

Doug Echols '77
2018 Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award

Each year, Winthrop recognizes an alumnus for selfless dedication of time, energy and talent in service to others. The Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award captures this high honor.

This year's 2018 recipient is Doug Echols, a former Rock Hill mayor who is a 1977 Winthrop graduate with an Education Specialist Degree in Administration. The university also awarded Echols an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters in 2012.

A 1967 graduate of Mars Hill University, Echols played football there and is a member of its Athletic Hall of Fame. He also earned a Master of Education Administration from Western Carolina University.

Echols taught and coached in the public school system, coached freshmen football at Western Carolina University, and was the director of athletics and head football coach at Northwestern High School from 1971-76. For the next few years, he worked in the Clover and Fort Mill school districts as the administrator of several curriculum development projects.

From 1982-89, he worked as Winthrop's associate director of athletics and coliseum manager. He then became the first commissioner of the South Atlantic Conference, retiring from that position in 2008 after 19 years. He was inducted into its Hall of Fame in 2009.

In 1998, Echols was elected as mayor of Rock Hill and completed his fifth term in January 2018. Before being elected mayor, he served two four-year terms on the City Council. During his tenure as mayor, the City of Rock Hill saw tremendous growth and engaged in sound fiscal practices, long-range citizen based planning efforts and the formation of numerous partnerships. Rock Hill has revitalized its urban core and renovated old textile mills, resulting in a senior housing complex and a corporate center for the headquarters of two companies.

A past president of the Municipal Association of South Carolina, Echols served as a member of the Board of Directors of the National League of Cities and as president of the Association of South Carolina Mayors.

In 2016, Echols received the S.C. Recreation and Parks Association's Lifetime Achievement and Hall of Fame Award, its highest honor, for his leadership, vision and support for the construction and operation of several parks and tourism facilities in Rock Hill, which include Cherry Park, the Rock Hill Tennis Center, Manchester Meadows and the Rock Hill Outdoor Cycling Center. The award also recognized his support for the 2% hospitality tax; the Rock Hill Parks Foundation; the Rock Hill Sports Commission; and an \$8.1 million local hospitality tax bond for improvements to aging sports tourism facilities. Other awards included the NAACP Visionary Leadership Award; the Municipal Association of South Carolina's highest honor, the Allison Farlow Award; and the Order of the Palmetto from S.C. Governor Henry McMaster.

Echols and his wife, Sylvia, a 1973 Winthrop alumna and a children's advocate, have both been involved in community affairs for many years and reside in Rock Hill.