

SEVEN QUESTIONS WITH....

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How did you first get involved with AIMS?

My first contact with AIMS would've been some years ago when at an NAES national conference in San Francisco I met the inimitable Judy Robbins, long-time Head of St. John's Parish Day School. Judy was on the board. Last summer Peter Baily reached out very warmly to me and, learning of my love of sporting dogs and hounds, sent me photographs of his tri-color coon hounds with assurance that we'll get hounds and setters together for a romp.

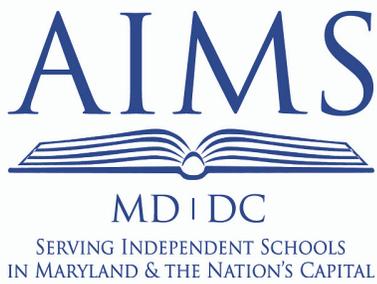
What's your first memory of being a Head of School?

This is a hard question! I have so many memories of my first several weeks as a new head in 2010. One memory is that I realized in short order that what experienced

heads told me about "too much time spent on personnel matters" is so very true! I recall that, at my first all-faculty meeting, not one soul asked a question, which unnerved me to no end. (Perhaps they were zombied by the coke floats.) I also remember my boss the board chair telling me that the trustees were fired up about becoming a truly mission-driven organization; so that made me feel as if I'd died and gone to Heaven.

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

I think that what surprises me the most - over and over again - is the cornucopia of imagination, inspiration, dreaming big, and human talent I encounter in our schools, both students and staff. The respect and Good Will of most of our students brings me almost to my knees in gratitude.



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What's the one thing you'd change about independent schools?

So often our schools are so really excellent and yet we have to beg for resources. Thus I would gain some public funding for our schools. It seems to me obvious that the best independent and private schools in America have a very public purpose. But we have a curious understanding of citizenship in the United States which makes us one of the few modernized nations that withholds financial support from families that choose non-public schools for religious and other important reasons. I'm deathly afraid of the rising cost of our schools, and it does not in fact have to be this way.

What do you wish other people knew about AIMS?

The Mid-Atlantic area is such an entirely interesting and diverse independent school region that AIMS is serving a most fascinating phenomenon in education.

What might AIMS members be surprised to know about you?

Many people are surprised that I am learning to play the harmonica and supported a band in that manner in the Texas Hill Country. I can make all sorts of bird sounds on a blade of grass. People might be surprised to learn that I'm a proud Trustee of Saint James School, St. James, Maryland, and the Editor-in-Chief of that noble institution's 175th Anniversary History.

If you weren't serving as a Head of School, what would you be doing instead - or what would your life be like?

This may demonstrate my insanity, but I can't imagine not being in school leadership and I enjoy headmastering on most days. If I weren't doing this, I suppose I would be teaching History or Literature, and coaching football, in a school or a college. But this teaching-coaching gig would have to be worked around learning how to play the blues harp, working with bird dogs, writing poetry and fiction, selling used books and sporting art, learning how to jump over timber with a horse, and keeping up with farm chores in Virginia with my dear wife (who is far more interesting than I am).