

26 January 2023

*Dr. Ron McNair's Legacy Lives On*

Dear Colleagues,

As we do every year at this time, **Winthrop's McNair staff and students are reflecting on the accomplishments and sacrifices of Dr. Ronald E. McNair and what they mean to us.** This year, our Scholars are especially engaged in this reflection because they have been invited to speak at and participate in the Candlelight Vigil at Dr. McNair's Life History Center in his home town, Lake City, SC. Saturday marks the 37<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Challenger explosion that killed Dr. McNair and his fellow astronauts.



<https://youtu.be/XHqIWwDpEFA>

Our students, alumni, and staff work to honor Dr. McNair's trailblazing legacy through our participants' research and graduate study achievements. Dr. Jordan Lewis (Winthrop Biology, McNair, Eagle STEM, and Honors alumnus) was asked to speak at the Vigil as a representative of the Legacy of Dr. McNair. Because his Post Doc work at Yale kept him from being able to travel to Lake City this week, Dr. Lewis prepared the video linked above for Florence County School District 3. It will be shared with students throughout the school district as part of their celebration of Dr. Ronald E. McNair Day (Friday 1/27/23).

Since 2009, the U.S. Department of Education has provided us with significant funding "to increase the attainment of Ph.D. degrees by students from underrepresented segments of society" "through involvement in [undergraduate] research and other scholarly activities" (<https://www2.ed.gov/programs/triomcnair/index.html>).

Winthrop's McNair program is funded to serve 30 undergraduates every year. At least two-thirds of each cohort must be first generation college students from low-income families and the remaining students must come from racial and ethnic groups underrepresented in graduate education.

So far, Winthrop has served 186 McNair participants.

- 98% persisted to graduation or are currently completing their baccalaureate degree.
- 86% of our graduates enrolled in graduate programs.
- 58% of all graduates have at least one graduate degree.
- 24 alumni have earned doctorates.

The grit and brilliance of these amazing students, expertise and support of their faculty mentors, work of the [Advisory Board](#), dedication of the McNair staff, investment of the administration, and help from staff all over campus make this possible. In particular, our program could not function without the efforts of the good folks in Grants & Research, Financial Aid, Student Financial Services, Records and Registration, Residence Life, Printing Services, Accounts Payable, The Foundation & Alumni Relations, ONCA, Undergraduate Research, Eagle STEM, Honors, ASC, and others throughout University College and the institution.

For more information about Winthrop's Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program, please check out our website (<https://www.winthrop.edu/mcnair/>). Learn more about Dr. McNair here: <https://youtu.be/C1BalnZZx9s>.

Thank you for all you do to support McNair Scholars, Mentors, and staff.

-Cheryl

**Cheryl A. Fortner, Ph.D.**  
*Proud Director, McNair Scholars Program*  
*Professor of Psychology*

Winthrop University



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RONALD E. McNAIR  
POST-BACCALAUREATE  
ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM