

SEVEN QUESTIONS WITH....

DR. PAUL BARKER, HEAD OF OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL

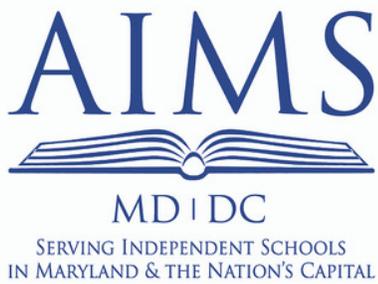


How did you first get involved with AIMS?

Bob Mattingly, former Director of Accreditation Services, invited me to serve on the Accreditation Committee (now the Commission on Accreditation) and I am in my fourth year of that service.

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

I started as Head at The John Carroll School on July 1, 2001. This is not exactly the very first memory but the very first time I was to address the entire student body was going to be at the conclusion of the opening of school liturgy held in the gym on the morning of September 11, 2001. I was all set to impress the students with a few words of wisdom. During the priest's homily, one of my guidance counselors came and whispered in my ear that a plane had crashed into the World Trade Center. He returned later with news of subsequent events. My very first address to the gathered student body was to disclose what we knew. We had many families that routinely had business at the Pentagon. We later learned that one of our freshmen lost her father in New York; he was on a business appointment at Marsh & McClennan, high up in One World Trade Center. With the help of a fantastic team of colleagues I think we were able to be a great source of comfort and support for our students. Like most of us in schools that day, it will not be one I forget.



SEVEN QUESTIONS WITH....

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

I shouldn't be surprised because I have seen it so often but it is always thrilling to see students do stunning things. It's that big voice you never anticipated at a choral concert. It's the engineering presentation that makes you feel like your own level of high school science learning was kinda pitiful. It's the energy and commitment and camaraderie in mobilizing to make a difference in the fight against cancer. It's the lofty college scholarship for the student coming from a chaotic home situation.

What do you find most challenging about independent education?

Perhaps it's the time of year as we await a clearer picture of what enrollment will look like for 2017-18. The competition and what sometimes feels like an "arms race" can be challenging. Just as they do at the college level, parents and students demand the newest and best in exchange for their tuition dollar. It's understandable. We have a marketplace full of fantastic schools and a highly reputable public school system. We have to be on our toes all the time.

Tell us about someone who has influenced your work.

Not someone, but a place. Back in 1990, I stumbled across a brochure for the Graduate Institute at St. John's College, Annapolis. I could hardly believe you could get a degree talking with others about the Great Books. The experience of four summers at St. John's changed the way I think about teaching and learning. Many years later, I had a great experience getting a doctorate from Penn but nothing tops the influence of the St. John's way on my work as an educator.

AIMS



MD | DC

SERVING INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS
IN MARYLAND & THE NATION'S CAPITAL

SEVEN QUESTIONS WITH....

What might AIMS members be surprised to know about you?

I have run several natural history adventure trips for students including Okefenokee Swamp five times and Belize twice. Right now, I am putting together a whale-watching trip in Baja for spring break 2018.

If you weren't serving as a Head of School.....

I'd be teaching a literature class somewhere. Of course, my fantasy job would be as race caller at Churchill Downs.