



Freda Pagani

## A SUSTAINABLE SCHOLARSHIP HONOURING A SUSTAINABILITY PIONEER

In 1997, UBC became the first Canadian university with a sustainability policy, and Dr. Freda Pagani became the first staff person in charge of implementing that policy. She had no money, no staff, and little support on campus. But like many pioneers before her, she had a novel idea: pay for the implementation with savings realized through energy efficiency and waste reduction.

Just 11 years later, in 2008, UBC was named the top Canadian post-secondary institution in the College Sustainability Report Card. Today the Sustainability Office, which Freda founded, supports four full-time and three part-time staff. It is funded, as it always was, out of savings in electricity, water and paper realized across campus.

It's no wonder that when Dr. Pagani retired in 2007, her UBC colleagues, friends and students paid tribute to her by establishing the Freda Pagani Scholarship in Sustainability. "The idea for a scholarship came from my staff in the Sustainability Office. They knew I wouldn't want a bag of golf clubs," Freda laughs.

Freda joined UBC in 1989 as a design coordinator in what was then Plant Operations. The World of Opportunity fundraising campaign launched, and in less than a year Freda was appointed Associate Director of New Projects.

A highlight of Freda's time in this role, and the project she calls "my baby", was the development of the C.K. Choi Building: a multi-award winner and the first green building on campus. "I was

becoming very interested in environmental issues, especially after hearing a guest lecture by Dr. William Rees, who pioneered the idea of the ecological footprint. Buildings consume so many resources; eventually I knew that I either had to quit my job or start building in a different way."

The C.K. Choi Building opened in 1996 and quickly became a model for other green buildings on campus such as the Liu Institute for Global Issues and the Life Sciences Centre.

Anticipating the completion of the World of Opportunity campaign, Freda began studying for a PhD in Resource Management and Environmental Studies. She completed her degree at about the same time as the university approved its sustainability policy, and she set to work on its implementation immediately.

The Freda Pagani Scholarship in Sustainability is open to graduate students in Resource Management and Environmental Studies. The scholarship will be awarded for the first time in the fall of 2009.

As an endowed award, this scholarship is inherently sustainable: the principal of the gift is invested and only the interest is used for the annual scholarship. This way, the award is maintained in perpetuity, and, as Freda says, "you know the money is going where it is really needed; to a deserving student who has the potential to really make a difference." ♦

