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WINTHROP MAGAZINE

SPRING 2025

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Dear Friends:

“Stacking wins,” or the practice of achieving conservative goals to build momentum and confidence, is how I described our work to state legislators during our recent budget request presentations. Our enrollment growth (significant double-digit increases over two years!), new academic program offerings (including our first doctoral program), the more than 150 partnerships we've established, the millions in external funding we've received lately and our aggressive \$35 million investment in our campus facilities all attest to this university being on the rise.

That message was reinforced last month when our students, alumni and trustees attended Winthrop Day at the State House to advocate for Winthrop and again reiterate to legislators all of the great work happening here.

In this edition of the Winthrop Magazine, I'd like to share with you some of those accomplishments, including the reopening of our beloved Byrnes Auditorium! I know you share my excitement in welcoming this impressive space back after a multi-year hiatus. You can read more about the renovations and upcoming performances on pages 8-11.

I hope you'll take a few moments to read about additional accomplishments in this magazine edition, such as:

- Two fine arts professors' trek of a lifetime this past summer as they completed research on the 500-mile pilgrimage trail known as the Camino de Santiago;
- The success of our cornhole team's inaugural season, including two national titles;
- The vision and success of Will McIntosh '02, president of NBC Sports Next & Fandango; and
- The latest campus happenings, alumni news and university advancement updates.

Please enjoy reading this magazine edition. As always, thank you for your continued support as we work together to proudly share that Winthrop is, indeed, on the rise.

Always an Eagle, WHAT'S INSIDE

THE CAMINO: TREK OF A LIFETIME BYRNES: A LONG-AWAITED ENCORE CORNHOLE TEAM
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About the cover: Fine Arts faculty members Kyle G. Sweeney and Andrew Davis '14 embarked on a 500-mile pilgrimage this past summer. Read, on pages 2-7, about their journey completing the Camino de Santiago or "Way of St. James." Photo courtesy of Sweeney.

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THE CAMINO TREK OF A LIFETIME

catastrophes, but recovery efforts began in the 1800s and continued for decades.

Now, people from all backgrounds undertake the Camino, many for spiritual or historical reasons... others for personal reasons. In fact, nearly 500,000 pilgrims completed the journey in 2024 alone.

For nearly two months, Winthrop University's **Kyle G. Sweeney** and **Andrew Davis** '14 existed outside the constraints of time.

Together, the duo walked the journey of a lifetime, a path millions of people have taken for centuries: the Camino de Santiago, or “Way of St. James.” The 500-mile pilgrimage route, considered Europe’s oldest and most well-known route, leads to the tomb of the apostle Saint James the Greater.

“The most noticeable thing was being disconnected with time,” said Sweeney, associate professor of art history. “Your goal for the day is just walking. Your sense of time changes.”

While averaging 12 miles per day may have been the physical goal, their overarching goal loomed much larger: using a process called photogrammetry to create digital 3D models of the numerous important examples of medieval art and architecture along the way. The resulting models combine history and virtual reality, allowing people to fully explore the marvels found in Spain.

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“It’s a level of interaction with content in a new way,” Sweeney explained, “and breaking old notions of what art history is and what it should be. My students won’t be just sitting in the dark looking at PowerPoint slides, but instead using VR headsets to immerse themselves in the art and visual culture of the Camino and discovering how virtual models are made.”

The way A UNESCO Heritage site, the Camino de Santiago involves many pilgrimage routes, all of which end in northwest Spain at the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, which is believed to house the remains of Saint James. This discovery, made in the 9th century, sparked pilgrims to journey to the site as a form of religious devotion.

The pilgrimage routes began to decay during the 14th century due to wars, epidemics and natural

The spark Sweeney’s interest in pilgrimages began with a course he took, “Visual Culture of Medieval Pilgrimage,” while completing his Ph.D. in medieval art and architectural history at Rice University. He and his then-classmates hiked for 10 days along the Camino, but Sweeney longed to do more.

Meanwhile, Davis, fine arts' lab technician and instructor, has long been fascinated by CAD (Computer-Aided Design) software and the use of 3D printing.

Thanks to grants from the Winthrop Research Council, the College of Visual and Performing Arts and the Southeastern Medieval Association, the duo realized they could combine their interests and skills and tackle the Camino.

“All of the pieces came together; it dovetails perfectly with what Winthrop is doing,” they said, noting Winthrop’s new multidisciplinary Virtual Reality-Augmented Reality lab in Owens Hall.

“I enjoy hiking, and it’s a way to explore digital production and this technology,” Davis continued. “Plus, it’s a good way to go on an adventure.”

The duo tried to average 12 miles of walking each day for 45 days.

France Spain

As for preparing to take on such a monumental task? Plenty of hiking, plus... “I can only speak for myself, but I spent many hours on the stair climbers in the West Center!” Davis joked.

The adventure The expedition began last May in Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port, a small French town in the foothills of the Pyrenees Mountains, where they received “coquilles” (shells) to attach to their backpacks, an old symbol of Saint James and one that remains an important part of the visual culture of the Camino. They also had their pilgrim’s passports (“Credencial del peregrino”) stamped. These passports are required for entry into every albergue, or hostel-like accommodation, for pilgrims along the route. Pilgrims collect stamps as they progress along the trail, filling up their passports as they get closer to Santiago de Compostela.

