

Joni Lacefield Towles • Atlanta, Georgia

My Westminster journey started in 7th grade. I went to several elementary schools (Guy Webb and High Point) K-3rd and Trinity School 4th-6th. The transition to Westminster wasn't bad since many other students started that year and several Trinity classmates came to Westminster including Lyn Allgood, Sally Almand, David Flack, John Frazier, Libby Freeman, Adam Frey, John Jones, Bert Rayle, Janet Upshaw and Brice Williams (came in 8th) (Forgive me if I've forgotten anybody).

One of the best teachers I had at Westminster was Ms. Fleming who taught 7th grade history. I wasn't fond of the subject because it just seemed to require a lot of memorization, but she was an amazing teacher! Other junior high memories include Ms. Nolan and Latin (my mother insisted I take Latin and, after switching to French, I realized that Latin was great because there were fewer exceptions!). Junior High also makes me think of reading *The Fountainhead*; for some reason, I felt very grown-up reading this!

I am proud of receiving the Math award (Jane, I know, you always give me grief about this!) and the Typing award (thank you, Mrs. Brake – at one point, I could type 100+ words per minute on a manual typewriter; I even earned some money in college typing law students' papers!)

Other random memories of Westminster include:
• Girls couldn't wear jeans and I was sent to Dr. Flaschka's office during exams for wearing them (they weren't even jeans but denim-colored pants!).
• Skirts couldn't be shorter than where your fingers hit on your thighs but being the 70s there were no hair length restrictions for the boys!
• Spend the night parties at the Upshaw's.
• Mr. Purdum's class and reading *The Great Gatsby*; I had always liked to read but he encouraged us to write freely and expressively.
• Assemblies in McCain Chapel with Dr. Pressly reciting Psalm 24 in his southern, genteel voice – "the oeth (earth) is the Lord's and the fullness thereof..."
• Mrs. Villar – calling me "Yanni" with that scary raised eyebrow! I never liked geometry – didn't make sense to me like other math.
• The "experiment" of having co-ed English classes – I had a class with Mr. Scott in the basement of the Boys' School (it stunk!).
• Ms. Smith and French – I got in over my head and ended up (wrongly!) in AP French my Junior year with Oscar Bonner. We were supposed to read novels in French – I couldn't understand a paragraph! Took the AP exam and got a 1 (I think for signing my name). Sorry, Westminster, for messing up the AP stats that year!
• Petitioning the administration to have a Calculus class for girls our Senior year – Commander Reider taught it; not sure how much we learned but I was proud of the fact that girls who wanted to take it could.
• Hanging with friends – Kathleen, Janet, Sally, Wayne, Eleanor, Donna, and others.
• Senior year = FUN!! Somehow the 7 Steers bull ended up on the Administration Building front lawn!!; reading *The Last Temptation of Christ* with the new Bible teacher (who I think only lasted one year) and the final exam question was: "Why" and you were not allowed to answer: "Why not?"; going to concerts at the Electric Ballroom, Great Southeast Music Hall and other venues with Donna Schneidewind (I still can't believe our mothers let us do that!) May you rest in peace, Donna.



With Donna Schneidewind Gilli



With Janet Upshaw, Kathleen King, and Sally Almand



Our family at Christmas

After Westminster, I went to Vanderbilt and double majored in Mathematics and Business Administration. I've had several careers, including investment analyst for Robinson-Humphrey and Trust Company (the old names!), Alumni Director and Annual Fund Director at Westminster, and most recently, I had a college counseling business for 16 years before I retired in 2020. I married David Towles (class of 1973) and we have two children who live in Atlanta: Elizabeth and her husband, Jason, and their son Evan (three) and David and his wife, Ansley, and their two boys - Brooks (six) and Walker (three). We are building a house in Blue Ridge, GA, where I hope to spend a lot of time and enjoy "old people" hobbies like spending time with my family, playing bridge, golfing and needlepointing!

I know I am "preaching to the choir" when I say this, but I firmly believe that we should live each day to the fullest and with intention. I am grateful to Westminster for the education and friends I have but am sad that I feel the school is vastly different than the one we attended. But let's remember the fond memories and the "good ole days" as we celebrate our 50th!