



# WINTHROP MAGAZINE

FALL 2025





message from the **PRESIDENT**



Dear Friends:

Our 140th academic year has yielded some incredible accomplishments thus far. Our enrollment is the highest it's been since 2019, we posted our second-highest fundraising year ever, our phase 2 strategic plan initiatives are underway, a new interior design center has been dedicated, and too much more to include here!

But this milestone year in our history also has experienced some sadness. The Winthrop and Rock Hill communities have mourned the sudden loss of Board Chair Glenn McCall this summer, and while that has been an emotionally difficult experience for us all to navigate, we know Glenn would want us to continue pressing forward, guided by our mission, vision and values, and not missing

a beat. I encourage you to read more about Glenn's life and legacy in this edition of the *Winthrop Magazine*.

I also encourage you to read other content in this edition as well, including:

- *A story on the university's new game-changing J. Robert Bazemore Design Center located at The Thread;*
- *The Model United Nations Program's 50th anniversary and how this first-of-its-kind program still holds a special place in the hearts of our alumni;*
- *The retirement of long-time employee Ben Roach '77, who compiled nearly 50 years of service to Winthrop;*
- *The fascinating research trips conducted in Peru and Mongolia by some of our faculty members;*
- *A compelling feature on junior Robert Sepheus, a life-long performer who is working towards a bachelor's degree in theatre and dance; and*
- *The latest campus happenings, alumni news and university advancement updates.*

Please enjoy this magazine edition. As always, thank you for your continued support. I hope to see you on campus for Homecoming and Reunion Weekend, Nov. 14-15. I always enjoy welcoming fellow alumni home.

Winthrop Ever Stand,

Edward A. Serna '02  
**President**



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*About the cover: This year's Convocation ceremony, held in Byrnes Auditorium for the first time since 2018, included a new element, Lighting the Winthrop Way. Attendees lit battery-operated candles to symbolize the light of learning, shared values, and the connection between past, present and future members of the Winthrop community.*

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# A MAIN FOCAL POINT: NEW CENTER ELEVATES INTERIOR DESIGN PROGRAM

When a national leader in commercial interior design conceptualizes a space that bears his name for a program dear to his heart, you could understand that the project might come with some pressure. But J. Robert “Bob” Bazemore ’85 did what he does best. He designed an incredible space. He utilized deliberate restraint by applying an informal rule of three to the space: neutral tones, natural materials and no accent walls.

The minimalist design in the J. Robert Bazemore Design Center, located in The Thread in the heart of Rock Hill’s Knowledge Park, achieves Bazemore’s vision to avoid distractions.

“The walls and surfaces provide a blank canvas that invites students to project their creativity into the space,” he said. “Their work, whether sketches, models or installations, supplies the vibrancy, contrast and depth,” said Bazemore.

## A Game-Changing Space

More than a year in the making, the center, featuring five classrooms, opened for classes this fall. Nearly 150 people from various organizations who helped make the center a reality turned out for an Aug. 20 ribbon-cutting event.

President Edward Serna ’02 said the center is a game changer to elevate the design program to the next level. “Combined with our wonderful faculty, incredibly talented students and an aggressive, robust curriculum, the space will be a springboard for the department and the future generations of students who will graduate with a design degree,” he added.

And there is plenty of need for Winthrop interior design graduates, said Dean Faile ’85, executive director of the York County Chamber of Commerce, at the ribbon-cutting event. He noted



that he recently counted at least 150 jobs in the Charlotte metropolitan area that are open in the design field.

## An Ideal and Intentional Location

The project officially began in fall 2024 when the Winthrop Foundation entered into a 10-year lease for the second-floor space at The Thread, which is about a 10-minute walk from the main campus. One of the attractions for The Thread site is that it sits a floor above Spring Creative’s Baxter Mill Archive Design Center, which houses more than 700 wallpaper and fabric swatch books to inspire home furnishing and apparel designers, and will provide a unique additional educational resource for students and opportunities for internships in multiple areas of design.

The building itself is steeped in Rock Hill history. It served as the Rock Hill Buggy Company and then the Anderson Motor Company where luxury cars were made before the Depression, said Harry Emerson, a Winthrop Foundation board member. Seventy-five years ago on the site, Lowenstein operated the Bleachery as the largest printing and finishing facility under one roof in the world.

Now the design center is one of a long line of projects where Winthrop has reached out to the community for assistance and Rock Hill has responded, said Board of Trustees Chair Joel Hamilton ’06.

He praised Family Trust Federal Credit Union for its generous partnership in the center and Bazemore for tapping into his vast network of industry resources to help with in-kind and other donations. “Bob’s vision and courage to offer his time, energy and personal resources to the initiative challenges other alumni to respond as well to help out their alma mater,” Hamilton said. “I’m proud that our board and President Serna are dedicated to ensuring that Winthrop continues to be a contributing partner to the economic growth in this vital area adjacent to our campus.”

## Bazemore to Stay Involved

Bazemore said the project has been one of the most meaningful of his career because it brings together everything he values: design, education and community.

“I believe that design has the power to shape how people learn, think and collaborate. Invest-





*Clockwise from top: Interior design students and alumni, College of Visual and Performing Arts Dean Karen Oremus, Design Chair Jason Tselentis, and staff posed at the grand opening; Rock Hill Mayor John Gettys talked about how Winthrop and Rock Hill are connected; Marie Cloud, left, owner of Indigo Pruitt Design Studio, is pictured with Quintel Gwinn, assistant professor of design. Cloud has guest-lectured numerous times; President Serna, retired Senior Development Officer Debbie Garrick '87, '89, and Bazemore were all smiles; and nearly 150 people attended the grand opening.*

ing my time and talents into a space that will directly inspire and prepare the next generation of designers feels like a natural way to give back to the university that helped launch me,” he said.

