



WINTHROP
UNIVERSITY

College of Visual & Performing Arts

ARTSWINTHROP



Celebrating Year One in the J. Robert Bazemore Design Center at The Thread *page 6*



- Summer 2026 -

A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN



Dear Friends,

As I reflect on the 2025–2026 academic year, I am deeply honored to serve as dean of such a creative, innovative, and inspiring college. It is a privilege to work alongside our remarkably talented students, faculty, staff and alumni – and to be part of the enduring ArtsWinthrop legacy.

This final newsletter of the academic year celebrates so much: outstanding student achievements, faculty and alumni recognition, the first successful year in the J. Robert Bazemore Design Center at The Thread, transformative study-abroad experiences in Venice, and the continued impact of programs such as ST-ARTS and the ABC Institute. These accomplishments reflect the extraordinary energy, imagination, and commitment found throughout our college.

I am also delighted to share the refreshed look and feel of the ArtsWinthrop Newsletter. Our new Director of Communications and Marketing, Matthew Shealy '22, has done a wonderful job bringing renewed creativity and vitality to this publication. His thoughtful storytelling and design help us celebrate the people and experiences that make CVPA so special.

To our students, faculty, staff, alumni, donors, and community partners: thank you. Your talent, generosity, encouragement, and belief in the arts make all of this possible.

I wish you a joyful and restorative summer, and I look forward with great excitement to the creative and innovative endeavors that await us in the 2026–2027 academic year.

KAREN OREMUS

Dean

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FACULTY & STAFF SPOTLIGHTS



MATTHEW SHEALY '22 was named Director of Communications and Marketing in April.

A Winthrop Mass Communication alum, Matthew brings strong experience in storytelling, media production, and digital communications. As a student at Winthrop, he served as sports editor for The

Johnsonian for two years, leading the student publication's efforts to cover sports-related stories at Winthrop and in the Rock Hill community.

Matthew brings a direct connection to ArtsWinthrop through his participation as a student in multiple ensembles within the Department of Music, including Collegiate Choir, Symphonic Band and the Screamin' Eagles Pep Band.

Matthew returns to his alma mater after beginning his professional career at Methodist University in Fayetteville, North Carolina, where he served as the Assistant Sports Information Director since January 2023.



PAULA GAROFALO was promoted to Associate Director of Recruitment in the Winthrop Admissions office in April. She will continue to serve as Admissions Counselor for all CVPA students.



Associate Professor of Design **CHAD DRESBACH** was recognized for 30 years of service to Winthrop at the Faculty and Staff awards ceremony in April.



Associate Professor of Dance and Director of Arts Education **GABRIELLE TULL** has been granted tenure beginning Aug. 1.



Associate Professor of Fine Arts **CLAUDIA O'STEEN** received the University Thompson scholar award in April.



KALIE SCANLAN was named Arts Administration Program Director and Assistant Professor in January.

Dr. Scanlan holds a Ph.D. in Communication Studies, Theatre and Performance Studies from Southern Illinois University, as well as graduate and undergraduate training in theatre arts administration and management.

Her work bridges arts management, teaching and learning, and community-engaged practice, with particular scholarly interest in inclusive pedagogy, multimodal learning and assessment, and arts-based civic and social impact. Prior to joining Winthrop, she led large-scale professional learning and curriculum development in regional nonprofit theatre.

In her new role at Winthrop, she teaches courses in arts administration and leads program direction.



BRETT SCHENNING was named Academic Advisor in CVPA Student Services in May. Brett comes to Winthrop having previously served as the Program Coordinator and Assistant Professor of Fine Arts at Limestone University.

Prior to joining the Winthrop community, Brett taught at various institutions from the college level to elementary school. He has also conducted numerous workshops focused on artmaking in various media and techniques. Brett has served over a decade as a member of the Exhibitions Committee at the Waterworks Visual Arts Center (WVAC) museum in Salisbury, North Carolina.

Brett holds a Master of Fine Arts degree in Photography from the Savannah College of Art & Design and a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Studio Arts Photography degree from the University of Wisconsin–Oshkosh. His research interests encompass rural American communities, sustainable agriculture, and southern culture.



