Legacy for Animal Welfare Inspires Another

In the late 1980s, armed with a degree in economics from the University of Victoria, Leanne McConnachie could not have predicted how dramatically an estate gift to UBC would change her life.

“I got into the technology sector, helping start-ups develop business plans, which led to jobs with BC Tel and then other tech companies,” she says. “The late-90s internet boom was a roller coaster. Very exciting, but unpredictable as well.”

As companies were merged, acquired and dissolved in the dot-com boom, Leanne began thinking about where she might take her career next. She considered her love of animals, and found that UBC’s Animal Welfare Program was a great fit.

The Animal Welfare Program at UBC was established in 1997 with the objective of improving the lives of animals through research, education and public outreach. The program was founded in part through an estate gift from Doreen Margetts, who died in 1994 after a distinguished career as a horsewoman and breeder of thoroughbreds.

Animal welfare programs are available in only 1% of the world’s universities. The UBC program attracts graduate students from across the globe to conduct research on ways to improve the lives of farm animals, companion animals, wild animals and research animals. Faculty members are respected international leaders called upon to advise on animal welfare issues and serve on influential national and international committees. Perhaps the greatest legacy of the Animal Welfare Program is the many graduates who have gone on to influential positions where they promote the welfare of animals in business, education, government and the animal protection movement.

Today Leanne is the Director of Farm Animal Programs for the Vancouver Humane Society. She spearheads the Chicken OUT! program that aims

“Animals have always been a continuing source of pleasure and companionship during my life and thoroughbred horses have considerably increased the value of my estate, so I feel it appropriate to leave some of my estate to the welfare of these friends who cannot help themselves.” -Doreen Margetts
Daniela Caprara’s passion for helping people brought her to UBC from Toronto. And a donor-supported scholarship helped her realize her dream of becoming a doctor.

As an undergraduate at the University of Toronto, Daniela completed a unique program in Toxicology that is jointly sponsored by the Faculty of Arts and Science and the Faculty of Medicine. She then pursued her interest in pharmacology with a masters degree, researching tests that could help diagnose fetal alcohol syndrome in newborn babies.

Although she then had the opportunity to do doctoral research, Daniela determined that her heart was in clinical work, particularly women’s health. She applied to UBC, and was accepted into the Faculty of Medicine class of 2008.

“Our class was the first one in the distributed medical program,” she recalls. “We would be in a lecture hall in Vancouver with our classmates in Prince George and Victoria on big teleconferencing screens. It worked out really well; it felt like we were all in one room.”

As a medical student, Daniela received a scholarship established by the estate of Janet Berryman, a UBC alumna who died in 1999. In addition to providing scholarships for over 100 medical students to date, Janet’s legacy gift supports research into the causes of cancer and heart disease.

“It was such a surprise and honour to receive the scholarship,” Daniela says. “Being a medical student takes so much time that I couldn’t have a part-time job, and everything was piling up on my line of credit. The scholarship was such a help.”

Recipient of the Janet Berryman scholarship are selected by the Faculty of Medicine. “It was great to be recognized for my achievements,” Daniela says. “In a way, that boost – knowing that people have confidence in you – was just as helpful as receiving the money.”

Following graduation from UBC, Daniela returned to her native Toronto (“Family was a big part of why I went back,” she says) to take up a residency in obstetrics and gynecology. Now in the fourth year of a five-year program, Daniela is working with a unique population of HIV-positive women in Toronto and researching factors that lead to positive pregnancy outcomes in this group.

In January 2012, Daniela will travel to Zimbabwe to do a six-week elective program at Howard Hospital outside Harare. “It’s a great opportunity to work with people who have different backgrounds and experiences,” she says.

Daniela credits the Janet Berryman scholarship with contributing to her success. To anyone considering setting up a scholarship for UBC students, she says, “it’s a great way to recognize students for their achievements, as well as helping them financially when they are in demanding programs.”
Estate Gift Expands Student’s World

When Surrey native Aaroneep Bains was accepted into the UBC Go Global program and received the Hugh M. Brock Education Abroad Scholarship, he couldn’t wait to go to Paris.

“I attended the Institute d’Etudes Politiques, which is known as Sciences Po, for my third year,” he says. “I was able to study in English, but of course I was living in France. Being on exchange teaches you how to fit in better in another culture.”

Sciences Po is one of the most prestigious universities in France, with a relatively small student body and a very competitive admission process. One of its strengths is the high percentage of international students: four in ten undergraduate students come from outside France, representing 60 different nationalities.

Aaroneep threw himself into the international student community right away. “I made friends with people from every continent except Antarctica,” he laughs. “I met so many different people, and I’m still friends with most of them.”

With a goal of studying law back home in Canada, Aaroneep worked hard at Sciences Po. “I knew that my transcripts would be included in my law school applications,” he says. “Knowing that the Hugh Brock Education Abroad Scholarship was helping pay my tuition took care of some of the money stress.”

Hugh Brock left a gift to UBC in his will, and when he died in 1990 scholarships for exchange students and for students entering first year at UBC were established. His legacy has created educational opportunities for hundreds of UBC students on campus, and in countries in almost every part of the world.

Being on exchange transformed Aaroneep’s academic goals. “Before I went on exchange, I had a businesslike attitude to my education. I wanted to get it done and get a good job. When I went to France, I really began to enjoy academic life, pursuing learning for its own sake. It opened up new opportunities for me and gave me ideas for a different future that the one I thought I wanted.”

“The other important thing I learned on exchange was to stop being so Vancouver-centric. I now want to do more work internationally rather than staying at home. I have an international network and I want to make the most of it.”

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to phase out the use of inhumane cages for egg-laying hens. “My degree gives me the expertise I need to be effective in my work. Even today, years after I graduated, I can consult with faculty members at UBC on any issue.”

“Doreen Margetts will never know how much her gift to UBC changed my life, both personally and professionally,” Leanne says. Ms. Margetts will also never know the significant impact her gift has had, and will continue to have, on the lives of countless animals worldwide.

Taking things full circle, Leanne has decided to make a gift in her will to benefit the UBC Animal Welfare Program. “The movement benefits tremendously from the UBC program, from the research they do, from the quality of the faculty members. I’d like to help someone in the future make the decision I made and change their career without worrying so much about the cost of returning to school.”
Start an evolution

UBC generates ideas that start evolutions. Ideas that change the way people think and the way the world works. We see this change as an evolution, one that improves upon what has come before and inspires the generations that follow.

Our start an evolution campaign has two ambitious goals—to raise $1.5 billion and to double the number of alumni engaged in the life of the University.

Why? To increase our capacity to change the world for the better, through student learning, research, and community engagement.

You can help start an evolution through involvement and investment. This can be as simple as reconnecting with UBC or as generous as making a donation now or planning a deferred gift.

We invite you to get involved and combine your energy with ours. Together with UBC, you can help create solutions for the issues you care about. This is your opportunity to make a contribution with long lasting effects. This is your chance to help start an evolution and support thinking that can change the world.

To learn more about how you can help start an evolution with a legacy gift to UBC, please contact us in UBC Gift & Estate Planning, as indicated below.

Elizabeth Ko, MBA
Director
604.822.8906
elizabeth.ko@ubc.ca

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

Cheryl Stevens
Associate Director
604.822.1232
cheryl.stevens@ubc.ca

Murray Landa, LLB
Associate Director
604.827.4155
murray.landa@ubc.ca

Sandra Mimic, CFP
Development Officer
UBC Okanagan Campus
250.807.8532
sandra.mimic@ubc.ca

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