



Susanna Cunningham, BScN 1966, MA 1969, PhD 1978
Alumni Distinction Award 2018

“Susanna Cunningham’s intellectual inquisitiveness simply could not be contained within a single field.” This phrase, pulled from the nomination documents, exactly describes our next award winner. After acquiring her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from UBC in 1966, she completed master’s degrees in nursing and physiology and biophysics from the University of Washington, earning her PhD in physiology and biophysics. During a period of time when the professions were becoming increasingly specialized, Dr Cunningham distinguished herself throughout her career by the breadth of her interests within the nursing profession, by her consistent efforts to reach across disciplinary boundaries, and by her ability to communicate to the public. Her research portfolio spans topics as diverse as addiction, cardiovascular risk assessment, risk factor reduction, the physiology of cardiac disease, comfort and sleep status. She has served in Namibia, Hong Kong and Cambodia. Her involvement the University of Washington’s Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee spanned four decades, half of those in role of chair. Dr Cunningham has been a leading voice in educating the public and professionals alike on cardiovascular disease and risk reduction. Throughout her career, she has been recognized with numerous awards for teaching, for service, and for dedication to the welfare of all. The expanse of Dr Cunningham’s career strains the perimeters of this short introduction, but we draw again from the nomination papers to attempt to encapsulate it: “If by “distinction” we mean someone who has looked where others haven’t, done what others didn’t do, and inspired collaboration where it was scarce, then by all these measures Susanna Cunningham [is] a most worthy recipient of the 2018 UBC Alumni Award of Distinction.”