Left to right: Tracy Patterson (Associate Dean), James Kopecky (Adjunct Professor of Dance), Tomoko Deguchi (Professor of Music), Karen Oremus (Dean), Michelle "Liv" Livek (Associate Professor of Fine Arts).

CONGRATS TO OUR SPRING 2026 CVPA FACULTY & STAFF AWARD WINNERS

Outstanding Service to Students Award
BRIAN FRANCO-WINN, *Assistant Professor of Dance*

Collaboration and Spirit Award
LEONARD MARK LEWIS, *Professor of Music*

Outstanding Staff Award
ANDREW DAVIS, *Fine Arts Technician and Instructor*

University/Community Service Award
TOMOKO DEGUCHI, *Professor of Music*

Outstanding Undergraduate Adjunct Professor
JAMES KOPECKY, *Adjunct Professor of Dance*

Outstanding Graduate Adjunct Professor
DAVID WOHL, *Adjunct Faculty*

Outstanding First Year Adjunct Professor
SARAH ABUSHAKRA, *Adjunct Professor of Music*

Excellence in Advising Award
MICHELLE "LIV" LIVEK, *Associate Professor of Fine Arts*

CVPA nominee for Outstanding Junior Professor Award
QUINTEL GWINN, *Assistant Professor of Design*

CVPA nominee for Distinguished Professor Award
TOMOKO DEGUCHI, *Professor of Music*



Associate Professor of Game Design **BRAD YOUNG** received a South Carolina Research Authority (SCRA) grant to fund brain computer Interface equipment for the game design program. He is also presenting two peer reviewed papers in Valencia, Spain, this summer.

Associate Professor of Art History **KYLE SWEENEY** received a Faculty Research Council Grant and sabbatical to support work on his next book titled "Fancying Gothic: Architecture, Ritual, and Civic Identity in Louviers." He'll be climbing around medieval churches and searching for clues in the archives of Normandy next year as he investigates the factors that led to the construction of some of the most elaborate and visually stunning monuments of the late medieval world.



Professor of Music **TOMOKO DEGUCHI** wrote an entry titled "Film Music in Japan" for "Bloomsbury Encyclopedia of Popular Music of the World, vol. 13," which was released in March. She also presented a paper titled "Tōru Takemitsu's Music as Prophecy in Masahiro Shinoda's Film Silence (1971)" at the Music and the Moving Image conference at New York University in May. Music and the Moving Image conference brings together an interdisciplinary mix of scholars, musicologists, composers, filmmakers, and sound designers to share research, present papers, and host workshops. Dr. Deguchi attended the John Bird and Seung Lee writing residency May 18-22, at which time she wrote her presentation for the Music and the Moving Image conference. She says she was very grateful to have the uninterrupted time to work on the presentation.

Professor of Music **LEONARD MARK LEWIS** wrote and arranged music performed at the Carolina Theatre in Charlotte during "Lullabies and Life: A Poetic Juneteenth Celebration." Lewis performed at the event with the Charlotte Strings Collective, which also featured Adjunct Professor of Violin Kari Giles.



Associate Professor of Trombone and Music Theory **JUSTIN ISENHOUR** was accepted to perform at the International Trombone Festival this summer in Latvia, which took place July 29-Aug. 1.



Associate Professor of Dance and Dance Program Director **KELLY OZUST** performed “Beneath the Breathing Ground” – a world premiere, interdisciplinary and interspecies piece – at the 2026 Bloomtown Festival in Manchester, UK. This performance was

the culmination of a months-long collaboration between four American dance professors and the artistic collective of Manchester-based artists Bionic and the Wires (BATW).



Ozust (right) performing with three other American dance professors.

BATW’s unique practice involves engineering custom bionic arms that enable mushrooms and plants to create music and visual art by transforming their bio-electrical signals into artistic expressions. This innovative approach makes complex scientific concepts accessible, revealing the hidden intelligence and creativity of nature.



One example of a plant with bionic arms engineered by Bionic and the Wires.

Kelly, along with dancers from three other universities, collaborated with BATW to create a unique work that examines the intersection of movement, nature, and communication. Combining dance, original music, text, and the improvisational sounds of plants and mushrooms, this piece told the story of four intrepid adventurers who journeyed underground to bring messages of preservation and communication from the root systems below. The piece was invited to perform at the festival by the UK National Trust and took place at the beautiful Dunham Massey gardens on May 29. The group is planning future collaborations stateside and is working to include other disciplines such as plant sciences and engineering.



