Couple’s Gift to Enrich the Future of Opera at UBC

The home of Irving Guttman and Robert Dales is both an urban oasis and a tribute to Irving’s decades-long career in opera. Gifts, framed letters, and photos of great singers and composers reveal his impact on opera in Western Canada. But far from living in the past, the couple is intent on making a difference in the future of the UBC Opera program, with an estate gift.

Over 50 photos of opera greats hang on one wall of the living room. Prominently displayed is a portrait of Pauline Donalda, founder of the Opera Guild of Montreal, who gave Irving his first big break. “I was working there as assistant stage manager,” he says, “and Madame Donalda said, ‘We have to see if he has any talent.’ I was lucky enough to direct all her performances for six years.”

In 1960, Irving became the founding artistic director of the Vancouver Opera. In 1963 his production of Norma, starring Joan Sutherland and Marilyn Horne, put the company on the map. “Norma was very special,” Irving remembers. “The company was barely three years old and suddenly there was an international cast...people couldn’t believe what they were hearing.”

continued on page 2
Robert and Irving’s partnership goes back four decades to when Robert, then an accomplished choral singer, met Irving in Vancouver. “So I got involved in opera,” Robert laughs.

While at Vancouver Opera, Irving met Nancy Hermiston, who was then a coloratura singer. When Nancy came to UBC as the Director of Voice and Opera Divisions in the School of Music, Irving and Robert became intrigued by the program. “It’s the full scope,” Robert says. “Students don’t just study singing, they also learn staging, acting, how to work with the musicians. And Nancy has very high standards.”

A UBC Opera production of La Bohème left a lasting impression on Irving and Robert. “The youth, exuberance, and excitement of the performers were so real and believable. I was so impressed with the high standard of the performance,” Irving says.

The pair is also excited about the renovation of the Old Auditorium. “It has so much potential,” Robert enthuses. “It has a lot going for it as a performance space: the best acoustics in Vancouver, and great Art Deco architecture.”

As Irving and Robert were considering their legacies a couple of years ago, they decided to make an estate gift to UBC. Their gift includes scholarships for Opera students, support for the Old Auditorium, and their extensive collection of opera memorabilia.

“The opera program gives students the training and exposure they need,” says Irving. “We wanted to make sure, in some way, that it endures.”

Robert adds, “The future of opera is at UBC.”

Irving and Robert are leaving a gift to UBC in their wills. This is a very popular type of planned gift that can benefit both UBC and your estate. Please contact us for more information.

Since 1932, when UBC received its first estate gift, UBC students, faculty members and researchers have benefited from the thoughtful generosity of donors who have left a bequest in their will.

Here are just a few examples::

Between 20 and 30 students each year can better afford a UBC education as recipients of a bursary established by the estate of Gordon Allen. Gordon was a teacher who believed that everyone had the right to a good education, no matter how challenging their personal situation.

The cardiovascular research group at the UBC Life Sciences Centre has been able to purchase essential equipment needed for cancer and heart disease research thanks to a planned gift from UBC alumna Janet Berryman. Dr. Chris Ahern, an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Medicine, says, “Janet Berryman’s generous gift allows a critical momentum to continue in this area.”

Since 2006, students and faculty members in the Faculty of Applied Science have benefited from the thoughtful “full circle” planned gift from Leslie Gould, whose two UBC degrees were followed by a successful career in the petroleum industry. The gift supports student recruitment in engineering, offers scholarships, helps ensure that labs are well-equipped, supports a teaching professorship in chemical engineering and provides a mentorship fund so students can learn from practicing engineers.

Graduate students often feel the financial pinch as much as undergrads. In the Faculty of Land and Food Systems, the pinch is eased by a fellowship established by the estate of Elizabeth Howland, whose passion for the earth and its creatures led to her vocation of farming and animal husbandry. Dean Murray Isman says, “The support our graduate students receive from this fellowship enables them to achieve academic excellence by focusing full-time on their studies and research.”

Providing for a gift to UBC in your will is straightforward. Any member of our Gift and Estate Planning staff can supply specific wording that will ensure your wishes are carried out. Please contact us.
Sophia Leung is perhaps best-known as Canada’s first female Asian-Canadian Member of Parliament, elected first in 1997 and re-elected in 2000. She has also served on the Board of Directors of over 20 community organizations, and received many honours for her contributions, including the Order of Canada and the Canada Volunteer award.

Yet she is quick to credit UBC for giving her a start in her career of social and political involvement, and is planning to give back to her alma mater through an estate gift.

Sophia moved to Vancouver in 1962, when her late husband, Dr. S. Wah Leung, was invited to become the founding Dean of the UBC Faculty of Dentistry. Sophia became a student, graduating with a Bachelor of Social Work in 1964 and a Masters in 1966.

Together, the Leungs helped establish the Chinese Cultural Centre in downtown Vancouver, and helped to forge sister-city ties between Vancouver and Guangzhou, China.

