While it might have been a foregone conclusion that Alison Royle ’57 would attend Bishop’s, her mother Elizabeth Berger Adams was a member of the Class of 1922 and her two sisters, Joanne Adams Bruun ’49 and Beverly Adams Hjermstad ’52, were Bishop’s students, what couldn’t be predicted was how much Alison would relish her time at Bishop’s. As a Royal Purple she fought to beat the Mighty Golds in all kinds of after school sports, although the field hockey game on T-Day was the highlight of the year. And her classroom memories include a fond recollection of Miss Seeber reading “Winnie the Pooh” in middle school, and an anxious remembrance of Latin with “scary” Miss Brown.

After Bishop’s, this La Jolla native left California to attend Middlebury College and then the University of California at Berkeley, where she earned her degree in Latin American Studies. Perhaps it was Alison’s background in Latin America led her to the adventures in her life. As the assistant to her dentist husband, Alison was part of dental missions to the Amazon and later Baja California with the “Flying Samaritans.” Before the highway was built, they flew a Cessna aircraft to isolated ranches and villages where there was no dental or medical help. “I remember flying the Cessna so low before each landing to chase the burros and cows out of the way,” laughed Alison.

The next step in Alison’s journey began with a chance meeting at a dinner party in the home of former headmistress Rosamond Larmour Loomis. Alison was introduced to Bishop Shannon Mallory and his wife, Toni. After an evening of sharing travels and adventures, Alison was intrigued by the work the couple had done in Africa.

“I love Africa, and had traveled there as a tourist,” says Alison, who admits that her interest in other parts of the world was stimulated by her Bishop’s geography classes and says that the School encouraged a “curiosity and openness” about other cultures.
Four years later Alison heard that the Mallorys were returning to Africa to help rebuild St. Mary’s Mission in Odibo, Namibia, where the Bishop had spent his early years as a priest. “I emailed the Bishop and asked if I could come over and give them a hand,” recalls Alison. “So I just went. Flew halfway around the world.” Alison spent three months rebuilding the Mission, which provides food, schooling and building programs to an area destroyed by civil war, and for a people living with AIDS, malaria, TB, poverty and hunger.

Alison’s commitment to the Mission and the people in Namibia, led to her founding Mission Namibia, a non-profit organization dedicated to empowering the people of Namibia toward becoming economically self-sustaining by partnering with them to fulfill their needs in education and health, focusing especially on women and vulnerable children.

Alison’s adventurous spirit and kind heart have driven her to help people halfway around the world. She is not content to serve from home, but is brave enough to travel to the places that need help the most. For leaving a far-flung legacy for Bishop’s, that the entire community can be proud of, we are honored to present Alison Royle ’57 with the Rosamond Larmour Loomis Award for Distinguished Service to Society.