

# Westminster School

## Rising to the Challenge

Embracing Community and Opportunity  
in A Year Like No Other

## AWARDS

Celebrating Our Students in  
the Classes of 2020 and 2021

## Animals

Respect For Every Creature

## Alumni Corner

## Mr. Glover's Retirement

-The End of an Era-

# The Westminster School Review





**W**estminster School empowers students with skills and attitudes crucial to personal success and outstanding contributions to workplace and community. Westminster's classical education teaches students to think critically and act creatively, to work hard, to develop strong organizational skills, attention to detail, and a keen sense of personal responsibility, and to treat others with respect, courtesy, and kindness.

Westminster students gain a broad and deep understanding of the world through rigorous, well-rounded academic and enrichment programs. Westminster graduates are noted for their superior academic skills, good character, positive attitude toward life's challenges and opportunities, and confidence. Westminster graduates are not only well prepared for higher education, they are prepared for life—and leadership—in the 21st century.

**Westminster students are empowered with 21st century skills:**  
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**Respect ~ Integrity ~ Work Ethic ~ Leadership**



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# A Warm Welcome for the Third Head of School



*Westminster School*

## Head of School

Nancy Schuler

## Assistant Head of School

Susan Glazier

## Admissions Director

Jori Sapper

## Director of Preschool

Kristine Lee

## Business Manager

Dolores Nelson

## Director of Publications

Kathryn Jacobson

## Editor

Susan Glazier

## Contributors

Kathryn Jacobson, Susan Glazier, Kristine Lee, Nancy Schuler

## Layout & Design

Kevin Crook

## Photography

Kevin Crook, Megan Lee, and friends

On January 7, 2021, the Board of Trustees announced the appointment of Mrs. Nancy Schuler as the third head of Westminster School. The decision marked a key moment of transition for the institution, from thirty years of growth under Mr. Glover's leadership to the new horizons to which Mrs. Schuler will direct the school, always buoyed by the strength of Westminster traditions.

All the members of the Board of Trustees have a personal relationship with Westminster School and profoundly appreciated the gravity of the task before them, selecting a new head – only the third since the school's founding. After months of consideration, including consultation with Dr. Dennis Campbell (School Leadership Consultant; former Head of Woodberry Forest and past Chair of VAIS accreditation team) as well as in-depth candidate interviews, the Board unanimously and enthusiastically appointed Mrs. Schuler to the position.

Mrs. Schuler's roots at Westminster run deep, even beyond her thirty years of professional service to the school. She arrived at Westminster as a sixth grader, just transferred from public school, and initially, not too thrilled about the change. However, under the guidance and love of Mrs. Goll, she adjusted and came to love the school. She was later hired by Mrs. Goll, who considered her "a born teacher." After completing a BS in Elementary Education with a concentration in Business Administration, Mrs. Schuler taught history/classical studies at Westminster for several years, also taking on leadership of the third- and fourth-grade teaching team. She proved to be an inspirational instructor, with students who not only loved her classes, but displayed a high degree of knowledge, effort, and enthusiasm for the education they received from her. Because of their strong commitment to and faith in the Westminster program, Mrs. Schuler and her husband, Dave Schuler, worked hard to put their three children through the school's challenging program and are proud to claim them as Westminster graduates.

After a hiatus taken to care for twin infants, Mrs. Schuler returned to the school as its admissions director in 1997, making her a familiar and welcoming figure to every Westminster family since that time. Over the years, her list of titles has expanded to include testing director, director of high-school placement, master scheduler, substitute teacher coordinator, summer program director, history and geography department chair, and most recently, COVID-response leader.

Mrs. Schuler has proven her professional excellence, passion for the school, and innovative skills as a teacher and administrator. She sought to improve Westminster's profile in the greater community, initiating projects such as the *Westminster Weekly* online newsletter and selecting and coordinating with an outside digital marketing firm. In her interactions with the students, she knows just how to balance loving delight in them with clear insight into what they need academically and in terms of personal development. She has the force of personality to succeed in guiding them toward improvement and greater well-being.

As evidence of her constant desire to grow as an educator and leader, Mrs. Schuler recently completed a Master's degree in Independent School Leadership. She has served as a guide to many colleagues and parents over the years, providing advice founded in experience and common sense and tempered by her loving heart. The expanse of Mrs. Schuler's spirit is evident in the tears that flow in response to another's suffering and the contagious laughter that rings out at school celebrations. Her lively sense of humor is combined with her steadfast moral character.

With a clear vision for the future of Westminster and a sincere appreciation for the school's historic mission, Mrs. Schuler is the ideal person to lead Westminster into the next chapter of its story. She will carry on the high ideals of Jane Goll and Ellis Glover, and she will introduce new opportunities and implement creative projects, leading Westminster School into a bright future.





# Westminster School

Westminster Review | Overview 2020-2021



**Cover:** Mr. Glover was dressed to impress for the "Spring Fling" dance, an upper-school tradition.



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# Westminster School

PreK - 8<sup>th</sup> Grade | Established 1962

*Presenting Challenge - Building Character - Instilling Confidence*



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“The halls of Westminster, the breathtaking Greek-inspired architecture, and the loving environment have become a second home to me. Every day I have attended Westminster, a new adventure awaited me and prepared me for the next big thing in my life.”

— Graduate, Class of 2021

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For the past several years, Westminster School has adopted a guiding theme for each academic year.

Past themes have included:

• The Golden Mean • Words • The Five Senses • Breakthroughs

For the 2020-2021 school year under Mr. Glover's leadership, we embraced the theme "Animals," and the Westminster community fell in love with the creatures that populate this planet. In the context of this theme, the students and faculty got to know some more obscure creatures and discovered new details about seemingly familiar ones. Students and teachers developed an awareness of some of the dangers animals face in this human-dominated world and became more familiar with the interdependence and similarities between animals and human beings, including how people have relied upon animals in the evolution of our societies.

This theme became a celebration that was just as compelling in May as it had been in the previous September. The year opened with uncertainty about COVID mitigation, and the animals theme had a settling effect, giving the students something fun on which to focus. The upper school spent an entire day during the first week of school learning about animals in every subject area. As the year progressed, the students were introduced to a new "Animal of the Week" each week, a list based on selections submitted by the grade-level teams. Each week, the students looked forward to hearing from their teachers which critter would be recognized. During homeroom, advisory, lunch periods, and through the *Westminster Weekly* newsletter report, the children read fun facts or watched video clips to get to know that week's featured creature. Whether it was the axolotl or the archerfish, the octopus or the ostrich, the community learned something fascinating and inspiring and came to appreciate and respect each animal.

Throughout the year, the students were treated to field-trip experiences that brought the theme to life. For students in the younger grades, the Westminster P.E. field became a petting zoo in the autumn when Squeals on Wheels rolled in with visitors such as a hedgehog, ducks, a tortoise, and a chinchilla. Springtime took the seventh and eighth graders on a science field trip to Catoctin Wildlife Preserve in Maryland, where they viewed and interacted with a wide variety of animals.

Because there was a U.S. presidential election last fall, the history department created an Animal Election at Westminster

School to illustrate how the elements of democracy function and how the uniquely American electoral college system works. The eighth graders made T.V. ads and campaign posters for the two animal candidates, which were displayed throughout the school, and each individual student voted in his or her homeroom "state." In a tight race, the giraffe was victorious over the peregrine falcon and became the Animal of the Week for U.S. election week in November.

April 29, 2021 was Animals Day at Westminster School. Students and teachers arrived on campus dressed up as their favorite animal, and the school became a gorgeous menagerie of creatures with over fifty species represented. The children enjoyed lessons and assignments related to animals in the varying subject areas, while the upper-school students engaged in trivia games testing their knowledge of the animals they had learned about throughout the year. The day of festivities was capped off with a school-wide virtual film presentation about amazing animal relationships, one of a selection of nature movies that were shown throughout the year to emphasize the theme of developing greater understanding for these creatures with whom we share this beautiful planet. This day was a successful and delightful culmination of the compelling annual theme.





March 2020 to June 2021

## Taking Lemons & Making Lemonade

When the governor mandated that all schools shut down on March 13, 2020, the Westminster community had no idea how resourceful it could be. One of the blessings of this pandemic has been to open our eyes to our own flexibility and capacity to innovate.

In Spring 2020, within one week of the shutdown, the entire Westminster program was transformed into an online school. Using Zoom as a way to connect, the teachers and students had regular class meetings, and Google Classroom was utilized to deliver materials, assignments, and assessments. Procedures and expectations were modified to mesh with this distance-learning environment, but the faculty and staff provided Westminster families with consistent delivery of instruction and were able to complete the curriculum for the school year. Parents were thrilled by the stability provided to their children and the continued preparation that they had for the next grade. The students were still accountable, devoted to their studies, and were grateful for the anchor that their Westminster education gave them during such an uncertain time.

In the fall of 2020, Mr. Glover was committed to reopening Westminster School for in-person instruction and, under the leadership of Mrs. Schuler, with countless hours of research and planning, that goal was fulfilled. Recognizing that some families would want or need virtual instruction at various points during the academic year, the school prepared for hybrid learning. In-person schooling was made safe by:

- new health checks, procedures, and regulations;
- set up and use of physical space according to separated, grade-level groupings and maintaining distancing between students; and
- regular sanitizing practices in terms of cleaning the

building and requiring personal hygiene habits.

Distance learning was implemented by arranging for entirely new technological capacities within the building (see “New Additions”). A hybrid system, addressing both virtual students and in-person students, required all the schedules across the grades to be overhauled, certain revised standards and expectations to be established for teachers and students, and new procedures to be learned and implemented by everyone.

None of this would have been successful without the guidance and reassurance of a trusted administration, the integrity and commitment of the parents, the diligence and cooperation of the children, the devotion of a tireless faculty and staff, and the heroism of a committed maintenance staff. When school opened in September, seventy-three percent of students attended in-person while twenty-seven percent were virtual. By the year’s end, ninety-nine percent were coming to school each day. School was open and in session every day of the entire school year, with only two instances of a single grade level being quarantined for a short time. There was not one case of transmission of COVID-19 at Westminster School.

This experience has revealed the equilibrium that Westminster strikes. It is an academic institution rooted in the classics and a culture buoyed by beloved traditions. At the same time, it is a place defined by versatility, open-mindedness, and ingenuity. The administration, staff, students, and parents embrace this balanced combination of qualities, and thus the school flourishes in times of challenge. The proof shines through in this lemons-to-lemonade tale.



# New Additions



## 1 High-Tech Threshold Security

Summer 2020 saw the installation of electronic doors to several entrances of Westminster School. While we will continue to cherish our welcoming atmosphere here, these doors allow for additional peace of mind with secure key-card entry for all staff members.

Guests may request entry by pushing a call button next to the foyer entrance under the tower, which in turn displays the video and audio of the visitor on a screen in the main office. Sparkling, all-glass electronic doors are in place at the carpool and playground exits. This allows light to pour into the middle and lower school hallways in addition to enhancing safety for our Westminster community.

## 2 Blackbaud Blends All Digital Needs

In August 2020, Westminster met its new best friend – Blackbaud! This exciting platform integrates all digital functions for the school community. The new system eliminates the need to click back and forth between Chalkable, Google Calendars or Classroom, or Blackboard Engage/Edline. In the new Blackbaud realm, Westminster families are able to:

- View and attend to teacher postings such as:
  - Virtual “bulletin boards” with a class syllabus, news, announcements, or links
  - Assignments and reminders
  - Assessment calendars
  - Current grades for quizzes, tests, homework, and class participation, as well as quarterly and yearly averages
- Exchange messages with the teachers
- Keep updated on athletic or club information and schedules
- Complete and submit forms to the main office
- Maintain personal settings for school announcements, news, or postings to be sent directly via email or text message

This new system will streamline record keeping and all electronic activity in one digital location, which will allow faculty and staff to keep Westminster business moving along with ease. Additionally, if distance learning becomes necessary again at any time during the school year, all functions can be completed through Blackbaud, including posting assignments, taking and grading assessments, posting grades, and more. The adoption of this new system is another way that Westminster is merging its cherished classical roots with the innovations of the 21st century.

## 3 A Connected Classroom

We always knew that Westminster teachers were creative, but prior to the pandemic, it probably would have been difficult to envision a Westminster class being live streamed from 3819 Gallows Road into the homes of multiple virtual students while the teacher was simultaneously instructing a group of in-person scholars. Through a focused effort in August and September 2020, the administration equipped all classrooms with the technology necessary to make this a reality. Each Westminster classroom now has a “technology tower” at the front of the room which integrates all functions. The station includes a



dedicated laptop on which the teachers connect with students via Zoom and display Power Point presentations or video clips. This device is connected to two other crucial pieces of hardware. One is a high-quality combined camera, microphone, and speaker,

which allows the virtual learners to hear, see, and communicate with the teacher effectively. The other is the top-of-the-line, ceiling-mounted projector, which displays the entire lesson on the white board at the front of the room for all students to see. This is all supported by a new system of high-powered cables and faster, more reliable internet installed throughout the building in Fall 2020. The introduction of this connectivity will allow teachers to further incorporate technology into all subject areas and opens up possibilities for more virtual field trips and presentations even after we move past this pandemic.



While these innovations made it possible for the Westminster faculty to teach both in-person and distance learners this past year, other technological advances will bring the community even closer together in the years to come. A public address system was installed throughout the school as well, linking the main station in the front office with individual speaker/microphone stations in each classroom. This allows the administration to make school-wide proclamations, contact individual classrooms, and even introduce a daily “school news” presentation by the eighth-grade class. Additionally, teachers can contact other classrooms or the office on routine or emergency matters.



## 4 A Healthier Environment

Westminster School has always prided itself on the sparkling cleanliness of its facilities; however, this year required that even greater attention be paid to creating the healthiest environment possible at Westminster School. The school installed medical-grade air purifiers in each classroom, which completely purify the air in the room twice each hour. Additionally, we purchased two electric disinfecting atomizing sprayers, which are capable

of disinfecting a classroom (99.9% of all viruses and pathogens) in ten minutes. Finally, no-touch water bottle filling stations were installed across from the main office and in the lower school hallway. Though these additions were made as part of the COVID-mitigation effort and were part of what kept our school open for in-person instruction all year long, the Westminster community will continue to reap the health benefits from these investments in the years to come.

# Mr. Glover's *Retirement*

## The End of An Era

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For nearly half a century, Ellis Glover has been the heart and soul of the Westminster School community. His vision for the school has been the driving force behind everything that happens here. His entire life has centered around lifting up the students who walk under that Westminster tower each day. His work has revolved around building a staff who can lead the children in their charge toward their best possible selves while assisting the parents in lovingly and firmly raising their sons and daughters. His legacy is defined by the minds that have been opened and the souls that have been enriched from being touched by his devotion and passion.



