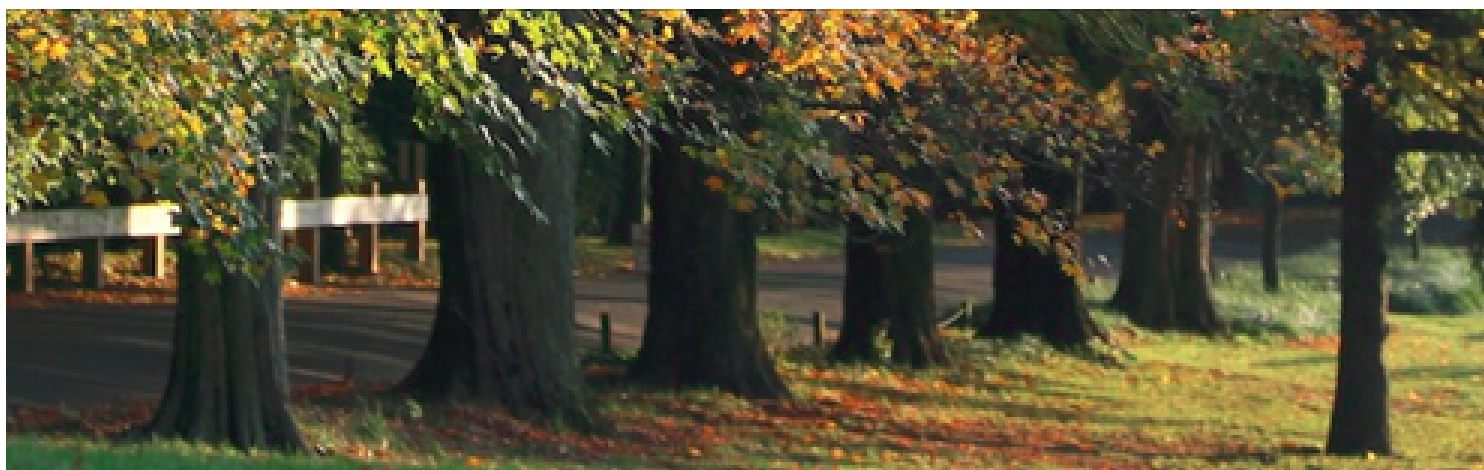




SPRINGSIDE CHESTNUT HILL ACADEMY



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Francis P. Steel '77 Award: Clark Groome '60

Written and presented by Frank P. Steel, Jr. '77

Wow what a pleasure it is to be back here...it feels so good to be back in this room where so many of the good parts of my life have happened. It is especially nice to be here to present this award to Clark Groome. It was such an honor for me to have it named for me, and it is a pure joy to be able to get back here and present it to others who have served the school so well and so extensively... and Clark has certainly done that! I have known Clark for over 40 years, and he has been part of both my CHA, my extended family and my personal life throughout that time.

The funny thing about people who get such honors as service awards, is that very few of them actually set out to win an award. Rather, they set out to do what they love, to make a difference, to be in a place that feels like home, with people they care about, and let the journey unfold in front of them. As I think back on Clark, and his lifelong service to CHA, I see that exact process having happened.

Clark joined CHA in 1947 as Class of 1961, and attended through 8th grade, when he moved to Pomfret and graduated from there. He eventually found his way back to the school to become the first CHA Director of Development. Clearly this was the kind of work that tapped into Clark's strengths and his love of people and making connections. Clark was the advisor to the Yearbook, but knowing what we were able to publish in the 1977 *Caerulean*, I'm not sure I should mention that! In addition, during that time Clark oversaw the merger of the Women's Advisory Committee and the Chestnut Hill Academy Fathers into the CHA Parents Association. He wrote and distributed all CHA press releases, published all CHA publications – The CHA News, admissions brochures, etc. He was the business advisor to *The Players* and to the *Caerulean* in 1976, 1977, and 1978. He also served as what he admitted was a very bad umpire for the youngest baseball teams! In 1978, he completed the odd achievement of leaving to become Director of Development at Abington Friends School and being named as the CHA Alumnus of the Year. 1980-2007 – During Barnaby Roberts and Richard Parker's headmasterships he wrote some PR for the school and also did some writing (interviews etc.) for *The CHA News*. Throughout this period he wrote articles about CHA for the Chestnut Hill Local – most memorably interviews with the headmasters and Springside headmistresses, stories about the emerging CHA Athletic Hall of Fame, and articles about the renovation of the third floor and the sharing of that space with Springside during the renovation of its Upper School.

Development is also the kind of work that really embeds a person in the life of the school, as you learn the many stories that make up the history of the school, and you become a teller of those stories. Gerrit Keator wrote:

“Clark has been a very, very enthusiastic and loyal school man over many decades as SCH has recognized by bestowing this significant award on him. During my '72-'79 years at CHA, he worked diligently in what is now known as the Advancement Office. He quickly learned the dynamics of relationships amongst all the constituencies of the Academy. It was expected that they would contribute time and treasure to build upon the school's foundation to take it to a higher level -- and they did so. Kudos to Clark then, and today as well!”

For the school's 2011 sesquicentennial, Clark wrote the CHA history. Written over four years, the eight-chapter work appeared in issues of *CHAnnels*, the successor to *The CHA News*.

In 2010 he rejoined the CHA Alumni Association Executive Board and since 2012 has served as the secretary and chairman of the awards committee ...and no that is not how he was chosen for this award!

The care Clark always showed in the awards process and making sure that the right people received the right awards was emblematic of his keen sense of the importance of all of our school values, but especially integrity and loyalty.

Many people can make a place better, but only a few are able to also positively affect the lives of the people around them, and Clark is one of those people. I know that my life is better for having known Clark from when I was a student, to having him as a great friend to Betsy and myself. I am so proud to present this award to Clark and so happy to have it as yet another link between us... Congratulations Clark!

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