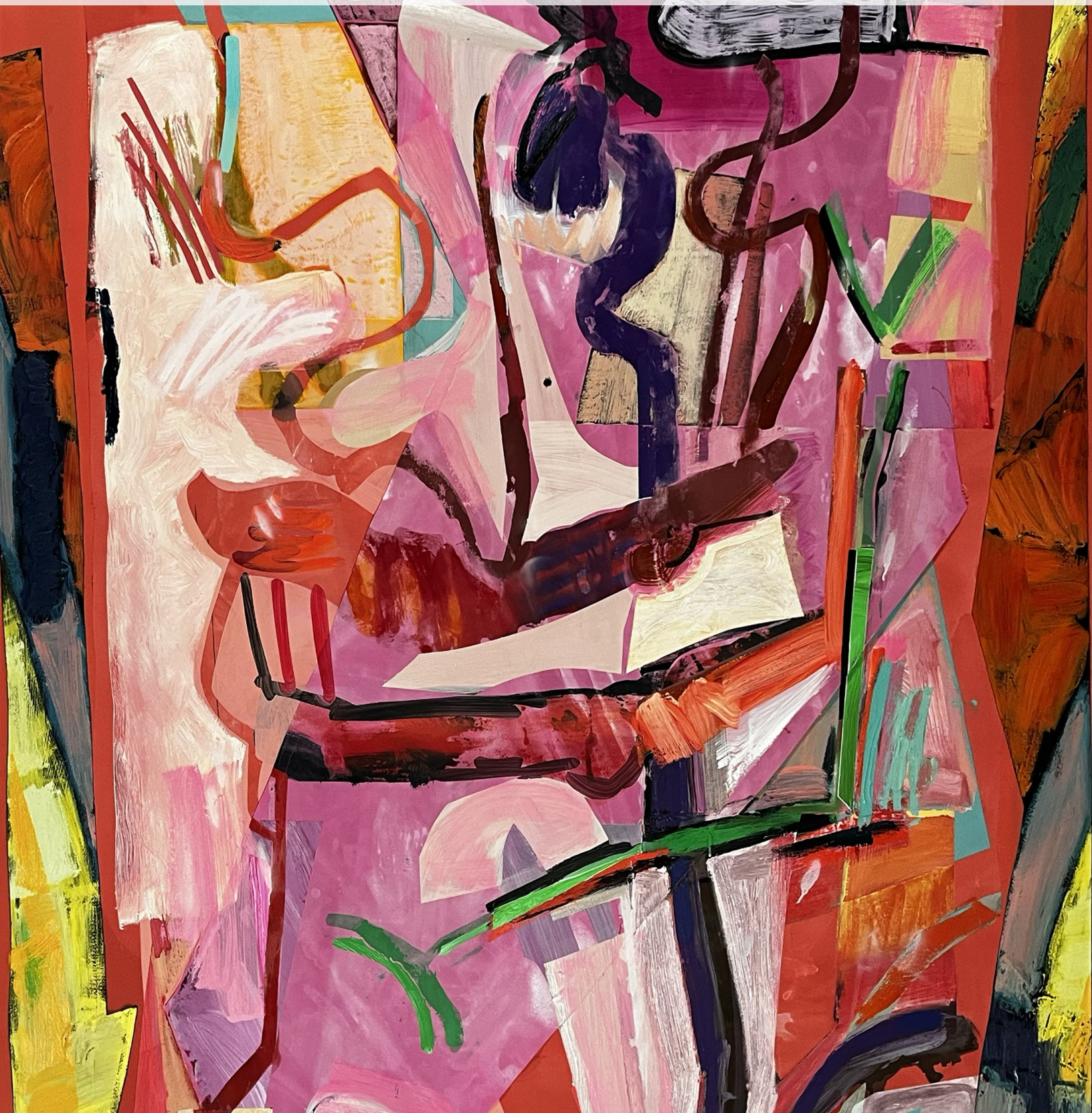




WINTHROP
MAGAZINE

SUMMER
2025



message from the PRESIDENT



Dear Friends:

There’s nothing quite like being on campus when the new academic year is right around the corner! Campus has been bustling with Orientation sessions, various camps, facilities projects, admissions tours and more. What positive energy these events inject into our busy days! We simply cannot wait to welcome our students next month.

Thanks to our Board of Trustees, cabinet members and the efforts of folks all across campus, we have officially closed out phase I of our strategic plan, **Winthrop: United in Excellence**. We launched the Honors College, introduced a new suite of academic programs, delivered course work through the innovative Winthrop Elevate, and more. Now, we are focusing on phase II initiatives, which I’ll share with you soon. We’ve made much transformative progress, and there is more to come.

For now, I’d like to share with you the summer edition of the *Winthrop Magazine*. In it, you’ll read about our spring Commencement speaker, alumna and actress Shanola Hampton, who brought her joyful personality and inspiring words to our newest graduates. I was honored to present her with an honorary doctorate of humane letters degree (which she accepted with a perfectly executed high kick!). She was not shy about sharing her love and appreciation for Winthrop, and that reinforces, again, how this place positively shapes the lives of our students.

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

- A story on the university’s more than 600-piece art collection, including the newest additions from supporters Charlie and Nancy Wofford ’67, ’84;
- A look back at April’s reopening of Byrnes Auditorium;
- Our students’ collaborative work with Keystone Substance Abuse Services;
- Compelling features on former trustee Jane LaRoche ’69, ’70, who remains one of Winthrop’s biggest supporters and cheerleaders, and Jimmy Duncan ’10, ’12, who has spearheaded bringing girls’ flag football to York County middle schools; 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 you will join us for Convocation on Aug. 25 as we kick off another exciting academic year.