ABC INSTITUTE

Arts in Basic Curriculum

ABC INSTITUTE received two Arts Curricular Innovation Grants for Arts Teacher Institutes through the South Carolina Department of Education. This June, they facilitated two week-long professional learning opportunities for South Carolina K-12 educators: Arts Integration Leadership Institute (AILI) and Curriculum Leadership in the Arts II (CLIA II).

AILI offered a unique professional learning opportunity for K-12 education professionals who are at a proficient level of implementation and desired a deeper exploration of how to design an arts integration learning experience. AILI is designed for graduates to be able to lead arts integration-related professional learning opportunities as well as design and deliver authentic arts integration lessons through the use of innovative strategies. AILI was co-facilitated by ABC staff and Arts Integration Master Teachers from ABC Certified Schools, which includes Winthrop graduates. Participants in the program received CEU credit from Winthrop.

CLIA II developed K-12 arts educators’ leadership capacities in curriculum, instruction, and professional advocacy. Through examination of arts education initiatives, research, and policy, candidates strengthened their facilitation and presentation skills, engaged in peer feedback, conducted collaborative planning, and participated in cycles of reflection. The course integrated the NEA Teacher Leadership Competencies, including overarching and pathway competencies with the Standards for Professional Learning to prepare leaders capable of upholding and advancing high-quality, equitable instruction aligned to the 2026 South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Visual and Performing Arts Proficiency Standards. CLIA II was co-facilitated by ABC staff and Master Teachers with expertise in the areas of Instructional, Association, and Policy Leadership, which includes Winthrop graduates. Participants received three non-degree graduate course credits through Winthrop.

ABC Institute is a statewide member of the Arts Grow SC consortium.

ABC Institute is funded in part by the South Carolina Arts Commission, which receives support from the National Endowment for the Arts.

BLEED GARNET, GIVE GOLD

Thank you to everyone who donated to the College of Visual & Performing Arts during this year's Bleed Garnet, Give Gold Day of Giving, which took place from noon on April 21 to noon on April 22. Online gifts for CVPA totaled nearly \$5,000!

To kick off the Day of Giving, the Winthrop University Alumni Association Executive Board hosted the Eagle Float Frenzy at the West Center Pool, with representatives from across campus competing for a portion of a \$2,500 challenge gift. Associate Professor of Trombone and Music Theory **JUSTIN ISENHOUR** represented CVPA in this year's contest, and he did not disappoint.

Sporting his tuxedo tank top, Dr. Isenhour paddled hard enough to earn a spot in the championship race, then claimed the top prize with a photo finish. His efforts secured \$1,250 for CVPA from the Alumni Association Executive Board.

"I feel great about raising money for all of our students and this university," he said after the victory. "Now, I've gotta teach a 12:30 class, and all the students better be in their seats, because we've got work to do around here!"

WANT TO DONATE?

It's never too late!

Give to CVPA online today at
winthrop.edu/advancement/make-a-gift-cvpa.aspx

Your support helps provide:

- Hands-on opportunities like exhibitions, performances, and public presentations
- Travel experiences including competitions, conferences, field trips, and study abroad
- Equipment and materials for studios, labs, production and performance spaces
- Scholarships and financial support so students can fully engage in their education



Isenhour competing in the Eagle Float Frenzy on April 21.



Isenhour post-race, celebrating with Big Stuff and the \$1,250 check for CVPA.

YEAR ONE AT THE THREAD



We are so excited to have completed our first year in the **J. ROBERT BAZEMORE DESIGN CENTER**, which opened last August.