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Other points of interest along the way were:

*The Pyrenees Mountains: Hiking over this range proved to be a tremendous physical challenge, an experience Sweeney said reminded him “how isolation can make encounters with sacred spaces and the works of art they contain all the more profound. Walking helps you see.”

*The Church of San Pedro de la Rúa in Estella: Its 12th-century cloister is deemed significant for the richness of its historiated capitals.

*Vía Trajana: The pair walked 18 miles along this ancient Roman road made of stone across the Meseta, a large flat plain between Burgos and León.

*The León Cathedral or “House of Light” as known to the locals: It’s an excellent example of Gothic architecture. Drawing inspiration from Reims and Chartres Cathedrals in France, it

features elegant double-tiered flying buttresses, four-part ribbed vaults, pointed arches, a glazed triforium and delicate radiating bar tracery in the upper windows, along with more than 2,150 square yards of stained glass, most of which is from the Middle Ages.

*The Cruz de Ferro (Iron Cross): The cross represented the highest point of the journey at 4,970 feet. Visitors typically bring a pebble to put at the base of the cross to represent the journey they've taken and the burden they leave behind. Sweeney added a rock from Rock Hill.

Despite blisters and some bouts of illness, Sweeney and Davis completed their journey in 45 days, arriving in late June in Santiago de Compostela.

"We had to work hard to get to the end," Sweeney said. "Definitely a feeling of relief, but also of celebration and emotion."

The two officially completed their pilgrimage at the Pilgrim's Reception Office run by the Archdiocese of Santiago de Compostela. There, they presented their credenciales, which were now full of stamps. After confirming they had walked the entire Camino, the officials presented Sweeney and Davis each with their own Compostela, a certificate in Latin attesting they had completed the Way of St. James.

4 Sweeney and Davis had their pilgrim's passports stamped along their journey.

"It was a mix of emotions," Davis said. "I was thrilled to have the work of walking 12 to 16 miles a day behind us. However, I knew the other half of our work hadn't started yet: processing our photographs and finding a way to present our data to an audience."

But there were still more things to study and more rituals in which to participate. Built over an earlier and smaller 9th-century church between 1077 and 1128, the Romanesque Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela contains a deep, dark nave 250 feet in length and is covered with a barrel vault about 70 feet high. The cathedral's size and innovative floor plan was in response to the large number of medieval pilgrims who came there to see sacred relics and pray.

A notable experience for the Winthrop pair was the cathedral's Pilgrim's Mass.

When Sweeney and Davis arrived, hundreds of pilgrims had already packed into the vast interior of the church filling up even the nave and transept, the choir's song echoed powerfully in the space, and incense filled the air, all of which created an almost mystical setting. The duo recalled that even beams of sunlight filtered through the windows down on to the altar, as if on cue.

Without a doubt, the highlight was the ritual swinging of the enormous 180-pound incense burner called the botafumeiro.

Suspended on a long rope in the crossing of the church, the botafumeiro takes a team of eight clergy to put it into motion, sending the huge incense burner swinging like a pendulum throughout the entire transept — some 70 feet into the air while reaching speeds of 50 miles per hour.

“Tears actually fell down my cheeks as it started to sink in that I had reached Santiago de Compostela,” Sweeney recalled. “I had given over completely to living in the moment.”

Then, Sweeney joined his fellow pilgrims in descending a flight of stairs to the subterranean crypt below the altar, where he could see a silver gilt sarcophagus containing the physical remains of Saint James; this was followed by ascending another flight of stairs to a huge baldachin containing an immense 13th-century sculpture of the saint.

For Sweeney, it was a solemn moment of gratitude.

Photos courtesy of Sweeney and Davis. **5**

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The research The pair returned home with more than 30,000 digital photos and videos, which they’ve used to create 3D virtual models of 30+ monuments.

So, how does the process work?

José Losada created this silver reliquary sarcophagus, which is located in the crypt of the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, in 1886. It contains the relics of Saint James, as authenticated by Pope Leo XIII in 1884.

Pictured here is the main altar of the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, which features a 13th-century polychrome stone statue of Saint James, who is dressed as a pilgrim in a silver cape with precious stones. Pilgrims can climb up a flight of steps on the back of the altar to perform the traditional embrace of Saint James.

Images taken in the field are imported into the photogrammetry software. For example, in the cloister of the Church of San Pedro de la Rúa in Estella, Spain, the software will use 208 photo- graphs just to show one of the church’s column capitals (the portion that touches the structure above it). The software then analyzes the images and aligns them in space by showing the location relative to its subject.

From there, a three-dimensional mesh can be created. Color and texture can be applied using the images as well. Depending on the amount of data and hardware used, the final high-quality model can take multiple hours to generate and contain millions of mesh vertices!

The result: viewers can interact with the virtual models on their smartphones, tablets, computers and VR headsets. **View a 3D model** of the capital pictured at right.

