

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI 2016 – FREDERICK S. DOWNS, JR. (RICK)

Every year Woodstock School recognizes alumni whose lives have made a significant contribution to realizing our ideal of “education for a world of difference.” We are pleased to announce our Distinguished Alumni for 2016 – Frederick (Rick) S. Downs, Jr.

Born in Jorhat, Assam in 1961 to missionary parents, Rick went to Woodstock in 1968 and graduated with the Class of 1979 as Valedictorian. He was the second generation of Downs to attend Woodstock. His father and an aunt attended Woodstock in the 1940s and 1950s. Another aunt, Carol (Downs) Mumby was the school nurse at Woodstock and married the gym teacher, Wynn Mumby. The current school gym was built in his memory. Rick’s siblings, Milton and Susan, also attended Woodstock. His sister Susan returned to teach at Woodstock for a number of years.

After graduating from Woodstock, Rick attended Oberlin College. He graduated in 1983, majoring in History and Philosophy. At Oberlin, he met his wife, Sadhana, who grew up in Old Delhi. After college, Rick studied law at the University of Virginia and graduated with a JD in 1986. That led to a job at an international law firm in New York City where he practiced Corporate Law for six years. In 1992, Rick left the practice of law to join an Oberlin classmate in Boston to start an investment firm with which he is still involved today.

In the 1990s, Rick reconnected with Woodstock by joining the board of two different North American non-profit organizations which supported the school, KWI and its successor, Friends of Woodstock School (FWS). Ultimately, Rick also served on the Woodstock School board for a number of years as a representative of FWS and North American alumni. During his tenure on the board, in addition to other duties he participated in two principal search committees. This included the committee which selected Dr. Jonathan Long.

In addition to serving on the boards of KWI, FWS and Woodstock, Rick has financially supported a number of projects at the school. First and foremost, he created and financed the Master Teacher Program. Rick was passionate about improving teacher compensation and retaining and recruiting the best teachers. Accordingly, the original purpose of this program was to provide additional financial support to very experienced teachers to incent them to come to or stay at Woodstock. This program now supports professional development opportunities for teachers. Rick also created the Oberlin Scholarship. Under this program, Oberlin College selects one Woodstock graduate each year to receive a four year grant as part of their financial aid package to attend the college. Rick has financed a number of other initiatives at Woodstock, including the creation of the new school website. **Last, but not least, the biggest project that Rick was involved with both personally and financially, was the building of the Win Mumby Gym.**

Today, Rick and Sadhana reside in Dover, Massachusetts. Their children, Arjun and Julia, have both graduated from college and work and live in New York City.