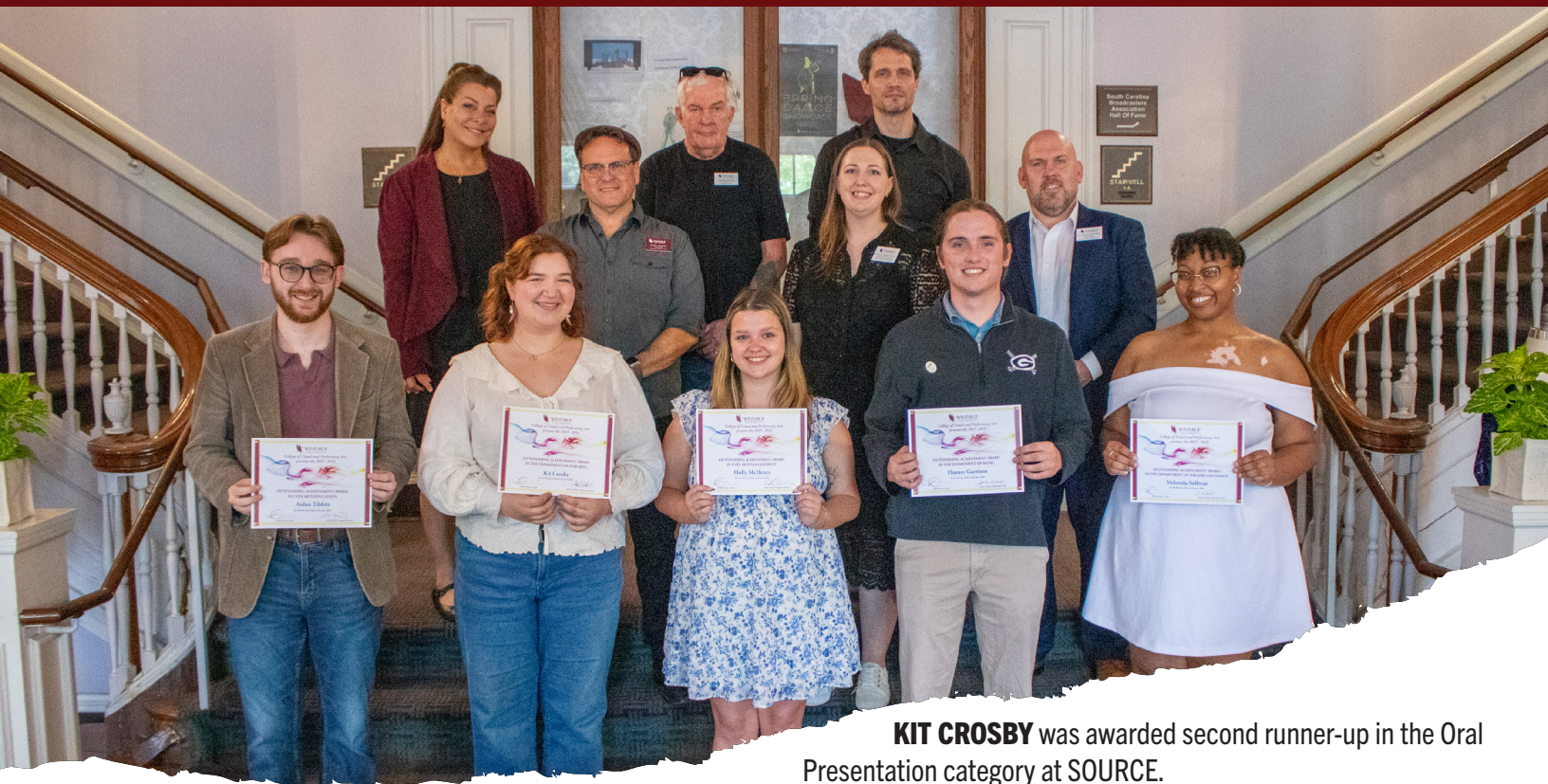
During the 2025-2026 academic year, the Department of Design enjoyed utilizing this new space, which is located at The Thread in the heart of Rock Hill's Knowledge Park district. The five modern classrooms inside the Bazemore Design Center were not only used for hands-on learning, but also for hosting two senior shows – our Visual Communication Design Senior Show in April, and the Interior Design Senior Showcase in May.



We look forward to continuing to grow into this space as we begin our second year at The Thread in the fall!



STUDENT SUCCESS



KIT CROSBY was awarded second runner-up in the Oral Presentation category at SOURCE.

At our Graduate Reception in May, we celebrated the Class of 2026, including our Outstanding Student Award recipients: **KIT CROSBY** (Fine Arts), **NAZIAH FOSTER** (Design), **HUNTER GARRISON** (Music), **HOLLY McHENRY** (Arts Management), **MELONDA SULLIVAN** (Theatre/Dance) and **AIDAN TIBBITT** (Arts Education).