The next steps Sweeney and Davis have been preparing to present their research to campus. In February, the

What's in Davis' Backpack?

*Electronic equipment (Windows tablet, mirrorless SLR camera, backup batteries and storage, data cables, monopod)

Davis took in the history and beauty of the numerous medieval churches that line the pilgrimage trail leading to Santiago de Compostela.

*Clothing: three pairs of quick-drying shirts, socks, running shorts, leg warmers, sun sleeves, sunglasses, hat, sandals, trail running shoes

*Sleeping bag liner **6**

*Toiletries bag, first aid kit, sunblock, water bottle, ear plugs, and sleep mask

*Rain cover

*Headlamp *Pilgrim's passport *Snacks – like Takis!

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Thousands of images were taken of sites along the way that eventually helped Davis and Sweeney create 3D virtual models of the monuments they visited.

two were invited to share some of their models with Winthrop students, alumni, faculty, staff and supporters at a President's Circle event. Using a Meta Quest 3 headset, attendees saw the sculptures up close and in stunning detail.

Next up: on April 1, the two will give an illustrated lecture about their journey at 6:30 p.m. in Dina's Place. Audience members will have an opportunity to interact with the virtual models of medieval sculptures — as if they were on the Camino themselves!

“Everyone walks their own Camino,” Sweeney said.

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LONG-AWAITED ENCORE

A treasured space reopened this spring to much anticipation.

The calendar for Byrnes Auditorium quickly filled as the Department of Music and other groups moved with a fast tempo to reserve the historic space that is one of the largest venues in the Charlotte metropolitan region.

Built in 1939, Byrnes closed in 2018 for repairs, but a subsequent small roof fire led to smoke, dust and debris settling inside the big hall. It sat quiet for a few years as insurance mitigation took place, and renovations began in earnest two years ago.

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Music classes now meet on the storied stage rather than across campus in Tillman Auditorium.

“Our students are excited to be in Byrnes,” said Lorrie Crochet, chair of the Department of Music. “The view is incredible from the stage to look out at the audience.”

Photos by Firewater Photography

Byrnes greets visitors when they enter the main campus entrance off Oakland Avenue. “It has so much character and history that set it apart from newer facilities,” Crochet said.

“The architecture is beautiful, and the renovations have highlighted the woodworking and painting to make it a bright, inviting place to perform.”

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The renovations The auditorium renovations have received rave reviews. Workers said the project was complex and tricky, with the scaffolding erection alone taking a full month so as not to damage the seats or the auditorium’s historic organ. Improvements to the space include a new elevator from the lobby to the second floor, restroom expansion, accessibility features, plaster repair/new paint, new stage rigging, flooring and curtain, and much more.

The organ returns For Music Professor Matthew Manwarren, playing the David Bancroft Johnson Memorial Organ again was like being reacquainted with an old friend. The organ was dismantled and professionally cleaned off-site during the renovation process.

“Playing the organ for the first time after the pipe work had been removed for cleaning was thrilling,” he said. “The students to whom I am teaching organ heard that instrument for the first time. It made me happy to see the expressions on their faces when they heard the majestic sounds of the instrument.”

The programming The grand reopening is set for April 4-9 during the Come-See-Me festival, Rock Hill’s spring celebration. There will be performances by Winthrop ensembles and choirs, as well as a special performance on April 4 by guest artist Vince DiMartino. He is one of the country’s most sought after trumpet performers and is equally known as a jazz artist, having played lead and solo trumpet in the Lionel Hampton Band and with the Chuck Mangione Band.

Another special event takes place on April 6 when the music department will host its first Alumni Band Concert. This is an opportunity for former music majors to play in the auditorium, some for the first time, Crochet said. **View a full listing of grand reopening events.**

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There are plans in the works to feature the organ during the summer 2025 series of the American Guild of Organists-Charlotte Chapter. Manwarren and others are excited to include Byrnes Auditorium once again in their performance plans.

Take a Look at the Newly Renovated Byrnes Auditorium

Professor of Music Matthew Manwarren played the D.B. Johnson Memorial Organ in his regalia at a past Convocation ceremony.

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At the national championship, Bryant and Quinn competed with teammates Gavin Hamann and Jaxson Remmick to win the team championship. Then in the singles competition, Bryant won second place and Quinn took third place.

With the American Cornhole League office near the campus serving as their practice facility, the team has put in the time to master the sport. “I’ve learned you really have to

focus on each throw,” said Hamann, who took home the College Doubles title at a February event in Reno, Nevada, with teammate Remmick. “It’s about mental endurance and toughness.”

CORNHOLE TEAM ACES INAUGURAL SEASON

Winthrop’s cornhole team made a splash during its inaugural season and has kept up its winning ways in the latest competition.

The Eagles won two national titles during the Jan. 2 American Cornhole League National Competition in Myrtle Beach. More than 40 college teams from around the country competed at the event which was streamed on ESPN 2 and on the American Cornhole League website. Winners took home scholarship money.

National titles aren’t enough for the 10-member Eagles team that has tasted success and is hungry for more.

