POLYTECHNIQUE MONTRÉAL

ORDER OF THE WHITE ROSE
POLYTECHNIQUE MONTRÉAL
THE FUTURE BLOOMS IN OUR HANDS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

8TH EDITION OF THE ORDER OF THE WHITE ROSE SCHOLARSHIP
SOPHIA ROY AWARDED $30,000 FROM POLYTECHNIQUE MONTRÉAL

Montréal, December 5, 2022 – Taking action to fight the environmental crisis: this is what sparked Sophia Roy's interest in engineering. Today the outstanding student was awarded the $30,000 Order of the White Rose Scholarship. The presentation ceremony, which was attended by Pascale Déry, the Minister of Higher Education, followed a moving commemoration of the tragic event that occurred on December 6, 1989. After completing a bachelor's degree in Chemical Engineering at McGill University, Ms. Roy was admitted directly to a PhD program in the same field at Polytechnique Montréal, where she is studying steel decarbonization methods. Every year, Polytechnique's senior administration awards the Order of the White Rose Scholarship to a female Canadian engineering student who hopes to pursue graduate studies at the university of her choice, in Canada or elsewhere in the world.

ADDRESSING ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES CAUSED BY HUMAN ACTIVITY

Behind every scientist is a role model or source of inspiration. Sophia Roy's interest was piqued at an early age by Jane Goodall, the well-known primatologist and biodiversity activist. After learning about her, Ms. Roy knew she wanted to pursue a career in applied research to address environmental issues caused by human activity. "I realized that engineering offered me the greatest potential for making a difference," she explained.

Ms. Roy's career is already off to a strong start after achieving outstanding results in her undergraduate studies at McGill University. She finished with a near-perfect GPA and earned the Québec Lieutenant Governor's Medal. Her first research project explored biodegradable proteinaceous materials and their potential for reducing the ecological footprint of solar panel manufacturing. Recognizing the need to standardize practices in the field, she also published a scientific review article that ended up ranking among the most downloaded articles from the *Canadian Journal of Chemical Engineering* in 2020.

In 2021, she completed an internship at the Ministry of the Environment and the Fight Against Climate Change. Still driven by environmental protection, she developed a calculator that

converts CO_2 emissions into their equivalent in vehicle emissions for a liquefied natural gas project led by the provincial government. Her calculator caught the interest of the Minister, who used it to explain to the general public why he decided not to give the project the green light based on its greenhouse gas emissions.

Ms. Roy is keenly aware of the gratitude she owes to the women who paved the way for her career in engineering. These pioneers include her own mother, who began her studies at Polytechnique just a year after the 1989 massacre, not allowing her plans to be derailed by fear or discouragement.

Ms. Roy is now carrying the torch in hopes of opening doors for the next generation of women in science. She became an elected official in the student community and has invested time organizing meetings and networking activities, and acting as a mentor to new undergraduate students. During the pandemic, she volunteered to give virtual science workshops to elementary students.

To maintain balance, she schedules time away from screens and enjoys painting, dancing and spending time outdoors.

PROMOTING THE OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION OF WOMEN IN ENGINEERING

White roses symbolize the commemorative activities for the tragedy that occurred on December 6, 1989, when 14 young women were killed and several others were injured. The Order of the White Rose was created in 2014 to honour the women who lost their lives or were injured, as well as the families, faculty, staff and students affected by the incident.

Nathalie Provost, who sustained injuries during the fateful event, and Michèle Thibodeau-DeGuire, who was the first woman to graduate in civil engineering from Polytechnique in 1963, are the scholarship's godmothers. Michèle Prévost, a full professor and member of Polytechnique's Board of Directors, chaired the Order of the White Rose selection jury this year.

Jury members are appointed by Polytechnique Montréal. They include the deans of the engineering faculties at the University of Calgary, Dalhousie University, McGill University, Queen's University, the University of Saskatchewan, the Université de Sherbrooke and the University of Toronto. The scholarship candidates are assessed based on their academic record (30%), technical achievements (35%) and non-technical achievements (35%).

QUOTES

"I'm extremely honoured and grateful to receive the Order of the White Rose Scholarship," said Sophia Roy. "This award encourages me to continue doing my best as a woman working in the scientific field, fighting prejudice and breaking down the barriers that still stand between young women and careers in engineering and science."

"All of the young women who receive the Order of the White Rose Scholarship demonstrate incredible strength, community involvement and academic brilliance. Sophia Roy is no

exception. Her first research findings have already caught the attention of the scientific world and her involvement in the student community, which includes supporting younger students, is an inspiration to all future female engineers," said Maud Cohen, President of Polytechnique Montréal. "I warmly congratulate Ms. Roy and look forward to seeing her become one of tomorrow's leaders."

"The Order of the White Rose serves to commemorate the exceptional women I studied with and pass on important values for our future," said Nathalie Provost. "Sophia upholds these values by excelling as a woman in engineering and as a member of society—there's no better argument for promoting women in science. For young women interested in engineering, her example shows that dreaming big and pursuing their ambitions is worthwhile."

"I'm delighted to see so much engineering talent and leadership among the candidates for the Order of the White Rose. Women in science and engineering make a tremendous contribution to society, and these positive role models help strengthen their participation," says Michèle Thibodeau-DeGuire.

"The upcoming generation that Sophia represents has everything it takes to be a good scientist: a drive for excellence, curiosity, tenacity and the desire to share knowledge. In addition, they are acutely aware of their social responsibility and are willing to take action to protect the future of our planet. Over the past 150 years, Polytechnique has contributed to Québec's growth, on both the technological and social levels, by training generation after generation of diligent and innovative engineers. By presenting this scholarship to Sophie, Polytechnique Montréal is demonstrating its commitment to finding sustainable solutions to pressing environmental issues, benefiting our society and the planet," said Michèle Prévost, Chair of the Jury.

ABOUT POLYTECHNIQUE MONTRÉAL

Established in 1873, Polytechnique Montréal is one of Canada's largest engineering education and research universities, and is located on the Université de Montréal campus – North America's largest Francophone university campus. With over 57,000 graduates and approximately 120 academic programs, Polytechnique has trained 22 % of the Ordre des ingénieurs du Québec's current membership. Polytechnique Montréal is also distinguished by its more than 300 talented professors and 10,000 students. Its overall annual budget is $300 million, including $100 million reserved exclusively for research.

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INFORMATION AND INTERVIEW COORDINATION

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COMMENTS

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- LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/video/event/urn:li:ugcPost:7003360797187792897/
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Order of the White Rose website: https://polymtl.ca/ordreroseblanche/en

Week of the White Rose website: https://roseblanche.org/en