In 1971, Mr. Glover's father, a self-made man and owner-operator of his own construction firm, won the bid to construct phase one of Westminster School. Little knowing the chapter that was beginning in his life's story, a young, long-haired Ellis Glover took a job on the school construction site. At that stage, Mr. Glover was much more focused on his passion for rock'n'roll and his love for The Beatles than on the pedagogical vision of the school's founder, Jane Goll. He labored on the site, running crew errands, pushing wheelbarrows full of brick and tile, installing lockers and classroom paneling, never realizing that he was helping to lay the foundation for his life's work.

Over the years, as each construction phase was completed, the two families, the Glovers and the Golls, would celebrate the school's progress with an elegant dinner. Mrs. Goll recognized the young Mr. Glover's


work ethic, enthusiasm, and upright character, but more importantly, she was able to see something that was not yet formed, the potential that waited within him. She watched him as a doting big brother, gently and patiently interacting with his little sister, Nancy, and Mrs. Goll began to think she saw the heart of a teacher there. Their paths continued to cross, and eventually, Mr. Glover accepted a job substitute teaching at Westminster School.

Not only did he step into that first temporary role of Latin instructor, but Mr. Glover immediately assisted Mrs. Goll with the planning and execution of the many end-of-year events at the school, which led to a permanent job offer as Mrs. Goll's assistant. While she recognized that Mr. Glover possessed characteristics and gifts that could make him an effective leader, Mrs. Goll also acknowledged his weaknesses and was forthright in revealing those to him. She

sought to help him overcome his faults, to mentor him so that he could live the most rewarding and impactful life possible. She insisted that he go back to school to complete his undergraduate work and then guided and supported him as he attained a Master's degree from Georgetown University. Mr. Glover admits that before knowing Mrs. Goll, he struggled to focus on academics in high school and his early college years. Mrs. Goll inspired him to see himself as an intellectual being, to find the joy in study, and to believe in his abilities as a thinker and writer.

Shadowing Mrs. Goll every day at Westminster was an education in itself, and she made sure to assign him to widely disparate projects so that he experienced the full range of tasks involved in running the school – from instructing in the classroom, to overseeing the bus fleet, to the inner-workings of maintenance, to interacting with families.



A photograph of Mr. Glover, a man with grey hair, glasses, and a beard, wearing a white suit jacket, a light pink shirt, and a colorful tie with a musical instrument pattern. He has a red rose boutonniere on his lapel. He is smiling and looking towards the camera. To his left, a young boy with glasses and a pink jacket is playing a guitar. The background is a stage set with a large, colorful, abstract structure on the left and a sign that says "ELVIS" on the right.

Mr. Glover opened his eyes to all the world had to offer and realized that he was capable of engaging with that world.



During these early years of his career, after a long day at school, Mr. Glover would cross Gallows Road to Mrs. Goll's home, where she had a delicious, gourmet meal waiting for him. Her elegant dining room was a welcoming training ground for him as she introduced him to enlightening conversation, great literature, uplifting plays and operas, the beauty of art, and the illuminating benefit of travel. Through these exchanges each evening, Mr. Glover opened his eyes to all the world had to offer and realized that he was capable of engaging with that world.

Mr. Glover learned his unwavering moral code and unfailing diligence from the father whose ambition and dedication he so admired, a boy who had come from nothing and had built his own business in which "everything mattered." The seeds for Mr. Glover's love of beauty, of great music and drama, were planted by his beloved mother who made sure that swelling tunes of Broadway shows wafted from the turntable in the Glover house. Mrs. Goll was the master who took what was already within Mr. Glover and expanded it and elevated it, challenging and empowering him to see what was extraordinary in himself and the world around him. Because of her he auditioned for and performed in the opera at the Kennedy Center. He read classic works and began to write poetry. She even inspired him, the young man who was terrified of speaking in front of a group when he first arrived at Westminster, to start and oversee a drama program at the school. Over the years, Mr. Glover rose from

being her student to stand beside Mrs. Goll, helping her to govern and improve the school she had founded, her dream fulfilled. When he would thank her for all she had taught him, the time she had invested in him, and the gifts she had revealed to him, she would respond, "I have only given you that which was already yours."

In 1992, Mrs. Goll passed away, and Mr. Glover, the natural choice as her successor, knew that he had a daunting task ahead of him. He had to embrace the dream of his dearest and wisest friend and keep it alive, loyally carrying on Mrs. Goll's mission to deliver classical education to young children. Yet at the same time, he had to make that dream his own. As the new head of school, he could not perfectly replicate Mrs. Goll. As he grieved the devastating loss of her, Mr. Glover had an epiphany. He would do for future Westminster students exactly what Mrs. Goll had done for him – guiding them to grow into their best possible selves. He would lead each child toward the heights of knowledge, wisdom, creativity, and the joy discovered in developing one's full potential. In Mrs. Goll's presence, he had come to understand that the true purpose of education is to draw out of us the very best that we have to offer, and that happens through the powerful conjunction of nurture and challenge. That mission would be the driving force of Mr. Glover's tenure as head of school and his glorious tribute to his late mentor.

Mr. Glover has spent forty-five years striving and encouraging others to strive for these lofty goals. Many times, he has fallen short, grown confused, or made mistakes. He has weathered opposition, criticism, and even attacks, but he has prevailed. Under his leadership, Westminster School has continued to provide a challenging, classical education steeped in the arts and persists in turning out disciplined, courteous, accomplished, and confident graduates prepared to face the challenges and seize the opportunities of life. Because of his stewardship of Mrs. Goll's dream and his own inspirational leadership, Mr. Glover leaves this school strong and ready to continue with its mission for many more years.





# *A Farewell Soirée*

Mr. Glover's Retirement Party

June 26, 2021





# A Tale of Two Graduations

The Classes of 2020 and 2021 Graduate During A Pandemic

Spring 2020 was a time of challenges and uncertainties, and the Class of 2020 weathered the storm with grace and fortitude. After a spring semester of distance learning, Westminster School wanted to do right by its students and grant them celebration and closure in a year that had robbed them of so many experiences. In true Westminster fashion, the administration made the very best out of a difficult situation, holding a hybrid graduation. The ceremony was in-person in the gymnasium with all attendees masked, and each graduate was accompanied by his or her parents. The students were seated in front of a beautiful backdrop, six feet apart, of course, and their parents were arranged in their own family pods in the audience. Unfortunately, the faculty could not attend; however, the event was live-streamed to the teachers and other family and

friends at home so that they could share in the customs of Westminster graduation, including listening to the individual student speeches, as well as one that was pre-recorded and delivered virtually by a student who could not attend. In their remarks, Mr. Glover and Ms. Glazier made sure that these students knew how admired and loved they were for their perseverance through adversity. A photo slideshow provoked sweet reminiscences, diplomas were awarded, and the night was capped off with a celebratory dessert. The administration upheld as many rituals as possible to let the Class of 2020 know how special they are.

Fast forward to June 2021, and the circumstances had changed dramatically post-vaccine. With restrictions easing as the spring season arrived, Westminster School was able



Kai - Class of 2020



Megan - Class of 2021





The class of 2021 performs a selection of songs from their play: *The Pirates of Penzance*

to host a more traditional ceremony, a mark of how far we had come within one year. The Class of 2021 was graduated in the Gryphon Theater with the option of bringing six guests, who were arranged according to separated family groupings in the audience. The entire Westminster faculty was in attendance once again, vaccinated and sitting as one cohesive body. Those masks had not disappeared, but students could be unmasked while standing alone delivering their speeches and for a photo opportunity after receiving their diplomas. In their class grouping, they could sit together on the stage to listen to speeches, while watching the cherished memories displayed in

the photo slideshow, and for a post-ceremony celebration on the Colonnade. A cake and punch reception followed for the graduates, their guests, teachers, and administration. Not only was the community commending the hard work and positive attitudes of the scholars in the Class of 2021, but we were recognizing our own relief and gratitude for the ability to assemble once again, something we had not been able to do in 16 months. It was such a wonderful moment of excitement and pride for our graduating class and an occasion of deep appreciation for our reunited community which had been apart for so long.



Elisa - Class of 2020



Jeremy - Class of 2021



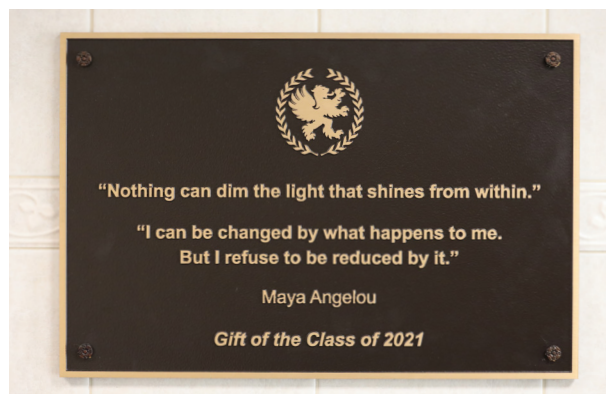
## Class Gifts

It has become customary for each graduating class to bestow a gift upon Westminster School to express love and indebtedness to its alma mater. Throughout the eighth-grade school year, the class parents raise funds for this purpose, and the bequest is presented at graduation. The Classes of 2020 and 2021 shared in this Griffin generosity.

## The Gift of Music

The Class of 2020 loved music, and they loved recess! Aiming to pass that along to the next generation, the graduates bestowed on the school several playground instruments as a class gift. The lovely melodies drifted on a breeze around Westminster's campus this past year, and as future students strike a beat in this percussion section, the joyful spirit of these alums will echo in their tunes.

“Music gives a soul to the universe,  
wings to the mind,  
flight to the imagination,  
and life to everything.”  
- Plato



## Acknowledging Mr. Glover and Diversity

The Class of 2021 formed a special bond with Mr. Glover, who stood by them in challenging times and guided them to greatness on the Gryphon stage. In an effort to recognize the role he played in their upbringing and in the raising of many generations of eighth graders throughout his forty-five year career at Westminster, the senior class presented two plaques of “Mr. Gloverisms” to be displayed in the school. They include his words of wisdom such as “Good is not good enough when excellence is expected,” and “Your life’s worth will be measured by the quality of your love and the excellence of your work.” Additionally, the class wanted to celebrate Westminster School’s diversity, and also gave two plaques featuring words from female, African and African-American, and Asian voices, which will join the chorus of inspirational sayings already displayed in the school’s hallowed halls. In honor of the year of COVID, the quotes are calls to action and persistence through times of hardship, a lesson well-learned by the Westminster community over the past several months.



## Collection of Quotes from the Graduation Speeches of the Class of 2021

“Every day I have attended Westminster, a new adventure awaited me and prepared me for the next big thing in my life.

Never once did Westminster fail to challenge or surprise me with its amazing people and unique experiences. It has taught me to strive for excellence in everything I do, and that is something that I will always carry with me.”

- Pooja

“Every day, I come to school to learn from teachers and staff about math and history, and even more so about working tirelessly for what you believe in, being passionate and doing an excellent job at whatever you do.”

- Jeremy

“Westminster has taught me that sometimes the most important things are not being athletic or smart, but knowing how to present yourself, being polite, and that every detail matters because if the details do not matter, then nothing does.”

- Blair



Each eighth-grade student delivers a speech about his or her experiences at Westminster School. This is done in front of a large audience consisting of family, teachers, and the administration.

## High School Matriculation (Class of 2020)

Justice High School  
H. B. Woodlawn Secondary Program  
South County High School  
Bishop O'Connell High School  
George C. Marshall High School  
Washington Liberty High School  
Bishop O'Connell High School  
Flint Hill School  
Lake Braddock Secondary School  
Thomas Jefferson High School for Science & Technology  
The Madeira School  
Woodberry Forest  
George C. Marshall High School  
Yorktown High School  
Thomas Edison High School  
The Miller School of Abermarle  
Langley High School

## High School Matriculation (Class of 2021)

Georgetown Visitation Preparatory School  
Thomas Edison High School  
South County High School  
Wakefield High School  
Flint Hill School  
Woodberry Forest School  
McLean High School  
Potomac School  
James Madison High School  
Annandale High School  
Bishop Ireton High School  
George Mason High School  
St. Anselm's Abbey School



# AWARDS



AN OVERVIEW OF THE YEAR'S ACADEMIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2020-2021

*"WE ARE WHAT WE REPEATEDLY DO.  
EXCELLENCE, THEN, IS NOT AN ACT, BUT A HABIT."*

*-ARISTOTLE*





## Art Contest

### Kindergarten

#### **Honorable Mention**

Quinn Hainey  
Thomas Short

#### **Overall Winner**

Anna Russo

### 1st & 2nd Grade

#### **Honorable Mention**

Vlad Avdeev  
Elizabeth Bereket  
William Browning  
Aubrey Greninger  
Jameela Hashmi  
Alaia Nguyen  
Abigail Samuel

#### **Overall Winner**

Ruth Alemu

### 3rd & 4th Grade

#### **Honorable Mention**

Ryleigh Hegens  
Liliane Karayilan  
Arielle Lamptey-Nanda  
Sydney Wallis

#### **Overall Winner**

Nathan Lonkeng

### 5th & 6th Grade

#### **Honorable Mention**

Nadwa Abdi  
Bethel Alemu  
Elijah Anteneh  
Haniya Khan  
Sophie Le

#### **Overall Winner**

Zara Damiani  
Ajwah Jahangir

### 7th & 8th Grade

#### **Honorable Mention**

Emelie Edwards  
Emina Jakupovic  
Gavin Goldstein

#### **Overall Winner**

Megan Mills

### Overall Winner Grades K-8

Megan Mills

## Dimes for Drama

### 1st place

Matthew Bredbenner

### 2nd place

Anna Russo

### 3rd place

Dana Bellamy

## Penmanship Award

### 2nd Grade

Ruth Alemu  
May Edmonds  
Padraig Hannaway  
Chance He  
Michael Papadouris  
Ash Sahl

### 3rd Grade

Saud Akhtar  
Christopher Akishev  
Yonael Chere  
Tinbete Daniel  
Cortland Silva  
Nadia Yacobucci

### 4th Grade

Ramzy Boudad  
Elena Hannaway



Art contest winner: Megan Mills 8th Grade

Léa Spriggs

Selene White-Holcomb

### 5th Grade

Nadwa Abdi  
Maya Eswaran  
Elijah Guerra  
Nicolas Guerra  
Hannah Jakupovic

### 6th Grade

Beza Abel  
Dylan Cespedes  
Onat Ergul

Ajwah Jahangir  
Karina Khanna  
Sophie Le

### 7th Grade

Madeleine Foster  
Sasha Guerra  
Emina Jakupovic  
Sabrina Khanna  
Asha Lavu  
Camdyn Parker  
Arleigh Womack  
Nabeera Yasir

### 8th Grade

Lailah Abdul Khaliq  
Pooja Shekar

### Master Penman

Pooja Shekar

## Perfect Attendance

### Kindergarten

Ishaan Chandra  
Alex Fulk

Tamilore Ogunlewe  
Gabby Pinder  
Garrett Stevens  
Claire Wallis



Pooja Shekar, the Master Penman.