A winning team One of its best players, Luke Bryant, said he would love to win a world championship in the

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pro division. The Virginia native played on very successful wrestling and football high school teams but burned out on the sports. He then turned a casual interest in cornhole to a major fixation. “It’s been very beneficial,” said Bryant, who made huge strides in his game over the season.

At the January national tournament, Bryant and teammate Josh Quinn won the doubles championship, defeating another Eagle team, Colson Clary and Jacob Harrison.

Coach Dusty Thompson said he hasn’t been surprised at the team’s success. “We went hard to recruit these players and know what they are capable of,” said Thompson, a former cornhole pro.

Making a splash With recruitment for next year’s team already underway, Thompson has commitments from two female high school players who are among the best in the country.

Thompson turned heads last summer when he offered scholarships to play cornhole. He recruited the team’s first players, Hamann and Remmick, both from Denver, Colorado, who were All American Cornhole League high school national champions. National media heard about their scholarships, which are tied to their academics, not athletics, as a first in the country.

Creating a cornhole team made sense to Chuck Rey, Winthrop's athletic director. Rock Hill boasts the American Cornhole League head- quarters, and the Rock Hill Sports & Event Cen- ter routinely hosts regional, national or world championship events. The center now serves as the Eagles home arena.

Rey's pride is evident. "From the national recognition garnered last summer to clinching a national championship is truly remarkable," he said, adding that equally impressive is the all-freshmen class achieved over a 3.0 GPA in the fall semester.

"

We are grateful that this program is already embodying traditions that make Winthrop so special. -Chuck Rey, Winthrop Athletic Director

"Head Coach Dusty Thompson has poured his heart and soul into building a program the right way, the 'Winthrop Way,' emphasizing academ- ics, a strong family atmosphere and a champi- onship culture," Rey said. "We are grateful that this program is already embodying traditions that make Winthrop so special."

"

For more information on the program, please **visit the cornhole team's website**.

Coach Dusty Thompson with players Josh Quinn, left, and Luke Bryant after winning the doubles championship.

Photos courtesy of Haleigh Shedd '18. **13**

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WILL MCINTOSH '02 PUTTING VISION INTO ACTION

One blessing in the career of **Will McIntosh** '02 has been to work with sports and technology visionaries and then execute their imagined paths forward.

As he sees it, in quoting a proverb, "Vision with- out execution is hallucination," meaning that it takes action to make a vision happen.

Carrying out those visions has helped McIntosh advance quickly during his 15 years inside Comcast and NBCUniversal. For the past two and a half years, he has served as president of NBC Sports Next & Fandango, leading the direct-to- customer digital businesses for Comcast's sports and entertainment portfolio.

Currently residing in New Canaan, Connecticut, McIntosh fills his days with travel or online calls to employees who work in different time zones as far away as the United Kingdom and California.

“We’re the market leader in everything we do,” McIntosh said of his division that now has 1,700 employees and has services in 20 countries.

As Comcast prepares to spin off some of its sports, entertainment and news assets to become a new publicly traded company by year’s end, McIntosh is looking to create new partnerships. “Our businesses are expected to be a big growth driver in the new entity,” he said.

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How it began Growing up in Cheraw, a town of some 4,000 people, McIntosh enjoyed visiting his older brother, Matt McIntosh ’00, who majored in business at Winthrop. As the valedictorian of his high school class, Will McIntosh followed his brother to Winthrop, and then their sister, Shelly McIntosh Garner ’02, joined them.

Though he majored in business with an emphasis in financial management, McIntosh said that as a techie, he was drawn to computer information system courses. Those were the years when the internet was really taking off, and he used e-mail for the first time in college.

McIntosh saw himself as an introvert and credits Winthrop in helping him learn to build meaningful relationships. “It forced me to become an extrovert,” he said as he took leadership roles in his fraternity, Pi Kappa Alpha. “The evolution of my personality and coming out of my shell helped me put myself out there and become a leader in a variety of ways.”

McIntosh met his wife, Hollis, at Clemson through a fraternity friend, also her brother, and he met one of his best friends, Todd Triplett ’02, who works with him as the leader of the golf division, GolfNow.

Making his move After graduation, McIntosh took a job with a family friend who understood that the internet would transform marketing for small- and medium-size companies. McIntosh called their company a digital agency where they helped hotels, golf courses and real estate companies embrace the internet for the first time by building websites and creating marketing databases.

They were one of the first companies to help golfers reserve tee-times online. “That led to the creation of a small version of what is GolfNow,” said McIntosh, who started playing golf in his mid-20s. Within four years they partnered with Comcast’s Golf Channel and then sold it to them a few years later.

“So, as a 29-year-old, I helped negotiate and sell a company that I helped create,” McIntosh said, adding that he eventually became its leader.

Once he started with Comcast, McIntosh looked for new ventures. He was the primary driver of more than 20 mergers and acquisitions. His group identified youth and recreational sports as an opportunity, and bought a Minnesota company, Sports Engine, which provides a technology platform for leagues to run their business and for parents to manage their child’s sports participation. Now they provide software and mobile applications for more than 45,000 sports organizations and 16 million coaches, parents and youth athletes.

His work in the sports industry has earned him a spot in Sports Business Journal’s “Forty Under 40” as a top young talent in sports business.

