



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Honorary Degree Citations The degree of Doctor of Science, *honoris causa*, conferred on Dr. Nelly Auersperg Wednesday, June 4, 2008

Mr. Chancellor, Dr. Nelly Auersperg is one of those exceptional individuals who discover their purpose early in life and to the great good fortune of society pursue it with vision and passion. She is one of Canada's preeminent scientists, a scholar, researcher, and teacher who has made seminal contributions to women's health and cancer research.

Born in Austria, she escaped to the former Yugoslavia with her family just before the *Anschluss*. She enrolled in medical school at the University of Zagreb, and subsequently completed her medical training at the University of Washington. As a young medical student, she continually asked the question "why?" and this innate curiosity combined with her sense of wonder about the human body compelled her to undertake research into its mysteries. After completing a Ph.D. in cell biology at the University of British Columbia, she assumed a position there as Associate Professor in 1968.

Since then Nelly Auersperg's quest has been truly remarkable. She received her first Canadian Cancer Society research grant in 1974, and today, more than thirty years later, her work is still funded by the society. Her pioneering investigations have greatly advanced knowledge of the development of gynecological cancers. Much of her research has focused on the early detection of ovarian cancer. Most recently, she and her team have made a ground-breaking discovery that may lead to the development of clinical markers for the early detection of (pre)neoplastic lesions in women at high risk of developing ovarian or breast cancer.

With that generosity of spirit that is the hallmark of the finest scientists, she has shared her knowledge with peers, students, and community. A prolific author, she has published 177 articles in refereed journals and authored eleven book chapters. She has also mentored more than sixty graduate and post-graduate students, many of whom are now conducting critical research of their own.

She has received many honours for her exceptional contributions, including the Terry Fox Award and the Distinguished Lifetime Achievement Award from the Society for In Vitro Biology. In 2003 BC Women's Hospital & Health Centre established the Nelly Auersperg Award in Women's Health Research, and in 2007, the University of British Columbia recognized her with its Faculty of Medicine's Lifetime Achievement Award.

Mr. Chancellor, on behalf of the Senate of this university, I ask that you now confer upon Dr. Nelly Auersperg the degree Doctor of Science, *honoris causa*.