2008 Faculty and Staff Distinguished Service Award
Michael Teitelman

With a master’s degree in teaching from Brown University, Michael Teitelman charted a notable career as a teacher and administrator in both public and independent education. His achievements as head of Graland Country Day School in Englewood, Colorado, as well as his strategic vision for Bishop’s, so impressed the search committee that they unanimously recommended him as the tenth Head of School of The Bishop’s School in April 1983, and the Board of Trustees agreed.

When Mike joined Bishop’s in 1983, his family quickly became part of the community. Mike and Marlene’s sons, Mark and Jeff, were twelve and fourteen when the family moved to La Jolla and both soon became part of the student body. Marlene immersed herself in life at Bishop’s, deftly fulfilling the countless responsibilities as headmaster’s spouse and serving as Mike’s partner and sounding board during an extraordinary tenure that would span twenty-five years.

Mike brought with him a unique sense of leadership: He managed the school like a business, the classrooms like an educator, and the people with artistry. He understood that Bishop’s three A’s – academics, arts, and athletics – were paramount in the life of the School. His abilities nurtured a campus culture that was entrepreneurial and motivational. Throughout the years, this esprit de corps led to a school of singular strength and an ever-growing list of achievements.

Progress and enterprise at Bishop’s would not be possible without the proper financial support, which Mike made a priority from his first day. He immediately took steps to bolster the School’s education mission through financial strength, growth in facilities, and incremental plans for improvement. With the first strategic plan in 1984 and in the years since, Mike and the Board of Trustees set new standards for quality of education, endowment, student diversity, and more. Plans were created that called for increasing operating funds and the School’s endowment, allowing Bishop’s to expand academic and athletic programs, attract
the best faculty, increase diversity, and upgrade and renovate the School’s infrastructure. Through the combined leadership of Mike and the Trustees, a vision took shape of what was needed to successfully move the School through the Twentieth Century and into the twenty-first.

To implement these changes, fundraising at Bishop’s entered a new era, and the results during Mike’s tenure have been nothing short of remarkable. Annual giving increased from $60,000 in 1984 to $1.9 million in 2007 and the endowment grew from $900,000 in 1984 to $27 million in 2007. Critical scholarship support for students increased from $90,000 in 1984 to $2.6 million in 2008.

The footprint of the campus also changed during the “Teitelman years.” Building projects under Mike include the Taylor Performing Arts Center, the Emily Fenton Hunte Black ’28 Computer Center, the Ellen Brown Scripps Davis ’28 Language Laboratory, the Hunte Fields at the Fowler Athletic Complex, the parking structure, the relocation and renovation of the Reading Room (now the Volunteer Center), and the Michael & Marlene Teitelman Science Center.

Another of Mike’s talents has been his ability to create a community, and every year hundreds of volunteers show an unparalleled determination to help Bishop’s. Knowing the value an auction can have as a friend raiser and a fundraiser, Mike turned to the Parents’ Association to organize the first auction on campus. From a modest start in the athletic center in 1985 through today’s event under a large tent on the Quad, the auction has become the school’s signature fund raising event. In recent years it has provided over $1 million in much-needed funds for student scholarships and faculty enrichment.

For twenty-five years Mike has attended every dance, sporting event, play, concert, parent dinner-conference-meeting, and been a counselor and friend for students, parents, faculty and staff, while remaining true to the vision of the School’s founders. His passion for children and his commitment to educating the whole child has never wavered. Watching “his kids” graduate and go on to be successful, responsible young adults brings him the greatest pleasure. For being a remarkable steward of The Bishop’s School for one-quarter of the School’s history, we are honored to present Headmaster Michael Teitelman with the Faculty and Staff Distinguished Service Award.