### 1st Grade

Abigayle Beach  
Malia Burnett  
Brielle Lamptey-Nanda  
Ryan Lonkeng  
Cora Messing  
Joseph Stevens  
Jason Struchtemeyer  
Luke Struchtemeyer  
Luna Taylor  
Taylor Thepmontry  
Sophia Tran  
Madison White Holcomb

### 2nd Grade

Ruth Alemu  
Vlad Avdeev  
Aarna Damle  
Chance He  
Aleph Mekete  
Jeffrey Nguyen  
Kathleen Rodriguez  
Thomas Sanchez  
Katelyn Ziembicki

### 3rd Grade

Tinbete Daniel  
Anayah Guerra  
Arielle Lamptey-Nanda  
Timileyin Ogunlewe  
Evangeline Oppong  
Jonathan Pinder  
Nadia Yacobucci

### 4th Grade

Isabelle Augustine  
Luke Foster  
Ryleigh Hegens  
Christian Sahl  
Léa Spriggs  
Ronel Tefera  
Sydney Wallis  
Selene White Holcomb

### 5th Grade

Bethel Alemu  
Knox Coffron  
Nicolas Guerra  
Hannah Jakupovic  
Nolawe Sebsbe  
Eliezer Tefera

### 6th Grade

Devin Boakye  
Dylan Cespedes  
Onat Ergul

Tyler Hegens  
Ajwah Jahangir  
Karina Khanna

### 7th Grade

Mia Lees  
Beza Alemu  
Matthew Bredbenner  
Kaveh Chism  
McKinley Cronin  
Madeleine Foster  
Gavin Goldstein  
Sasha Guerra  
Emina Jakupovic  
Sabrina Khanna  
Asha Lavu  
Brian Mock

### 8th Grade

Maximilian Castro  
Tomas Dasek  
Jeremy Lees  
Justin Nguyen  
Blair Todd

## 3rd Grade

## Academic Awards

### English

#### **Most Improved**

Pedro Teran-Gross

#### **Highest Achievement**

Saud Akhtar  
Nadia Yacobucci

### Math

#### **Most Improved**

Liliane Karayilan

#### **Highest Achievement**

Saud Akhtar  
Nadia Yacobucci

### History

#### **Most Improved**

Dean Yimaj

#### **Highest Achievement**

Saud Akhtar  
Nadia Yacobucci

### Science

#### **Most Improved**

Victoria Fahouri

#### **Highest Achievement**

Saud Akhtar  
Nadia Yacobucci

### French

#### **Most Improved**

Christopher Akishev

#### **Highest Achievement**

Saud Akhtar

Eleanor Pomerance

### Art

#### **Most Improved**

Liliane Karayilan

Nadia Yacobucci

#### **All- Around Proficiency**

Pedro Teran-Gross

### Music

#### **Most Improved**

Ethan Powers

#### **All-Around Proficiency**

Nadia Yacobucci

### P.E.

#### **Most Improved**

Tinbete Daniel

Yonael Chere

#### **Most Outstanding**

Liliane Karayilan

Cortland Silva

## 4th Grade

## Academic Awards

### English

#### **Most Improved**

William Hughes

#### **Highest Achievement**

Isabelle Augustine

### Math

#### **Most Improved**

Beza Abel

Dylan Cespedes

#### **Highest Achievement**

Karina Khanna

Maren Lees

### History

#### **Most Improved**

Sanya Budhrani

Sofia Cespedes

#### **Highest Achievement**

Isabelle Augustine

### Science

#### **Most Improved**

Ronel Tefera



**Highest Achievement**  
Sydney Wallis  
Isabelle Augustine  
**French**  
**Most Improved**  
Elena Diaz  
**Highest Achievement**  
Isabelle Augustine  
**Art**  
**Most Improved**  
Elena Hannaway  
**All-Around Proficiency**  
Selene White Holcomb  
**Music**  
**Most Improved**  
Nathan Lonkeng  
**All-Around Proficiency**  
Luke Foster  
**P.E.**  
**Most Improved**  
Sydney Wallis  
Ramzy Boudad  
**Most Outstanding**  
Elena Diaz  
Luke Foster  
Jonah Kauffman

### 5th Grade

#### Academic Awards

**English**  
**Most Improved**  
Isabella Mamani Duran  
**Highest Achievement**  
Nadwa Abdi  
**Math**  
**Most Improved**  
Knox Coffron  
**Highest Achievement**  
Nadwa Abdi  
**History**  
**Most Improved**  
Nolawe Sebsbe  
**Highest Achievement**  
Nadwa Abdi  
**Science**  
**Most Improved**  
Zara Damiani  
**Highest Achievement**  
Nadwa Abdi  
Hannah Jakupovic  
**French**  
**Most Improved**  
Zachary Duvalsaint  
**Highest Achievement**  
Bethel Alemu  
**Art**  
**Most Improved**  
Elijah Guerra  
**All-Around Proficiency**  
Zara Damiani  
**Music**  
**Most Improved**  
Maya Eswaran  
**All-Around Proficiency**  
Priya Perakam  
**P.E.**  
**Most Improved**  
Ece Su Ergul  
Eliezer Tefera  
**Most Outstanding**  
Shreya Vadlamani  
Nicolas Guerra  
**6th Grade**  
**Academic Awards**

**English**  
**Most Improved**  
London Diamond  
**Highest Achievement**  
Devin Boakye  
Ajwah Jahangir  
Karina Khanna  
**Math (Pre-Algebra)**  
**Most Improved**  
Ajwah Jahangir  
Mia Lees  
**Highest Achievement**  
Karina Khanna  
**History**  
**Most Improved**  
Maren Lees  
**Highest Achievement**  
Ajwah Jahangir  
Devin Boakye  
**Science**  
**Highest Achievement**  
Devin Boakye  
Karina Khanna  
**French**  
**Most Improved**  
Mia Lees  
**Highest Achievement**  
Devin Boakye  
Ajwah Jahangir  
**Art**  
**Most Improved**  
Devin Boakye  
Ajwah Jahangir  
**All-Around Proficiency**  
Sophie Le  
**Music**  
**Most Improved**  
Mia Lees  
**All-Around Proficiency**  
Sophie Le  
Elyse Oppong  
**P.E.**  
**Most Improved**  
Elyse Oppong  
Tyler Hegens  
**Most Outstanding**  
Karina Khanna  
Ajwah Jahangir  
Devin Boakye

### 7th Grade

#### Academic Awards

**English**  
**Highest Achievement**  
Gavin Goldstein  
Madeleine Foster  
Sabrina Khanna  
William Townsend  
**Math (Alg.1,Pt.1)**  
**Most Improved**  
Nyla Damiani  
Yohannes Zelalem  
**Highest Achievement**  
Emina Jakupovic  
**Math (Alg)**  
**Most Improved**  
Mehad Abdi  
Arleigh Womack  
**Highest Achievement**  
Gavin Goldstein  
**History**  
**Most Improved**  
Sasha Guerra  
**Highest Achievement**  
Gavin Goldstein

**Science**  
**Most Improved**  
Beza Alemu  
**Highest Achievement**  
Gavin Goldstein  
**French**  
**Most Improved**  
Emelie Edwards  
**Highest Achievement**  
Gavin Goldstein  
**Latin**  
**Most Improved**  
Kaveh Chism  
**Highest Achievement**  
Gavin Goldstein  
**Art**



Max Castro (right) and Tomas Dasek both received the **Cal Ripken Award**, meaning they never missed a day of school from kindergarten through 8th grade.

**Most Improved**  
Emelie Edwards  
**All-Around Proficiency**  
Emina Jakupovic  
**Music**  
**Most Improved**  
McKinley Cronin  
**All-Around Proficiency**  
Sabrina Khanna  
**P.E.**  
**Most Improved**  
Asha Lavu  
Gavin Goldstein  
**Most Outstanding**  
Emina Jakupovic  
Kaveh Chism

### 8th Grade

#### Academic Awards

**English**  
**Most Improved**  
Mary Ivy Smith-Mensah  
**Highest Achievement**  
Tomas Dasek  
Artemeez Marzban  
**Math (Alg.1,Pt.2)**  
**Most Improved**  
Justin Nguyen  
**Highest Achievement**  
Abigael Lonkeng  
**Math (Geometry)**  
**Most Improved**  
Jeremy Lees  
**Highest Achievement**  
Tomas Dasek  
**History**  
**Most Improved**  
Kenny Pozo  
**Highest Achievement**  
Tomas Dasek  
Abigael Lonkeng  
**Science**  
**Most Improved**  
Megan Mills  
**Highest Achievement**

Maximilian Castro  
**French**  
**Highest Achievement**  
Abigael Lonkeng  
Artemeez Marzban  
**Latin**  
**Most Improved**  
Jeremy Lees  
Megan Mills  
**Highest Achievement**  
Maximilian Castro  
**Art**  
**Most Improved**  
Maximilian Castro  
Justin Nguyen  
**All-Around Proficiency**  
Megan Mills  
**Music**  
**Most Improved**  
Jeremy Lees  
Kenny Pozo  
**All-Around Proficiency**  
Megan Mills  
Blair Todd  
**P.E.**  
**Most Improved**  
Aya Boudad  
Jeremy Lees  
**Most Outstanding**  
Lailah Abdul Khaaliq  
Tomas Dasek  
Maximilian Castro

### Continental Math League

#### 3rd Grade

##### **Runner-Up**

Tinbete Daniel  
Liliane Karayilan

##### **Winner**

Saud Akhtar  
**4th Grade**  
**Runner-Up**  
Elena Hannaway

##### **Winner**

Isabelle Augustine  
**5th Grade**  
**Runner-Up**  
Elijah Guerra  
**Winner**  
Nicolas Guerra  
**6th Grade**  
**Runner-Up**  
Karina Khanna  
**Winner**  
Raphael Chere

#### Science Fair

##### **6th Grade**

##### **3rd place**

Elijah Anteneh

##### **2nd place**

Devin Boakye

##### **1st place**

Karina Khanna

##### **7th Grade**

**Honorable Mention**  
Josemaria Meister

### National Mythology Exam

#### **4th Grade**

##### **Cum Laude**

Nathan Lonkeng

##### **Magna Cum Laude**

Ramzy Boudad  
Luke Foster



Jonah Kauffman  
Christian Sahl  
Ronel Tefera  
Selene White Holcomb  
**Maxima cum laude**  
Isabelle Augustine  
Lea Spriggs  
Elena Diaz  
**Perfect Score**  
Sami Abdelkefi  
Elena Hannaway  
Ryleigh Hegens  
William Hughes  
Sydeny Wallis  
**5th Grade**  
**Cum Laude**  
Janelle Yancor  
**Magna cum laude**  
Knox Coffron  
Zara Damiani  
Nicolas Guerra  
Haniya Khan  
Makda Nana  
Nolawe Sebsbe  
**Maxima cum laude**  
Elijah Guerra  
Hannah Jakupovic  
Abigail Riverson  
Eliezer Tefera  
**Perfect Score**  
Sami Abdelkefi  
Elena Hannaway  
Ryleigh Hegens  
William Hughes  
Sydeny Wallis  
**Summa cum laude**  
Nadwa Abdi  
Priya Perakam  
**Perfect score**  
Maya Eswaran

### National French Exam

**7th Grade**  
**Honorable Mention**  
Matthew Bredbenner  
Nyla Damiani  
Madeleine Foster  
Sasha Guerra  
Baran Karayilan  
Arleigh Womack  
Nabeera Yasir  
**Bronze Medal**  
Emina Jakupovic  
Sabrina Khanna  
**Silver Medal**  
Gavin Goldstein  
William Townsend  
**Gold Medal**  
Josemaria Meister (1A)  
Adam Abdelkefi (1C)  
**8th Grade**  
**Honorable Mention**  
Artemeez Marzban  
Megan Mills  
Justin Nguyen  
**Silver Medal**  
Abigael Lonkeng

### French-Junior National

**Honor Society**  
Maximilian Castro  
Artemeez Marzban

### Latin Awards

### National Honor Society

Maximilian Castro  
Tomas Dasek  
Abigael Lonkeng  
Artemeez Marzban  
Kenny Pozo

### Latin National Exam

#### **7th Grade:**

#### **Magna Cum Laude**

Sasha Guerra  
Asha Lavu  
Nabeera Yasir

#### **Silver Maxima Cum Laude:**

McKinley Cronin  
Josemaria Meister  
Madeleine Foster

#### **Gold Summa Cum Laude:**

Emina Jakupovic  
William Townsend  
Gavin Goldstein  
Sabrina Khanna  
Kaveh Chism

#### **8th Grade:**

#### **Cum Laude**

Justin Nguyen

#### **Magna Cum Laude**

Abigael Lonkeng  
Kenny Pozo

#### **Silver Maxima Cum Laude**

Maximilian Castro  
Tomas Dasek  
Jeremy Lees  
Megan Mills  
Josiah Riverson  
Blair Todd

#### **Gold Summa Cum Laude**

Artemeez Marzban

### Honor Roll Award (grades 3-8)

#### Year-Round Honor Roll

##### **3rd Grade**

Saud Akhtar  
Yonael Chere  
Tinbete Daniel  
Anayah Guerra  
Liliane Karayilan  
Arielle Lamptey-Nanda  
Austin Le

Timileyin Ogunlewe  
Eleanor Pomerance  
Cortland Silva  
Nadia Yacobucci  
Dean Yimaj

##### **4th Grade**

Sami Abdelkefi  
Isabelle Augustine  
Ramzy Boudad  
Luke Foster  
Elena Hannaway  
Ryleigh Hegens  
William Hughes  
Jonah Kauffman  
Nathan Lonkeng  
Christian Sahl  
Lea Spriggs  
Sydney Wallis  
Selene White Holcomb

##### **5th Grade**

Nadwa Abdi  
Bethel Alemu  
Knox Coffron  
Maya Eswaran  
Elijah Guerra  
Nicolas Guerra

Hannah Jakupovic  
Isabella Mamani Duran  
Makda Nana  
Priya Perakam  
Abigail Riverson  
Mira Sears  
Shreya Vadlamani  
Janelle Yancor

