



2026 Beverly H. Sgro Award Recipient
Lisa A. H. Darling



It is with great pleasure that The Heads Network Board of Trustees has named **Lisa A. H. Darling** the recipient of the **2026 Beverly H. Sgro Award**. The Sgro Award is given annually by the Board to an individual who has supported and advocated for the advancement of women in leadership within independent schools.

Lisa is a lifelong educator whose storied career spans more than four decades. She has made a lasting impact on schools across the United States as a librarian, English teacher, technology director, CFO, and Head of School. Given her deep commitment to global education, it's only natural that all three schools she led were International Baccalaureate or International Schools. After spending 11 years at the helm of Wilmington Friends School (Wilmington, DE), Lisa became President of United World College (Montezuma, NM) for 8 years. She then went on to lead The Awty International School (Houston, TX), the largest international school in North America, until her "retirement" in 2023.

Those who know Lisa were unsurprised that she viewed her departure from Awty not as a conclusion but as a doorway to new opportunities. She is now back in schools, currently serving as Assistant Head of School at Christ School (Arden, NC), while also consulting and continuing to champion women leaders through numerous Heads Network programs. Head of Christ School Sean Jenkins wrote the following:

"Lisa is a treasure and great blessing to our community... she's a beloved and revered member of our community, mentoring and advising our leadership team, faculty, staff, and students. She fist-pumps the boys at every sporting event, at music recitals, while on dorm duty, during the school day, and in the dining hall. The boys adore her. We all do. It's hard to convey how much her friendship and mentorship means to all of us."

Lisa has earned deep respect for her work at the local, regional, national, and international levels and is a highly sought-after expert and mentor. She returned to Houston in October 2024 to receive the Knight of the Order of Academic Palms from France's ambassador to the United

States in recognition of her work promoting the French language and francophone culture. She has also served on numerous boards in the independent school space, including the National Association of Independent Schools, and currently sits on the boards of the The Shlenker School (Houston, TX) and Dallas International School.

There are scores of school leaders who point to Lisa as the person who recognized their strengths and encouraged them to take the next step in their careers. At least six of her former colleagues have moved into headship, all of whom know she is still only a call or text away—ready to lend support, talk through a challenge, or cheer them on.

One of those who nominated Lisa for this award put it best:

“Lisa Darling is truly deserving of this award for her remarkable legacy in championing and developing female educators in leadership. As a Head, Lisa had an eye for potential, recognizing leadership skills in those around her and actively supporting their growth... she empowered us to step confidently into our own leadership journeys. Her mentorship went beyond the professional; she offered thoughtful advice, coaching, and unwavering support that extended across time and distance. Today, even as many of us are spread across the country and the globe, Lisa remains a cherished mentor, offering invaluable guidance on a personal level. Her commitment to fostering the next generation of leaders has left a lasting impact on each of us.”

We are delighted to honor Lisa and her tremendous work with this award.

* The Board of Trustees will recognize Lisa’s accomplishments at our Annual Conference in Napa, CA, January 25-27. We hope you can join us!