Bazemore expects to be at the center several times each semester, both in lectures and in more informal mentoring settings. He plans to focus his talks on areas where design intersects with business and culture, such as sustainability, product design, architectural interiors, branding and the realities of building a design practice.

What excites Bazemore the most about the center is that it is not just a building, it is a platform. “It is designed to evolve with students’ creativity and to showcase their work as the true focal point. My hope is that it becomes not only a hub for design education at Winthrop, but also a place where the broader community sees the value of design in shaping culture and daily life.”

Learn more about the interior design program at [www.winthrop.edu/cvpa/design](http://www.winthrop.edu/cvpa/design).

# REMEMBERING GLENN MCCALL

The Winthrop and Rock Hill communities received heartbreaking news on July 11 with the sudden passing of longtime Board of Trustees’ member and chairman Glenn McCall.

He was known as a natural leader, a man of faith and one of the university’s greatest cheerleaders.

McCall first joined the board in 2011 as the education superintendent designee. He was then legislatively appointed to an at-large seat in 2014 and was re-elected for a six-year term ending in 2027.

President Edward Serna '02 recalled how McCall took the time to speak to everyone. “He asked about our families, praised us for our accomplishments and always put folks at ease. As board chairman he was willing to take a chance on a young president without a long tenure at my former institutions. Glenn saw something in me that gave him hope that the revolving door of leadership at Winthrop would finally close. He offered steadfast encouragement and let me know the board was always in my corner.”

During his 14-year board tenure he developed deep friendships with those he worked alongside.

Kathy Hudson Bigham '73 served with McCall in board leadership roles for many years. “I can never adequately express how much it has meant to me to serve on the board with Glenn. His steady leadership always was focused on what was in the best interest for the university. He loved his family, the Winthrop family and our Rock Hill community. Outside of Winthrop, he and his wife, Linda, were a mainstay in the lives of my late husband, Larry, and myself. Not only was he one of Winthrop’s greatest

ambassadors but he also was one of my dearest friends.”

Joel Hamilton '06, who assumed the chairmanship, appreciated the opportunity to learn from and observe McCall over the years. “There is no replacing a leader as naturally gifted as Glenn McCall. Winthrop has reaped the benefits of his steadfast wisdom and leadership. We choose to follow his example of passion for Winthrop and will continue the positive momentum across the university.”

Winthrop will honor McCall and his legacy with a posthumous honorary degree at its Dec. 20 Commencement ceremony.



*McCall was a fixture at Move-In Weekend. He greeted and welcomed families to campus.*

## Endowed Scholarship Fund Created In Glenn McCall's Memory

To contribute to the scholarship created in McCall’s memory, please visit [www.winthrop.edu/give](http://www.winthrop.edu/give) and select the Glenn McCall Endowed Scholarship in the drop-down menu.





# MODEL UN CELEBRATES GOLDEN MILESTONE

“The Winthrop College Model United Nations was a tremendous success!”

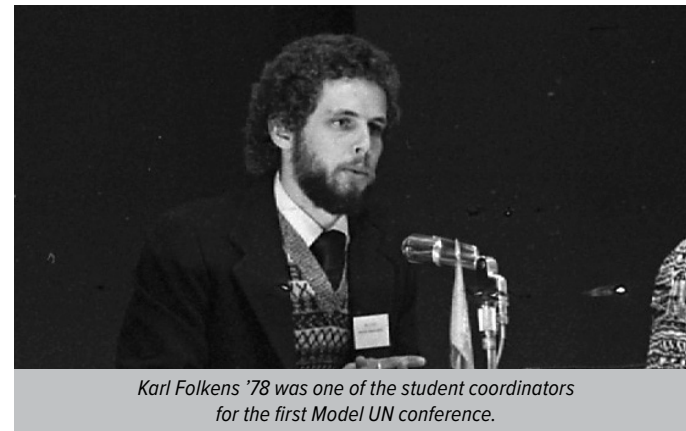
The Johnsonian, the weekly student newspaper, declared the success on its front page on April 25, 1977, along with a photo of long-time Political Science Professor and Winthrop Model UN founder Melford Wilson; and student coordinators Karl Folkens '78 and Alan Rash '77.

Just one week before, some 200 high school students from the Carolinas and more than 70 Winthrop students came together on campus for the inaugural Model United Nations Conference. For three days, they enjoyed film screenings, convened meetings, captured awards, heard from Canadian Minister and UN Representative Geoffrey Bruce and debated hot button topics such as terrorism, human rights and the environment.

After this rousing success, Folkens, who continued serving as student coordinator, and Judy Guy Gaulin '78, who hopped on board as assistant coordinator, already looked forward to making Model UN II in 1978 bigger and better.

With Guy nodding in approval, Folkens told The Johnsonian: “Our No. 1 goal is to foster student leadership and student participation....People were saying, ‘There’s no way you can make it better.’ We would argue that point.”

As Winthrop prepares to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Model UN program, Folkens’ words from decades ago ring truer than ever, with 2025’s conference topping 450 students.



Karl Folkens '78 was one of the student coordinators for the first Model UN conference.

## Where It All Began

The 1970s brought many new and exciting changes to campus, and Model UN was one of them.

In December 1978, then-Rep. Ken Holland rose to the floor in the S.C. House of Representatives and hailed Winthrop for the program’s implementation. Just a year later, the leadership in the actual UN commended Winthrop’s program as the best organized in America.

