

# SEVEN QUESTIONS WITH....

## JEAN BRUNE, PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, AIMS

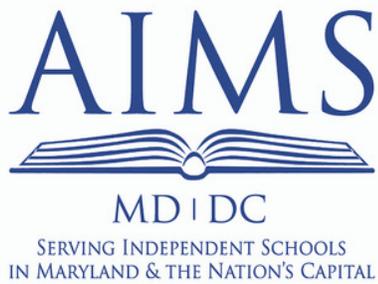


### **Tell us how you first got involved in with AIMS?**

I began teaching at Gilman in 1968 and went to my first AIMS conference that year, so that was my first official involvement with AIMS! I was on the first Accreditation team at Harford Day School (I think it was the first when we were beta testing the first AIMS Accreditation document). But I am a graduate of Roland Park Country School in 1960 as was my mother in 1933 and my daughter in 1984, so I have a long affiliation with Maryland independent schools.

### **What's your first memory of being a Head of School?**

I don't know what my first memory was -- I have several from the first week(s) at RPCS in 1992. The first was being excited/honored/privileged to be Head at my own alma mater (and from which my mother and daughter also graduated), but RPCS had moved to its current location in 1980, so it was not the same campus from which I had graduated, so another early memory is having to find my way around a new campus. One time I found myself in a part of the School that I had not even known existed! That was so disorienting for me, that I used it always to help teachers new to RPCS know that I understood how strange they might feel for the first few months as they acclimated to our school. Another early memory was the excitement that the students wanted me to bring my dog to school. The editor of the School newspaper wrote her first editorial about why my dog should be part of RPCS! I loved it, and that dog came every day from then on. When she died (at age 16 plus), I then brought my new puppy who grew up at RPCS and was actually named by the students!



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## **What has surprised you most about working with schools and or students?**

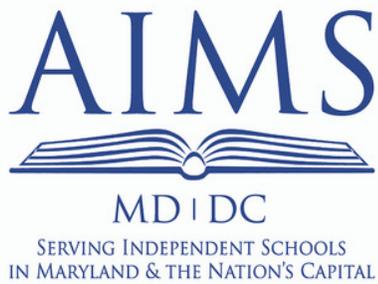
I grew up wanting to be a teacher, and in all the years (over 50) that I have been working in schools (parochial, public and independent), I have never wanted to be anything else. I grew professionally from being a classroom teacher to eventually becoming a senior administrator and ultimately Head of School, but I have always kept teaching as the primary motivation for everything I have done. While I called myself "Head of School" at RPCS, I think "headmaster/headmistress" was a fundamental part of how I led the School. What has always also pleased me, is how wonderful students are! They have taught me so much and kept me young at heart and made it possible for me to be a lifetime learner.

## **What do you find most challenging about independent education?**

I think the greatest challenge is also the greatest strength --that we are independent and autonomous. One of the benefits of being a member of AIMS is that it brings each of our independent schools together for collegiality, for sharing of common problems/concerns/issues/ideas/solutions and for professional development. Being an independent school brings freedom AND responsibility. Being a member of AIMS means that you do not stand isolated and alone.

## **Tell us about someone who has influenced your work?**

The person who comes first to mind is Reddy Finney, Head of Gilman from 1968-1992. Not only did he give me many professional opportunities and outstanding advice, he was also the best mentor and role model for how to be a leader in education, how to keep the students in the forefront of all decision making, and how to both listen and also be decisive. I know no one with more integrity, more compassion or more commitment to the well-being of students. It was a privilege to serve under his leadership for the 24 years I taught at Gilman. In tough times, I always think, "what would Reddy advise?"



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## **What might AIMS Members be surprised to know about you?**

I have been in education in AIMS schools for 48 years! I'm not sure that there is anything left to discover about me! Most people know how I love to vacation at my home in Vermont - that has been a refuge for me from the busy-ness of School life.

I am also a devoted grandmother of two wonderful girls who are now in 10th and 12th grade at The Ethel Walker School - an independent school in Simsbury, Connecticut.

## **You recently retired as Head of Roland Park School in Baltimore after 24 years there and 24 at Gilman before that. If you weren't serving at AIMS, what would you be doing instead, or what would your life be like?**

I feel privileged to be serving as the President of the AIMS Board of Trustees and very happy to have such a meaningful way to stay closely involved with the teaching and learning of the independent schools in the Maryland/DC area. I started school myself when I was 3 years old, and started teaching as soon as I graduated from college, so I actually have no memory of not being in school!

While I have looked forward to retiring (and have enjoyed these first weeks of retirement immensely), I knew that I still wanted to be connected in some intentional and meaningful way with schools. Being part of AIMS provides just that perfect opportunity. I am also honored to be serving on the boards of The Jemicy School in Owings Mills and The Country School in Easton. I am also looking forward to continuing to work with the Lillie May Carroll Jackson Charter School because my commitment to education goes beyond independent schools.