Karen Milburn Gabsch ’61, passionate about the lifelong influence and memories of The Bishop’s School, has contributed over 42 years of distinguished and remarkable service to ‘her’ school.

Entering as a seventh grader in 1955, Karen served on the Altar Guild and was confirmed by Father Stevens in St Mary’s Chapel as a junior. A member of the Dolphin synchronized swim team and the swim and diving team, she was the Gold Team cheerleader in her senior year.

Following her graduation from Bishop’s, Karen attended the University of Wisconsin where she met her husband, Orrin. They were married in 1966. Karen said that when Orrin placed the diamond ring on her finger she realized, for the first time, the true impact and sincere connection of Bishop’s on her life. She knew then that she would be married in St Mary’s Chapel by Father Stevens and that their children would attend Bishop’s.

Karen’s volunteer service at Bishop’s focused on supporting students and other school programs. From 1969-1972, she chaired horse shows along with fellow classmate Mimi Thornton Morris ’61 and others to raise funds for the Alumni Association. Karen’s devotion to the School led her to serve as president of the Alumni Association, as a trustee on the School’s Board during the period when Michael Teitelman was selected as the new head of school, and as the editor of “Bridges,” the alumni newsletter. During the years her children attended Bishop’s, Karen served on numerous committees of the Mother’s Club as well as chairing the Bishop’s Ball which was the precursor to the successful annual auction. In 2008-2009, Karen co-chaired the School’s Centennial Celebration and in February 2011 she co-chaired Rosamond Larmour Loomis’ 100th birthday celebration.

Karen embodies the spirit and commitment to service. “Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much.” —Helen Keller. Suzanne Weiner, director of marketing, says, “Karen’s support of Bishop’s, her generosity and deep loyalty and love for the School, has never changed. I can’t think of one time when Karen has said ‘no’ when asked to do something for Bishop’s.”

Karen’s volunteer activities also have deep roots in the San Diego community serving on several boards associated with Scripps Clinic and Scripps Green Hospital,
La Jolla Historical Society, Las Patronas, and the San Diego Blood Bank. As the Vietnam War came to an end, Karen applied her skills as a social worker and volunteered as a Red Cross volunteer at the Balboa Naval Hospital. She is honored to have been able to help the returning veterans adjust to ‘life.’ Karen is also a devoted supporter of animal rescue, which she says ‘speaks to her heart.’

Karen’s legacy and her tireless support will ensure years of continued growth for students, faculty, staff and programs at Bishop’s. It is for this reason that Karen Milburn Gabsch ’61 is awarded the Service to Bishop’s Award.