Statistically Speaking: A Professor’s Inspiration Behind Giving

“The field of statistics doesn’t fit neatly in a box,” says Dr. Nancy Heckman, head of the Department of Statistics at UBC. “We interact with researchers and students in economics, medicine, policy, health, and the natural and social sciences.”

Nancy has been a faculty member at UBC since 1984. Besides being a passionate educator and researcher, she is a generous donor who contributes regularly to the University. Nancy recently created an estate gift to the Statistics Department. She is also a longtime supporter of the Statistics Fund for Excellence, which funds student awards.

There are two main prizes that recognize academic excellence in the Department of Statistics. The Nash Medal, named for UBC’s first statistician, Professor Stanley Nash, is presented to an outstanding undergraduate student while the Marshall Prize, named after Professor Albert Marshall, recognizes a graduate student. The Department also rewards excellence in graduate teaching, through an annual award.

“I am an educator,” says Nancy. “I see universities as important for all the practical reasons people say: to create skilled labour, to keep the economy strong, and to help solve the problems we face today. However, it’s deeper than that. A healthy society needs educated citizens. You need to be able to understand your history and look ahead to the future.”

Nancy also chose to endow the Jane Heckman Scholarship in Choral Singing as a tribute to her mother, a talented choral singer, who recently passed away. In a serendipitous twist, she discovered that Jane had also decided to honour Nancy’s passion by leaving a gift to the Statistics Fund for Excellence in her will.

“I love math structure, and I love problem solving,” says Nancy, who explains that it’s the ability to apply both creative and critical thinking that makes statistics so interesting to her.

“We get to play with pictures and graphs and figure out how to use data to answer important questions. It’s fascinating to...”
Nursing Pioneer Leaves Bequest to School of Nursing

As someone who shares a common ancestry with Florence Nightingale, it seems only natural that Helen would emerge as one of the most influential nursing leaders in the province. She has also been a generous UBC donor for many years and recently created an estate gift, which reflects her passionate advocacy for the School of Nursing.

“The role of a nurse, in my opinion, is to draw from science-based knowledge and develop a care plan to help an individual develop abilities to cope with and manage a health issue,” says Helen Shore, a UBC alumna (BSN 61, MA 71) and Associate Emerita of Nursing.

Helen was born in Calgary, Alberta. Her father and her mother were pioneer doctor and nurse in Bowden and Alix in northern Alberta who had a great influence on Helen. As a young woman, she moved to Vancouver and enrolled in the Vancouver General Hospital (VGH) diploma program. After graduating, she was assigned to open a ward in the Infectious Disease Hospital at VGH during a polio epidemic. She then went on to be a staff nurse at the Calgary General and King George VII in Hamilton, Bermuda to gain experience.

When Helen returned to Canada, she completed a diploma course in Teaching and Supervision at UBC School of Nursing and then taught Nursing Arts at the Royal Columbian Hospital, New Westminster for ten years. She then enrolled in UBC School of Nursing and earned her BSN, which led to a position with the Metropolitan Health Services as a public health nurse in Vancouver.

It was during this time that Helen met Trenna Hunter Director of Public Health Nursing and a former President of the Canadian Nurses Association. Both her BSN education and Trenna Hunter’s encouragement served to enlarge Helen’s understanding of nursing.
Alumni Couple Shares Legacy of Education

Husband and wife team Anton Henricus Kuipers and Vivienne Taylor shared more in common than thriving careers. They both felt it was education that had put them on the right life path. To express their gratitude and pay it forward, Anton and Vivienne both left gifts to their respective universities in their wills—his to UBC and hers to SFU.

“Anton came to Canada from Holland when he was nineteen,” says Vivienne, a Canadian leader in trend forecasting who mentors designers and retailers on strategies, research, and analysis within the fashion industry.

As an alumnus of UBC, Anton graduated in 1977 with a BSc in Science before completing his graduate studies in Urban Planning.

This experience would become a stepping-stone to a successful career that would span government, industry, and education. Among many notable accomplishments, Anton co-designed Vancouver’s first rapid transit line. He also promoted international trade partnerships in BC’s tech, environmental, and energy sectors before joining UBC as Associate Director, Development for the Faculty of Science, where he helped raise unprecedented funds for research.

“I’m glad UBC accepted him, because it was the best job he ever had,” says Vivienne. “He loved working with professors, researchers, and the people in Development.”

When Anton was diagnosed with cancer, they both decided to reexamine their wills and evaluate what really mattered to them.

“We really credited our universities for giving us the skills and education that helped us throughout our lives,” says Vivienne. “And so we said we’d like to support students. We decided to set up bursaries, because we both felt strongly that people should not be held back because of financial difficulty.”

The wills were prepared so both gifts would come from the surviving spouse. Although Anton passed away in May, his legacy will live on through a gift that will support students enrolled in any degree program in the Faculty of Science.