Winthrop Ever Stand,

Edward A. Serna ’02
President



WHAT’S INSIDE

GLOW GET IT: SHANOLA HAMPTON 02

PRESERVING LEGACIES THROUGH ART 04

BYRNES: A GRAND REOPENING 09

STUDENTS EXPERIENCE REAL-WORLD LEARNING 10

WINTHROP’S CHEERLEADER: JANE LAROCHE 12

ADVOCATING FOR WOMEN’S SPORTS: JIMMY DUNCAN 14



CAMPUS NEWS 16 | ADVANCEMENT NEWS 18 | ALUMNI NEWS 20 | CLASS NOTES 22 | MILESTONES 24

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About the cover: “Mascara Spill,” a piece by artist Ryan Sluggett, is one of the works recently donated by Charles and Nancy Wofford to the university’s art collection. Read more about the university’s art collection and the Woffords’ recent gift on pages 4-8.

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GLOW GET IT

HAMPTON ENCOURAGES NEW GRADS TO EMBRACE THEIR STORY

Award-winning actress **Shanola Hampton** '98 commands a stage. Her mega-watt smile, infectious energy and larger-than-life charisma introduce her to audiences before she utters a word.

On the morning of May 10, the Winthrop Coliseum stage set the scene for her latest stellar performance. As the keynote speaker for the first of two undergraduate Commencement ceremonies, Hampton, outfitted in regalia after receiving an honorary doctorate of humane letters degree from President Edward Serna '02, delivered a rousing monologue to the newest graduates of the College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Visual and Performing Arts. She offered insight into her time at Winthrop and provided words of wisdom to those sitting where she once sat awaiting her own diploma.

"Today is your day, your moment, the next chapter in the incredible script that only you can write. You are the architects of your own dreams, the creators of your own scripts, the star character of your life series. Class of 2025, a draft of your script

is already written, and you are the only one who can play the lead," she told the graduates.

She noted life would interject plot twists, unexpected guest stars, antagonists and even love interests. But throughout all of life's ups and downs, she encouraged graduates to not just shine but to glow. "Shining might catch eyes for a moment, but glowing with inner strength and self-worth lights up the world long after. Glow! Glow with passion and compassion. Glow with forbearance and perseverance. Glow with aspiration and inspiration. Glow even when the deck seems stacked against you," she added.

Her parting message to graduates was "when the noise of negativity consumes you, remember the voice that stands before you today saying 'keep glowing'...., and never forget, you are the star."



[View Hampton's full Commencement address](#)

A Happy Homecoming

In addition to delivering the Commencement address and receiving her honorary doctorate, Hampton returned to her alma mater, amid a flurry of fanfare and selfies, to chat with current and prospective theatre students in Johnson Hall and to hold an informal Q&A session with fans and members of the public at the Coliseum. Accompanied by her husband, Daren Dukes, whom she met at Winthrop, Hampton reflected on her career, offered advice to those pursuing similar dreams and spoke about how Winthrop shaped and influenced her life and career.



Take a look at her time on campus:



1. Hampton, pictured with husband Daren and event emcee Kalaylah Chisolm '22, '23, a theatre graduate, took questions from the crowd on Friday evening. 2. Members of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., came out to support their soror. 3. Hampton posed for photographs and signed autographs. 4. Fellow actress and theatre alumna Rayana Briggs '16 asked a question and welcomed advice from Hampton on how to further her blossoming career. 5. Hampton started the Friday evening event by talking about how much Winthrop means to her. 6. Attendees waited for a photo op with Hampton. 7. On a familiar stage, Hampton spoke to current and prospective theatre students in Johnson Hall on Friday afternoon. Some photographs provided by The Professional Photography Group.

About Hampton:

- 1998 Winthrop theatre graduate; M.F.A. from University of Illinois
- Raised in Summerville
- Starred in and produced NBC's drama series "Found." Role earned her a Gracie Award and Critics Choice Award and NAACP Image Award nominations.
- Portrayed Veronica Fisher in Showtime's award-winning television show "Shameless."
- Face model of Rochelle in the video game "Left 4 Dead 2."
- Held roles in television shows "Criminal Minds," "Strong Medicine," "Stalker," "Scrubs" and "Reba," and movies, including "You Again," "The Mostly Unfabulous Life of Ethan Greene," "They Die By Dawn," "Things Never Said," "Christmas in the City" and "The Hanged Man."
- Earned Best Actor Award at the 2013 American Black Film Festival for her performance in "Things Never Said."
- Pledged the Mu Xi chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.
- Her older sister, Andrea Hampton-Mills, who holds an Ed.D., graduated from Winthrop in 1991.
- Works with charity organizations such as Feeding America.
- Mother of two children, whom she shares with husband Daren.



PRESERVING LEGACIES:

WINTHROP COLLECTION EXPANDS ITS HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

“El Señor,” by painter Nancy Reese, was donated by Charlie and Nancy Wofford to the university’s art collection.



Mike Gentry

A drive around the Winthrop campus and a walk through many of its buildings reveal one of the university’s valued treasures: art. And a recent gift of major artistic significance has expanded Winthrop’s notable collection, according to Mike Gentry ’08, director of the Winthrop Galleries.

“Remarkably, a couple from Greenville with close ties to Winthrop recently donated an entire modern art collection to the institution,” Gentry noted.

The gift from Charlie and Nancy Wofford includes more than 33 pieces of contemporary art collected by Juliet McIver, a native South Carolinian and close cousin of Charlie.

McIver spent most of her life working in the art world of Los Angeles, and over the years became a key member of that city’s vibrant art community. She was well known for supporting artists at all stages of their careers, nurturing emerging and under-represented artists.

Her collection at the time of her death in 2022 was close to 200 fine art pieces made up of trending contemporary art mostly produced by southern California artists. Some of her pieces were designated for LA museums and art institutions, others given to friends.

