



November 2025

GIVING TUESDAY

[Help Make a Difference on Giving Tuesday](#)



On Giving Tuesday, Dec. 2, the Winthrop community is coming together to make a difference for students who need it most. Your gift will provide essential support that helps students stay on track, overcome challenges and keep chasing their dreams. We're specifically advocating for donations to the Winthrop Fund, Winthrop Scholarship Fund and the Gloria Jones Student Emergency Fund, but your choice to give to any area you're passionate about makes an impact. Let's show our Eagles that their Winthrop family is behind them today and every day. [Make your gift online!](#)

TRADITIONS

[Winthrop to Kick Off the Holidays with 90th Annual Tree Lighting](#)



The Alumni Association and Student Alumni Council will host the 90th Annual Tree Lighting on Friday, Dec. 5, at 6 p.m. on the front lawn of Tillman Hall. The annual event, which dates back to 1935, will feature performances by the Winthrop RockHettes and the Winthrop Chorale and Collegiate Choir. The event ends with a countdown to the main attraction: the lighting of the flagpole at the fountain plaza. If you can't attend in person, the tree lighting will be livestreamed on the [Alumni Association's Facebook page](#).

HOMECOMING AND REUNION

[Take a Look Back at Homecoming and Reunion Weekend](#)



What a fantastic time was had at Homecoming and Reunion last week! A variety of events, such as the Alumni Awards Celebration, the Morgan-Holcombe Alumni Center open house, Alumni Reunion Brunch, tailgating, basketball games, class reunion reception and much more, made for a memory-filled time. [Check out the photo album](#) to see all that happened, and make plans to attend next year!

FACULTY AWARD

[Janet Wojcik Earns the University's Top Teaching Award](#)



Janet Wojcik, professor and program director of exercise science, was selected to receive Winthrop's top teaching accolade, the James Pinckney Kinard and Lee Wicker Kinard Award for Excellence in Teaching. She will be formally presented with the award at the university's Dec. 20 Commencement ceremony. The award was established 41 years ago in honor of former president James Pinckney Kinard and his wife, Lee Wicker Kinard, by their family. Sebastian van Delden, provost and vice president for academic affairs, surprised Wojcik on Nov. 18 during one of her classes to tell her about the award. He was joined by Associate Dean Erin Hamel and Assistant Provost for Curriculum and Program Support Tim Drueke.

FACULTY AWARD

[Minnie Mize Selected as Latest Thompson Scholar](#)



Minnie Mize, an associate professor in education core and special education in the Richard W. Riley College of Education, Sport, and Human Sciences, has been selected as the 2025-26 Thompson Scholar. Mize has created the Reading, Engagement and Academic Development Initiative (READI) to train undergraduates as literacy mentors to work with low-income students at Rock Hill Title I schools and to train graduate students to serve as supervisors. The Thompson Scholar program is generated through the Robert and Norma Thompson Endowment. Sebastian van Delden, provost and vice president for academic affairs, presented Mize with the recognition.

ATHLETICS

[Volleyball Takes Share of Conference Regular Season Title](#)



With an impressive Nov. 14 win over Gardner-Webb, the volleyball team (18-6 overall, 12-2 conference) claimed its share of the Big South Conference Regular Season title for the first time since 2019, splitting the honors with High Point. The Eagles earned the top overall seed in the conference tournament which runs Nov. 21-23 at High Point. Also, congratulations to Head Coach Heather Gearhart who was named the Big South Conference Volleyball Coach of the Year and to senior Avery Jolley who was named the conference's Volleyball Scholar-Athlete of the Year and Player of the Year. Go, Eagles!

WINTHROP MAGAZINE

[Read the Fall Edition of the Winthrop Magazine](#)



In case you missed it last month, take a few minutes to get caught up on the latest profiles and features included in the fall edition of the Winthrop Magazine. This edition highlights the 50th anniversary of the Model United Nations program, the opening of the new J. Robert Bazemore Design Center and the recent retirement of long-time employee Ben Roach '77, who dedicated nearly 50 years of service to Winthrop.

[A Message from the Alumni Director](#)



It was so wonderful to have hundreds of our alumni on campus for Homecoming and Reunion Weekend. I don't think we could have wished for better Carolina weather. We had such a fantastic time catching up and welcoming everyone to the Morgan-Holcombe Alumni Center and honoring its namesake, Betty Morgan Holcombe '56, who also was on campus for the weekend! Homecoming and Reunion touches my heart in so many ways, and we'll soon begin planning next year's! But, for now, we turn our attention to the 90th Annual Tree Lighting on Friday, Dec. 5, at 6 p.m. We will kick off the holiday season with a festive program that culminates in the lighting of our tree. If you can't attend in person, you can always tune into the livestream on

the [Alumni Association Facebook page](#). Finally, our alumni relations staff members hope you and your family have a restful and blessed Thanksgiving.

The mission of the Alumni Association is to honor the traditions and values of Winthrop University through the engagement of alumni worldwide.

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