

Feds honour Dr. Maude

The oak-panelled shelves and display cases containing Dr. Maude Abbott's pathology slides were a fitting backdrop for unveiling a Historic Sites and Monuments brass plaque and oil portrait in honour of one of Canada's first female physicians. The unveiling took place Mar. 10 at McGill's Osler Library.

A pathologist who became world renowned for her pioneering work in abnormalities of the heart, Abbott obtained her medical degree in 1894. At the time, few women pursued medical careers in Canada or elsewhere. Abbott, one of the first women to teach medicine at McGill, also became curator of the university's pathology museum. She was the first to use its specimens to teach medical students, a practice that Dr. Abraham Fuks, McGill's dean of medicine, said continues to this day.

"When I first read the story of that woman, I found it unbelievable," said federal cabinet minister Lucienne Robillard, who attended the unveiling. "How did she succeed at that time?"

Abbott, who was called "the beneficent tornado" by one of the speakers, helped found the Federation of Medical Women of Canada, which began as a meeting of 6 women sitting on the grass after a CMA meeting. The group now has more than 2000 members.

Some of the retired physicians present at the standing-room only ceremony remembered not only her achievements but her travails. "Her work studying congenital heart malfor-



Federal cabinet minister Lucienne Robillard unveils plaque honouring Dr. Maude Abbott at McGill's Osler Library

mations formed the basis of the initiation to cardiac surgery," said Dr. Sean Moore, professor emeritus of pathology, "yet she had a problem getting a clinical clerkship."

"It's a pity she couldn't get into medicine at McGill because she was a woman, and had to go to Bishop's," added Dr. H.J. Scott, a retired cardiac surgeon who was on McGill's faculty of medicine for more than 35 years. — *Susan Pinker, Montreal*

Shocking, graphic cigarette packages are a deterrent: study

A University of Guelph study on cigarette packages has concluded that strong emotional statements on packages, such as "Smoking causes mouth cancer," along with pictures of rotting gums and blackened teeth, are huge deterrents to both smokers and non-smokers.

The study, conducted by John Liefeld of the University's Department of Consumer Studies, was commissioned by Health Canada and was part of the reason the federal government proposed increasing the size of health warnings, printing them in colour and including a graphic image on the package.

"The content of the message is most important," Liefeld said. Some of the other messages he used in his study in-

cluded: "This year, smoking will kill off the population of a small city." It was combined with a picture of a bar graph showing projected deaths from motor vehicle accidents, suicides, smoking and heart disease. Another message, "Smoking kills babies," is accompanied by a graphic of a baby lying on its back.

Liefeld studied a sample of 617 people in Ontario and Quebec. "It can be concluded from these results that the immediate impact of larger, stronger warning messages with pictures on one's thinking about smoking would be strong," he said.

Approximately one-third of the study sample were teenage smokers and another third were teenaged nonsmokers. An estimated 90 percent of all

smokers begin smoking before age 20. The remaining participants were adult smokers.

The study also found that even warning messages that covered 60% of the package surface did not prevent smokers from recognizing their brand in a simulated store display. Liefeld said that for 95% of smokers, there was no difference in the time taken to locate their brand in the display.

"The incidence of smoking has decreased over 20 years because of the weight of combined actions from many agencies, including the CMA," he said. Because of those actions there has been a decrease in the smoking population — except among teenage girls. — *Ken Kilpatrick, Hamilton*