*Model UN is a truly special program where students build community and form lifelong friendships.*

-Jennifer Disney

## Not Just Surviving but Thriving



Jennifer Disney, professor and chair of the Department of Political Science, Philosophy, Religion, and Legal Studies and director of the women’s and gender studies program, now serves as the Model UN director.

“This is an exciting year for the program,” she said. “Not many institutions can say they have survived, much less thrived, for a half a century! Winthrop’s Model United Nations Program is truly a transformative curricular and co-curricular experience for our students.”

Winthrop students interested in Model UN take multiple one-hour courses to prepare for the big annual event. The classes serve as an educational briefing, with students using their newly acquired knowledge to debate at Model UN.

The three courses are: Political Science (PLSC)

260, a conference simulation of the United Nations’ General Assembly; PLSC 261, a secretariat class in which students learn how to chair committees and run the conference; and PLSC 362, a travel course.

The last component has led to multiple awards for Winthrop students at the Southern Regional Model United Nations Conferences, including Outstanding Delegation Awards.

“Winthrop students have earned an incredible reputation earning top awards while competing with the best and brightest across the nation,” Disney said. “Model UN teaches global literacy, professionalism, collaboration and confidence in public speaking. Our alumni who have gone on to become lawyers have all said Model UN helped prepare them the most for law school due to the necessity to answer difficult questions and to think on their feet.

“Model UN is a truly special program where students build community and form lifelong friendships,” she continued.



Transformative Experiences



Chief Staff Attorney with the South Carolina Court of Appeals **Susan Barber Hackett '00** embodies Disney’s words. She said Model UN helped prepare her for a career in law.

“Practicing law is about collaborating to solve problems, just like Model UN,” she said. “When you can’t solve the problem through collaboration, you have to make the best argument you can to appeal to the widest audience, again just like Model UN. I was an appellate litigator for 11 years before accepting a position at the court. It also prepared me for public speaking and answering tough questions - both huge parts of my career.”

Hackett heard about Winthrop’s program from her ninth-grade world geography teacher, who asked her to join the high school team, and she competed at Winthrop. Due to her familiarity with the program and campus, she chose to attend Winthrop, earning a bachelor’s degree in political science and history and later a J.D. from the University of South Carolina School of Law. While at Winthrop, she continued participating in Model UN, representing Afghanistan and Rwanda, and held several positions.



**Willie Lyles III, Esq. '06** called his time at Winthrop and with Model UN “transformative.”

“I learned how to become an effective listener so I could be an even more effective advocate for my position,” he said. “It was an invaluable experience that has served me well in the halls of Congress.”

Lyles currently works as chief of staff for U.S. Representative Troy Carter of Louisiana.

After earning a bachelor’s degree in political science, Lyles earned his J.D. from Southern Illinois University – Carbondale School of Law. He served as senior advisor for two members of Congress throughout a seven-year period: Congressman James E. Clyburn of South Carolina, majority whip of the U.S. House of Representatives; and former Congressman Bill Enyart of Illinois. He also served as director of federal affairs for Duke Energy.



A recent graduate, **David Ibragimov '25** will put his Model UN experience to use this fall as he enters American University to pursue a master’s degree in U.S. foreign policy and national security. He called Model UN “an incredible opportunity.”

“As the world becomes ever closer and begins to move ever faster, it is necessary that future leaders within our communities can adapt to the ever-changing circumstances of international relations,” he said. “Through this







“  
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and problem solvers.

-David Ibragimov

”



program, students have the tools and opportunity to look at countries, regions and worldwide conflicts through the lens of critical thinkers and problem solvers. Many times, when people hear news of trouble in some part of the world, they say, ‘This is very unfortunate to have happened, but there is nothing that I can do.’

Model UN students, on the other hand, learn how to say, ‘This is very unfortunate to have happened; what can I do to help make it better?’”



### Make a Gift in Honor of Chris Van Aller

Alumni and friends of the Model UN program are raising funds to endow a scholarship in honor of **Chris Van Aller**, who served as Model UN director for 26 years.

To make a gift in honor of Van Aller or the Model UN program, please visit [www.winthrop.edu/give](http://www.winthrop.edu/give) or e-mail Allison Morton in university advancement at [mortonam@winthrop.edu](mailto:mortonam@winthrop.edu).





# BEN ROACH

WITNESSING WINTHROP'S  
TRANSFORMATION FOR NEARLY  
50 YEARS



**Ben Roach '77** walks around Winthrop and recalls a story at every turn. An only child, Roach spent much of his childhood helping his electrician father, Ernest, with campus projects. Like many of the children of Winthrop employees, he pitched in to help after school, on weekends and in the summer. Hired part time in December 1972 when he turned 18, Roach ultimately tallied nearly 50 years of service at Winthrop. As a full-time employee, he compiled 46 years in the state system, mostly with the facilities management office but also with the public safety department.

Roach turned in his keys at the end of August, closing out a long and dedicated career. The last three decades he worked as the senior projects manager of architectural and engineering services for the campus.

## Happy at Winthrop

Winthrop was not Roach's first or only job, but it certainly was the place where he put in the most hours. One example involved the renovation of the former Wofford and Richardson residence halls in 2002. He remembered working 12-hour days, seven days a week, between May and August to have the rooms ready for the start of school.

"Winthrop has been my family and my home and my workplace," Roach said. "I've been happy to be here."

Many of the women on Roach's mother's side attended Winthrop to become teachers, the first being his great-aunt, Emmie Sams, who graduated in 1913. His mother, Jackie Lancaster Roach '54, '83, aunt, Evelyn Lancaster Vaughn '52, and cousins all graced the Winthrop halls.