Winthrop Dance students swept the podium finishes in the Performance category at the university's 2026 Showcase of Undergraduate Research and Creative Endeavors (SOURCE) on April 17. The category included not only dance, but also theatre, music composition, and film. **RACHEL FULLER** claimed the top prize, while **MIRACLE PARKER** was named first runner-up and **MIKAYLA RAINEY** was awarded second runner-up.



Parker (left), Fuller (middle) and Rainey (right) showing off their awards.

KIT CROSBY and **WILLIAM BROOME** were inducted into Phi Kappa Phi, the nation's oldest and most selective collegiate honor society for all academic disciplines.

WILLIAM BROOME presented his paper titled "The Demonic Face in a Gender Paradox: Mahākāla as a Wrathful Subversive Figure in Tantric Buddhism" at the SUNY-New Paltz Undergraduate Art History Symposium and his digital humanities research on medieval sculpture at SOURCE. He also received the Certificate of Superior Achievement in Art History and the Margaret Fant Lipscomb Endowed Scholarship from the Department of Fine Arts.

The National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) announced that five Winthrop students – **JAMES GRAGG**, **JAKE MATTHEWS**, **JESSE MATTHEWS**, **MATTIE WASHBURN**, and **WILLIAM WHEATON** – advanced to the National Student Auditions (NSA) preliminary YouTube round through their Mid-Atlantic Region NATS auditions. All five students come from the Allen Studio under the direction of Adjunct Professor of Music **CRAIG ALLEN**. Following the preliminary round, Gragg (musical theatre), Jake Matthews (commercial music), Jesse Matthews (commercial music) and Washburn (musical theatre) were named national semifinalists. The four represented Winthrop in San Antonio, Texas, as part of the NATS 59th National Conference, which took place July 3-5.

VIVA VENICE! – EAGLES ABROAD



15 students traveled to Venice, Italy, to study abroad with Art History professors **KYLE SWEENEY** and **STEPHANIE SUTTON** from May 20-29.

From the glittering medieval mosaics of Venice's past to the bold visions of the contemporary Biennale, these students lived the history, present, and future of art. They explored, created, debated, learned, and discovered the magic of Venice together.

Some crossed an ocean for the first time.
All returned inspired.



These photos were captured through the lens of Winthrop student **MARY PRESSON ROBERTS**.

ST-ARTS SUMMER PROGRAM



Our 2026 **ST-ARTS** summer program is in the books! Over 300 rising seventh, eighth and ninth graders with special talents in the arts flooded Winthrop's campus in June, studying art, dance, drama and music. We had so much fun watching them learn and grow more confident in their areas of interest, and we are grateful for all the wonderful instructors who directed them throughout the three-week program.



ALUMNI NEWS

RACHEL BURROUGHS '25, M.A.T. '26 was the recipient of the 2026 Distinguished Teacher Candidate Award and **REBECCA LIPPS M.F.A. '19** was the recipient of the 2026 Distinguished Mentor Teacher Award, which were presented by the Winthrop University Teacher Education Program on May 6.



Lipps (left) and Burroughs (right) with their certificates.

AIDAN TIBBITT '26 will be working in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools as a theatre teacher at Jay M Robinson MS in Charlotte.

STACEY WALDEN '10, M.A.T. '19 was named one of 10 national Art Education Leadership Award winners by Artsonia.

JESSICA FICHTER '09 has been named the Artistic Director at the Nashville Repertory Theatre. Jessisa was previously at Trustus Theatre in Columbia.

DYLAN BANNISTER '16 received the Ben Ardrey Volunteer of the Year Award from the Arts Council of York County in June.



Bannister at the Center for the Arts.

DYLAN BANNISTER '16 and **ALEXIS HOWARD '16** curated "Signs of Life," an art exhibit hosted by the Arts Council of York County inside its Dalton Gallery at the Center for the Arts in downtown Rock Hill. The exhibit aimed to highlight the serendipitous beauty of everyday life and was on display May 8-June 13.

JESSIE HAYNES '11 has been named a quarterfinalist for the GRAMMY Music Educator Award for the second year in a row.

LILA SHULL '11 was awarded a McKnight Fellowship this Spring. This is an extremely competitive and prestigious fellowship that comes with an unrestricted \$25,000 award and an exhibition at Highpoint Printmaking.

