



Dr. Julie Fradette

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Hometown: Québec City

Since establishing her own lab in 2005, Julie Fradette has become a leader in the field of tissue engineering. Julie has supported and mentored close to 50 students, graduate students and research assistants, who have helped build her lab at Université Laval and whom she credits with its many successes.

Who is your female role model in the science sector?

Since I have read her biography (three volumes), I have been fascinated by Irma LeVasseur (1877-1964) who is the first French-Canadian woman to become a doctor and was a pioneer in pediatrics. At the time, women were not allowed to study medicine in Canada, therefore Irma went to Minnesota to obtain her degree. Once she returned to Quebec, she contributed to founding two hospitals: Hôpital Sainte-Justine in Montreal and Hôpital de l'Enfant-Jésus in Quebec City, where I currently work. Her tenacity and diversified achievements are remarkable to me.

What has been your career highlight?

Working in the field of tissue engineering, I use stem cells extracted from adipose (fat) tissue to reconstruct human tissues in the laboratory, where the ultimate goal is to develop functional and safe substitutes to replace damaged tissues. My team celebrates each time we successfully produce a promising new tissue, whether it takes the form of a tri-layer skin, an adipose tissue with capillary blood vessels, or a bone-like tissue. Nonetheless, I would say that my career highlight has been when I hosted the 2012 IFATS Conference (International Federation for Adipose Therapeutics and Science). Being recognized and selected by the Board to organize this three-day annual meeting, and being the first

woman to do so on the 10th anniversary of the society was the best vote of confidence! Seeing all these experts and colleagues from 24 countries in my hometown, sharing the newest scientific achievements was extremely rewarding and worth all the extra work!

What career advice do you have for the next generation?

Be curious and outgoing. Start early to gain knowledge on the type of careers that might appeal to you. Gain experience that will allow you to know your strengths.

Be pro-active and passionate about each opportunity given to you, at work or traveling abroad.

Be savvy but surround yourself with more than technology. Establish meaningful relationships with different types of people, from colleagues to mentors, and be active and involved in your scientific community.

Learn new languages. The future is bright and the world is small after all!