The institution has provided Roach with notable memories over the decades. He smiled when he remembered listening to students Christmas caroling in area neighborhoods out of the back of a flatbed truck. He talked about the ferocious field hockey players who competed as "warriors with clubs." He attended Leonard Bernstein's performance in Byrnes Auditorium. He found and got rid of pests in the house occupied by Mae Johnson, wife of Winthrop founder D.B. Johnson, who died on her birthday when she was 100 years old. He then helped bury her in the Little Chapel next to her husband. He played on intramural softball teams with faculty, staff and students. He served as a chauffeur for U.S. Senator Strom Thurmond when he visited, and he helped direct traffic for big events.

Roach loves to delve into Winthrop's history, much of what he learned from older workers. Their memories would prompt him to research maps, photographs and old land documents.

## Memories from the Decades

Roach witnessed the move to coeducation when male students became a permanent fixture on the campus. He was involved, by the mid-2000s, in the addition of new buildings at Winthrop: Dalton Hall, West Center, DiGiorgio Campus Center, Carroll Hall and Owens Hall.

Other memories involved working four campus fires (Roach is a long-time volunteer firefighter) – Sims in 1980, Kinard in 1986, Owens in 2010, and Byrnes in 2018. He observed that times have changed with updated building systems, increased technology and other infrastructure that make rebuilding facilities much more complex. Then there was Hurricane Hugo in 1989 which brought down trees all over the campus, and, as Roach noted, facilities management staff spent the next few years completing insurance paperwork.

Before Roach earned a business management degree from Winthrop, he had attended Clemson, where his engineering courses set him up for success in his long-time career. He was often considered the first person to ask about anything underground at the university. Facilities management leaders over the years appreciated Roach's detailed recollections of past projects, decades-old infrastructure, and general campus knowledge. Associate Vice President for Facilities Management James Grigg noted, "Every capital project on the campus had Ben's hand in it. He made significant contributions throughout his long career to Winthrop's facilities progress."

Over the years Roach received four presidential citations and was involved in numerous planning projects, including being on the campus master plan steering committee. His many efforts were rewarded in 2019 when Roach received the Algernon Sydney Sullivan

Award, recognizing a Winthrop alumnus for selfless dedication of time, energy and talent in service to others, from the Winthrop Alumni Association.

Now that Roach has retired, he will continue to take care of his mother, Jackie, and wife Terry, and enjoy his train hobby. He recently visited the N.C. Transportation Museum at the former Southern Railway's 1896-era Spencer Shops where he was able to sit in and operate a Southern F7 engine. After a near lifetime of helping conduct Winthrop's progress, he now wants to move full speed ahead to chase his dream of learning more about trains.



Roach received his 40 years of service certificate in April 2021.



# EXAMINING PERU'S PAST TO HELP TODAY'S FARMERS



Two faculty members and five students traveled to Peru this summer to dig among past ruins to find answers to help with current challenges.



They were part of a 30-member archaeology team excavating the site of Achomani, a hilltop fortification that dates to around 1000 A.D., a period of warfare and climate stress prior to the Inca Empire. **Lauren Kohut**,

an assistant professor of environmental studies and anthropology, said the village covered an area roughly the size of 10 football fields and may have been home to around 200 people.

The project, directed by Kohut and colleagues from Binghamton University (BrieAnna Langlie) and Cornell University (Matthew Velasco), is in its second year with funding from the National Science Foundation and the Archaeological Institute of America. Their fieldwork is carried out under the approval and supervision of Peru's Ministry of Culture and with support from the local community.

## Adapting to Change

"We're looking at how farmers at the time adapted to climate change and warfare," said Kohut. During this time period, which dates from around 1000–1450 A.D., communities here confronted both severe drought and significantly cooler temperatures—conditions that threatened both their crops and their herds. The team hopes that by understanding how farmers in the past confronted these challenges they can help contemporary farmers navigate current environmental uncertainties.

From early June to early August the team excavated in and around the houses where the farmers lived to uncover evidence of what residents of the site were eating and from where their food was coming. This evidence, including charred food remains, discarded animal bones, and tools used for farming and food preparation, will be analyzed to create a complete picture of foodways during this time.

Sociology major Hugo Buchanan of Rock Hill said he initially joined the project to narrow down his career options in anthropology. "I

discovered a lot more than I was expecting. I found that the work, while exhausting at times, spoke to me as an individual and I adored all of the opportunities that came with being a part of the project," he said.

## Using Data to Prepare and Inform

The team also collected data on both ancient and modern climates. Geological cores, extracted from a nearby wetland, were collected for paleoclimate modeling to understand exactly what conditions farmers at Achomani faced. The peat soils that form in these wetlands preserve chemical signatures of climate conditions. Student Alisa Olive of Summerville joined the trip, with Geology Professor Scott Werts, to collect the cores. Ascending to an elevation of 14,000 feet, they extracted columns of peat with a core sampler and prepared them for transport back to the U.S. where they will be analyzed.

Eventually, radiocarbon dating and stable isotope analysis of the soils will be used to model changing temperature and rainfall across thousands of years. These cores can also be used to understand carbon sequestration. "Since my major is environmental sciences, I collected data for research regarding carbon sequestra-

tion in high altitude wetlands," Olive said.

Investigators are also tracking modern climates using modern instruments. The team installed dozens of remote weather sensors that will allow them to track conditions important for farming, including air and soil temperature, wind speed, solar radiation and soil moisture. The data will be shared with farmers through an online dashboard and collected by the researchers to create an ongoing record of how conditions in the region are changing. "This will inform current farmers about planting options during the current climate change," said Kohut, who will present the findings along with Olive and Buchanan, at upcoming archaeological conferences.

