Dear Members of the Westminster Community,

Personally, one of my greatest joys as headmaster is visiting with alumni — many of whom I taught, coached and advised — now settled into their adult personal and professional lives. Listening to alumni share their stories, I often reflect on my fond memories of our times together decades earlier on Williams Hill, as they prepared for the lives that awaited them and that they are now enjoying. I cherish this perspective, especially since the life-journeys alumni experience are so inspiring.

Of course, alumni are our school’s great legacy, and through that legacy they lead us in all sorts of important capacities — perhaps most notably as class agents, as trustees and as faculty. Alumni return to campus regularly, whether for reunions, other campus events, or even to speak to or perform for current students. They also attend receptions we host around the country and the world, and they generously give back with their philanthropy, supporting the people and programs that distinguish Westminster School. In all of these various ways, alumni continue to make a difference in the lives of today’s students on Williams Hill, and they continue to relish their friendships with peers from Westminster.

Eleven alumni currently serve on the Westminster faculty, including a number in critical leadership roles, such as Mark de Kanter ’91 as dean of faculty, Tim Joncas ’00 as director of athletics, Miles Bailey ’94 as dean of admissions, Newell Grant ’99 as director of advancement and Aileen Daversa ’90 as director of advancement and Aileen Daversa ’90 as director of alumni relations. Day in and day out, through the model of their leadership, this faculty alumni cohort sustains our ethos of Grit & Grace, our core values of community, character, balance and involvement, and the inspiration of our Martlet mascot.

Across our school’s long history, relationships have always been at the center of the student experience at Westminster. In fact, when I am visiting with alumni, rarely do we share memories about curriculum, or campus buildings and spaces. Instead, our conversation always turns to memories of influential teachers. Many of the most memorable faculty in our school’s history devoted their lives to Westminster, teaching, coaching, living on corridors and advising countless students. Even today, 20 faculty colleagues have committed 20 years or more to Westminster School.

Emphatically, as Westminster seeks to move forward, faculty colleagues ensure that we do so in ways that enhance our commitment to the relationships that define the experience of our students. Highlighting the depth of the entire faculty’s enthusiastic dedication to our students, 100 percent donated to the 2018-2019 Westminster Fund.

At a governance level, alumni leadership sustains our Board of Trustees. Brad Raymond ’85 is the third board chair during my tenure as headmaster, having been preceded by Tread Mink ’77 and John Armour ’76. The vice chair of the board is Moy Ogilvie Johnson ’86 and the chair of our Committee on Trustees is Andrew McCullough ’87. And, at present, 27 trustees are alumni. These alumni trustees offer an invaluable long-term perspective, not distracted by day-to-day developments, as they attend to Westminster School in 2019 and plan for its future.

The continuity in ethos that results from this alumni perspective ensures that Westminster remains at once familiar to alumni and relevant to current students. In this context, not surprisingly, 44 children of alumni enrolled for the 2018-2019 school year, offering arguably the most telling affirmation of the enduring values that permeate our school community. Simply put, the families who know us best, our alumni families, continue to trust their children to us, and they are doing so in remarkable numbers.

Drawing on the influence of their shared experience on Williams Hill, Westminster alumni make an enormous difference in all of their various endeavors, again as highlighted by the examples of the alumni featured in this edition of the Bulletin. And, the influence of these alumni extends far and wide. For me, it is noteworthy both professionally and personally that two of the most prestigious professional organizations with which I am affiliated are led by Westminster alumni: The Association of Boarding Schools by Ben Williams ’81 and The Headmasters Association by Arch Montgomery ’71.

Martlets Soar Together!

William V.N. Philip P’06, ’09
Headmaster