#### **6th Grade**

Beza Abel  
Devin Boakye  
Raphael Chere  
Tyler Hegens  
Ajwah Jahangir  
Karina Khanna  
Sophie Le  
Maren Lees  
Mia Lees

#### **7th Grade**

Beza Alemu  
Matthew Bredbenner  
McKinley Cronin  
Emelie Edwards  
Madeleine Foster  
Gavin Goldstein  
Emina Jakupovic  
Sabrina Khanna  
Asha Lavu  
William Townsend  
Nabeera Yasir

#### **8th Grade**

Lailah Abdul Khaaliq  
Aya Boudad  
Maximilian Castro  
Tomas Dasek  
Abigael Lonkeng  
Artemeez Marzban  
Kenny Pozo  
Josiah Riverson  
Pooja Shekar  
Aiden St.Clair  
Blair Todd

### Honor Roll – 24 Quarters

Maximilian Castro

### Play Poster Contest

Emelie Edwards  
Tomas Dasek

### Griffy Awards

#### **7th Grade**

Matthew Bredbenner  
Kaveh Chism  
McKinley Cronin  
Madeleine Foster  
Gavin Goldstein  
Sabrina Khanna  
Brian Mock  
William Townsend  
Arleigh Womack

#### **8th Grade**

Maximilian Castro  
Jeremy Lees  
Megan Mills  
Kenny Pozo  
Aiden St.Clair  
Blair Todd

### Kenneth Hatch Award

McKinley Cronin  
Tomas Dasek  
Gavin Goldstein  
Aiden St.Clair

### President's Education Award

Maximilian Castro  
Tomas Dasek  
Jeremy Lees  
Abigael Lonkeng  
Artemeez Marzban  
Aiden St.Clair  
Blair Todd

### Griffin/Citizenship Award

Maximilian Castro  
McKinley Cronin  
Tomas Dasek  
Gavin Goldstein  
Artemeez Marzban  
Blair Todd

### Sope Peters Heart Award

Tomas Dasek

### Pinnacle Award

Tomas Dasek

### Golden Griffin Award

Tomas Dasek



The six students pictured above (From left to right: Max, Tomas, Gavin, Arti, Mac, Blair) earned citizenship awards, among the highest Westminster School honors, given to students who come to school with a positive attitude, achieve in the classroom, and participate in all aspects of life at school, including clubs and sports. They each received a trophy, and their names were engraved on a plaque in the lobby, which dates back to 1978.



# Highest Honors 2020

## Recognizing Students Who Persevered In The Face Of Challenge

In June 2020, it was not possible for the Westminster community to gather for the Awards Assembly to cap off the school year as we usually do. Instead, the administration, the team leaders, and the three eighth graders who were receiving the highest honors, along with their parents, were spread out in the theater, and the ceremony was delivered virtually into the homes of the Westminster families. In the days that followed, families drove to Westminster School to pick up a bag containing the awards received by each student.



**Abbie Lee**

### Golden Gryphon Award, June 2020

Abbie is a young woman of quiet resolve and enormous talent. A Westminster student since preschool, the youngest of three Lee family graduates, and the daughter of Mrs. Lee, the director of the Griffin Academy, Abbie has been steeped in the mission of the school since she was a baby. As an eighth grader, she served nobly as the president of the Builders Club, leading her fellow students by example and promoting service projects throughout the community. She is a devoted scholar, achieving high marks in every subject area and exhibiting particular talent in writing and visual arts. During the distance learning period from March to June 2020, she demonstrated her support of the Westminster way by being a stand-out student on the screen, expressing her thoughtful viewpoint through enthusiastic involvement in Zoom classes, thus inspiring participation from her classmates. Abbie is held in the highest esteem by the entire Westminster faculty, staff, and administration, trusted and

respected by adults and children alike for her unfailing integrity and kindness. However, where Abbie truly glowed during her time at Westminster was on the Gryphon stage. An aspiring thespian and lover of musicals, Abbie's strong, clear singing voice effortlessly filled the theater, and her acting reflected a mature, nuanced sensitivity to the characters she played here. Because of her consistent participation, academic achievement, artistic passion, and sterling character, Abbie Lee was named the Golden Gryphon in June 2020.



**Abdu Abbas**

### Inaugural Recipient of the Sope Peters Heart Award, June 2020

June 2020 saw the introduction of a new award at Westminster School – the Heart Award. It was established in honor of Sope Peters, beloved alumnus of the Class of 2007, who passed away while at university in the United Kingdom. Created by Sope's mother, two best Westminster friends, Amanuel Shitaye and Spenser Thompson, and Mr. Glover, the sparkling, glass, heart-shaped trophy recognizes a student who spreads love in the same way that Sope did, fashioning a beautiful tribute to a young man who his friends say, "cared about other people more than he cared about himself." This award is given to a Westminster student whose every action is guided by the principles of kindness, generosity, friendship, and love. The inaugural recipient of this award was Abdu Abbas, a young man who came to Westminster School in sixth grade. Sometimes, students who have attended other schools before coming to Westminster are the ones who recognize

more fully how special this place is while they are here because they have experienced the alternative. Abdu was one of those students. A calm, sweet soul, Abdu flourished in the caring, accepting environment of Westminster, a place which values toleration and love as much as he does. Abdu truly proved his character when, after having some struggles in seventh grade, he opted to repeat the grade, embracing the opportunity to solidify his academic skills as well as add to his Westminster family with friends in a new grade. Abdu always has a good-natured smile on his face, and is always the first to volunteer to help run an errand, guide a younger child, or assist the maintenance staff with heavy lifting. The purity of his soul made Abdu the ideal representative of the Sope Peters Heart Award.



**Madison Olds**

### The Daughters of the American Revolution Award, June 2020

The Daughters of the American Revolution Youth Citizenship Medal is given to a Westminster eighth grader who epitomizes the qualities of honor, service, courage, leadership, and patriotism. In June 2020, the award winner was Madison Olds, a young woman who leads quietly, by example, with a steady confidence to do what is right whether someone else is watching or not. Her unfailing kindness to others is a reflection of her sense of responsibility to her community, and her constant diligence in the face of academic challenge demonstrates her fortitude. She possesses a passion for American History, most certainly fed by her love for the musical *Hamilton*, and that enthusiasm shined through in the 2019-2020 school year.



# 

The Awards Assembly on June 10, 2021 was the first time since March 13, 2020 that a small group was able to gather in the Gryphon Theater. Separated and masked, the seventh- and eighth-grade students were seated in the audience, and the seventh- and eighth-grade parents were invited to attend, strategically seated away from the student body. The upper-school teachers, specials teachers, Miss Foster, (third through fifth grade team leader), and the administration were present to announce and bestow the honors in the theater. The ceremony was filmed and displayed via Zoom in the kindergarten through sixth grade classrooms and in Westminster homes. Once again, applause rang out in the Gryphon Theater, just as it was meant to be.



Tomas Dasek

#### 

In a year like no other, eighth grader Tomas Dasek walked away with a trio of distinctive honors at the June 2021 Awards Assembly. Tomas was recognized as the winner of The Pinnacle Award in History, a newly minted honor at Westminster School (see inset box). He was also granted the Sope Peters Heart Award, acknowledging his kindness of spirit and depth of friendship toward everyone he meets, adults and peers alike. Finally, Tomas earned the highest honor at Westminster School, the Golden Gryphon

Award. He is the second of two Dasek graduates of the school, and his father is a devoted leader of Westminster's maintenance staff. Tomas began as a three-year-old in the Griffin Academy, and his eleven years at this school, along with the love and guidance of his stellar parents, have shaped him into a giving, diligent, informed, and caring young man. As an eighth grader, Tomas served as the president of the Builders Club, leading his classmates through service projects in a year of COVID restrictions. Tomas' commitment to his studies and his motivation to achieve academic success are superb and admirable. But it was his character and attitude that served as the moral compass for his fellow upper-school students, inspiring them to be their best selves. Tomas is treasured by the Westminster teachers and administration for his willingness to participate, to help, to work for the common good, and to perpetuate kindness to all. Tomas is a gem and will make us proud as he ventures out into the world.



#### 

#### 

To acknowledge the unique and valuable arc of the Westminster history curriculum, the school introduced a new honor in June 2021, The Pinnacle Award in History. This is bestowed upon the student who has most clearly demonstrated the following:

- an outstanding passion for and effort directed toward studies in eighth-grade history, the pinnacle of the Westminster history experience;
- a clear recognition of the significance of

Westminster's history program as a six-year journey, tracing the progression of the dignity of the human species from prehistoric man, through the Egyptians, the ancient Greeks and Romans, to Medieval and then Renaissance Europeans, all providing the basis for the founding of the United States of America;

- a deep appreciation for the principles established in the founding documents of the United States of America, including equality and shared rights, unity and service to others, liberty and self-reliance, and the "pursuit of happiness" in a life well-lived; and
- an understanding that in the United States, we are engaged in an ongoing effort to realize those principles more perfectly with each passing generation.



Tomas receives the Sope Peters Heart Award. Pictured: Tomas and Mrs. Peters.

Visit our website at  
[www.WestminsterSchool.com](http://www.WestminsterSchool.com)  
to view the full list of the  
2019-2020 Awards.





Bringing Back Theater Traditions

# The Griffy Award

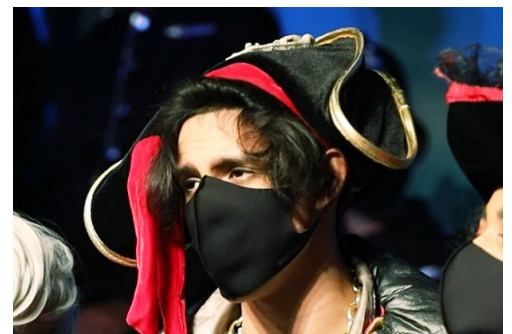


The last two years awoke the Westminster community to how much we truly value our drama department. When we thought about what we would have to postpone or cancel due to COVID concerns, we could not envision the students completing a school year without doing their grade-level plays. The faculty and administration reflected upon the tremendous lessons the children learn through the theater about self-discipline, collaboration with classmates, creative expression, and personal presentation, and it was clear that a safe alternative had to be developed to allow the students to absorb these objectives. Thus, it was determined that while we could not have the students present to a live audience of a few hundred, we could have them go through the process of the play by filming their productions and presenting them virtually throughout the classrooms and in the homes of their families and friends. Utilizing the creative expertise of Mr. Crook, our resident tech guru, each grade spent a few weeks in the theater practicing and then taping their scenes. Then Mr. Crook edited the film into a complete play, enhanced by visual and sound effects. The results were a series of charming and impressive productions, and the students benefitted immeasurably from the experience.

Because this year placed even more emphasis on the skill, enthusiasm, and cooperation of the student actors, who had to be motivated to persevere and perform without a live audience to cheer them on, Mr. Glover thought it was fitting to reinstitute the Griffy Award, recognizing devoted thespians in the seventh-grade Shakespeare play and the eighth-grade musical.

• For their work in *The Comedy of Errors: The Bard Meets The Beatles*, filmed mostly on location in Old Town Alexandria, the award was given to seventh graders Matthew Bredbenner, Kaveh Chism, McKinley Cronin, Madeleine Foster, Gavin Goldstein, Sabrina Khanna, Brian Mock, and William Townsend. Though he was a distance learner in the first half of the year and could not be part of the November play for seventh grade, Arleigh Womack was also given this award for his devotion to the theater and talent shows through the years and for his willingness to wear his heart on his sleeve on the Westminster stage.

• Because of the energy and talent they invested in their eighth-grade performance of *The Pirates of Penzance*, this honor was granted to Maximilian Castro, Jeremy Lees, Megan Mills, Kenny Pozo, Aiden St. Clair, and Blair Todd.





# The Show Must Go On

2020 - 2021 On the Griffin Stage.

Kindergarten - *The Tortoise and the Hare*



Fourth Grade - *Charlotte's Web*



First Grade - *The Wild Symphony*



Fifth Grade - *The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe*



Second Grade - *Babar*



Sixth Grade - *Oliver Twist*



Third Grade - *The Cricket in Time Square*



Seventh Grade - *The Comedy of Errors:  
The Bard Meets The Beatles*





# Poetry Contest

## 22nd Headmaster's Poetry Contest

We live our lives in a mysterious medium. One that surrounds us, flows through us, stretches beyond us. Sometimes, when we are not distracted by the daily wants and schemes of our egos, we are struck by a sense of profundity—the presence of something—even in our ordinary, every-day experience. Something that cannot be seen directly but whose immanent message seems to reach for us. A good poem captures that signal, through language simple or abstract, via allusion or concrete imagery. A poet is a kind of sleuth, forever seeking clues to the mystery of existence.

For the past 22 years, the Head's Poetry Contest has encouraged students in grades 3 – 8 to join the quest for meaning through the magic of poetry. Under the guidance of their English teachers, and on their own, the students typically submit between 100 – 125 poems to the contest. A small committee reviews the poems, noting outstanding achievements and selecting the “best poem” in each grade. If there is a surpassingly outstanding poem among these, its author is also designated the Poet Laureate of Westminster School for that school year.

## Headmaster's Poetry Assembly, 2021 Winning Poems – Best Poems by Grade

### Night Light

Through night and through day  
Life drifts away  
Stars shine in the moonlight  
as tears of rain fall into the river  
The blow of the wind shakes and quivers  
Near and far the river takes you into the night light  
Cold wind blows but I feel warm as we drift away from the storm.  
We land upon the shore  
I wake, back in bed once more.

Anayah Guerra  
Grade 3

### A Tree's Colored Robes

In the winter cold,  
I wear a pure white robe  
Made from stunning snow.  
  
With the embark of spring,  
My robe turns into a shiny green  
Made of grassy flowered rings.  
  
In the golden summer,  
My robe glitters, a glowing sheen  
A bright dress of lime green.  
  
In the pumpkin of fall,  
My dress ignites; red, orange, yellow  
Colors that surround us all.

Ryleigh Hegens  
Grade 4

### The Scorpion

Isolated and passionate  
Fearless and bold  
Bruised and burned by jealousy and deceitful lies

Lend me your strength  
Hand me your confidence  
Help me with life  
  
When in balance you are wild  
Free and fierce  
  
Is this the way of the scorpion?  
To be carefree?  
Or are you full of jealousy?  
  
Do you have a legacy to protect?  
Because I do.

Lend me your strength  
Hand me your confidence  
Help me with life.