The Juliet McIver Collection

After studying the initial collection, Nancy recognized the value of its content and selected from it special pieces that make up The Juliet McIver Collection. Nancy said that she attempted to bring together a body of work which best



Charlie and Nancy Wofford recently donated a modern art collection that contains more than 33 pieces of contemporary art. The couple has close ties to the university.

shows examples reminiscent of the various trends and sub-styles in American Abstract Art as they gained momentum and recognition throughout the 20th century.

The Woffords looked for a suitable place to house the collection and decided to reach out to Winthrop. Both have ties to the university through family members who were educated here since the early 20th century.

Ties That Bind

Charlie’s aunt, Kate Wofford, graduated in 1916. She became the first woman county superintendent of education in South Carolina and the first president of the S.C. Teacher Association (later S.C. Education Association). Wofford was also among the first women to enlist in the U.S. Armed Forces in World War I, joining the Navy as a yeoman. Winthrop’s Wofford Hall, a former high-rise residence hall that housed thousands of Winthrop students for over 50 years, was named in her honor.

A Rock Hill native, Nancy, who graduated from Winthrop in 1967 as an art and education major, is one of 13 family members who either attended or taught at Winthrop. Her grandfather, Thomas, arrived to head the science department in 1915, and her mother, Nancy Craig Thomas ’41, taught Winthrop student interns at

Macfeat Early Childhood Laboratory School for many years.

The couple was thrilled when Winthrop said yes to accepting their art collection offer.

Next Steps for the Collection

Gentry said he will work with Art History Professor Karen Stock to review the McIver collection for an exhibition that he hopes will open in January. They expect to work with a class to explore the Abstract Expressionist Movement and the artists who were active in the Los Angeles area from the late 20th through the early 21st centuries. It will also give students a look at how museums and galleries operate.

“This is a great opportunity for students to research the work of these artists’ and write about their connections to other prominent works of art history,” Gentry said.

Gift Funds Other Needs, Scholarship

Once the Woffords made their generous art donation, now retired Senior Development Officer Debbie Garrick ’87, ’89, realized that Winthrop needed a permanent storage area for the artwork. After Gentry identified three unused adjoining rooms in the Rutledge Building, the Woffords agreed to underwrite a

renovation of the rooms to set up a dedicated, climate-controlled storage space for the university’s growing art collection.

Garrick also worked out a plan with the Woffords to transform the mezzanine of Byrnes Auditorium into gallery and reception space. Some of Nancy’s classically rendered charcoal studies are displayed there now.

Wrapped around the McIver art collection is a yearly art scholarship, which allows a student to help care for Winthrop’s artwork under guidance of the Winthrop Galleries. “We wanted to help facilitate the Winthrop Galleries’ management of its art, while at the same time create opportunities for art students to gain experience in handling art professionally, exposing them to the business side of it,” Nancy said, “so that Juliet’s collection and others can remain in caring hands for years to come.”

A Complement to Winthrop's Wide-Ranging Collection

Gentry said the addition of contemporary and abstract art greatly enhances the existing Winthrop collection. “There are many interesting public art creations and prized collected and donated pieces across the campus,” he noted. “As the collection grows, Winthrop students especially benefit from exposure to various artists and artistic styles.”

Gentry keeps track of Winthrop’s art inventory that contains more than 600 pieces, some of which are on display and others in storage.

The Winthrop Collection

Some of Winthrop’s most valued works came from the estate of Clara Barrett Strait, one of the foremost portrait artists of the first half of the 20th century. The adopted daughter of Thomas Jefferson Strait and his wife, Kate, of

Lancaster, she studied at the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., while her father was a congressman representing the Fifth District. A prolific artist, she traveled around the eastern part of the country drawing dozens of politicians, judges, U.S. presidents, Confederate generals and businessmen, among others.

Upon Strait’s passing in 1948, her estate went to the state of South Carolina, and the courts decided that her 34 portraits and landscapes would remain at Winthrop, where Strait had a studio.

Some of her portraits remain displayed around the campus today.

One of the first major donations to Winthrop was made in the 1940s from an Italian sculptor who lived in Rock Hill and owned Rock Hill Marble and Granite Works. Joseph G. Sassi and his wife gave the institution 19 paintings created by such Italian artists as Albani, Moroni, Ricciarelli and Gignoux, as well as four pieces of statuary. The works are safely stored in Rutledge Building.

Other notable contributions include a Joan of Arc equestrian piece and two fighting stags by Anna Hyatt Huntington, the notable early 20th century American sculptor whose numerous works are featured at Brookgreen Gardens in Murrells Inlet. A Sue Shaw-donated replica of the Winged Victory of Samothrace, the original which is found in the Louvre Museum in Paris, stands on the second floor of Tillman.

Perhaps the most unusual selections in the art collection are the 16 brass rubbings hanging on the third floor of Tillman Hall. Primarily associated with British culture, brass rubbings are a form of relief printing, created by placing paper over an engraved brass plaque and rubbing its



Sue Shaw donated this replica of the Winged Victory of Samothrace, the original which is found in the Louvre Museum in Paris. The replica stands on the second floor of Tillman Hall.



This piece is one of the 34 portraits and landscapes painted by Clara Barrett Strait. Upon her passing it was decided that her works would remain at Winthrop.



“Place,” by artist Alex Olson, is one of the modern art pieces included in the Woffords’ donated collection.

surface to capture the raised or incised designs. This technique produces an image of the original artwork, typically a medieval monumental brass.

Donated by Alice Allene Sefton, who was a former chair of the Department of Physical Education, the rubbings were collected from churches and cathedrals in England and reflect 14th- and 15th-century knights, ladies, merchants and religious icons.

Faculty and Student Work Spotlighted

Gentry estimates that about half of Winthrop's collection consists of student art purchased by the school or given by donors since the 1980s. The pieces represent a variety of mediums and show budding artists' talents, like those of Chris Clamp '01, in the beginning of their careers.

Pieces by Winthrop faculty members, many of whom are practicing artists, were chosen to display in various buildings. Geometric designs by the late Associate Professor Paul Martyka hang in a DiGiorgio Campus Center classroom. Pieces by the late Edmund Lewandowski, a precisionist artist who chaired the art department, can be found in various places, and one of the university's galleries is named for him. Fellow Art Department Chair Tom Stanley, now retired, worked with Professor Shaun Cassidy to design the Winthrop Monolith sculpture in the Hardin Family Garden.

A recent addition to Winthrop's art landscape is a sculpture class project which consists of concrete letters positioned on the ground in front of McLaurin Hall. The blocks spell out "is what brings us together."

The Winthrop community knows the enthusiastic response to that question is "art."

View some of the pieces in Winthrop's public art collection or **reach out to Gentry** for more information.



The above two pieces are part of 16 brass rubbings that were donated by Alice Allene Sefton, who was a former chair of the Department of Physical Education.



Lorrie Crochet, music department chair and director of bands, soaked in the crowd.

From Convocations to Commencements to concerts, Byrnes Auditorium has been the premier campus gathering space at Winthrop and for the region since 1939. Closed several years due to renovations, the cherished space reopened this year with a series of grand events held April 4-9, including performances by world-renowned trumpeter Vince DiMartino, the Carolinas Wind Orchestra, the Winthrop Chorale & Collegiate Choir, along with a 70-member alumni choir, and more. The events also served as the first opportunity for music lovers to hear the famed D.B. Johnson Memorial Organ since the auditorium was offline.



Supporters of the music department were invited to an invitation-only reception before the Vince DiMartino performance.



Professor of Music Matthew Manwarren accompanied the performances on the D.B. Johnson Memorial Organ.



Gerry Schapiro talked with Trustee Randy Imler '87, '00, at the reception.



STUDENTS EXPERIENCE REAL-WORLD LEARNING

For more than 50 years, Keystone Substance Abuse Services has helped people and their loved ones find hope and light at the end of the addiction tunnel. The nonprofit, located in Rock Hill, offers in- and out-patient treatment, education, counseling services and more.

But staff needed a little help recently themselves: what data can we gather about the community's awareness and perception of our services?

Enter the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Employer Provided Innovation Challenges (EPIC) program. Celeste Tiller '01, '04, vice president for talent and workforce development at the York County Regional Chamber of Commerce, has worked to pair local organizations with college classes to tackle real-world projects.

Learning in an Unstructured Environment

As Winthrop Marketing Professor Cara Peters searched for a research project for students in her business research symposium, Tiller approached Peters about participating in EPIC, which she agreed to – with the caveat that she and her students wanted to work with a non-profit.

Now enter Kerri McGuire '98, '05, Keystone's executive director. McGuire visited the class to discuss the work and then hosted the class for

a tour. She tasked students with conducting two surveys and two focus groups.

"This type of data is helpful during our annual strategic planning process and helps us identify strategic priorities and goals for the upcoming fiscal year," she explained.

Peters added that opportunities like this allow students to learn in an "unstructured environment."

"Normally, classes are very structured with lectures and readings and then tests over that material," Peters explained. "But with a client project, it's unclear what the problem is, and the steps to solve the problem slowly emerge over time, so you have to just dig into the work and figure out what you need to do in real time. That means the students were a bit confused when we started the project, but they began to figure out how to write survey questions, how to collect the data, and then how to analyze the information along the way."

Creating Meaningful Experiences

After students analyzed the data, they presented it to Keystone and the chamber this past spring – with awesome results, Peters said.

"[The students] poured themselves into the work and figured it out," she said. "In the end, I think

they realized that they learned a ton by doing the work in a hands-on way, rather than just memorizing from a book – and that seems pretty exciting!"

"I thought the students did a fantastic job with the research they conducted for Keystone," McGuire said. "Their reports and recommendations were helpful, and I hope it was a meaningful learning experience for them. Keystone has written a draft of our next strategic plan and the students' recommendations are reflected as objectives for a couple of strategic priorities."

Their hard work paid off because not only will students receive certificates from the U.S. National Chamber of Commerce, but several students — Julie Ghent, Jocelyn Hess, Ayana Jones, Katelyn Kirk and Bobby Strong — traveled to Washington, D.C., June 23-25 to present their work to the national chamber.

For McGuire, the project provided more proof of her alma mater's commitment to student success and engagement.

"I love returning to campus and being part of the learning for students," she said. "I believe that real-world experiences are an important part of higher education, and I hope my time with the students helped create a bridge between classroom learning opportunities and the careers students will eventually pursue."



JANE LAROCHE

ENTHUSIASTICALLY CHEERING
WINTHROP THROUGH
THE DECADES



Jane LaRoche '69, '70, spent four years as her class cheerleader, and then took on the role of cheering on her alma mater, its faculty, staff and students through the years.

Now 55 years in, Winthrop regards her as one of its most dedicated alumnae. She has served three terms on the Board of Trustees, volunteered for numerous alumni activities and given significant donations to help Winthrop achieve its mission. The Alumni Association presented her with its top award, the Mary Mildred Sullivan Award, in 2002.

The caring Camden emergency room doctor said that she wants to support the people at Winthrop. "Winthrop is a family," she emphasized. "It's a place I love to be with the many friends I've made during my college years and the newer friends I've grown to know over my years of staying involved. It's just such a special place."

Her Commitment Is Unmatched

LaRoche visited Rock Hill for three-straight days in early May. She drove back and forth from Camden to Rock Hill each day, minimizing her efforts by saying the drive only takes her an hour and 15 minutes each way. During those days, she attended a reception for retiring Foundation Director Robin Embry, the Graduate Commencement ceremony, an "Evening with Shanola Hampton"

meet and greet, and two Undergraduate Commencements.