Located in the high Andes, the Colca Valley is particularly vulnerable to climate changes due to the fragility of their mountain climates, Olive said. "I am hoping to pursue this research and similar projects as I am highly interested in geology and hope to attend graduate school with a focus on geology and environmental processes," she said. Aside from the scientific research, she made lifelong friends, became immersed in Peruvian culture and even enhanced her Spanish language skills.



Two faculty members and five students traveled to Peru this summer to conduct field research. Their work was made possible by funds from donor Harry Dalton '86, Winthrop Research Council grants and other internal funds. Photo credit: BrieAnna S. Langlie.



# ROBERT SEPHEUS

## REINVENTING HIMSELF AFTER 60



**Robert Sepheus** learned to dance at an after-school program at the Dunbar Community Center in Springfield, Massachusetts.

And he was taught by one of the best. The late legendary jazz dancer and choreographer Frank Hatchett grew up in Springfield and gave back to his hometown by teaching at the center. Sepheus' association with Hatchett led to his migration to New York City after high school so he could compete with some of the best dancers in the country and escape a dysfunctional family.

It took time but he landed a dance job with the late singer Rick James' Cold Blooded Tour and later performed for many years on cruise lines.

### Overcoming Challenges

Grateful for his life, Sepheus admits to overcoming knee surgery, drug addiction and a gypsy lifestyle.

In between his tours, jobs and life's challenges, Sepheus credits one person who shaped the dancer and teacher he is today: Carol Ann Board-

way-Chapin. "She was more than just an employer; she was a mentor, dance partner, director and collaborator," he said.

At her studio, Shooting Star Dance Center in Springfield, she gave him the freedom to choreograph, to teach, and to express his vision, always treating him with respect as her choreographer-in-residence. What he admires the most about her is that she stood by him through everything. "She never stopped believing in me as both an artist and a person. The respect she showed me, and the trust she placed in my choreography, satisfied my heart more than owning a studio of my own ever could," he said.

### Future Focused

Fast forward to 2007 when Sepheus moved to Rock Hill to be near his mother and stepfather. He earned an associate's degree at York Technical College and after riding by Winthrop for years thinking he wanted to attend, he took the plunge in fall 2020 during the pandemic.

A non-traditional student, Sepheus finds that

he is 40+ years older than many of his fellow students. He brings a wealth of entertainment knowledge to the classroom and an air of professionalism and dedication to his theatre and dance classes. His fellow students are surprised that he is 60+ years old because he seems younger in attitude and spirit.

His goal is to earn his bachelor's degree and return to cruise life where he will be eligible to apply for jobs attracting talent. "This can be a pipeline for Winthrop students," he noted.

### Setting a Positive Example

When he's not at Winthrop, Sepheus cares for his elderly parents or works in some temporary positions.

As the voice of experience, he tells students to listen to their teachers and choreographers to interpret dance as the teachers see it, not as the students want to perform a piece.

Sepheus' time at Winthrop has provided him a way to update his skills. "I have gained invaluable vocal and dramatic training, refining my versatility as a triple-threat performer," he said, plus he finally learned to tap dance in a way that he felt comfortable doing it. "I plan to build upon this foundation by actively participating in new works, exploring choreography for musical theatre pieces, and collaborating with faculty and students to produce high-caliber performances.

"I am eager to continue my journey at Winthrop, growing not just as an artist but as a leader in the performing arts community."

He approaches every class and work session with a strong work ethic, ensuring that he is present, prepared and ready to contribute.

Associate Professor of Dance Kelly Ozust said that by setting an example of attendance, attentiveness and professionalism, Sepheus encourages other students to bring the same level of dedication to their shared craft.

### Not Bound by Age

"My goal is to be an asset to every production," Sepheus said. His presence in these classes proves that dance and the performing arts are not bound by age.

"One's passion, dedication and artistry can thrive well into our 60s and beyond," he said. "I take pride in showing my younger classmates that longevity in the arts is possible, that discipline and perseverance matter, and that every stage of life brings new growth opportunities."







# SEARCHING FOR FORGOTTEN REEFS

“The Lost Reefs of the Gobi Desert.”



That sounds like the title of an Indiana Jones adventure movie, but it actually was the focus of Geology Professor **Diana Boyer’s** trip to Mongolia this past summer.

Though located more than 1,000 miles from the ocean and known for its extreme temperatures and rocky terrane, geology experts have found evidence that the Gobi Desert was once home to vibrant coral reefs. These findings have likely gone undiscovered because work in the south Gobi Desert has been very limited, Boyer noted.

“The Devonian period had the most extensive reef ecosystems in the history of our planet, but no one has recorded reefs from this area before,” she explained. “Certainly, these areas are not easily accessed, which has limited the previous research in this region. This expedition had us off the grid camping in places with no roads!”

Boyer has spent years investigating fossils of the Devonian, 360 to 420 million years ago. However, most of her previous research has focused on times of environmental stress and mass extinctions. This fieldwork focused on reconstructing what life was like before the extinction events.

Thanks to funding from a Winthrop Research Council grant, Boyer paired with Appalachian

State colleagues Johnny Waters and Sarah Carmichael for the quest. The latter duo has traveled to Mongolia over the last 15 years and laid the groundwork for the research team’s amazing finds. They also developed important relationships with Mongolian geologists and paleontologists to accompany them and help navigate.

“The most exciting thing is that we did find a remarkably large reef,” Boyer said, “rising close to 20 meters off the sea floor and traceable for over 10 kilometers. It was filled with extinct types of corals and sponges called stromatoporoids. This is the first time reefs have been documented in this area, and it could be one of the biggest reefs from this time period.”