Janelle Yancor  
Grade 5

### Demons

I can't go outside, my demons will catch me  
They follow me everywhere I go  
That's why I hide inside, where they can't see  
People tell me that they aren't my foes  
I think that they're lying, but I really can't tell  
But not listening makes me feel so low  
They tell me to do things that I don't like  
But sometimes I like to listen and go

Aiden St. Clair  
Grade 8



## Easily Forgotten Memories

I am from campouts  
From music and neighborhood parties  
I am from the brownie batter that tastes better raw than cooked  
I am from the blue sky, the chirping birds  
And the flowers loved only for their beauty

I am from the easily forgotten memories  
From each day suffered through  
I'm from that of love and that of hate  
I'm from the place where the insecure reign ramped  
And s'more, s'more please

I'm from mythology and the so-called carefree  
Days of your youth, from sitting at the wrong spot  
At the table when the candles are blown out  
From my mom not wanting me to have a nickname  
To my brother never being hot, never being cold

I'm from deep thoughts, positive or negative  
I'm from the love that swirls around  
With an ever-growing heart  
I'm from the small moments  
That keep us all together  
And the love I constantly want to give  
To everyone

Maren Lees  
Grade 6

## Stereotype

ster-e-o-type  
noun  
a widely held but  
fixed and  
oversimplified  
image or idea of  
a particular type  
of person or thing  
an exterior judge  
of what you can do  
a question of  
your ability  
A barrier to  
break down  
a point to prove  
dumb blonde  
smart and unathletic because  
of your glasses or race  
boys can't like pink  
don't be defined by  
the stereotype  
and don't let it stop you  
go beyond  
ster-e-o-type

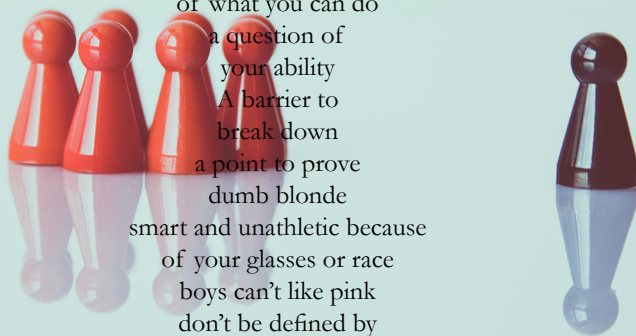
Sabrina Khanna  
Grade 7

## Poet Laureate for June 2020

### Forever Cursed by True Love

Forever cursed by true love  
To wander the earth with the heavenly sent  
Or to wander about the moors alone  
To never be full and always crave more  
To search for him and him alone  
It was fast and painless  
Like the blade she was stabbed with  
And the baby ripped from her womb  
So she could leave to search for him and him alone  
It is the forever sadness lodged in her breast  
And the pain of regret  
It is the sigh past this hell and onto the next world  
It is the attention to detail to every last second  
It is the haunting of this world too  
It is looking up at the sky and refusing heaven or hell  
To become the gypsy of the unseen world  
It is knowing there is something in the world after  
It is the final moments, the final impact, the final straw  
It is waking up in a puddle of sick sweat  
It is knowing you can't have it all, but you're still trying to  
It is the everlasting sorrow that seems to drive her into the wandering  
Never fully finding happiness, never awake but never asleep  
Forever cursed by true love

By Nasim Abdul Khaaliq, Grade 8





# Camp Griffin

Experience ~ Explore ~ Create



Westminster School was hopping this past summer with Camp Griffin! Every week of the camp was completely sold out. The majority of the campers were children from other schools, so Camp Griffin served as an introduction to our Westminster facilities and practices. Additionally, the camp sessions, under the leadership of the director, Ms. Kari Mock, were almost all run by Westminster teachers assisted by Westminster alumni serving as counselors-in-training, so the campers were being guided in the Westminster way at all levels.

A wide variety of experiences were offered by age group. The youngest campers, “Explorers” from three-year-olds to rising kindergarteners, engaged in camps such as an environmentally

friendly “Griffins Go Green” week, a “Pint-Sized Gourmets” series of cooking classes, and an “Ahoy Matey!” nautical experience. The Junior Griffins, from rising first grade through rising fourth grade, had options including “Sports Academy” or “Science Palooza,” while their enrichment camp counterparts delved into “Story Slam” writing camp, acting through “Camp at the Improv,” and “Space Invaders” with an astronomy theme. Those Junior Griffins, along with rising fifth- through eighth-grade Senior Griffins, took part in “Splish Splash!” camp at the beginning of August, touring Northern Virginia waterparks such as Ocean Dunes, Pirate’s Cove, Atlantis, and Volcano Island.

With COVID mitigation still in place and CDC and local health department guidelines adhered to, the campers and staff were still







able to engage in many traditional activities, including a weekly visit to neighboring Broyhill Crest Swimming Pool. Many campers also enjoyed selected field trips to area attractions. For example, the youngest Explorers visited Hidden Pond Nature Center as part of their “Full STEAM Ahead!” science camp, as well as McLean’s Clemyjontri Park and the Burke Lake carousel and train for “I Like to Move It, Move It!” field trip week. For “It’s a Mystery!” camp, the Junior Griffins ventured to the Spy Museum in Washington, D.C., while the Junior Enrichment “Time Travelers” went to nearby Bowlero to knock down some pins to commemorate 1967. The French camp, “Mais oui, l’école est finie,” took the Junior Griffins to La Madeleine for a lesson in authentic cuisine, followed by a French picnic in Mason District Park. For “History 101” camp, the rising first through fourth graders went back to the late Middle Ages with a visit to Medieval Times, had a glimpse of 18th century life in Virginia with a tour of Mount Vernon, and familiarized themselves with U.S. history through a bus tour of D.C. monuments.

When they were in school, the building was pumping with energy as the children performed science experiments, wiggled through hallway mazes, competed in athletic challenges, created beautiful artwork, boogied to music, and screened films in the theater. Camp Griffin was a true wonderland for these children, giving them a summer of fun after an unpredictable school year.

## CAMP TESTIMONIALS

*My daughter has the time of her life at Camp Griffin. We just spent our second summer there where she got to go on fun day trip adventures, participate in specialty camps on site and have a pool day every Friday with her camp friends. Camp Griffin provides a safe but fun activity-full day where my child comes home happy and tired, excited to wake up for the next day at camp. What more could a parent ask for?*

- Elizabeth

*I wanted to thank you for keeping our babies safe and happy all summer. You are simply the best and our family loves you and your camp staff.*

- Julie







# A YEAR AT THE GRIFFIN ACADEMY

## NORMAL NEVER SOUNDED SO GOOD



As an uncertain 2020-2021 school year opened, the Griffin Academy staff knew one thing for certain. They all felt very strongly that only in-person classes could be offered at the preschool level. It was extremely important to the teachers that the three- and four-year-olds had that social interaction with their peers and teachers. To that end, on the first day of school, thirteen preschoolers entered the front doors with masks on and ready to go! Though they were not able to venture off-campus for field trips or come together as a whole school for

plays or in-house programs, the preschool teachers did an amazing job of providing the children with a very normal school year in spite of these challenges.

The youngest Griffins enjoyed starting each day by playing in the gym. The circle time that followed found the children sitting on their carpet squares conversing with each other and with the teacher. In this setting, they learned the sounds letters make and began to absorb sight words, allowing them to begin to read pre-decodable books.



They sang songs, played games, listened to stories, and learned to calm their bodies and be good listeners as their teachers taught them new and exciting things.

The children worked enthusiastically to complete their center work, knowing that great adventures awaited them afterwards. They explored dramatic play centers such as a bear's cave, grocery store, construction site, or camp site. The students spent the day in a classroom space that stretched their minds and spirits,





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building trains and tall buildings, playing with Gak, putting puzzles together, painting beautiful masterpieces at the art easel, and reading at the book nook.

The preschoolers flourished in the structure, creativity, and fun of the art, library, science, and French classes presented by the innovative Griffin Academy teachers. As exciting as the lessons were for the children, being outside for recess each morning was certainly the most anticipated time of the day. In the spring of 2021, the children had some special friends joining them at recess – cicadas, cicadas, and more cicadas! The adults may not have been so fond of these every-seventeen-year visitors, but wonder and curiosity won out, and the preschool students certainly seemed to enjoy the company of these winged creatures. Cicada masks and binoculars helped the children to spot and investigate any insect activity.

The Griffin Academy participated in many special events, which were delivered in new and creative ways because of COVID. The staff and children were grateful to have Squeals on Wheels visit the school, bringing with them a tortoise, a chicken, a BIG white bunny, a hedgehog, and a chinchilla. The preschoolers were an enthusiastic audience

for this outdoor event and delighted in being able to pet the animals. The Griffin Academy students showed how brave and strong they could be by walking through the indoor Spooky Walk during the Halloween Parade, and they treasured being able to show their friends how much they love them during the Valentine exchange. The annual Trike-a-Thon in the gym showed off the preschoolers' athleticism and sportsmanship in cheering on their classmates.

The school-wide theme of Animals was perfect for our youngest Griffins, and they relished learning about the many different animals that were introduced weekly. One of the best days of the year was Animals Day. The preschoolers are cute every day of the school year, but coming to school dressed as a ladybug, tiger, shark, bear, or monkey pushed the cuteness factor off the charts. Along with dressing as their favorite animal, the children made cat toys, bird feeders and blankets for the animal shelter on that day.

Throughout the year, the preschoolers had many opportunities to grow as performers and presenters. They watched fellow schoolmates in the grade level plays, through a new virtual delivery, which always made for a fun morning and

helped them prepare for their own future debut on the stage. The preschoolers sang a charming version of "Dashing Through the Snow" at the virtual Cookie Party during the winter holidays. In the spring, the students proved their TGA pride by performing an adorable cheer for the virtual Spirit Week celebration. By the end of the year, they were most excited to be able to sing and record their spring music show in the music room and to share this event on Zoom with the entire school. Additionally, the inspired pieces they created in art class with Mrs. Guerra and Ms. Mock were a feast for the eyes on display in the skylight corridor.

As the school year progressed, the preschool classes grew from thirteen to twenty-one students. No one was more excited to welcome new friends than the preschoolers themselves. The preschool staff was grateful every day for being able to come to school and to spend the day with these children, and they took deep pride in offering their students the gifts of constancy and routine in changeable times. Amazingly, the 2020-2021 academic year turned into one of The Griffin Academy's finest.



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1. Vigorously scootering around at the Trikeathon event
2. Three Stunning Princesses ready for the Halloween Parade
3. A charming Ladybug on "Animal Day"
4. Searching for Cicadas!
5. Posing on the playground
6. Petting a super soft chinchilla at an in house field trip (Squeals on Wheels)



# Westminster's Veteran Staff

## A Life-Long Commitment to Our Mission

As Mr. Glover's forty-five year career here at Westminster School reached its conclusion, it was worth noting that there are many people who have invested their lives in this special place. With an elevated mission that inspires employees, Westminster has had a stalwart group of dedicated staff members who have spent long careers here. This past summer, a group of former staff members was honored with plaques that recognized a combined two hundred and sixty-six years of service to Westminster School. This hall of fame includes:

- Ellis Glover - Served from 1976 to 2021, Headmaster from 1992 to 2021
- Caitriona O'Drudy - Latin Teacher, 1982 to 2018
- Virginia Herchert - French Teacher, 1976 to 2012
- Carol Fugate - Bookkeeper, H.R. Manager, and Registrar, 1977 to 2011
- Ellen Conde - Kindergarten Teacher, 1984 to 2012
- Marie-Lou Saldanha - Music Teacher, 1980 to 2007
- Dennis Miller - P.E. Teacher and Athletic Director, 1992 to 2019
- Stephen L. Best - Chairman of the Board of Trustees, 1972 to 1995



The current staff also includes many individuals who have dedicated their professional lives to fulfilling the highest of standards during their years here. To recognize the loyalty of these employees, the school awards a gold Griffin pin starred with a diamond to anyone who has worked here for ten years, and then for every additional decade, another diamond is added to the pin. The following people have been honored with such a pin or an additional diamond within the last two school years, and here they reflect upon the impact that Westminster School has had on their lives, both personally and professionally.

Jori Sapper joined the Westminster faculty in September 2010, and over her eleven years of service, has fulfilled the role of second-grade math and science teacher as well as a short period as the second-grade reading and history teacher. She has been the lower school team leader for the past six years, and at certain stages has also been the After School Care Program supervisor and a counselor in Camp Griffin. In August 2021, Miss Sapper stepped into the position of Admissions Director, where her warm, welcoming demeanor and expertise in the early grades will greatly benefit Westminster School.

Over the years, Miss Sapper has grown in appreciation for "the dedication and commitment of our students and their families to receiving an exceptional education." She recognizes that not only has she been teaching her students, but that she also has learned from being at Westminster, including the concept that "excellence is in the details" and "everything matters," two lessons that she notices "seem to be going out of style" in society at large. Miss Sapper cherishes the fact that the school's mission is so clear and strong. She points out that, "As a lower-school teacher, so much of what we

do is centered around instilling [the school community's] core values of respect, kindness, and discipline in our students at the earliest stages of their education so that they become ingrained and deeply rooted into who they are as people."



Miss Sapper embraces many Westminster traditions, but especially loves the Cookie Party. She sees it as "an extremely special way to celebrate the many winter holidays and traditions of differing faiths beyond just Christmas. As a person of Jewish faith, I have never felt left out or overlooked by this school tradition, which I think is great," she shares.

In just over a decade, Miss Sapper has noticed that her personal and professional life have been nourished by Westminster School. She reflects, "It is not often that you find a place that truly feels like a home away from home. The mission of the school and the people it attracts have always felt like an extension of my family. I have 'grown up' here... as a teacher, mentor, and leader and am so thankful for the opportunity to learn and grow in a place that is so aligned with and reflective of my values and beliefs about education and the world."





When she joined the Westminster preschool staff in 2010, Amy Bowab could not have predicted the gravity of the journey on which she was embarking. Not only did she witness the establishment and expansion of The Griffin Academy from its founding, but she grew from a young adult into an accomplished and confident teacher.

Eleven years later, Mrs. Bowab is able to reflect on what a rewarding undertaking this has been for her, as she has seen the school from a bounty of perspectives, first as a teaching assistant and ultimately as lead teacher and science teacher in the threes and fours class, as well as in roles supervising early and after care and as a summer camp instructor and coordinator. In September 2021, she rose to the professional challenge of becoming the kindergarten math and science teacher. In all those capacities, she has been grateful to work with the diverse, kind, and welcoming community here, recognizing that the students “have a special connection to life and learning,” and the families are “supportive and bursting with love.”