President Edward Serna '02 gave her a shout-out at the graduation ceremonies, and said she remains one of his favorite people. "Jane loves Winthrop more than anyone I know," said Serna. "Her commitment to this place is unmatched."

Known for her kind demeanor and gracious hugs, LaRoche loves the feeling she gets from gift giving. "Nothing makes me happier than to give people gifts and to see the joy on their faces," she said.

Faculty members appreciate LaRoche's many contributions, particularly her establishment of the Jane LaRoche Graduate Faculty Award. "The creation of a faculty award has had a profoundly positive impact not only on me, but also on the graduate faculty," said Sherry Hoyle, an associate professor for educational leadership and the 2025 award recipient. "Beyond honoring individual accomplishments, it fosters a shared commitment to academic excellence and innovation. It also sends a powerful message about the importance of what we do—not only for us as faculty, but for the students we guide."

The Best Of What Winthrop Offers

LaRoche has many interests but narrowed them

down to support three charities: Winthrop; her church, Grace Episcopal; and the Kershaw County Fine Arts Center. At Winthrop, LaRoche created a musical performing instrumentalist scholarship for an undergraduate, belongs to the Eagle Club, which supports the university's student-athletes, and sponsors an annual lunch for Kershaw County alumni at the private Springdale Hall club.

Quick with a compliment, LaRoche does not shy away from speaking her mind or standing firm on an issue, as those who served with her as a trustee well know.

To many, LaRoche represents the best that Winthrop has to offer. "She is the epitome of kindness, honesty and integrity. She demonstrates the highest level of alumni spirit through her presence at campus academic and athletic events, and she is a most generous donor," said Political Science Professor Jennifer Disney, chair of the Department of Political Science, Philosophy, Religion and Legal Studies.

Why Such Dedication?

While she was earning a B.A. degree in Spanish in 1969 and then her B.S. degree in physical education in 1970, LaRoche said Winthrop brought her out of her shell, turning an introvert into someone who was more outgoing.

Her alma mater also provided her the foundation to seek her dreams. After completing her medical degree in 1974 from the Medical University of South Carolina, LaRoche worked five years in internal medicine, eight years in geriatric medicine and then 28 years in emergency room medicine.

One of five children, LaRoche has a twin sister, Susan Reynolds LaRoche Kearns, who lives in Rock Hill and is an artist. LaRoche learned about the medical field from her father, Ripon Wilson LaRoche, whom she described as a "small-town Camden doctor with an exceptional knack for diagnosing patients' illnesses." A

brigadier general and advisor to the surgeon general, he would have advanced further, she said, but the family unfortunately lost him to cancer when LaRoche was only 25.

Looking back on her bond with Winthrop, LaRoche said her commitment has never wavered. She was elected Most Enthusiastic in her senior class and could still hold that title if a vote were taken today.

Always a cheerleader, LaRoche offers the advocacy and support that distinguishes her among her Winthrop peers.

As President Serna quipped, "We need more Janes."



LaRoche attended the May 8 Graduate Commencement ceremony to see the faculty award named for her given to Hoyle, right. They were joined by Education Graduate Director Lisa Harris.



In this 1970 Tatler picture, LaRoche was listed among the senior class officers as the class cheerleader.

JIMMY DUNCAN

UPLIFTING WOMEN’S SPORTS



Two years ago, the Carolina Panthers invited select high school football teams to Bank of America Stadium in Charlotte, North Carolina, for the inaugural Keep Pounding High School Classic. One of those invited teams was the Northwestern High School Trojans from Rock Hill Schools.

The event sparked a new conversation between the school district and the Carolina Panthers: would the Carolina Panthers support a girls’ flag football league in York County?

The answer was YES, and **Jimmy Duncan** ’10, ’12, now leads the charge.

Competing on the Same Level

On a typical school night, you can often find Duncan, athletic director for Rock Hill Schools, supporting his student-athletes from the sidelines or the stands – alongside his two cheering daughters, Nora, 5, and Adaline, 8.

So when the Carolina Panthers decided to push girls’ flag football in the Carolinas, reaching out to Duncan was the obvious call.

The district scheduled an interest meeting for families and community members, with Duncan noting that they were unsure, yet hopeful, about the outcome. A typical interest meeting about launching a girls’ sport in the district, he said, draws about 18 student-athletes.

The one for flag football? Nearly 100 female student-athletes attended.

“From talking with parents and families, we know there’s such a high interest in football here,” Duncan explained. “Flag football is an opportunity for these girls to compete and do the same things they’ve seen their fathers, brothers, cousins, uncles, etc., do. Another big plus is, all of these athletes are starting at the same level here.”

The Carolina Panthers Charities donated \$45,000 in grant funding to go toward uniforms, equipment, and coach and player development programs. Duncan worked with peers in Clover School District, Fort Mill School District and York School District 1 to build 14 teams of 15 student-athletes each. The league played for seven weeks, two games per week, this past spring.



Joni Boyd ’07, ’20, ’21, an exercise science professor at Winthrop, former female football athlete and mom to two football-loving girls (one of whom played during the inaugural season) served as assistant coach for a flag football team.

“This moment is full circle and all-inclusive for what it means to serve our community as an

Eagle,” Boyd said. “The 14 young athletes on my team (and likely the 13 other teams in York County) have demonstrated dedication, toughness, competitiveness and accountability to new skills in a short span of two months. The impact of this experience for them is momentous, and the future of female flag football in South Carolina is incredibly bright. I am very pumped about girls’ and women’s flag football possibilities!”