The team will begin analyzing, processing and reporting on the rocks and data they collected.

“I am very excited to piece together the stories that we gathered on this trip,” she said. “We are all very excited to go back out and explore more.”



## Nearly \$8 Million Raised to Close Out Fiscal Year



Winthrop reported a near record-level year of giving during the 2024-25 fiscal year.

Vice President Kevin Hughes said 2,829 donors gave \$7,957,027 to the institution. That reflects a 73 percent increase in total giving over the 2023-24 fiscal year.

Giving highlights included:

- *The Winthrop Fund saw a 76 percent increase in dollars raised: \$821,350 in 2025 compared to \$466,230 in 2024.*
- *The number of members in the President’s Circle, which recognizes donors who give \$1,000 or more, increased by 16 percent from 2024. The 446 donors in 2025 are the highest number of members in Winthrop’s history.*
- *The record-breaking Giving Day prompted 1,011 donors to contribute \$391,233.*
- *Donors established 23 new endowments.*

## Former Student-Athlete Upgrades Baseball Areas



Generous gifts from **Will Simmons ’02**, a former baseball player, have upgraded the weight room and batting cages. The Will Simmons Weight Room now includes new Sorinex equipment, Winthrop branding and new flooring. The Simmons

Hitting Center features state-of-the-art Kodiak batting cages.

Head Baseball Coach Mike McGuire said the upgrades have made a tremendous impact on player development. “I’m forever grateful for Will’s commitment to Winthrop baseball. His gifts allow us to have one of the best baseball facilities in the country with state-of-the-art player development areas. All of this helps us recruit some of the best and brightest student-athletes.”

Simmons was happy to help. “Winthrop and the baseball program gave me so much—not just in terms of athletics, but in shaping who I am today.

The lessons I learned on the field, the friendships I built and the opportunities I had continue to impact me every day. Being able to give back and help improve the facilities is my way of paying it forward to the next generation of players. I also have a lot of respect for Coach McGuire. He was an assistant coach when I played and now seeing him leading the program makes it even more exciting for me to support the team. I want these players to have the resources they need to chase their goals and create the same kind of life-long memories that I did.”





# Student-Made Rock Hill Opens on Main Street

On Sept. 4, Winthrop student-artists, the Rock Hill Economic Development Corporation (RHEDC) and the city of Rock Hill launched Student-Made Rock Hill, a program to support and engage student-creators and small business owners from the university. Student-Made Rock Hill is part of a growing network of more than 15 universities that have implemented this program, and this partnership is the first to pair a municipality with a university.

The partnership will not only allow students to take advantage of the small business resources provided by RHEDC, but it will include online sales and the sale of student items at the brick-and-mortar store. Visit the shop in person at 202 E. Main Street in downtown Rock Hill or shop online at [www.studentmaderockhill.com](http://www.studentmaderockhill.com).



Student-creator Sabrina Lateefuddin displayed one of her paintings at the opening.

# Byrnes Renovation Receives State Preservation Award

The South Carolina Historic Preservation Office presented Winthrop with its 2025 Stewardship Award for the renovation of the university's historic Byrnes Auditorium.

Accepting the award on June 18 at the State House from Governor Henry McMaster were James Grigg, associate vice president for facilities management, and Chris Johnson '99, sustainability coordinator.

Byrnes' reopening this past spring was one of the university's highlights. Grigg said the project architects and contractors were able to balance modern requirements with the

building's historical significance, ensuring the preservation of key architectural features while addressing practical challenges. The auditorium had been offline since August 2018 due to a roof fire and subsequent insurance mitigation.



# Upcoming Milestone Celebrations!

- Several programs and organizations plan to mark significant milestones this academic year. Please save the date to help celebrate the following, and be on the lookout for more information as these events get closer:
- **50th anniversary of DSU.** Nov. 14, 2025: Were you part of DSU during your time on campus? If so, drop into the DSU office (212 DiGiorgio Campus Center) from 4-5 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 14, during Homecoming and Reunion Weekend to connect with other DSU alumni, look at memorabilia of DSU over the years, and more. A spring celebration also is in the works.
  - **50th anniversary of Model UN.** March 25-27, 2026: If you've represented countries, written resolutions and defended your stances alongside hundreds of others in Tillman Auditorium, then please plan to celebrate the Model UN program's milestone celebration. There will be a special 50th anniversary reception on March 26 at 7 p.m.
  - **50th anniversary of Greek Life.** April 17-18, 2026: Calling all Greeks! Get ready to show off your letters during a weekend full of chapter gatherings, a special luncheon and mixers.
  - **130th anniversary of Macfeat Early Childhood Laboratory School.** April 25, 2026: Are you among the thousands that received your preschool or kindergarten schooling at Macfeat or a parent of a child who did? If so, get ready to celebrate this program's legacy in the Winthrop and Rock Hill communities with a celebration on Saturday, April 25.

# Gallery Exhibit Honors the Influence of the Late Alf Ward

"Legacy of a Mentor: Honoring Alfred D. Ward and His Artistic Influence," an exhibit featuring a variety of works from Ward and select alumni and previous students of his, runs through Nov. 15 in the Rutledge Gallery and the Elizabeth Dunlap Patrick Gallery. A reception will be held Nov. 13 from 5:30-7 p.m.

