2008 Ellen Browning Scripps Distinguished Alumni Award
Karin Winner Class of 1962

She describes herself as adventurous, passionate, intuitive, and demanding. A member of the El Miradero yearbook staff at Bishop’s, Karin Winner ’62 went on to major in journalism at the University of Southern California. However, her road to college was not a direct one. She was urged to postpone college and instead play tennis on the European circuit. Her talent was that good and, through some outside financial help, she honed her skills at the La Jolla Beach and Tennis Club. But Karin made a critical choice and opted for college, initially at the University of Wisconsin before transferring to USC. Very much a Mighty Gold, in addition to tennis Karin played field hockey, volleyball, and basketball while at Bishop’s. She believes that Bishop’s provided the forum for developing the attributes of a good person - manners, philosophy, spirituality, competitiveness, and humility.

Karin’s first job after college was at a trade journal followed by a position at Women’s Wear Daily, where she had the opportunity to interview Rose Kennedy. She was later named West Coast editor for the publication and was integral in starting W magazine.

Karin arrived at the San Diego Union in 1976 to work as a special features editor. Her rise to more managerial positions was swift. Just one year later, she was named assistant city editor, and a year after that, she became assistant manager editor- features. By 1986, Karin was working as the managing editor of the paper. In 1991 Helen Copley gave Karin the weighty job of overseeing the merger of the Union and Tribune papers. Karin credits her athletic experiences at Bishop’s that taught her about team play with helping her as she affected a successful merger. Four years later Karin was named editor of The San Diego Union-Tribune. Karin recalls that for a while only a small number of women in this country worked as editors of large metropolitan newspapers and they would meet once a year to discuss their ideas.

Karin once told a reporter that her goal for the paper is “to be the best regional newspaper in the country.” Through her leadership a senior editor structure at the paper was established, eliminating the old system of having a managing editor and a number of assistants. Each senior editor now works essentially as the managing editor of a particular section of the Union-Tribune. Under her leadership, the paper
has also created a recurring feature, “Solutions,” that discusses ways to solve problems in the community. “The role of community is growing in significance again,” Karin says, “so we’re providing more community-oriented news.”

Karin has served as president of the California Society of Newspaper Editors. Her memberships include the American Society of Newspaper Editors, Women in Communication, the California Newspaper Publisher Association, and the Associated Press Managing Editors Association. The USC School of Journalism named her outstanding alumna of 1993. In 1996, the San Diego Press Club named her one of its Headliners of the Year. She has served on several Pulitzer Prize juries over the years. Two years ago, led by Karin, The San Diego Union-Tribune received a Pulitzer Prize for national reporting.

For her passion, vision, and leadership in the San Diego community for the past three decades, we are pleased to present Karin Winner ‘62 with the Ellen Browning Scripps Distinguished Alumni Award.