Keeping the Momentum Going

Growing up in York, Duncan wanted to be a basketball coach. He worked as a graduate assistant in Winthrop’s physical education, sport, and human performance department and with the men’s basketball team under former Head Coaches Gregg Marshall and Randy Peele. From there, he served as an assistant coach at Cayce High School in Columbia; then basketball coach and athletic director at Great Falls High School in Great Falls; and then athletic director at Northwestern High School in Rock Hill before taking on the inaugural athletic director role for Rock Hill Schools in 2023.

Since then, Duncan can list several accomplishments: convening the first Coaches’ Symposium, a professional development day for coaches at all levels; significant fundraising; and launching three new sports: men’s volleyball, girls’ wrestling and girls’ flag football.

A new season of flag football begins this fall and expands to the high-school level in York County, with hopes of it one day being sanctioned in the state. Flag football is currently a sanctioned sport in 14 other states and will debut in the 2028 Los Angeles Summer Olympic Games.

“I’d like to keep that momentum going,” Duncan said. “We’re known as Football USA, and I love that from a marketing standpoint. We do have a lot of great talent, but our female sports are also incredible here — three championships in girls’ wrestling, championships in girls’ basketball and girls’ track and field...Flag football is another way to highlight and uplift our female athletes and give them time to shine.”



Three Outstanding Faculty Members Honored with Awards

This spring, **Winthrop** recognized three faculty members with prestigious teaching awards.

English Professor Matthew Fike, who retired in May, received the Distinguished Professor Award, which is the highest award given to a faculty member. It is presented to educators who demonstrate exceptional teaching skills, pursue significant research or creative efforts, hold a high standing among professional colleagues and provide general service to the university.

Assistant Professor of Human Nutrition Jessie Hoffman earned the Outstanding Junior Professor Award. This award recognizes excellence among assistant professors for inspired teaching, research or creative excellence, and for dedication to the welfare of students.

Associate Professor of Education Leadership Sherry Hoyle accepted the Jane LaRoche Graduate Faculty Award. It recognizes outstanding teaching at the graduate level and significant contributions to graduate education at Winthrop.



Matthew Fike



Jessie Hoffman



Sherry Hoyle

Global Close Scholars Explore Japan

Several Global Close Scholars, accompanied by Vice President for Student Affairs Shelia Burkhalter, traveled to Japan this summer to explore cities including Tokyo, Nara and Osaka. In Kyoto, they visited Nijo Castle (pictured) that was once home to the first shogun of the Edo period. In addition to sightseeing, the scholars participated in a cleanup along the Arakawa River where they collected 34 bags of trash. Global Close Scholars must complete 112 hours of service per semester at an approved site and have the opportunity to participate in group travel experiences thanks to generous contributions from the Springs Close Foundation and the Springsteen Foundation.



Contracts Extended for Head Basketball Coaches

Athletic Director Chuck Rey recently announced **contract extensions** for Head Men's Basketball Coach Mark Prosser and Head Women's Basketball Coach Semeka Randall Lay.

Prosser, who was hired in April 2021 as the seventh head coach to lead the men's basketball program, will have a contract extension through the 2028-29 season. He wrapped up his fourth season at the helm this spring in which the team posted its second 20-win season under his watch.



Mark Prosser

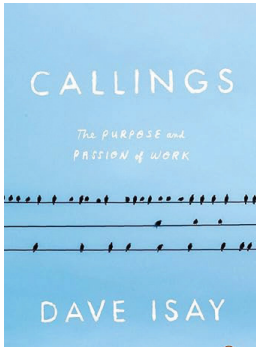


Semeka Randall Lay

With the women's team, Randall Lay, who was named the head coach in April 2021, received a contract extension through the 2027-28 season. She completed her fifth season this spring and led the program to one of its most successful seasons in recent years.

Latest Common Book Selected for Freshmen, Campus

New students will read the 2025-26 Common Book, "Callings: The Purpose and Passion of Work," this summer and then discuss the book's themes of purpose, vocation and meaningful work throughout the year.



Told through touching conversations between friends, coworkers, and family members, in "Callings," StoryCorps founder David Isay presents unforgettable stories from people doing work they love.

The book was selected in part to align with Winthrop's Quality Enhancement Plan, "Flight Ready," which aims to integrate career readiness across the university curriculum.

Melissa McCartney Welcomed as New Dean

Melissa McCartney, the founding dean of Queens University's Graduate School, an associate provost for digital learning and chief online officer for the Charlotte-based school, will join Winthrop on July 16 as the dean of the **School of Graduate, Continuing, and Online Education**.



Melissa McCartney

In addition to her experience at Queens University, she served as an instructional designer, an assistant program dean and doctoral programs dean for the University of Phoenix.

She holds a Doctorate in Education from Arizona State University, a Master of Education in curriculum and instruction from Arizona State University and a Bachelor of Arts in creative writing from the University of Arizona.

Benamins Create Scholarship to Pave Way for History Makers



Former Columbia Mayor Steve Benjamin and The Honorable DeAndrea Gist Benjamin '94 have created a scholarship that honors Judge Benjamin's history-making career.

Judge Benjamin serves as a United States Circuit Judge for the United States Court of Appeals for the

Fourth Circuit. Confirmed to the court in 2023, Judge Benjamin is the second African-American woman and the first person of color from South Carolina to serve on the Fourth Circuit.

Steve Benjamin said it was important to the couple to make sure others had the resources to follow in the same career path if that was their goal. "DeAndrea is a history maker, fully representative of the possibilities in American life. She is the product of her faith, her family and the sacrifices and contributions of others to ensure that she would be able to achieve historic heights."

The Hon. DeAndrea Gist Benjamin Endowed Scholarship provide funds to support a student majoring in political science and is also pre-law. Preference is given to a student from South Carolina and who is a minority.