During the pandemic, when movie theatres suffered huge losses, McIntosh saw an opportunity as another Comcast-owned business unit, Fandango Media, was in a state of transition. Through his relationships with other leaders within Comcast and NBCUniversal, he was provided the opportunity to extend his responsibilities to encompass the entertainment leadership team of Fandango, Rotten Tomatoes and Vudu (recently renamed Fandango at Home). Since then, he has led that organization to renewed success as the negative impacts of the pandemic have subsided.

It turned out to be another example of where recognizing opportunities and turning them into reality has proven to be a successful McIntosh venture. Now, with his vision fixed firmly on the future, McIntosh is ready to tackle the new growth and partnerships endeavors expected to come Comcast’s way later this year.

McIntosh presented at a recent business meeting in Orlando, Florida.

McIntosh and Todd Triplett ’02 met at Winthrop and now work together.

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CAMPUS NEWS

First Doctoral Degree, Other Programs Coming

Beginning in the fall, Winthrop aims to offer its first doctoral degree, a move that is a major milestone for the institution.

The Ed.D. in leadership and innovation will give students a chance to explore advanced studies in the areas of learning, leadership and organizational change.

Two new undergraduate degrees responding to evolving business needs also will be offered this fall — the Bachelor of Science in artificial intelligence and the Bachelor of Science in financial technology (FinTech). Both degrees are the first of their kind in South Carolina.

Other recent program additions include a B.A. in criminal justice, B.S. in business administration, concentration in logistics/supply chain management, B.Des. in design with concentration in game design and M.A.Ed. in education studies.

With support from a \$6 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education, Winthrop will collaborate with three S.C. institutions to create a statewide model for year-long teacher residencies in an effort to recruit and retain aspiring teachers.

Winthrop will partner with Clemson University, Columbia College, the University of South Carolina, and South Carolina's Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement (CERRA), which is housed at Winthrop.

Called SC RISE (South Carolina Residencies Impacting Schoolwide Equity), the five-year project will be funded through the federal Education Innovation and Research Program.

\$6 Million Grant to Improve Teacher Retention

Research Designation Added to Carnegie Classification

Winthrop is now classified as a research institution by the American Council on Education.

There are three levels within the council's Carnegie classification. Winthrop is placed in the third level, meaning in a single year, it has at least \$2.5 million in research and development.

President Edward Serna '02 said Winthrop's recognition for research is another step towards its growth as an institution. "Winthrop prides itself on the research offerings that are available to all of our students from freshmen to graduate students. They conduct important and impressive research alongside our award-winning faculty and staff. It's one of the hallmarks of the Winthrop experience. We look forward to the exciting research opportunities ahead as we are recognized by the American Council on

Education for the valuable work conducted by our faculty, staff and students," he said.

The Carnegie Classification® is the leading framework for recognizing and describing different categories of institutions in U.S. higher education.

Night to Shine Prom Makes Lasting Memories Seven Inducted into 2025

Athletics Hall of Fame Class Six former student-athletes and one former athletics administrator were inducted into the Athletics Hall of Fame on Jan. 31. This year's inductees were (seated from left) Erin Lehman '02 (volleyball), Marthaline Cooper '17 (track & field); Krystyna Freda '15 (soccer); (standing from left) Jacob Dempsey '07 (baseball); Jack Frost (athletics' media relations); Henry Kalungi '09 (soccer); and Daniel Revivo '09 (soccer).

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The Richard W. Riley College of Education, Sport, and Human Sciences, WinthropLIFE and special education programs partnered with Impact Church to host a Night to Shine prom on Feb. 7. Night to Shine is a project of the Tim Tebow Foundation, and the dance for individuals with disabilities age 14+ gave high school and college students, as well as community members a chance to dress up for a fun evening. WinthropLIFE student Canady Little (middle) was joined by Samantha Pean (left), a special education major, and Riley Brodie, a psychology major. An interesting and impressive fact about the WinthropLIFE program, which is for students with intellectual disabilities, is that all 23 students are working this spring in various positions in the community.

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ADVANCEMENT NEWS Founders Expands Sponsorship with Winthrop Athletics

integrated sponsorship with a \$1.5 million investment over five years.

Ford's Planned Gift Will Create Two Athletic Training Funds

Photo courtesy of Amy Faulkenberry

Polly Wylie Ford '48 has spent half of her life on Winthrop's campus. As a graduate of Winthrop Training School and then Winthrop College, Ford then spent 32 years teaching and serving as chair of the physical education department before retiring. She then served a term on the university's Board of Trustees as the Alumni Association representative. Her life-long commitment to Winthrop and its students led her to establish two funds that will be realized through a planned gift.

The Dr. Polly Wylie Ford Athletic Training Scholarship will provide funds to support students majoring in athletic training who have successfully completed the first year of graduate studies within the program and achieved a minimum GPA of 3.2.

The Dr. Polly W. Ford Athletic Training Laboratory & Professional Development Endowment will help purchase textbooks, equipment, software,

and other programmatic needs in addition to funding travel expenses for students, faculty and staff for conferences and other professional development related fees.

“After meeting with College of Education Dean Beth Costner, we determined that athletic training had a great need for support, and it was a nice fit for my interests and their needs. It just made sense and where Winthrop seemed to need it the most at that moment,” said Ford. “My dear late friend Bert Bobb, a Winthrop faculty member and coach, was instrumental in getting the athletic training program started, so I thought this would be a nice tribute to Bert. Winthrop was very important to her and athletic training was too.”

If you would like to contribute to one or both of Ford’s funds, please contact the Winthrop Foundation at **803/323-2229**.

For information on giving opportunities, please visit www.winthrop.edu/give or call **803/323-2275**. Why I Give to Winthrop

Leighton Wise ’17 Digital Acquisition Product Management, Truist

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“Winthrop University played a pivotal role in shaping who I am today—both personally and professionally. The education, experiences and connections I made there have been invaluable. Giving back is my way of ensuring future generations have the same opportunities to grow, learn and succeed. It’s not just about gratitude; it’s about investing in the next wave of leaders, innovators and change makers.”

From left: At the press conference were Trustee Isaiah Venning, Trustee Gary Williams, Founders President Keith Wilson, Board Vice Chair Kathy Bigham, Board Chair Glenn McCall, Founders Chief Marketing Officer Nicki Nash, President Edward Serna and Athletic Director Chuck Rey.

Winthrop Athletics and Founders Federal Credit Union announced on Jan. 31 an expanded

The agreement includes the naming rights of the ballpark to Founders Field and \$500,000 earmarked for turfing the baseball field, among other partnership elements.

Founders Federal Credit Union President Keith Wilson ’94 said, “We could not be more proud of this expanded partnership as we know even greater achievements and successes are around the corner.”

Winthrop President Edward Serna '02 echoed those sentiments in sharing his appreciation for the notable sponsorship agreement.

“We are grateful for Founders’ incredible commitment to our student-athletes through this generous investment in Winthrop Athletics.”

Winthrop Foundation Welcomes New Board Members

Three new members were recently appointed to the Winthrop University Foundation’s Board of Directors. Joining the board are **Alice Davis** of Rock Hill; **Robert Tidwell** '98 of Woodstock, Georgia; and **Mike Smiley** '92 of Charlotte, North Carolina.

Davis serves as director of foundation and community support for Williams & Fudge. Smiley is a managing partner

Alice Davis Mike Smiley '92 Robert Tidwell '98 **19**

with Coastal Bridge Advisors and Tidwell founded Tidwell Strimban Injury Lawyers where he currently works as a trial attorney.

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ALUMNI NEWS

It's Easy to Stay Connected to Winthrop **Get involved and stay connected in the following ways:**

- Submit your updated contact information to the Alumni Association **here** to ensure you receive event invitations, Winthrop news, including the **Winthrop Insider** monthly alumni newsletter, the **Winthrop Magazine** and other communications from the university. Also, follow the Alumni Association on **Facebook** and **Instagram** (@winthropalumni) for updates on alumni events, campus happenings, throwback photos and more university news!
- Connect with fellow alumni by joining **Winthrop Connect**, the Alumni Association’s exclusive online networking platform! Create a profile to connect with fellow alumni, join an alumni community, search and post jobs, browse the alumni business directory, offer mentoring services and more. Visit winthropconnect.org to join!
- Become a **class reunion volunteer**, a **Young Alumni Council** member, an **Alumni Chapter leader**, an alumni mentor through the **I’m Ready program** or an **Alumni Community leader**.

WINTHROP CONNECT

JOIN Wear Your Winthrop Pride; Order an Official Ring

The **Student Alumni Council** will host the Official Spring Ring Ceremony on April 9. Students who purchased their rings during spring Ring Days are eligible to participate in the ceremony and be presented with their rings. Alumni who would like

to purchase an **Official Winthrop Ring** as a lifelong reminder of your Winthrop experience can shop the website of the university's exclusive ring partner, **Jostens**. Alumni may use the code ALUMNI50 at checkout to receive \$50 off a ring order.

Homecoming and Reunion Slated for Nov. 14-15

If you are a degree-holding alumnus, a current student who has completed 54 credit hours, achieving junior or senior status, or a graduate student who has completed at least 18 hours at Winthrop, you can purchase the Official Winthrop Ring.

The Alumni Association looks forward to welcoming alumni back to campus, Nov. 14-15! If your class year ends in '5 or '0 you are celebrating a milestone reunion. Class reunion registration will open in August, so please be on the lookout for more information in your e-mail inbox and mailbox.

20 21

Nominate Deserving Alumni for Awards

Nominations remain open through March 31 for the 2025 Alumni Awards! Each fall, the Alumni Association presents awards to alumni who have demonstrated Winthrop's tradition of excellence. The Honors and Awards Committee of the **Alumni Executive Board** reviews nominations and selects winners annually for the Alumni Distinguished Service Award, Alumni Professional Achievement Award and Outstanding Young Alumni Award. **Nominate a deserving graduate** for an Alumni Award!

