WINTHROP Insider

YOUR MONTHLY UNIVERSITY UPDATE

November 2026

GIVING

Help Make a Difference on GivingTuesday



GivingTuesday - the international day to celebrate generosity - is back on Dec. 1! This year, we're advocating for donations to support challenges that Winthrop students face outside of the classroom. Gifts to support students' everyday essentials (Student Affairs Food Pantry Fund and Center for Student Wellness Fund), financial stability (Gloria Godfrey Jones Student Emergency Fund and Winthrop Scholarship Fund), and resources for success (First Generation College Student Initiatives Fund and CDI Career Closet Fund) are what we're specifically advocating for, but your choice to give to any area you're passionate about makes an impact. Let's make a difference in our students' lives through contributions of any amount. Give online to support GivingTuesday!

ATHLETICS

Volleyball Wins BSC Championship; Headed to NCAA Tourney



The volleyball team is the 2026 Big South Conference Champions after defeating High Point Nov. 22 at the Winthrop Coliseum. With the win, the Eagles earn the automatic bid to the 2026 NCAA Volleyball Tournament. The Eagles will await the NCAA Selection Show on Sunday, Nov. 29, at 6 p.m., to see who they will play. This is the seventh championship in program history and the first Big South crown for the Eagles since 2019. Junior Teagan Sychterz was named the Big South Conference Tournament MVP. In addition, senior Lexi Thatcher was named the Big South Conference Setter of the Year and sophomore Addison Torain was named the conference's Libero of the Year. Go, Eagles!

COMMENCEMENT

Neurosurgeon and Medical Educator to Address Graduates



Zayed Almadidy '12 will speak about his journey from being a Winthrop student to becoming one of the most prominent neurosurgeons in the country when he addresses graduates as the keynote speaker during the university's Dec. 19 Commencement ceremony. The ceremony will take place at 10 a.m. inside the Winthrop Coliseum. President Edward Serna ’02 will confer degrees for 225 undergraduate and 95 graduate students. Also invited to participate are the 133 graduate and undergraduate students who finished their degrees in August. Additionally, there is an opportunity to meet Almadidy the day before Commencement - Dec. 18 - from 4:30-5:30 p.m. in the Tuttle Dining Room of McBryde Hall.

HOMECOMING AND REUNION

Take a Look Back at Homecoming and Reunion Weekend



What a fantastic time was had at Homecoming and Reunion earlier this month! A variety of events, such as the Alumni Awards Celebration, the Morgan-Holcombe Alumni Center open house, Alumni Reunion Brunch (that included, pictured above, a special entrance from the Class of 1976 for their 50-year reunion), tailgating, basketball games, and much more, made for a memory-filled time. Check out the photo album to see all that happened, and make plans to attend the 2027 Homecoming and Reunion Weekend, Nov. 12-13.

FACULTY AWARD

Kelly Ozust Earns the University's Top Teaching Award



Kelly Ozust, an associate professor of dance and director of the dance program, 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. 19 Commencement ceremony. The award was established 42 years ago in honor of former president James Pinckney Kinard and his wife, Lee Wicker Kinard, by their family. President Serna and Sebastian van Delden, provost and vice president for academic affairs, surprised Ozust during one of her classes to tell her about the award.

TRADITIONS

Winthrop to Kick Off the Holidays with 91st Annual Tree Lighting



The Alumni Association and Student Alumni Council will host the 91st Annual Tree Lighting on Friday, Dec. 4, 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. The Rock Hill Christmas parade will immediately follow the tree lighting, and Winthrop will spread more holiday cheer from its newly designed float!

POTTERY SALE

Beloved Pottery Sale is Back on Dec. 4 After Hiatus



One of Winthrop's most popular holiday events will have its last spin this December. The 32nd Winthrop Christmas Pottery Sale will be held on Dec. 4 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. in Rutledge Building, room G-10. The pottery sale took a hiatus for a few years but is returning for its last run as Ceramics Professor Jim Connell retires after 40 years. This year, 15 artists, including Connell and students, will sell their hand-crafted wares at the event. This is the perfect opportunity to purchase unique gifts for the holidays while supporting student-artists.

A Message from the Alumni Director



It was so wonderful to have hundreds of our alumni on campus for Homecoming and Reunion Weekend. We had such a fantastic time catching up and welcoming everyone back home to Winthrop. Please save the date for Homecoming and Reunion 2027, Nov. 12-13! Now, we turn our attention to the 91st Annual Tree

Lighting on Friday, Dec. 4, at 6 p.m. We will kick off the holiday season with a festive program that culminates in the lighting of the 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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