"We hope this scholarship provides a meaningful resource to a young person to achieve his or her dreams. We want the recipient to have faith, work hard, get good grades, treat people with dignity and respect, and serve the community knowing that he or she has our full support," said Steve.

Judge Benjamin was the 2024 recipient of the Alumni Association's Alumni Professional Achievement Award. [Read more about her](#) storied career and achievements.

Day of Giving Breaks More Records!

The fifth annual Day of Giving, held April 22-23, became the most successful 24 hours of giving to date, thanks to generous alumni, faculty, staff and friends. Donors gave in spades, surpassing the 1,000 donor goal, and unlocked several giving challenges and matching gifts to raise even more financial support.

1,011 Donors

\$391,233 Raised

263 Donors Gave to the Winthrop Fund

243 Donors Gave to Athletics

22 Matching and Challenge Gifts Were Made

18 Donors established a New Monthly Gift

For information on giving opportunities, please visit www.winthrop.edu/give or call 803/323-2275.

Foundation Welcomes New Executive Director



Courtney Jurado

The Winthrop University Foundation Board of Directors recently announced the unanimous appointment of Courtney Jurado as the Foundation's new executive director.

Jurado will assume the position on July 21. She will succeed Robin Embry '00, '12, who concluded her 14 years of service to the Foundation on June 30.

As the executive director, Jurado will ensure the Foundation's mission to support and enhance Winthrop by encouraging alumni and friends to contribute private funds and other resources that allow the institution to maximize its potential.

She joins the Foundation from AbilityFirst, a Los Angeles, California-based nonprofit supporting individuals with disabilities and their families.

Somervilles Establish New Organ Fund to Honor David Lowry



David Lowry

Husband and wife Murray and Hazel '69 Somerville have each known Professor Emeritus of Music David Lowry longer than they have known each other.

The accomplished organists and generous Winthrop supporters recently created the Dr. David Lowry Endowment Fund for Organ Education in honor of Lowry, who taught organ performance and served as the university's principal organist until his retirement in 2012.

The new fund will provide support for the ongoing education and advancement of organists at all stages of their musical journey.

"We want to honor Dr. David Lowry for his important influence on our lives and the lives of many students, choral members and colleagues, by providing a means for his legacy to continue at Winthrop," said the Somervilles. "Inspired by his teaching, many of his students have continued with graduate study

and impressive professional careers, benefitting from his stated goal of coaching us to think for ourselves and always seek for musical excellence in our musical endeavors. At Winthrop he maximized the resources of the D.B. Johnson Organ in the most creative way to excite each student's imagination. As churches face a shortage of skilled organists, this fund aims to offer lifelong learning opportunities for those who want to enhance their skill on the organ."

Several of Lowry's friends and former students recently gathered to once again play the D.B. Johnson Memorial Organ and share stories about Lowry and his impact on their lives.

Make a gift to the Dr. David Lowry Endowment Fund for Organ Education.



That’s a Wrap on Senior Week

The Alumni Association hosted **Senior Week** May 5-8 for the Class of 2025. Featured events included the Final Toss: Senior Cornhole Tournament; Muffin but Money: Strategies for Financial Success; Strike a Pose: Professional Headshots; a Champagne Toast to the Class of 2025 and the 2.025 Grad Dash. As part of their participation in Senior Week, students also had the option to donate any amount to any fund through the senior class gift campaign. Students who donated \$25 to commemorate their class year also received a donor medal to wear at Commencement and a water bottle to use throughout the week. Thank you to our 40 senior donors who raised a combined \$1,308!



The Champagne Toast at the President's House is an homage to D.B. Johnson, Winthrop's founder and first president, who hosted seniors for lemonade and cookies.

Meet the New Alumni Executive Board Officers

A new officer slate for the **Alumni Executive Board** was voted on for the 2025-27 term during the May 9 spring board meeting. Casey Munn Ferri '09 will serve as president after serving as president-elect for two years; Pat Plexico Boutwell '84 was voted president-elect; and John DeLoache '92 was voted secretary. Thank you to these dedicated alumni for serving their alma mater!



Casey Munn Ferri



Pat Plexico Boutwell



John DeLoache

Volunteer as an I’m Ready Mentor

Be a mentor and make a difference. Recruitment is now open for the 2025-26 *I’m Ready* alumni to student mentor program! Join us for the third year of this impactful experience where Winthrop alumni guide students through topics related to career exploration, networking and professional growth. As a mentor, you will share your insights, career background and connect with current students through your shared Winthrop experience. Be a part of something meaningful – empower the next generation of Eagles by giving back in a personal and powerful way. [Learn more and get involved here.](#)



Black Alumni Weekend Was a Big Success!

Winthrop welcomed over 500 alumni for Black Alumni Weekend in April. The multi-day event featured panel discussions with notable Black alumni, a Black history exhibit and networking opportunities. A special thank you goes out to Chelsea Brown '14, president of the Black Alumni Council, and the council’s additional leaders for their time spent planning an educational and fun-filled weekend. The next Black Alumni Weekend will tentatively be held in 2027. [View photos from the weekend.](#)

Homecoming and Reunion Set for November

Call or text your classmates and tell them to save the dates of Nov. 14-15 for **Homecoming and Reunion Weekend**! The Alumni Association looks forward to welcoming all alumni back to campus for a variety of special events. If your class year ends in '5 and '0 you are celebrating a milestone reunion. Be on the lookout for class reunion information in your e-mail inbox and your mailbox and be ready to sign up for the weekend when registration opens in August.



1977
Doug Echols of Rock Hill received the 2025 Citizenship & Service Award from the York County Regional Chamber.

1979
Kathryn Kirkpatrick of Vilas, North Carolina, published two books: “Creature” and “Enrap-tured Space: Gender, Class, and Ecology in the Work of Paula Meehan.”