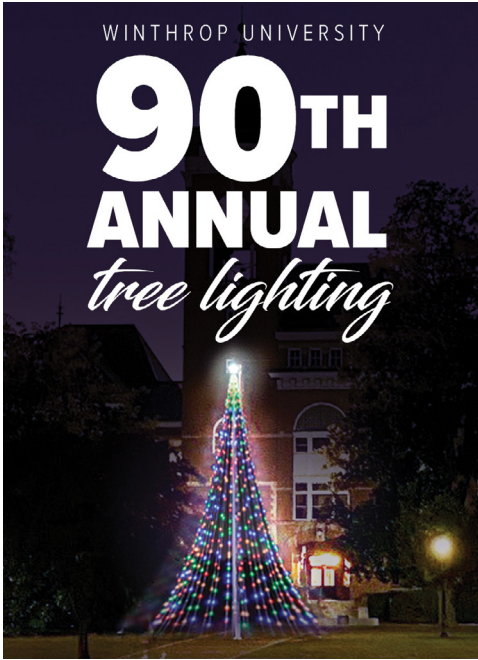
Ward, a long-time professor and former chair of the Department of Fine Arts and Design and mentor in the College of Visual and Performing Arts, passed away in 2023. He was an internationally recognized designer, craftsman, fine artist and design educator who spent nearly 35 years teaching and mentoring students, as well as leading the Department of Fine Arts. Ward designed the university mace, which will be a part of the exhibit, that is displayed at each Convocation and Commencement ceremony.



This painting by Ward was photographed by Alexis Howard.



Help Welcome the  
Holiday Season



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. Help celebrate the beginning of the holiday season by joining us on campus for this special event or tuning in to the **Alumni Association's Facebook Live stream**. Happy Holidays!

Homecoming and  
Reunion Is Here!

We are excited to welcome alumni and friends back to campus for Homecoming and Reunion, Nov. 14-15. There will be something for everyone, including campus tours, lectures, gallery exhibits, tailgating, basketball games and more! Alumni whose class year ends in '5 and '0 are celebrating a milestone reunion this year. Visit [www.winthrop.edu/homecoming](http://www.winthrop.edu/homecoming) for details.

Meet the 2025  
Alumni Award  
Winners

The Alumni Association will recognize five alumni at the Nov. 13 **Alumni Awards Celebration**. These deserving recipients have contributed to Winthrop, and their communities and professions.

*Mary Mildred Sullivan Award:*  
**Betty Morgan Holcombe '56**

*Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award:*  
**Bob Hambricht '74**

*Alumni Distinguished Service Award:*  
**Tiffany Spann-Wilder '95**

*Alumni Professional Achievement Award:*  
**Julie Robinson Adams '78**

*Outstanding Young Alumni Award:*  
**Roman Vitanza '17**



**1967**  
**Cynthia Plair Roddey** of Catawba received the 2025 Visionary Leadership Award from the Rock Hill branch of the NAACP.

**1986**  
**Lisa Breland Spangler '86, '88**, of Rock Hill retired from York School District 1.

**1995**  
"A Guide to Becoming a More Intentional Gifter" is the first book published by **Gina Butler Carrell** of Woodbridge, Virginia.

**1999**  
The Fort Mill School District named **Jocelyn Reynolds Young** of Fort Mill its executive director of elementary education.

**2001**  
Affinity Health Center named **Heather McCutcheon** of Chester its chief executive officer.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation selected **Celeste Plyler Tiller '01, '04**, of Rock Hill to participate in a competitive master class for members of the Business Leads Fellowship Program network.

**2002**  
Fort Mill School District named **Peter Olinger** of Fort Mill its assistant superintendent of human resources and educator effectiveness.

**2004**  
Greenwood School District 50 named **Shane Goodwin**, formerly of Front Royal, Virginia, as its superintendent.

**Chris Miller** of Rock Hill won his 15th consecutive Sportscaster of the Year Award at the South Carolina Broadcasters Association Awards ceremony.

**2005**  
**Lindsay Sheronick Yearata '05, '07**, of Rock Hill was named the executive director of the Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement (CERRA). The center is housed at Winthrop.

**2007**  
The American Water Works Association awarded **Alison Rauch** of Greer the Public Communications Achievement Award.

**2008**  
Lander University awarded **Heather Culbertson Bennett** of Greenwood the Moore Award for Excellence in General Education Teaching.

**Morgan Grant Thornburg** of Lexington joined the staff of Lexington High School as the graduation coach.

**2009**  
**Daniel Beels** of Fort Mill was named principal of Springfield Middle School.

**2010**  
**Matt Mallery** of Fort Mill was named the coordinator of Oak Grove Academy.

**Janelle Willis** of Charlotte, North Carolina, was named director of materials management operations for Advocate Health-Southeast Region.

**2011**  
**Tiara Moore** of Norfolk, Virginia, and her organization, Black in Marine Science, won Best Documentary for "Harm in the Water" at the 2025 Essence Film Festival.

The American Public Gas Association awarded **Hannah Smith** of Rock Hill the Next Generation Employee Achievement Award at the York County Natural Gas Authority's annual conference.

**2012**  
**Punam Patel** of Columbia was named a Columbia Regional Business Report Forty Under 40 awardee.

**2013**  
"It Started Here," a 2024 television special featuring reporting by **Billie Jean Shaw** of Manning, was awarded Best Local Programming by the South Carolina Broadcasters Association at the 2025 STAR Awards.



2014

**Shamira McCray** of Irmo was selected as a 2025-26 Diversity and Inclusion Career Development Fellow through the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) - Mass Communication and Society Division.

2015

**Andrea Causebrook** of Manchester, Connecticut, joined the University of Connecticut’s

sports medicine staff as an assistant athletic trainer concentrating on women’s lacrosse.