Kristine Lee began working at Westminster in 1989 when she started as an office assistant. Her career path led her to the position of third- and fourth-grade math teacher, followed by the team leader position. Currently, Mrs. Lee is Westminster School’s phenomenal Preschool Director of The Griffin Academy. She is also the mother of three stellar Westminster graduates and can attest to the school’s success

The summer of 2018 will always stand out for Mrs. Bowab because it was then that The Griffin Academy relocated from St. Alban’s Church to its permanent home on Gallows Road. She acknowledges that change is always difficult and anxiety-provoking, but “when we walked in the door and started unpacking, it felt as if we had been here all along! It was a seamless transition and continues to be.” She is constantly impressed by the “amount of love and dedication that goes into everything done at Westminster School. Nothing is done halfway, and everything goes above and beyond normal expectations.”

Once she was here on campus, Mrs. Bowab came to value the school’s customs even more. She especially enjoys Halloween at Westminster and names the elaborately decorated Spooky Walk that the maintenance staff designs each October as “one of her all-time favorite adventures.” She also loves to be surprised by the theme of the eighth grade’s costumed and choreographed Halloween performance each year.

Mrs. Bowab realizes that while she has been teaching her own students over the last decade, she has also been in the process of learning and evolving as a person. She prizes the guidance that she has received from her colleagues and administrators, knowing that their years of experience make them the best advisors. She has discovered that “it is okay to ask for help. We all learn from each other daily.” Mrs. Bowab feels that she has built a family here. She is godmother to the daughter of her colleague, preschool teacher Mrs. Farrell, and she knows herself to be in the warm embrace of the Westminster faculty, administration, students, and parents. “I know that when I walk in the doors of the school, I am loved, respected, and supported,” Mrs. Bowab explains. “It is because of all those things that I have stayed as long as I have and continue to work hard for my colleagues and students.”

in “creating a well-rounded student.” She notes that a Westminster graduate, “walks across that stage at graduation and, with so much confidence, heads onto the next chapter of his life. They really are ready for anything that comes their way.”

In the thirty-one years that Mrs. Lee has worked here, she has transformed from a college student to a consummate professional and leader of the school, and she has cherished that experience, loving the interaction with students and families. While it is difficult for her to pick one Westminster tradition that is her favorite, she cites the special events and experiences of the upper school, which she has seen her three children live through and benefit from, that really stand out to her, including “the sock hops, overnight trips to Sheridan and Williamsburg, the class dinner before graduation and graduation itself.” Mrs. Lee recognizes, “These students are likely to never experience a graduation like a Westminster graduation again – not in high school or college. Westminster does an amazing job of celebrating the moment and creating lifelong memories.”

On a personal level, Mrs. Lee will never forget when her youngest daughter, Abbie, and a classmate teamed up to perform Queen’s classic “Bohemian Rhapsody” for Mr. Glover’s famous Headmaster’s Talent Show. “They were



missing some guitar players,” she recalls, “so Mr. Glover hired two to come and play with them. It was fantastic! Watching Abbie jump for joy at the end was priceless!”

Mrs. Lee realizes that Westminster has taught her that “Time really is the greatest gift and to take pride in everything that you do.” She revels in the fact that the school is her “home away from home.” She reflects, “I enjoy the camaraderie of my colleagues and enjoy the time spent with the children. Honestly, it doesn’t feel like I have been at Westminster for three plus decades. I guess time flies when you are having fun!”



Kari Mock’s first taste of Westminster School was as a counselor in the Spring Camp in 2011, but she has taken on a plethora of jobs since then. Gaining experience over the years working in the camps, After School Care Program, substitute teaching, and coordinating events, Ms. Mock now serves as the Director of Camps and Auxiliary Programming and works in the preschool. She is the very proud parent of an eighth grader Brian, as well.

Ms. Mock was introduced to Westminster School a decade ago because her friend, who was a teacher here, invited her to attend the eighth-grade play. She watched in amazement as fourteen-year-olds sang their hearts out and dazzled a packed auditorium. Remembering her own timidity and self-consciousness at that age, Ms. Mock resolved then and there to give the gift of the Westminster experience to her son, then aged two.

Ms. Mock describes the Westminster community as “a mighty family that has a unique and special life-long bond.” She loves to support other parents and their children using her experience working with children through all the developmental stages from preschool through the upper school. Through her ten years at the school, she has developed a deep commitment to Westminster’s shared message, “Everyone has gifts, and they should love themselves enough to explore and find joy in them. Have faith and believe in yourself. You can do anything, and there will be beauty in it!”

Because she was the event coordinator, Ms. Mock carries special insight into Westminster customs, and one of her favorites is the eighth-grade dinner on the night before graduation. She has hosted this event nine times, assisting Mr. Glover in catering a gourmet meal for the graduating students.

“It is a culminating event, attended by the administration and upper-school faculty. The students enjoy each other’s company and sing songs from their play. This is the night where their friendships are cemented, and they are able to be grateful for the gifts Westminster and their families have given them for nine years.” Ms. Mock has watched the students walk through the farewell receiving line at the end of this dinner each year, seeing them smile through tears as they embrace their teachers and express their thanks. She explains, “As I watch every year, I marvel at the poise and grace of our graduating class as they are about to take flight.”

After ten years, Ms. Mock contemplates the privilege of working at Westminster School, “being able to work with the finest educators that inspire me with their creativity and passion for excellence.” She is deeply grateful for “having my co-workers evolve over the years from acquaintances to family.”



When Maria Polchert accepted the position of school librarian at Westminster School in the summer of 1990, she had no idea that it would be one of the best and most transformative experiences of her life. After meeting Mrs. Goll and Mr. Glover at the interview, Mrs. Polchert went home and told her family about the school’s focus on the arts and theater and the emphasis on the classics, knowing that the program meshed well with her own academic interests. The sincerity of the Westminster School mission gave her a sense of real purpose and satisfaction as a librarian.

During her first decade at the school, Mrs. Polchert found herself tearing up at many of the children’s presentations and award ceremonies. She subsequently enrolled both of her sons and was confident that they would receive the structure, discipline, and tender guidance that they needed. As graduates of Westminster School, both young men credit the school with their love of the arts and academic success.

Mrs. Polchert recognizes that Westminster has a unique mission and philosophy of education that attracts families and students who appreciate the school’s efforts to fulfill that mission, even when it is challenging to do so. This makes working at the school a joy because parents, students, administration, and teachers are all clear and unified about their objectives and are able to commit to their jobs enthusiastically. Always impressed by how supportive and kind the Westminster families and students are, Mrs. Polchert credits the success of



the library to volunteer efforts and contributions of parents and friends of the school.

Like many teachers, Mrs. Polchert's favorite Westminster tradition is the eighth-grade graduation ceremony. She is deeply moved by the gratitude and love the students express for their families, classmates, and teachers in their farewell speeches. She always strives to help students accept their unique and inherent selves, so it is gratifying to hear them allude to their growth within and appreciation for the Westminster program.



A graduate of the Class of 1979, Nancy Schuler first set foot on Westminster's campus as a sixth grader, and her heart and soul have been part of the school since that day. She has fulfilled so many roles here, beginning in 1991 when she became the third- and fourth-grade history teacher and eventually served as chairperson of the history and geography departments. She was the team leader for a time and was the Admissions Director for the school since 1997, inspiring families to join this community through her deep enthusiasm and love for Westminster. Not only is she vested in the school in a professional capacity, but she also knows it from a parent's viewpoint since her three children are all graduates, twin girls in the Class of 2010 and her son in the Class of 2014. In August 2021, Mrs. Schuler became Head of School, the role that will allow her to express her loyalty and passion for Westminster to the fullest.

After thirty years here, Mrs. Schuler holds Westminster's standards of excellence in the highest regard. She knows that there is much more to the "Westminster Way" than just elevated expectations for academic performance. It is rooted in a shared set of values – as she describes, "kindness, tolerance, respect, and joy in the possibilities life

Mrs. Polchert is a strong believer in the Westminster philosophy founded in the classical tradition of educating the "whole child," including physically, intellectually, emotionally, and creatively. She firmly believes that this requires nurturing self-discipline and respect for adults, as well as understanding oneself and expanding friendships with others. Westminster students are taught to recognize their community and civic responsibilities, and Mrs. Polchert is proud that these goals are exemplified in the curriculum and governance of the school to which she has given over thirty years of service.

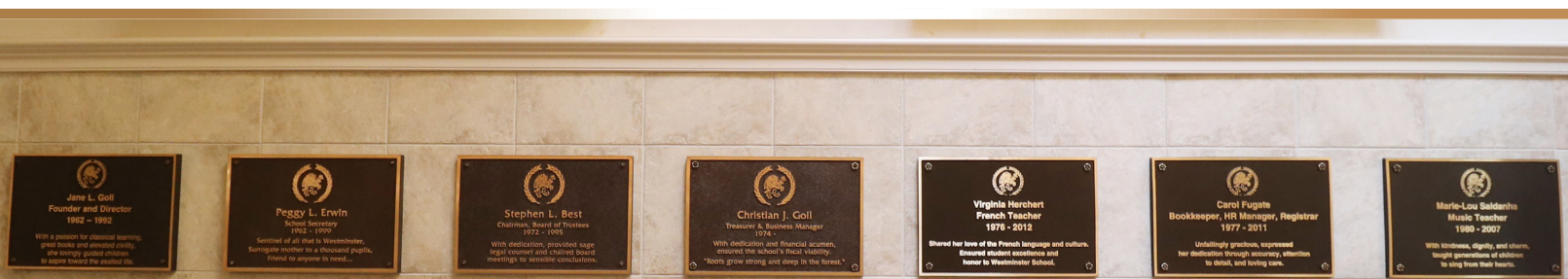
has to offer." Mrs. Schuler derives excitement from the diverse community drawn together by these commonly held ideals. She has seen the "deep and long-lasting bond" formed by families from wide-ranging cultures and nationalities who have shared the Westminster experience.

With an intimate knowledge of the many lessons Westminster conveys to those who spend time here, Mrs. Schuler recognizes that her years at the school have taught her a greater compassion for all, including "to remember that every person you encounter has a story and a battle that they may be facing. As human beings, every day brings joy, but also brings challenges. When we encounter one another, we must always remember this and be kind."

The traditions of the school run deep with Mrs. Schuler, from the grand celebration of the Shakespeare Festival to the holiday parties, but she especially cherishes the grade-level plays. After watching so many students, including her own children, undergo a transformation in the Gryphon Theater, she knows what it can mean for their futures. "I've watched shy children come into their own and find their voice," she explains. "I've watched the 'hams' find direction and purpose, hone their talent and soar."

As she takes on this new leadership role as Head of School, Mrs. Schuler seeks to uphold Westminster's profound commitment to the arts. She notes, "As the arts are being deemphasized and defunded in public schools, Westminster is looking to expand them as we recognize that it is through the arts that children learn to be creative, outside-the-box thinkers....[The arts] will bring them joy and allow them an outlet that they will be able to turn to in times of struggle." Mrs. Schuler firmly believes that nurturing that imaginative, innovative spirit in each child feeds his or her humanity.

Mrs. Schuler looks upon her thirty years at Westminster School with awe and gratitude. "Westminster transformed me. It opened doors that I didn't even know were closed. I appreciate the many people who have dedicated so much of their energy and spirit to the school. It is a great honor to serve alongside them."





# Welcome, New Trustees of Westminster School!

Westminster is pleased to introduce four great friends and long-time supporters of the school who have recently been elected to the Board of Trustees. We are grateful for their ongoing contributions of time and expertise in service to Westminster and its community.



**Amanda Fulk Meadows** is a Family Nurse Practitioner practicing at VCU Health. She provides primary care doing house visits in the Richmond community for complex and homebound patients. Prior to her current role, she worked in pediatrics and women's health at Inova Fairfax. As an alumna (class of 2001) she recognizes many of her accomplishments and achievements started with the core values, time management and education she received from Westminster. The rigorous curriculum, extracurricular activities and unique community prepared her well for high school and college. She is the mother of two little boys and aunt to two current Westminster students.

Mrs. Meadows is very proud of how the teachers, staff, students and families responded to the COVID-19 pandemic with immediate virtual learning, followed by a successful in-person school year, and looks forward to playing a key role on the Planning and Development Committee of the Board.



**Mojan Nourbakhsh** has been a part of the Westminster School family for over two decades. She is a graduate (Class of 2006), and has held various positions within the school, such as substitute teacher, 6th grade play director, and camp counselor. She has championed the school ever since she walked through its doors as a kindergartner and firmly believes in its classical curriculum, rigorous sense of discipline, and beautifully unique atmosphere. With an extensive background in both the entertainment industry as well as the business world, Ms. Nourbakhsh successfully runs two companies in Los Angeles and has a hand in various entrepreneurial ventures, where her platform focuses on empowering young women. She is eager to use her skills for the benefit of the Board's Planning and Development Committee.



**Jennie Wills** has maintained close ties to Westminster School since her employment there from 1999 through 2008. At Westminster, she worked in development, publications, and event planning. She also taught dance, assisted with theatrical productions, and sponsored the yearbook. After more than twenty years of experience in independent schools, Mrs. Wills is an accomplished advancement professional, demonstrating strengths in building and implementing comprehensive donor pipelines, closing major gifts utilizing a donor-centered approach, and managing innovative alumni and community development programming. She is currently the Executive Director of Advancement for St. Stephen's and St. Agnes School in Alexandria, Virginia. Mrs. Wills holds a BA in Theater from the University of Arkansas and additional graduate coursework in Dance at the State University of New York College at Brockport.

Mrs. Wills firmly believes in the values of Westminster School, the importance of the arts, and the overall "Westminster Way." Through the years, she has continued to support Westminster with financial gifts and offers to help with fundraising and is very enthusiastic about the opportunity to further assist Westminster through service on the Board of Trustees.



**Michael Townsend** has been a Westminster parent since 2006 and is the parent of two graduates, Avery (2015) and Emily (2017), and of current eighth-grader, William. Mr. Townsend is honored to join the Westminster community in this capacity on the Board.

Professionally, Mr. Townsend has spent more than 21 years at the Charles Schwab Corporation, where he is Managing Director for Legislative and Regulatory Affairs. He is the company's principal political analyst, and he gives more than 100 speeches a year to clients, investor advisers and industry conferences about how policy and political decisions in Washington affect the capital markets, individual investors, and investment advisers. He is also the host of Schwab's popular podcast, *WashingtonWise Investor*. Prior to joining Schwab, Mr. Townsend was a vice president at Powell Tate, Inc., a Washington public affairs firm, and he served as an aide to two U.S. Senators in the 1990s.

Mr. Townsend's volunteer experience includes two years as the Senior Warden (chief lay officer) at St. Mark's Episcopal Church on Capitol Hill, and he later served as co-chair of the church's \$5 million capital campaign to renovate its Parish Hall, offices, and classroom space. He has also served in a variety of roles at his alma mater, Bowdoin College, including as a member of the Alumni Council, chair of the Bowdoin Career Advisory Network and as a member of the selection committee for Bowdoin's Athletic Hall of Honor. He earned a B.A. degree in English from Bowdoin, and a M.A. in English from George Mason University.