Over the next several decades Sophia served Canadians as a social worker, volunteer, community activist and politician. In addition to her role as MP, she was Parliamentary Secretary for National Revenue for four years, and Special Advisor to the Prime Minister from 2004 to 2006.

And she’s not slowing down yet: she has participated in the Governor General’s mentor program, in which members of the Order of Canada are paired up with young people. She is also facilitating student exchanges between UBC and Chinese social work students, and serves as a member of the Dean’s Advisory Council in the Faculty of Dentistry.

Sophia’s planned gift to UBC will further enrich existing scholarships in her late husband’s name, as well as establish a new scholarship in the School of Social Work.

“My husband and I both had the opportunity to get an education. We struggled, but we succeeded. We want to share part of what we have with young people, to encourage them.”
**EARL DODSON**

Earl and his wife Suzanne have been connected to UBC Libraries for over four decades. They met while students at UBC in the 1950s. Earl graduated in 1954 with a degree in Geological Science and went on to a distinguished career in mineral exploration. He worked for companies such as Rio Tinto and Chevron Minerals, and explored for diamonds in Canada’s north. After graduation Suzanne went to work at the Library for what she thought would be a couple of years, but what turned out to be a successful 36-year career. Together Earl and Suzanne made many gifts to improve library facilities, including an elevator for people with disabilities in the Koerner Library, a microfilming project, and air conditioning for rare materials storage. In appreciation, the Library dedicated the Suzanne Cates Dodson and Earl Dodson Reading Room in 1999, a space not only for reading but also for meetings, lectures and other events. When Earl passed away in 2009 UBC was the grateful recipient of the proceeds from a life insurance policy.

**WERNER AND HILDEGARD HESSE**

Werner and Hildegard began their decades-long relationship with UBC in the 1950s, as students in night-school courses on birding. Driven by curiosity, they developed a deep love of birding and avian research that included their hands-on participation as bird counters in a remote location on the Arctic Circle. To show their appreciation for how UBC helped change their lives, the Hesses completed a charitable gift annuity that provided a steady stream of income for them for their entire lives and a gift to UBC. The Hesses both passed away in 2008, and generously made arrangements to leave UBC an estate gift that will bolster avian research in the faculties of Science and Forestry for years to come.

*The true meaning of life is to plant trees under whose shade you do not expect to sit.*  
-Nelson Henderson
Gayle Stewart

Gayle was a journalist, broadcaster, communications professional, volunteer and UBC alumna whose contributions to the university have extended beyond her lifetime, thanks to her gift of life insurance. Gayle received a BA from UBC in 1976, then began a career in journalism with Canadian Press and the CBC. Later, she moved into corporate communications and worked for a variety of BC companies. In 2006 Gayle returned to UBC to pursue a Masters degree, graduating in 2008. That year she was appointed head of UBC’s Olympic Secretariat, and worked to prepare the Vancouver campus for the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. As a volunteer, Gayle was a dedicated member of the Board of the UBC Alumni Association. She was a key member of the Communications committee, served as co-chair of the Chancellor Nomination Committee, and was elected Vice Chair in 2006. Although Gayle’s life was shortened by cancer, her memory was honoured by many friends and colleagues who made gifts to UBC in her name. Her estate gift will support the UBC Alumni Centre.

Kay Earle

Kay was born in 1911 in Vancouver, and lived in the house her father had built in Kerrisdale until the late 1930s. She attended Magee Secondary School and the Vancouver School of Decorative and Applied Arts (now Emily Carr University). She moved to Victoria in the late 1930s and worked as a draftsperson for the Department of National Defense, one of the first women in this field. In the 1950s she designed and built a home in Victoria. In the early 1960s she returned to Vancouver and worked as a draftsperson for the City until her retirement in 1976. Kay had a lifelong interest in art, particularly Asian art, sculpture and furniture, and her home was full of interesting objects, paintings and other artworks. Kay left her entire estate to UBC, including the Kerrisdale home her father had built, which has class C heritage status. Proceeds from her estate have created an endowment to fund research into environmental pollution, ophthalmology and allergies, three topics about which Kay had passionate ideas and opinions.

Legacy Honour Roll

Gayle Stewart

Kay Earle

The true meaning of life is to plant trees you do not expect to sit.
- Nelson Henderson
UBC lost a great friend and longtime supporter with the passing of Dr. Don Rix late in 2009. Over the years Dr. Rix gave millions of dollars to UBC, but above and beyond those gifts he was passionate about education and gave freely of his experience, leadership and wisdom.

Most recently, the Faculty of Education received its largest-ever gift when Don and his daughter Laurie established the Eleanor Rix Professorship in Rural Teacher Education, in memory of Don’s wife. Dr. Linda Farr Darling, former Associate Professor in Curriculum and Pedagogy at UBC, was appointed to this position in September 2009.

Don was born in Ontario and attended the University of Western Ontario, where he obtained his BA in 1953 and MD in 1957. His fascination with diagnostic medicine led to his involvement with, and eventual leadership of, Metropolitan Biomedical Laboratories. Over the years the company grew through acquisition and expansion, eventually becoming MDS Metro and then LifeLabs. Similarly, he grew Cantest into one of Canada’s leading industrial labs.