2017

**Trina McFadden** of Rock Hill was named principal of Fort Mill Middle School.

2025

**Claire Kirkley** of Sumter joined the YMCA Upper Clover Branch as a ceramics instructor.

**Sean-Patrick McDonald** of Simpsonville joined South Carolina Addiction Treatment as a behavioral health technician.

**Adelle Pruitt** of Greenville was chosen as a 2025-26 Brandon Fellow by the Greenville Center for Creative Arts.

MILESTONES

BIRTHS

**Mathieu (Mat) Stephen Fretschel** ’03, a girl, **Lennon Rose Fretschel**

**Julieta Jones Cunningham** ’09, a boy, **Maddox Reid Cunningham**

**Brittany Nicole Guilfoyle** ’11, a boy, **Luke Knight Lafontaine**

MARRIAGES

**Ellen Wilder-Byrd** ’88, ’94 to **Troy Dechert**

**Cooper Smith** ’13 to **Jordan Sease** ’12

**Hunter Huggins** ’22 to **Gabriel Marz**

**Jill Stuckey** ’02, ’07 to **Michelle Ralston**

**Sam Lovell** ’21 to **Lauren Paige Hershelman** ’22

**Lynde Beaver** ’24 to **Garrett Bowers** ’23

Let Us Hear from You!

*Do you have a new job, recently married, welcomed a baby or another life-changing event that you would like to share with the Winthrop family?*

If so, please let us know! Submit your information by scanning this QR code.



IN MEMORIAM

1940s

**Elizabeth Brogdon** ’45  
**Pauline Palles Costas** ’47  
**Mary Jane Allen Magrath** ’47  
**Nancy Norris Scott** ’48  
**Marian Chuan** ’49  
**Katharine Dinkins Rappe** ’49

1950s

**Anne Roper** ’50  
**Lucia Hannaford Daniel** ’51  
**Amy (Gail) Hipp Kendall** ’51  
**Sarah (Dot) Lucas Lyles** ’51  
**Doris Foster Russell** ’51  
**Lovey Moore Bigham** ’52  
**Rosemary Morris Holdaway** ’52  
**Barbara Kelly Dawkins** ’53  
**Brontee (Mary) Hulon Dixon** ’53  
**Nettie Hartzog Roberts** ’53  
**Barbara Jennings Zobel** ’53  
**Madge Lewis Bates** ’54  
**Mary Love Couick** ’54  
**Margaret Craig Giles** ’54  
**Joan Hovis Pusser** ’54  
**Janet Breaux Sorensen** ’54  
**Sarah (Jo Ann) Burriss Atkinson** ’58  
**Sandra McCorkle Matthews** ’58  
**Betty Hallman Miller** ’58  
**Gail Herndon Boyd** ’59  
**Harriett Thomas Covington** ’59  
**Ellen Caulder Driggers** ’59

**Mary Jane Newman Ramsey** ’59  
**Edith (Carolyn) Price Sutton** ’59

1960s

**Thelma (Joyce) Chappell Abbott** ’60  
**Eva Felton Cobb** ’60  
**Louise (Peace) Fewell Gaston** ’60  
**Joan Livingston Holling** ’61  
**Jane Littlefield Hood** ’61  
**Pauline (Polly) Buice Anglin** ’62  
**Ivadine Allen Shelley-McDaniel** ’62  
**Alleine Austin Hair** ’64  
**Jennie Eargle Frick** ’65  
**Karen (Diane) Anderson Gause** ’65  
**Janice McCall Hindman** ’67  
**Cynthia (Jane) Wolfe Thomas** ’67  
**Brenda Jo Clark** ’68  
**Isla Ford Graham** ’68  
**Nancy Hoar Cannarella** ’69  
**Linda Cooper Nunn** ’69  
**Cynthia Helms Stanley** ’69

1970s

**Phyllis Mims Pearson** ’70  
**Martha Porter Beasley** ’71

**Melinda Fulmer** ’71  
**Deborah Greene Foor** ’73  
**Betty McGraw Porterfield** ’74  
**Rebecca Rush Shipman** ’74  
**Robert Featherstone** ’76  
**Thomas Smith** ’76  
**Carl Joseph Berger** ’77  
**Glennis Griner** ’79  
**Margaret Randall Harmon** ’79  
**Elizabeth (Jane) Tipton Mozeleski** ’79

1980s

**Dennis Stevens** ’80  
**Phillip Andrew Edwards** ’82  
**Anna Hughes Rast** ’85  
**Gary Varnadore** ’86  
**Janet Bentley Crocker** ’87

1990s

**Carla Hoover Thomason** ’94  
**Susan Shikany** ’96

2010s

**Jaclene Austin Poley** ’11

2020s

**Teresa Maria Roccanova** ’21





*University Communications and Marketing  
200 Tillman Hall  
Rock Hill, SC 29733*

If you are a parent of a recent graduate and your son or daughter no longer resides at this address, please call **803/323-2145** or email **[alumni@winthrop.edu](mailto:alumni@winthrop.edu)** so we can update our information.

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## WHY I GIVE...

“I give to Macfeat Early Childhood Laboratory School each year because early childhood education is one of the most important success factors for getting children off to a great start in life. Macfeat also helps teachers in training gain invaluable experience. My children went to Macfeat, and that experience set them on the right path in life!”

Cara Peters  
Professor of Marketing  
Co-chair, Macfeat 130th Anniversary Celebration

*Giving to Winthrop has personal meaning for each donor. Let us help you find an area of giving that you're passionate about, and, together, let's move Winthrop forward, United in Excellence.*

To learn more visit **[www.winthrop.edu/advancement](http://www.winthrop.edu/advancement)** or contact us at **[giving@winthrop.edu](mailto:giving@winthrop.edu)** or **803/323-2275**.