Black Alumni Weekend Returns in April All alumni are invited to come home to

Winthrop for Black Alumni Weekend, April 10-12! The schedule consists of thought-provoking panel discussions, community service opportunities, celebratory gatherings and more. This weekend is designed for all alumni, students and friends. Check out what's planned and **register** for the weekend by March 28.

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1967 **Cynthia Plair Roddey** of Rock Hill, **Sue Frances Meriwether Steed** of North Charleston and **Delores Johnson Hurt** '68 of Charlotte, North Carolina, were honored as 2024 Freedom Walkway Local Heroes in Rock Hill.

1980 **Fran Esselmeyer** of Gastonia, North Carolina, retired after serving 15 years with AGDATA, 12 years with VF Corporation-Healthex, four years with Hanesbrands and one year with RSVP Communications.

1981 **Larry Williams** '81, '84, of Charlotte, North Carolina, published a book entitled "Surviving the First Two Weeks of Principles of Financial Accounting (In Plain English)."

1984 **Johnny Deal** of Camden was named the public information officer for Kershaw County.

1989 **Wes Burton** of Rock Hill joined the York County Natural Gas Authority as the senior director of regulatory and government relations.

1991 **Tami Pierce-Beall** of Greenville was appointed to the Fine Arts Center's board of directors.

1993 **Angie Slatton** '93, '95 of Blythewood was named principal of Seven Oaks Elementary Global Magnet.

1996 **Montrio Belton** of Fort Mill was elected to the Rock Hill School Board.

Comporium promoted **Karl Skroban** of Rock Hill to vice president of marketing, media services and video strategy.

1998 **Michelle Vandrovec Gritz** '98, '03, '20, of Fort Mill is the principal for Flint Hill Elementary School.

1999 **Alvin Few** of Simpsonville was appointed dealer channel sales director at TELECO.

"You Matter," a rhyming picture book that celebrates the unique importance of every individual, was written by **Ameca Carter Thomas** of Gray Court.

2001 **Jennifer McAdams** '01, '05, of Fort Mill was named executive director at Nation Ford Land Trust.

2006 **Jermaine Whirl** of Augusta, Georgia, was named president of Savannah State University.

2009 Winthrop Athletics Hall of Fame member **Ashley Howard** of Wilmington, Ohio, was inducted into the Wilmington High School Athletic Hall of Fame.

2011 **Lila Shull** of St. Paul, Minnesota, presented "An Echo and A Hum," a collection of art pieces, in collaboration with another artist, at the Cornell College Peter Paul Luce Gallery.

2012

The Georgia Bureau of Investigation announced **Amber Wallace Carroll** as the technical leader of its crime lab's forensic chemistry section.

Brett Frye of Saltville, Virginia, received the 2024 H. Hiter Harris III Rising Star Award from the Virginia Foundation for Independent Colleges.

2015 **Tim Smoak** of Rock Hill was named executive vice president and interim chief operating officer for Comporium.

2016

Erin Alessi Barie of Allegany, New York, was named principal at Seneca Intermediate School.

George Daughtry of Fort Mill joined the Catawba College School of Health Sciences and Human Performance as an assistant professor of exercise science.

2022

Jasmine Moyd '22, '23, of Chester was chosen by the Knowles Teacher Initiative as a member of the 2024 Cohort of Teaching Fellows.

CLASS NOTES

2019 **Brandon Reeder** of

Blythewood was named to the Emerging Leaders Class of 2024-25 by the South Carolina Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

2020 **Juan Pablo Boada** of Rock Hill was named the head men's tennis coach at Presbyterian College.

Gay Randolph '72, '77, who worked for 43 years in the College of Business and Technology, had a space in Thurmond Building named in her honor on March 4. Thanks to a generous gift from Randolph's husband, Winthrop Professor Emeritus of Business Law Bob Breakfield, the Student Services Suite is now the Gay Randolph Student Services Suite.

Karama Bailey Herrington '02 is the new State Court Administrator. Her new position began on March 15 and was announced by Supreme Court of South Carolina Chief Justice John W. Kittredge.

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SPRING 2025

IN MEMORIAM

1940s **Bess Moses Hammond '41 Clara Webb Maxwell '41 Carrie McSwain Pritchard '44 Georgia Madeline Shuler '44 Willette Padget Satterwhite '45 Jacqueline Way Connor '46 Nina Rogerson McLaughlin '46 Marian Hodge Stevens '46 Margaret Cauthen Corvette '47 Eleanor Craig Kline '47 Doris Baldwin Milam '47 Sara Eugenia Roper '47 Elizabeth (Betty) Carpenter Edwards '48**

Jean Lay Owen '48 Jean Jones Park '48 Sybil Bagwell Williams '48 Patricia (Pat) Croom Barnard '49 Claudia Ann Summers Jenkins '49 Margie Haynes Sexton '49 Elisabeth (Lib) Allen Smith '49

1950s

Elsie Niven McGill '50 Jane Fox Smyre '50 Sally Greer Hart '51 Jeanne Clark Rast '52 Anne Watson Clark '53 Dollie Joyce Jackson '53 Virginia (Ginger) Archer Foster '54 Peggy Pettus Grow '54