“To me, an education is the best gift you can give, because it changes lives,” says Vivienne. “Today, I can see students having a great deal of difficulty dealing with massive debts. Anton and I both felt it was the least we could do—to give someone the gift of education and help set them on their own path.” ◆
Dermatology Faculty Bequeath American Property

As longtime faculty members, Dr. Larry Warshawski and Dr. Anne Wachsmuth always planned to leave something to UBC down the line.

When they learned about the American Foundation for The University of British Columbia, a registered charity designed to maximize tax benefits on donations from the United States, these generous donors had the perfect gift idea—a vacation home in Florida.

“Donating the property to the American Foundation for UBC just made sense for us,” says Larry, who is also an alumnus of the University (BSc 71, MD 75). “When you sell a non-residence, the taxes can be exorbitant. Between the Canadian government and the American government, it can get as high as the full value of the home.”

To help maximize the benefits on their gift, Larry and Anne consulted with a legal firm that specializes in US and Canadian tax laws.

“As it turns out, we could give the entire condo to UBC, and neither government will get anything,” says Larry. “The entire property will pass to the university—and on top of that, our estate gets a tax benefit.”

“The Department of Dermatology has been a huge part of our lives,” adds Anne, who specializes in sports medicine and works as clinical faculty. “I have hosted many social functions for them over the years. They became our family. We are hopeful this gift will help contribute to a stronger Dermatology Department.”

“Donating to the American Foundation for UBC is a very good and efficient way of making a donation to support the university,” says Larry.

When Larry and Anne’s property passes to UBC, it will be sold and the proceeds will be put towards the Department of Dermatology to support their buildings and laboratories.

“UBC has been a part of my life for a long time,” says Larry, who joined the faculty in 1982. “When you give to UBC, you get better facilities, and that means better training. In the case of medicine it means better care for patients. Research is impacted, which leads to more grants and more grad students, so everything just gets bigger and better.”
Kerrisdale Property Gift Supports Research at UBC

Remembered as an art collector, designer, and pioneer, Vancouver native Kathleen Florence Earle grew up in Kerrisdale at the home her father built.

Born in 1911, she attended Magee Secondary School and later graduated from the Vancouver School of Decorative and Applied Arts (now Emily Carr University). After moving to the Vancouver Island, Kay became one of the first female civilian draftspersons to work with the Canadian military.

Like her father, Kay designed and built her own home, a beautiful waterfront property in Esquimalt, and lived there until the 1960s. She then returned to Vancouver and worked as a draftsperson for the City until her retirement in 1976.

Kay’s life was full of stories. She had a lifelong passion for art and watched Vancouver evolve from a humble pioneer outpost to a world-renowned city. Before she passed in 2009, Kay decided to leave her entire estate to UBC, including her heritage home in Kerrisdale, one of the first established in the neighborhood.

Proceeds from the estate have created the Kay Earle Endowment, which will fund research in three areas about which she was passionate – environmental pollution, ophthalmology and allergies.

New Capital Gains Tax Exemption for Gifts of Real Estate and Private Shares

The April 2015 federal budget included a new capital gains tax exemption regarding gifts of real estate and shares in private companies.

Beginning in 2017, individuals and corporations will be exempt from tax on capital gains on the sale of land or private shares to an arm’s-length buyer if the cash proceeds are donated to a registered charity within 30 days of the sale. The buyer must also deal at arm’s length with the donor and the charity. Where a portion of the sale proceeds is donated, the capital gains exemption will apply to the donated portion.

Suppose you’d like to make a significant gift to UBC to create a permanent bursary fund but don’t have cash available to do so. You’d like to see your gift at work during your lifetime, or possibly make your gift by will. You have a family cottage that you no longer need which has appreciated in value. Under the current rules, 50% of any capital gain on the cottage will be taxable if you donate it or pass it on to loved ones.

Under the new rules, if you sell your cottage to an arm’s-length buyer and, within 30 days, give all or part of the cash proceeds to UBC, you will receive an immediate tax receipt for your cash gift and there will be no capital gains tax payable on the portion donated. If the cottage is passed on to loved ones or sold and not donated, capital gains tax will still apply.

The budget also included new anti-avoidance rules. If, within five years after the sale, the donor (or a person not dealing at arm’s length with the donor) directly or indirectly reacquires any property that was sold, the capital gains exemption will be reversed and the amount will be included in the donor’s income.

Assuming the new rules survive the Fall 2015 election and beyond, the simplified process will make it easier and even more tax effective for people to achieve their philanthropic goals.

To learn more about making a gift of real estate, please contact a Gift & Estate Planning staff member.
Not everyone knows what makes people happy, but John Helliwell tries. A Professor Emeritus of the Economics Department at UBC, John says it was “serendipity” that led to his happiness research.

John is an author and editor of the World Happiness Report, first published in 2012 to support a UN meeting on happiness and well-being. Now in its third edition, it provides data and research used around the world to help shape and inform policy.

