

IC SAVINGS | DONATION RECEPTION

Remarks by Dr. Gianluigi Bisleri • October 28, 2026

Good evening, everyone.

First, thank you to the leadership of IC Savings, to Susana and her team, and to everyone who has made this evening possible. I am also delighted that our colleagues from St. Michael's Hospital Foundation can join us for such a meaningful occasion.

I want to begin by recognizing something that makes tonight particularly special. IC Savings has had an extraordinary impact on our community—not only as a financial institution, but as an organization rooted in the belief that when a community succeeds, it should create opportunities for others to succeed as well.

For generations, the Italian-Canadian community has been shaped by hard work, determination, generosity, and a deep commitment to giving back. IC Savings has helped carry those values forward. Tonight's generosity is another wonderful example: a community institution choosing to invest in better care for patients and families throughout Toronto and beyond.

As someone who grew up in Italy and eventually made Canada my home, that connection means a great deal to me personally.

When I think about why I became a cardiac surgeon, I return to a simple idea: the privilege of making a difference in someone's life at the moment they need it most. Heart surgery can save a life, but we also have a responsibility to ask how we can make the journey through surgery less difficult.

Traditionally, cardiac surgery has meant large incisions, time in intensive care, and a demanding recovery. I have spent much of my career asking a different question: what if we could achieve excellent results while reducing the burden of treatment on patients?

What if we could repair a heart valve through a small incision? What if robotic technology could help us perform complex procedures with remarkable precision? And what if we could help people return to their families and their everyday lives sooner?

Those questions inspired the minimally invasive and robotic cardiac surgery program we have built at St. Michael's Hospital. None of this happens through the work of one individual. It takes an outstanding team of surgeons, cardiologists, anesthesiologists, nurses, perfusionists, and so many other colleagues working toward the same goal.

Together, we have introduced approaches that were previously unavailable to many patients here. Just recently, our team performed Canada's first robotic hybrid ablation procedures for atrial fibrillation. What matters most to me is not simply that we used a robot. It is that these patients were able to recover and return home the following day.

To me, that is the true meaning of innovation. It is not about having the newest machine or the most sophisticated technology. It is about what that technology allows us to do for another

human being: helping a parent get home to their children, helping a grandparent return to family life, or giving someone with heart disease renewed confidence in the future.

But ideas alone do not transform medicine. We need teams willing to pursue them, institutions willing to embrace change, and partners who believe that progress is worth investing in.

That is why the \$100,000 donation from IC Savings to St. Michael's Hospital Foundation is so important. It will support our efforts to advance minimally invasive and robotic cardiac surgery, explore new approaches, strengthen education and training, and bring the benefits of innovation to more patients.

What I find especially moving is the connection between the values that built this community and the future we are working to build in cardiac care. Tonight, IC Savings is not simply supporting a surgical program. It is bringing together the generosity of a community, the possibilities of medical innovation, and a shared commitment to making people's lives better.

Your gift is an investment in patients we have not yet met, families whose lives we may one day change, and ideas that may shape cardiac surgery for years to come. We will honour that confidence with dedication, responsibility, and an unwavering focus on patient care.

I often say that the future of cardiac surgery is not something we are simply waiting for. The future is already here. With partnerships like this one, we can make that future accessible to more people.

So, on behalf of our entire team at St. Michael's, and above all the patients and families who will benefit, thank you for believing in our work, for giving back to our community, and for helping us build the future of cardiac care right here in Toronto.

Grazie di cuore. Thank you very much.