# Board of Trustees' Resolution

June 22, 2021

**Whereas** Ellis H. Glover has been employed by Westminster School in various capacities from 1976 to 2021, culminating in service as Headmaster from 1992 to 2021; and

**Whereas** Mr. Glover has been an outstanding leader, shaping the mission, philosophy, program, operation, and reputation of the school in myriad ways, including but not limited to the following:

- ▶ Served Westminster School for 45 years;
- ▶ Fostered a diverse community of students, faculty, and staff dedicated to the education and personal development of the whole child;
- ▶ Upheld the school's founding commitment to classical education while adapting it to meet 21st century needs, including the development of an up-to-date, forward-looking, school-wide technology program;
- ▶ Led in improving teacher salaries, benefits, and professional development opportunities;
- ▶ Established and developed an athletic program, including co-founding a league for competition among area schools;
- ▶ Elevated the arts program, including art and music classes in all grades, establishing an orchestra program, hosting art and poetry contests, talent shows, and dance classes;
- ▶ Established and developed the drama program, personally producing and directing more than 100 student productions, making drama a signature feature of the Westminster program;
- ▶ Ensured Westminster's leadership in community service, helping countless area residents in need and establishing Westminster's reputation throughout the giving community;
- ▶ Strove for and led capital development projects, including land acquisition that tripled the size of the campus and building the Jane L. Goll Center for Arts and Athletics;
- ▶ Established an advanced, high-quality preschool as a service to area families and as a feeder program for Westminster School.
- ▶ Guided the preservation of the school through numerous crises, ranging from attacks on the school's reputation and staff to a national financial recession to the Covid pandemic; and
- ▶ With great heart and wisdom, taught, counseled, guided, and otherwise cared for an evolving community of students, parents, and staff;

**Be It Resolved** that the Board of Trustees of Westminster School hereby bestows upon **Ellis H. Glover** the designation of **Headmaster Emeritus**, with all due respect and privileges.

**Be It Further Resolved** that, in honor of Mr. Glover's unparalleled efforts and achievements in drama at Westminster School, along with his personal establishment of the Gryphon Theater, both materially and in spirit, the Board of Trustees hereby renames this facility, henceforth to be designated

**The Ellis Glover Theatre.**





# Gratitude for the WPC: Past and Present

The Westminster Parents Club (WPC) is always a crucial part of the life of the school, but just like all other organizations during the pandemic, the club had to set aside or re-think its typical school-wide events and become even more creative than usual to keep the camaraderie alive throughout our community. Luckily for Westminster, most of the same devoted parents will remain on the WPC Executive Board for the 2021-2022 school year with the hopes that we will be able to reintroduce, though perhaps with modifications, some of the traditional activities that increase our bonds here. This committee is responsible for overseeing all the WPC's activities, including making decisions about what programs the WPC will offer and when and how to make donations to the school.

With deep appreciation to the 2020-2021 WPC Executive Board, the school thanks the following individuals for their dedication and flexibility, as well as for the gift of time that they invested in Westminster during a trying year:

- President: Reñee Hegens
- Vice President: Yvette Hannaway
- Acting Recording Secretary and Corresponding Secretary: Breanna Beach
- Treasurer: Leo Guerra
- Assistant Treasurer: Judith Lonkeng
- Parent Liaison: Sheila Sears
- The Griffin Academy Liaison: Salome Tewelde
- Information Resource Officer: Pamela Rodriguez
- Immediate Past President: Evelyn St. Clair



As the club's calendar evolves, the Executive Board will reach out to Westminster families throughout the year, so please become involved through volunteer opportunities or by taking part in WPC events or meetings.

For the 2021-2022 academic year, the WPC Executive Board welcomed two new members, while a core of veteran members continue to captain the ship. The school works with this stalwart team to strengthen the connections in the Westminster community through opportunities for fun and friendship. We are grateful for their generous willingness to serve.

- President: Yvette Hannaway
- Vice President: Herb Pinder
- Acting Recording Secretary: Reñee Hegens
- Treasurer: Judith Lonkeng
- Assistant Treasurer: Joe Nanda
- Parent Liaison: Sheila Sears
- The Griffin Academy Liaison: Salome Tewelde
- Information Resource Officer: Pamela Rodriguez
- Immediate Past President: Renee Hegens





# Devoted Westminster Dads

Not only does Westminster inspire the long-term dedication of staff members, but many parents have found that the school has become just as big a part of their lives as that of their children. Griffin Pride runs in the blood of the following two fathers who have gone above and beyond to give back to the school that has given their families so much.

Tom Foster's family is inextricably woven into the Westminster community. He is the proud father of three graduates, Victoria (Class of 2005), Samantha (Class of 2007), and Thomas (Class of 2009), and of two current students, eighth grader Madeleine and fifth grader Luke. Mr. Foster is the husband of Charlotte Foster, a steadfast Westminster faculty member, completing her twenty-third year of service as the upper-school English teacher, Sixth Grade Team Leader, and English Department Chair. His daughter, Samantha, teaches at Westminster as well, overseeing the middle school as the team leader and fulfilling the role of third through fifth grade English teacher. Not to rest on the laurels of his stellar family, Tom Foster has stepped forward and found his own role to play in the Westminster community, even in the midst of the busy professional life he has established.

After a six-year tour in the United States Marine Corps, Mr. Foster had developed technology skills while being stationed in top-secret military communications centers around the world. Using that background, he entered the software technology business, where he recognized the future of the Internet and opted to start a web design company. Mr. Foster ended up creating his own marketing automation software to allow his clients to update and maximize every aspect of their websites. His company, Foster Web Marketing, became a success across the country, and he grew into a nationally recognized author and speaker, sharing his knowledge of web marketing with a focus on the legal and medical industries.



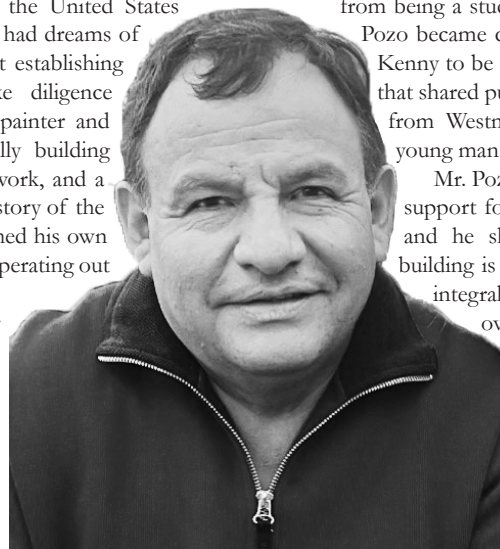
In the packed schedule of running his company, publishing books, appearing on television, and speaking at conferences as an internet marketing services expert, one might have assumed that Mr. Foster would not have a spare moment to invest in the school that his children attended. Never assume! Since the first time that he and his wife walked through Westminster's halls, they recognized what a special place this is and have sought to support the school's mission in all possible ways. Not only have Mr. and Mrs. Foster provided generous financial support, but more importantly, they have truly invested themselves in buoying up the institution. Mr. Foster served as a member of the Board of Trustees, and he has been a loyal friend to Mr. Glover, extending him stalwart support over the years.

Recognizing the importance of an internet presence in building Westminster's reputation at the turn of the 21st century, Mr. Foster generously and bigheartedly created Westminster School's first website, helping the organization to bridge the gap between its classical roots and a new technological age. In Fall 2021, as Westminster welcomed a dedicated STEAM instructor and installs a MakerSpace in a specialized classroom, the school recognizes the role that Mr. Foster played in helping us to balance our mission with the best that technology offers.

Many thanks to Mr. Foster for always standing by Westminster School and for being so giving of his time and talents for the benefit of the school community.

When William Pozo arrived in the United States from Peru many years ago, he had dreams of a better life, but he knew that establishing that life was going to take diligence and perseverance. He began working as a painter and expanded into home improvements, gradually building a reputation for attention to detail, efficient work, and a positive attitude with his customers. In a true story of the American dream, Mr. Pozo ultimately established his own business, William's Painting and Remodeling, operating out of Woodbridge, Virginia for the past decade.

Mr. Pozo came to Westminster School when his son, Kenny, was in second grade. Knowing that his son would benefit from the structure and routine of a school like this, Mr. Pozo recognized the value of the financial investment in a Westminster education. He wanted to give his son the gift of not only the elevated academic instruction, but also the self-discipline that he would gain



from being a student here. Over the years, Mr. Glover and Mr. Pozo became close friends as they worked together in raising Kenny to be the best young man he could be. In June 2021, that shared purpose came to fruition as Kenny was graduated from Westminster School, an intelligent, talented, caring young man bound for Flint Hill High School.

Mr. Pozo has continually expressed his gratitude to and support for the school and its administration and faculty, and he shares the school's philosophy that character building is crucial to a child's education. He has been an integral part of the physical maintenance of the school over the years, working with his team on painting and other projects throughout the building. His support of Westminster's mission is now built into the very structure of the school.

Deep appreciation goes to Mr. Pozo for his friendship and his enduring support for Westminster School and for the labor and love that he has invested in that cause.





# 2020-2021 DONATIONS



## THANK YOU FOR HELPING "THE GRIFFINS RISE!"

### ANNUAL GIVING TOTAL\* : \$94,561.72

#### EMERITUS LEAGUE

**\$5,000+**

Mr. and Mrs. Mark Carter  
Mr. Daniel and Mrs. Yuko Girdwood on behalf of Taisho Girdwood  
Mr. Ellis Glover  
Miss Mojan Nourbakhsh (BOT)  
Mr. and Mrs. David Schuler  
WPC- Donation

#### FOUNDER'S SOCIETY

**\$2,500-\$4,999**

Mr. and Mrs. David Breen (BOT)/DMB Foundation  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Goldsmith  
Mr. and Mrs. Michael Townsend

#### HEAD OF SCHOOL'S CIRCLE

**\$1,000-\$2,499**

Mr. and Mrs. David Bredbenner  
Mr. and Mrs. James Dann  
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Mr. and Mrs. Keith Fulk (BOT)  
Ms. Susan Glazier  
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Amazon Smiles Purchases  
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Dr. Marco Castro and Dr. Brigid Castro  
Mr. and Mrs. Luis Chalmeta  
Mr. John Cibinic  
Dr. Peter Dodson and Ms. Marice Werth  
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Mr. and Mrs. Mark Russo  
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Mr. and Mrs. Bradley Todd  
Mr. and Mrs. Scott Wallis

#### LAUREL PATRONS

**\$250-\$499**

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Mr. Jegnow Alemu and Mrs. Mekdes Shani  
Mr. Abel Awgichew  
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Dr. Sujeeta Bhatt and Mr. Eric Needy  
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#### IVY DONORS

**\$100-\$249**

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Anonymous - Ronald ?  
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Ms. Samantha Foster  
Ms. Kori Friedman  
Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Grant  
Mrs. Nana Guerra  
Mr. and Mrs. Hans Hammer  
Mr. Daniel Hay in memory of Carol Griffin, Sean Griffin's mother  
Ms. Amanda Hinton  
Mrs. Kay Hoyt  
Ms. Pamela Hunter  
Mrs. Kathryn Jacobson  
Mr. and Mrs. Brian Kane  
Mr. Sung Min Kim and Mrs. Nakyung Ahn, w June  
Mr. and Mrs. Savant Lavu  
Ms. Heidi Levine in memory of Carol Griffin, Sean Griffin's mother  
Ms. Li Li  
Mr. Matthew Locke  
Mr. and Mrs. David Lundgren in Memory of Ruth Glover Weller  
Mr. and Mrs. Phong Mai  
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Mrs. Sylvie Peev  
Mr. Michael and Mrs. Maria Polchert  
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#### GRIFFIN CLUB

##### Up to \$99

Mr. Zebulon Anderson  
 Anonymous grocery check out  
 Anonymous through Facebook  
 Ms. Shannon Barna in memory of Carol Griffin, mother of Sean Griffin  
 Mr. Rachid Boudad and Mrs. Lamia Najem  
 Mr. and Mrs. Richard Browning  
 Ms. Sara Caltrider  
 Mr. and Mrs. Atul Damle  
 Ms. Danielle Davy  
 Mr. Rafael Diaz and Mrs. Soledad Requejo  
 Mrs. Taryn Ellmyer  
 Ms. Fatima Khalid  
 Ms. Rebecca Mize  
 Mr. Yasir Mubarrick and Mrs. Naheed Ejaz  
 Mr. Christophe Poyad  
 Ms. Teresa Simmons  
 Ms. Ellen Turner



The **Annual Giving Fund** comprises all donations to Westminster School. This fund is a vital component of the school's income and continued success as an independent school. While tuition pays for the basic program and operation of Westminster, The Annual Giving Fund helps lift school offerings above "basic," and directly benefits the students during the school year in a number of important ways:

- To enhance technology, learning materials, curriculum expansions, and field trips/activities that support our teachers' efforts and our students' experience inside and outside the classroom;
- To further develop capital projects.
- To help fund scholarships for outstanding students from the surrounding community who would not otherwise receive the life-changing gift of a classical education.

# THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS!

## GRYPHON LEGACY FUND\* : \$22,600

On the occasion of Mr. Glover's retirement in 2021, Westminster's Board of Trustees established the Gryphon Legacy Fund to help ensure the growth and success of the school. This fund is designed to further the mission of the school by providing project-based support, beyond the annual budget, for the programs and spaces that are so critical to the fabric of a Westminster School education. Projects supported by this fund will be identified by the Head of School and approved by the Board of Trustees before being implemented. Donations may be made freely or in recognition of outstanding members of the community, such as retirees, current staff, graduating classes, alumni, or current staff members and students.

#### EMERITUS LEAGUE

##### \$5,000+

Dr. Marco Castro and Dr. Brigid Castro  
 Mr. John Murray  
 Mr. and Mrs. David Schuler

#### FOUNDER'S SOCIETY

##### \$2,500-\$4,999

Mr. and Mrs. Keith Fulk (BOT)

#### HEAD OF SCHOOL'S CIRCLE

##### \$1,000-\$2,499

Ms. Susan Glazier

#### IVY DONORS

##### \$100-\$249

Ms. Sara Dudine  
 Dr. and Mrs. Steven Burnett

#### GRIFFIN CLUB

##### Up to \$99

Ms. Li Li  
 Mr. Nathaniel Smith



**Scan Here to Donate Now!**



# ALUMNI NEWS



**Samira Abbasi**, a distinguished member of the Class of 2018, has built upon the Westminster training she had in public speaking and in the Gryphon Theatre. A stellar competitor in speech and debate at the national level, Samira earned several honors for her presentation this past year, which explored the detriments of using whiteness to measure others' cultural authenticity. She finished as a semifinalist (top fourteen in the country) at the National Speech and Debate Association Nationals, a semifinalist (top twelve in the country) at the National Catholic Forensic League Grand Nationals, and a semifinalist (top twelve in the country) at the Tournament of Champions. Samira also finished in second place as the tournament runner-up at both Yale University and George Mason University. She was a quarterfinalist at both the Harvard University and Glenbrook tournaments. Her high GPA, ACT score, and competition results led to her recognition as an Academic All-American within the debate league.