“Although we are interested in emotions as well as life evaluations,” explains John, who is conducting his work as a Senior Fellow of the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research. “The main country rankings are based on life evaluations, which vary much more from country to country, and are more easily explained by life circumstances.”

These average life evaluations are reported in the 2015 Report for 158 countries. Among the top four countries, which are very closely grouped, Switzerland ranks first, followed very closely by Iceland, Denmark and Norway, with Canada taking fifth position.

The report then explains most of the large international differences using six key variables, including GDP per capita, healthy life expectancy, social support, perceptions of corruption, generosity, and freedom to make life choices.

Other chapters explore making policy when happiness is the objective, the neuroscience of happiness, the mental health of children, human values, social capital, and subjective wellness by age and gender.

For example, in Canada and most western countries, the study found there’s generally a U shape when charting the correlation between life evaluations and age. It falls in the first half of life, hits a low at about 50 and then rises, in some cases returning to or surpassing the level it was at the beginning. It also determined that across the globe men and women experience similar levels of life satisfaction, although women are slightly happier in most countries, including Canada.

The findings are important on many levels. Most significantly, they provide leaders and policy makers with greater insight on how to achieve societal well-being. It also helps individuals understand what constitutes happiness, which is not primarily based on material circumstances, but on a broader combination of social factors like fairness, friendship, health, and trust.

As editor of The World Happiness Report, John’s objective “is to help people who are trying to design systems of delivery or services understand the consequences of what they are trying to do, and do it better.”

“For all of us,” he says, “happiness should not be seen as a personal objective, but as the welcome outcome of a life well lived.”
Think how a general template that analyzes the data structure of tracking objects, for example, could be used to understand the information from tracking devices on marine mammals, or people’s cellphones. There can be completely different applications.”

Today, Nancy explains, people are living in an age of information. There’s a lot of data being generated, and this makes statistics more relevant than ever.

“I love statistics, and I know a lot about it,” says Nancy. “I have also served the Department in various ways, and I’ve seen the impact awards have on students. They are so happy to receive them, and it looks great on their resumes. Creating and funding awards help students for the long run, and I like having that impact.”

Statistically Speaking: A Professor’s Inspiration Behind Giving  

The thing about Trenna was that she fostered public health nurses to demonstrate advanced skills, and she supported innovation in nursing practice. Working with her increased my pride and confidence.”

Although being a public health nurse was deeply satisfying to Helen, a phone call from Evelyn Mallory, Director of the UBC School of Nursing (SON), would soon change the course of her career.

“To make a long story short, she offered me a faculty job substituting for a professor who was going on education leave,” explains Helen. “It was a great offer, so I thought why not?”

At UBC, Helen met many academics focused on the challenges and needs of the profession. She presented nursing workshops on “Nursing Process” that were held throughout the province and later completed an MA in Adult Education, which reflected her new role as an educator. She was proud to join a committee of faculty members who would develop and implement a new curriculum for the 4-year BSN.

Today, Helen is recognized as a pioneer of her profession, both within the University and within the province. She hopes that her gift will help to highlight the School’s unique history and make it stronger: “Nursing has been a part of the UBC campus for 100 years now,” says Helen. “But we don’t really have a space that is suitable for our Bachelor, Master, and PhD programs or to recognize the important contributions our graduates make to society. That’s my reason for making this gift—to support fellowships, nursing history, and nursing space, all those things that will bring the distinction and recognition that is appropriate to a modern and progressive School.”

Thank you

for helping us to raise over $1.5 billion and engage over 55,000 alumni annually with the university. We are deeply appreciative that 415 donors made estate gifts to UBC during the campaign, totalling over $196 million.

Together we are creating an exceptional learning environment, supporting research excellence and making a significant positive impact within our local and global communities. Thank you for supporting thinking that can change the world.
100 Years of UBC

On September 30, 1915, 379 students comprised the first class of the University of British Columbia. Of those 379 students, 40 had already completed three years at the preceding institution, McGill University College of BC, and so graduated as UBC’s first alumni on May 4, 1916. Our founders welcomed UBC’s first students in 1915 with a promise to “provide a satisfactory education” and to conduct “respectable” research.

What a difference a century makes! UBC’s best – now acknowledged to rank among the best in the world – have proved that we can aim much higher. UBC has grown over the last 100 years, from a provincial institution with just 379 students to an internationally renowned research powerhouse with 60,000 students and more than 300,000 alumni across the globe. Wherever they may be, our talented graduates are building upon their education to enrich the social, environmental, and economic sectors of their society, and contributing to the well-being of their fellow citizens.

This Centennial not only offers us the occasion to celebrate a century of success; it also gives us an opportunity to rededicate ourselves to the goals of an exceptional learning environment, true global citizenship, a civil and sustainable society, and a program of outstanding research, all in the service of the people of British Columbia, Canada, and the world.

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