John “Jack” S. Swan graduated from Westminster in 1954 with a degree in history. He was a member of the Kappa Alpha Order and the Historical Society, and president of Phi Alpha Theta and the International Relations Club. He worked at the Fulton Movie Theater and with Coach Kimball.

After Westminster, Swan returned home to the East Coast and received a Master’s degree and a New York State teaching certificate from Syracuse University. He taught for three years at Roscoe Central School in the Catskill Mountains of New York, also serving as an assistant football coach. Swan was the Scout Master of the local Boy Scout Troop. Swan then accepted a position as Alumni Secretary at Peekskill Military Academy in Peekskill, New York, where he also taught history and coached soccer.

For thirteen years, Swan served as the Eastern Admissions Director for Westminster, promoting the College at college fairs, interviewing admissions applicants and establishing and maintaining relations with high school guidance counselors from Maine to Virginia. Swan notes, “Dr. Davidson, Clarence Keel and Jack Marshall gave me terrific support in this position.”

For one hundred years, the Swan family has been involved in the resident summer camp business. In 1905, Swan’s grandfather founded Camp Pok-O-Moonshine for boys in New York’s Adirondack Mountains. Swan became a Counselor at the camp in 1950, the camp’s Headmaster in 1954, and the Camp Director in 1963 after his parents’ retirement. Under Swan’s direction, the camp has expanded to include a girl’s camp and several educational facilities. In 1967, he opened Camp MacCready for girls, which functions with a schedule of activities coordinated with those of the boy’s camp. The two are now the Pok-O-MacCready Camps.

In the late 1960’s, Swan acquired 125 acres of land near the camps that was home to a farm house built in 1813 and a 150-year old post and beam barn. The property was an ideal place to bring the heritage of everyday Americans to life and Swan established a working farm of the 1830s, the 1812 Homestead Foundation. On the farm, visitors can practice pioneer skills such as candle making, rail splitting, cooking on the hearth, blacksmithing, and caring for farm animals such as pigs, chickens, turkeys, sheep and oxen. The Homestead has been a “hands-on” museum for kids for more than thirty years.

Swan created the Pok-O-MacCready Outdoor Education Center in 1975. The Center is one of the few private outdoor education centers in New York state, and provides youth groups and school classes opportunities to rock climb, canoe, kayak, cross country ski, hike the Adirondack High Peaks, and to learn team work, winter camping skills, and an appreciation and understanding of the environment.

In 1992, Swan created the Adirondack Scholarship Foundation so that more campers from a variety of economic backgrounds could attend the Pok-O-MacCready Camps. With the support of the camps’ alumni, the foundation is able to provide more than a dozen scholarship grants to deserving young people each year.

Swan has also served as Vice President of the New York State Outdoor Education Association for six years. He was a Standards Visitor for the American Camping Association for 20 years.

Today, the camps, the outdoor education center and the museum are known and appreciated by people from throughout the world. Swan’s vision, his ability to make dreams come true and his enthusiasm for camping – for sailing, horseback riding, wilderness experiences, and history – have made the Pok-O-MacCready Camps and the 1812 Homestead superior education facilities, shaping the lives of thousands of young people. Swan moved on from Westminster to become a teacher – he has been an educator ever since.

Swan and his wife Ramona reside in Willsboro, New York. Swan has three children, Sharp ’78 and David ’84 Swan and Margaret Reinckens.

“Westminster gave me confidence, intellectual curiosity, a passion for history, and long lasting friendships with my professors and classmates. Westminster and my experiences in Fulton made me realize that vision and hard work could make dreams come true.”

2004 Alumni Achievement Award