Members of the Class of 2016, **Maryam Abbasi and Sara Abbasi** graduated from The Potomac School in 2020. At Potomac, both young women were nationally ranked debaters and three-time qualifiers for the Tournament of Champions. Maryam is in her second year at Barnard College of Columbia University where she is on the executive board of the

historically significant Columbia Debate Society and continues to be a competitive debater. Sara is a sophomore at Cornell University and intends to debate for the school's team as well. Both Sara and Maryam have explored the political science realm through internships with Virginia's U.S. senators, Mark Warner and Tim Kaine.

Not only are the three Abbasi sisters shining in the academic realm, but they are also flexing their altruistic muscles. Maryam founded a non-profit organization, GirlsConnect, which aims to provide computers to all-girls schools around the world. With the support of all three sisters behind the project, they managed to raise funds to purchase six new desktop computers for Maryam High School in Kabul, Afghanistan. In Spring 2019, GirlsConnect donated new computers and toiletries to Education for All, which benefits girls from the rural Atlas Mountain region of Morocco. The Abbasi sisters were able to travel to Morocco in March 2019 to distribute the donations. A year later, GirlsConnect partnered with Project Turquoise, which aids Syrian refugees, and distributed several of their excess computers to Afghan refugees in the D.C. area to enable them to participate in distance learning during the pandemic.



## 2017



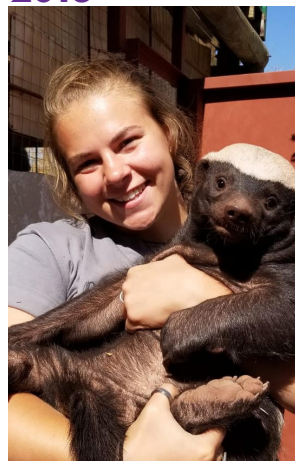
**Sara Ghanbari**, graduate of the Westminster School Class of 2017, was recently honored for her academic excellence as the valedictorian of Bishop O'Connell High School's Class of 2021. Her Griffin family remembers her as an enthusiastic, hard-working member of our community, and those qualities have blossomed over the last four years. She was an avid track and cross-country runner during high school and participated in two mission trips to Peru, which she describes as a "life changing experience." Sara is attending the University of California, Los Angeles, to begin pre-law studies. In her valedictory address to her classmates, she reflected, "This has been a tough year for us. I hope that we will look back and realize that this year has made us stronger in ways that we might not recognize now."

## 2015

**Ashley Owusu**, Westminster Class of 2015, is a junior guard on the University of Maryland's Big Ten women's basketball team. Her college career opened strong when she was named the 2020 Big Ten Freshman of the Year. As a sophomore in 2021, Ashley won the Ann Meyers Drysdale Award for the nation's top shooting guard, and earned All-

Big Ten First Team honors, as well as All-America honors from the Associated Press. She finished second in the Big Ten in assists and seventh in scoring. In Spring 2021, Ashley was named Co-MVP of the Big Ten Tournament, which her team won. Her efforts helped the team to rise to the Sweet Sixteen in the NCAA Tournament. While her opponents might "Fear the Turtle," we have nothing but love, pride, and admiration for Ashley and her skills.

## 2013



Many of the Class of 2013 Griffins celebrated their college graduations in Spring 2021, but one of them reached that milestone a bit early. **Julia Utting** was graduated from Virginia Tech with a Bachelor of Science in Animal and Poultry Sciences in May 2020. She is currently a second-year veterinary student, working on a dual Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) and a Master of Public Health (MPH), both at Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine. After four years of vet school in May 2024, she plans to move into a career in One Health (human, animal, and environment health). Julia's focus lies in wildlife health and zoonotic diseases, and this summer, she is completing an internship with the Centers for Disease Control One Health Office, working on zoonotic disease data.

As part of her undergraduate work, Julia had the privilege to study abroad in Botswana where her passion for African wildlife was born, including her love for the bush baby and honey badger she is pictured with here. She dreams of returning to the continent to complete a zoo/wildlife residency program after vet school.

Julia is a school ambassador for both her DVM and MPH programs and would be happy to connect with any Westminster students or alumni who have an interest in becoming a veterinarian. Congratulations, Julia, for your impressive work and our gratitude goes out to you for striving to make this world a happier and healthier place for all its creatures.



After nine years as a Griffin, **Mojdeh Nourbakhsh**, Westminster Class of 2013, attended George C. Marshall High School and flourished there as captain of the field hockey team, a member of an internationally competitive dance team, and a member of multiple National Honor Societies, earning an International Baccalaureate diploma in 2017 along with the Marshall Star, bestowed upon the most ethical, well-rounded, and enthusiastic students.

Mojdeh went on to Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech), majoring in Biological Science with a minor in Psychology. She was active in the Panhellenic community, serving as vice president of her sorority and Director of Risk among the Panhellenic executives. She also served as a recruitment guide advising potential new sorority members. In the last year, Mojdeh served as one of two students on a thirteen member Access and Equity Advisory Committee of the National Panhellenic Council, working to strengthen diversity and inclusion throughout the Greek community nation-wide. For her work in this capacity, she earned the Order of Omega Outstanding Sorority Legacy Award, the highest honor for a woman in the Greek community.

Additionally, Mojdeh served on Virginia Tech's Title IX Advisory Board, ensuring justice and safety for students who have experienced sexual violence and assault. She is a member of the Student Alumni Associates who bridge the gap between university alumni and current students at Virginia Tech by working at school events such as football games and reunions or hosting spirit rallies for students.

Mojdeh used her free time as a volunteer at a local elementary school with College Mentors for Kids to introduce underserved children to opportunities and interests in education and future careers.

As a college senior, Mojdeh served on the Homecoming Court, campaigning for Prayosha, an organization dedicated to providing girls in Mumbai, India, a full education so that they can pursue the profession of their dreams. She won the title of "Homecoming Royalty," which included a grant of \$1,000 for Prayosha.

In May 2021, Mojdeh graduated from Virginia Tech, and went on to pursue a master's degree in Health Sciences in Mental Health at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in Baltimore, Maryland. This professional path seems to be the ideal combination of Mojdeh's impressive work ethic, admirable leadership skills, and inexhaustible passion for helping others.

Mojdeh recognizes that her time at Westminster laid the bedrock of knowledge and self-discipline that made her academic success possible, but she sees an effect far beyond that. The best friends she made on the first day of kindergarten at Westminster are still the people she relies on and trusts the most. That support system has been a gift. Mojdeh also explains that Westminster "teachers and staff taught me that I do not need to be the smartest person in the room to make the biggest impact," and that has given her confidence and motivation in her life.

If she could give advice to current students, Mojdeh would tell them to "take advantage of every activity and opportunity" during their Westminster years. "No other organization or school will afford you this enriching gift... Don't ever feel you are 'too cool' to participate and engage in these opportunities because you will miss out on the life-changing impact of it." To current and future parents, Mojdeh assures, "You will not find any other school, public or private, where the school partners with you and offers your child the chance to grow and recognize their individual value and full potential."

Mojdeh's work, generosity, and ambition are a credit to her family and to all the schools that have nurtured her. Her Westminster family is deeply proud of her!

Feel free to share any Alumni  
news by emailing Kate  
Jacobson at

**KJacobson@westminsterschool.com**



## Class of 2003 in the Classroom



Many Westminster graduates have been inspired to establish careers in the realm of academia. After beginning her work as a teacher in Westminster's English department, **Claire Holman**, Class of 2003, now teaches eighth-grade English at the Bullis School in Potomac, Maryland, where in June 2021, she was honored with the David S. Stone Foundation Excellence in Teaching Award in recognition of her contributions as an educator.



Another Class of 2003 member who heard the call of the classroom is **Martha Crockett**, whose career in education is rising to new heights. After teaching in and chairing Westminster's Language Department, Martha headed to Connecticut in 2016 to teach French and Latin at Miss Porter's School. In addition to her classroom responsibilities, she served as a dorm supervisor, soccer and basketball coach, and class dean. She had the opportunity to lead student groups to France and Vietnam, as part of the InterMission program. In Spring 2020, she was accepted into a PhD program at The College of William and Mary, with a focus on K-12 Educational Policy, Planning, and

Leadership. She is a full-time student and supports Project HOPE and the EdD program as part of her graduate assistantships.

It is deeply gratifying for all their Westminster teachers and colleagues to hear about the positive effect that Martha and Claire are having as educators.

## 1983



**Dan Prieto** attended Westminster School from 1975 to 1981, and though he left Westminster after sixth grade, would have been a member of the Class of 1983. Dan currently lives in Maryland with his wife and two daughters and has established an impressive and impactful career in his field. He is head of cybersecurity strategy for Google Cloud's global public sector business and also serves as an adjunct senior fellow at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs. Prior to his role at Google, Dan worked in President Obama's administration as Director for Cybersecurity Policy in the White House on the staff of the National Security Council. Before that he served as Chief Technology Officer in the office of the Department of Defense CIO.

Dan fondly remembers the time that he, his brother, and his sister spent at Westminster, learning under the leadership and guidance of Mrs. Goll. He and his brother have recently taken part in the springtime parent and alumni basketball game during Westminster's annual Spirit Week, renewing their connection to this special place.

Make sure you subscribe to the *Westminster Weekly* to keep up with current happenings around the school. Email [Office@westminsterschool.com](mailto:Office@westminsterschool.com) and we will add you to the email list.

## *A Loving Tribute to Mrs. Nancy Potts*



In Spring 2021, the school community lost a devoted former faculty member, Mrs. Nancy Potts, who served as the physical education teacher at Westminster School from September 1968 until June 1980.

Head of School and Westminster graduate, Nancy Schuler, fondly remembers being Mrs. Potts' student and recalls, "[Mrs. Potts] had a great laugh and was always cheerful. She expected a lot of us and required us to try everything, but she was very loving and so kind to all of us." Ellis Glover was Mrs. Potts' colleague at Westminster prior to his term as headmaster and recalls that she was always dignified and courteous as she worked to assist Mrs. Goll in establishing the roots of the physical education program during the early years of the school.

A native of West Virginia, Mrs. Potts was inducted into the Hinton High School Sports Hall of Fame in honor of her achievements as a basketball player and cheerleader. She graduated from Madison College (now James Madison University) in 1958 with a degree in Elementary Physical Education. After her marriage to William Potts in 1960, they settled in Holmes Run Acres in Fairfax County until 1980, when they relocated to Pennsylvania for a time. Returning to Virginia to be closer to family in the late 1990s, she served as a bus driver in the Fairfax County Public School System until 2014 when she retired. Mrs. Potts passed away in May 2021.

Mrs. Potts is survived by her two children, Rebecca Potts Campbell and Rick William Potts, along with his wife, Rachel, and her four grandsons. Her family remembers her for her love of baking, playing bridge, bowling, bird watching, gardening, sewing, drawing, and especially swimming. But most importantly and not surprisingly given the time she spent at Westminster nurturing student-athletes, she was a passionate fan at her grandsons' sporting activities where she never missed a game.

Mrs. Potts' love for athletics and her desire to instill that passion for sport in the next generation was an integral part of her life, and she certainly fulfilled that goal during her years at Westminster School. Our community remembers her with gratitude for her service and love for her commitment and generosity. We send her family comfort in the beautiful memories of a life well-lived and defined by the time and affection she gave to others.

## *A Loving Tribute to Matthew Yip*



The Westminster community is sad to share that Matthew Yip of the Class of 1980 passed away unexpectedly at his home in November 2021. His longtime friend and fellow Westminster alum, Wei-Tai Kwok, Class of 1977, remembers Mr. Yip as "very fun and funny, extremely considerate and loving" and valued the steadfast friendship between their families over the decades. Not only was Mr. Yip a student at Westminster, but he also loyally worked on the school's Board of Trustees from 1992-93. We send our heartfelt condolences to his friends and family and remember him fondly for his service to the school.





# CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

Westminster School

Dear Friends of Westminster School,

The school year is Westminster's Diamond Jubilee—marking 60 years of outstanding educational service to the Northern Virginia community. As friends of the school, you already know about Westminster's unique blend of challenge and nurture, its classical curriculum, well-rounded program, emphasis on the arts, and its core focus on the personal development of each student. You have shown your appreciation and support of Westminster with loyalty and generosity. You stand with us in wanting to spread the word about our amazing school.

This year, our promotional program features the tag line, "What if . . .," asking prospective parents to imagine the answers to questions such as: What if going to school felt like coming home? What if boundless energy and bubbling curiosity met with days full of activity and learning? What if budding talents found thrilling outlets? As we promote our 2021-2022 fundraising year, we ask you a comparable question:

What if Westminster School lasts another 60 years? Where do we want to go? How do we want to grow?

- Install that long-planned-for athletic field?
- Build a new upper-school wing, including expanded technology, art, and science labs?
- Establish a dynamic program of technology in the arts, including photography, graphic art, video and film making?
- Expand Westminster's drama program to include summer theater for enrolled and non-enrolled students?
- Expand our fundraising to enable Westminster to establish an endowment fund?

The past 60 years have brought extraordinary developments for Westminster School. Among our proudest accomplishments is our vibrant, diverse, and loyal community—united by a shared experience of this extraordinary school. As we celebrate the achievements of the past 60 years, let's ask what we will take with us into the future? What will we add? How will we finance our dreams? Westminster needs the partnership of its extended community. When you receive this year's fundraising appeals, please give generously. Together, let's turn all those "ifs" into "whens."

With warm regard,

Nancy Schuler

Head of School

Keith W. Fulk

Chair, Board of Trustees



We plan to celebrate Westminster's 60 years of excellence in education with an all-school, outdoor festival on June 11, 2022.

The entire Westminster School community is invited to celebrate all that has been accomplished in the past 60 years and to imagine and plan for the next 60! Mark your calendar and plan to bring the entire family. This event will include many fun attractions for the children, special presentations and acknowledgements, and a celebration of all things Westminster, including our amazing, diverse community. Please help to spread the word to graduates and friends of the school! More details coming soon!





*Westminster School*

3819 Gallows Road Annandale, Virginia 22003

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