Don joined the UBC Faculty of Medicine in 1966, and from then on his impact took many forms, from capital investment in UBC’s infrastructure to personal relationships with faculty members and students. He provided sage advice and strategic counsel, fostered relationships with the community, and supported medical research.

Through the Rix Bursary in Medicine, Don supported dozens of students for whom a medical education would have been out of reach financially. Through the Dr. Donald Rix Northern Health Sciences Centre, he created a home for UBC’s Northern Medical Program. He also established the BC Leadership Chair in Early Childhood Development and supported the Program Office for Laboratory Quality Management, the Michael Smith Memorial Fellowship, the John M.S. Lecky UBC Boathouse, and the Donald Rix Building, which promotes high-tech industry.

Don’s support of UBC has not ended with his passing. Through his estate UBC will continue to benefit from Don’s lifelong generosity and commitment to learning, teaching and research.

“Dr. Rix set an example of entrepreneurship, philanthropy and volunteerism from which we all benefit and to which we should all aspire.”

Professor Stephen Toope, President of UBC
**Henry Skinner**

Henry was an honorary alumnus of UBC and a generous supporter of the UBC Landscape Architecture program. Born in England, he came to Canada in 1928 and spent more than 70 years in Vancouver, working at various executive dining clubs as a steward and maitre d’. His passion was gardening. He once said that he saw himself as a nurturer, helping others to thrive – and this included everything from his garden to his family to UBC students who studied topics close to his heart. In 1989, he established the Henry Skinner Scholarship in the Landscape Architecture program. His steady generosity over 30 years has helped more than 55 students achieve their goals. In 2007, he said, “The idea that all the hard work I’ve done over the years will be making a difference long after I’m gone — that’s a wonderful thought.” Henry died in 2009 in his 100th year, leaving a final gift to his scholarship as a bequest.

**Mary Tierney**

Mary and her sister Kathleen were born in Calgary and studied violin in London, England. There, in the 1950s, the sisters acquired two violins made by Alessandro Gagliano and his grandson Ferdinand Gagliano. Alessandro Gagliano lived in Naples from 1700-1735, and was the first known Neapolitan violin-maker. He established a family dynasty, and instruments made by his family are highly prized. Mary Tierney bequeathed both violins to the UBC School of Music. In her honour, the School established the Mary and Kathleen Tierney Memorial Concert in her honour. Each year students compete for the honour of performing in this concert and other School of Music performances using the Gagliano violins.

**Margaret Heppner**

Margaret (Peggy) Heppner knew that her daughter Amanda’s heart condition would most likely dramatically shorten her life. Despite this heartbreaking news, Peggy was determined to afford her daughter a normal life: she decided not to tell Amanda about her heart condition. Amanda lived her young life fully, unburdened by any knowledge or worry about her illness. She attended UBC and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in 1966. She died of heart complications shortly after graduating from UBC. To honour Amanda’s memory, Peggy left almost her entire estate to UBC to establish the Sheridan Amanda Heppner Memorial Endowment. The endowment fund provides bursaries to science students at UBC.
NOURISH YOUR PASSION...

...for medical research, sustainability, music, visual arts, business, or whatever else moves you. UBC’s 50,000 students and 14,000 faculty and staff are engaged in learning, research and contributions that will help change the future.

A planned gift to UBC can help nourish your passion even after you are gone. Legacy gifts can support students in financial need, reward outstanding scholars, fuel necessary research or give a margin of excellence to a program of study.

Establishing a planned gift is straightforward: simply choose a destination for your gift and the type of gift you would like to make. Bequests, gifts of life insurance, and RSP/RRIF gifts can be made easily. Our experienced staff can handle the details in partnership with your lawyer or financial advisor.

Elizabeth Ko, MBA
Director
Gift & Estate Planning
604.822.8906
elizabeth.ko@ubc.ca

Cheryl Stevens
Associate Director
Gift & Estate Planning
604.822.1232
cheryl.stevens@ubc.ca

Brian Altwasser, MBA
Associate Director,
Estates & Trusts
Gift & Estate Planning
604.822.2652
brian.altwasser@ubc.ca

Murray Landa, LLB
Associate Director
Gift & Estate Planning
604.827.4155
murray.landa@ubc.ca

Don Hickling
Associate Director
Gift & Estate Planning
604.827.4794
donald.hickling@ubc.ca

Sandra Mimic, CFP
Development Officer
Gift & Estate Planning
250.807.8532
sandra.mimic@ubc.ca

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT CREATING A LEGACY, PLEASE CONTACT:

GIFT & ESTATE PLANNING

VANCOUVER CAMPUS
500 – 5950 University Blvd.
Vancouver, BC, Canada
V6T 1Z3
Fax: 604.822.8151
heritage.circle@ubc.ca

OKANAGAN CAMPUS
3333 University Way
Kelowna, BC, Canada
V1V 1V7
Fax: 250.807.9211
www.supporting.ubc.ca