EMILY TUTTLE '10 has accepted a tenure-track appointment at Francis Marion University, where she will join the faculty as Assistant Professor of Art History this fall. She previously taught at Limestone University from 2015-2025 and spent the past academic year as Visiting Professor of Art History at Wofford College. She has also served as an Adjunct Instructor at Winthrop since 2020.

JAMES KEVIN GRAY '99 recently saw his song "While I Breathe, I Hope," become the official State Choral Anthem of South Carolina. Gray wrote the piece more than a decade ago, and legislation to adopt the song finally passed the House and Senate this spring before being signed into law by Governor Henry McMaster on May 15.



Gray recently became director of music ministries at the American Church in Paris, France.

HAVE YOU SUBMITTED YOUR ARTSWINTHROP ALUMNI PROFILE?

Thank you to those who have! We are in the process of catching up on profiles that have been submitted over the past year.

To set up your profile or to request an update to your existing profile, complete the online form found at winthrop.edu/cvpa/alumni

This public alumni directory helps us stay in touch with you, and makes it easy for generations of ArtsWinthrop alumni to connect with each other. Thanks for your participation!

IN MEMORIAM

The College of Visual and Performing Arts mourns the unexpected passing of alumna **KAMINER HAISLIP QUINN**, a gifted silversmith, educator, and beloved member of the Winthrop creative community. Kaminer passed away on April 11, 2026, at the age of 46.



Kaminer earned her B.F.A. in Jewelry and Metals from Winthrop University in 2002, graduating cum laude, and continued her graduate studies at Winthrop, earning an M.F.A. in Silversmithing and Design with a minor in Sculpture in 2005. Her time in the Department of Art and Design helped shape a remarkable career grounded in technical excellence, artistic discipline,

and a deep respect for the traditions of metalsmithing.

Over the course of her career, Kaminer became widely recognized as a designer, metalsmith, and silversmith whose work reflected patience, precision, and a deep understanding of material. Based in Charleston, South Carolina, she created handcrafted silver hollowware, functional objects, serving pieces, jewelry, and commissioned works that united traditional silversmithing techniques with a refined contemporary design sensibility. Her work was exhibited, collected, featured in numerous publications, and received significant professional recognition, reflecting the reach and distinction of her career as a contemporary craftsman.



Her connection to Winthrop remained meaningful throughout her life and career. Kaminer studied under the late Alfred D. Ward, internationally respected silversmith and longtime Winthrop professor and chair, whose mentorship had a lasting influence on her artistic development. In fall 2025, Kaminer returned to Winthrop University Galleries as one of the alumni artists included in “Legacy of a Mentor: Honoring Alfred D. Ward & His Artistic Influence,” an exhibition celebrating Ward’s work and the generations of students he shaped.



In many ways, Kaminer carried Alfred D. Ward’s legacy forward through her own work and teaching. Beginning in 2021, she served as Adjunct Professor of Silversmithing at the American College of the Building Arts in Charleston, South Carolina, where she shared her knowledge of silversmithing, jewelry, and metalwork with a new generation of students. She also continued to deepen her own understanding of specialized tools, techniques, and traditions, including recent training in Switzerland connected to machinery and methods associated with Ward’s legacy with the Guilloche engraving machine, acquired by ACBA from Ward’s studio. Through her work, Kaminer helped preserve and extend knowledge that might otherwise have been lost, ensuring that the traditions that shaped her own artistic path would continue through the students she taught and inspired.

Kaminer’s life and career embodied the best of a Winthrop arts education: disciplined craft, creative independence, generosity of spirit, and a commitment to carrying knowledge forward. She was shaped by mentorship, became a mentor herself, and leaves a legacy that will continue through her artwork, her students, and the many lives she touched. Her unexpected passing is a profound shock and loss to the Winthrop community, not only because of the remarkable artist and educator she became, but because of the kind, warm, and generous person she was.

The College of Visual and Performing Arts extends its deepest condolences to Kaminer’s family, friends, students, colleagues, and all who knew and loved her. Her talent, kindness, and spirit will remain part of the many lives she touched, and her memory will continue to live on within the Winthrop community and beyond. A memorial service will be held later this year in August at the American College of the Building Arts in Charleston.