Beatrice (Bea) Smallwood Hall '54 Dorothy Lee Huggins '54 Billie Hamilton Wilson '54 Sylvia Boone '55

Betty Jo Lindler Bozard '55 24

Rachel Calvert Drake '55 JoAnn Bright Shook '56 Dohnree Powell Cribb '57 Joyce Drew Cannady '58 Barbara Jenerette Torres '58 Mary Peay Evans '59 Lois Wessinger Fulmer '59 Dorothy (Eloise) Broadwell Milliken '59

Ann Sherer Smith '59 Charlene Pettit Yarborough '59

1960s

Barbara McCall Meigs '60 Erika Coulson Galloway '61 Ann Palmer Blevins '62 Betty Jane Emory '62 Margaret (Beth) Elizabeth Fogleman '62

Patricia Cothran Lawing '62 Patricia Parnell Matthews '62 Mary Ann Hope Kisson '63 Virginia (Ann) Bell Meares '63 Ann Dillard Withrow '63 Felecia Hewett Girton '64 Floy

Dennis Lipscomb '64 Nancy Wood Marsella '64 Barbara Kirkpatrick Muller '64 Nancy Turner Baxter '65 Linda Wilford Dodd James '65 Mary Clark Tyler '65 Mary Graham Moore '66 Margaret Chatham Ammons '67

Elizabeth Miller Blevins '67 Jane Hutchinson Burnette '67 Kaye Ailene Martin '67 Patricia Fritz Price '67 Joyce Chandler Singleton '67

Gladys Elaine Sudduth '67 Gilda Turner Barnwell '68 Pamela Cox Davis '68 Vickie Boulware Robinson '68 Margaret Barton Wheeler '68

1970s

Sandra Whitfield Hoechstetter '70

Tamara Abbott Mack '70 Ann (Peach) Foster Fralick '71 Sara Jane Simpson Johnson '71 Sally Jo Hayes '72

Christine Howell Hepfer '72 Martha Bagwell Stallard '72 Constance Pike Zdenek '72 Brenda Donald Harris '73 Sister Carmelita Boyd '74 Carolyn Amos Mann '74 Thomas Colter '75 Eloise Pate Graham '77 Gwendolyn (Gwen) Black Harden '77 Betty Mulkey Hines '77 Eunice Amerson Rowell '77 Gail Bousquet Brown '78 Andrew Leon Tucker '78 Marjorie Thomas Warlick '78 Connie Christine Anderson '79 Sylvia Bobo Jenkins '79

1980s

Howard Francis Fox '80 Donna O'Neal '80 Marjorie Barrie Koconis '82 William David Smith Jr. '82 Ronnie Wiley '82 Johnsie McAteer Williams '84 Lisa Shaffer Wylie '84

Philip Marcel Blankstein '85 Robbie Pyle Hudson '86 Deborah Boulware Pendergast '86

Sandra Gayle McDuffie '87 Bruce Walter McCraw '88 Glenn Reeves Jr. '88 Stokes Jerome Smith Jr. '88 Doug Throgmorton '88

1990s

George Christopher Christos '90

Deborah Adams Henderson '93 William Alan Wilson '93 Carol Lynn Hines '94 Violet Rebecca Jones '95

2000s Ross Dean Alford '06 Cynthia Ann Auvil '06 Brandi Gettings Owensby '06

2010s Tina Deese Huggins '18

Welcome New Members!

The newest members of the D.B. Johnson Society made a legacy gift to Winthrop by including the university in their estate plans during the time period of July 1, 2023-Dec. 31, 2024. Thank you for your support and commitment.

Anonymous

Nancy C. Blanton '72 Judy Ashley Brock '68 Pascal S. Brock Mary Sue Day '68

Elizabeth Currence Evans '87 Polly Wylie Ford '48 George R. Garrison James Stevenson Hammond '88 Dorothy Tipton Hancock Gray '59

E. Grace A. Hood Chris Huber Laura Bock Huber '74 Gloria Godfrey Jones '84 Linda Lorraine Keene '72 Virginia Allee Merchant '68 Frank O'Steen '89 Gail O'Steen '92 Donna Faulkenberry Pardue '82 Steven Kyle Parrish '03

Audrey Lail Perselay '97 Gerald Perselay Monica Saksena P.N. Saksena

Holly Bland Sarratt '79 Joseph Anthony Tarulli '88 Mindi Tarulli Mary Katherine Martin Vass '58

If you are interested in learning more about including Winthrop in your estate plans or already have, please contact Ashley Blanchard, associate vice president for university advancement, at blancharda@winthrop.edu or call **803/579-0389**.

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

Electronic Service Requested

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 so we can update our information.

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APRIL 22-23

Let's band together for 24 hours to show our pride (Bleed Garnet) and help pave the way for future Eagles (Give Gold).

This year's event begins at noon on April 22 and ends at noon on April 23, and the goal is for 1,000 donors to give back to help unlock more funds for the university via creative donor challenges and matching gifts.

You can give to designated areas that mean the most to you. That includes student scholarships, athletic programs, academic colleges and departments, and other programs like undergraduate research.

Make a gift during Bleed Garnet, Give Gold to support Winthrop!

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