1980
Beth Amick Cleland of Lexington was inducted into the Brookland-Cayce High School Educator Hall of Fame in recognition of her more than 28 years of service to education.

1981
John Coleman of Rock Hill received the David Boone Advisory Award for his service to Rock Hill’s Parks, Recreation and Tourism programs.

HELP BYRNES SHINE!
In honor of their 50-year reunion, the Class of 1975 is raising money for a new theatrical lighting system in Byrnes. It will be more energy efficient and will enhance students’ and external clients’ experiences. The estimated cost is \$85,000. **Support the fundraising effort.**

1982
Bob Bowen of Matthews, North Carolina, was inducted into the North Carolina Soccer Hall of Fame.

1983
Mandy Catoe of Lancaster won first place for growth and development beat reporting for The Lancaster News at the South Carolina Press Association Awards.

1986
Jane Wallace ’86, ’92, of Smyrna was appointed coordinator of special projects for the York School District.

1987
The South Carolina Association of School Administrators named **Teresa Price Mingo** ’87, ’90, of Columbia the South Carolina Middle Level Principal of the Year.

1989
Watts Huckabee of Rock Hill received the 2025 Rock Hill Area Business Person of the Year Award from the York County Regional Chamber.

1992
Greer resident **Ed Driggers**, a member of the Winthrop Board of Trustees, was named interim administrator for the town of Blythewood.

1997
Nichole Plumblee Livengood of Kingstree placed second in a series of articles for The Kingstree News at the South Carolina Press Association Awards.

Tara Chelf Reeves of Rock Hill received a Congressional Patriot Award from Congressman Alex Mooney (R-WV).

1998
Patrick Byrne of Fort Mill won South Carolina Press Association Awards for lifestyle feature writing and election/political coverage for The Tega Cay Sun.

1999
Mac Banks of Fort Mill placed second in government beat reporting for The Lancaster News at the South Carolina Press Association Awards ceremony.

2000
Heather McCarley Montgomery of McConnells was named principal of Hunter Street Elementary School.

Cassidy McDaniel Valerino of Rock Hill was named assistant principal of Hickory Grove-Sharon Elementary School.

2001
Rachel Young Fields of Savannah, Georgia, was recognized as one of the 2025 Georgia Super Lawyers.

Adriane Livingston Radeker of Columbia was named public outreach manager in the Office of Public Engagement at the South Carolina Department of Transportation.

Grey Young of Fort Mill was appointed superintendent of the Fort Mill School District.

2002
Alexis Gordon of Charlotte, North Carolina, was named senior international business manager and chief of protocol for the city of Charlotte.

LeTricia Parks ’02, ’07, of Duluth, Georgia, was named Teacher of the Year at Norcross Elementary School.

2003
Bradley Moore of Salisbury, North Carolina, was appointed executive director of the New Bern Civic Theatre.

2004
Mary Leigh Burgess Dickerson of Fort Mill joined Affinity Health Center as the revenue cycle manager.

2005
Jerrienne Berry Jackson of Rock Hill received the Small Business of the Year Award from the York County Regional Chamber for her business, Blu J Agency.

Charles Perry of Conway won first place in breaking news reporting, beat reporting and business beat reporting for The Post and Courier Myrtle Beach/Georgetown Times at the South Carolina Press Association Awards ceremony.

2006
The Clover School District named **Calub Courtwright** of York the principal of Lake Wylie High.

2007
Charlotte, North Carolina, resident **Eric Ferri** was recognized as one of the Charlotte Business Journal’s 40 Under 40.

Massey Services named Irmo native **Lindsey Whiting Herndon** as director of sales for the multi-family division.

2008
Ashley Yon of Hickory Grove was named assistant principal at Hunter Street Elementary School.

2010
Stephanie Burgess of Lexington was appointed principal at Gilbert Middle School.

2013
Samantha Smigel married Taylor Carwile on Oct. 12, 2024, at the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden in Richmond, Virginia.

2015
Once a regular on CN2 in Rock Hill, **Rachel Richardson**, formerly of Lexington, Kentucky, joined the WBTV news team in Charlotte, North Carolina.

2016
McKenzie Miller Lemhouse of Winnsboro received the South Carolina Library Association’s New Librarian Award at the association’s annual conference.

The South Carolina Association of School Administrators named **Saani Perry** of Blythewood the South Carolina Secondary Assistant Principal of the Year.

2017
Jessica Kelly of York was named testing specialist for York School District One.

2018

Sarah Gilreath of Fort Mill was named Teacher of the Year at Doby Bridge Elementary School.

Elize Miramontes Hensley of Manning was named head coach of the junior varsity volleyball team for Laurence Manning Academy.

Tanner Slagle of Rock Hill received the MultiTiered Systems of Support Big Rock for his leadership as assistant principal at Lesslie Elementary School.

2019

Chelsea Dantonio of Charlotte, North Carolina, joined the Quail Hollow Club as an assistant professional.

Ayanah Johnson of Inman was named Fairforest Middle School’s Teacher of the Year.

2020

Dominic Cothorn of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, was named strength and conditioning coach for the Dayton Dragons baseball team.

2021

Anna Sharpe of Charleston placed third in growth and development beat reporting and placed second in lifestyle feature writing for The Post and Courier at the South Carolina Press Association Awards ceremony.

2022

Bryn Eddy of Rock Hill won first place in in-depth reporting, government beat reporting and lifestyle feature writing for The Sumter Item, and first place in profile feature writing for The Lexington County Chronicle at the South Carolina Press Association Awards ceremony.

2023

Greenville resident Danny Kilgore Wilson joined Greenville Technical Charter High School as a social studies teacher.

Evan Plumley of Landrum was named athletic trainer at Polk County High School.

Doris Johnson Forrester ’53
Barbara Sewell Singleton ’53
Mimi Emily Wannamaker ’53
Julia Carter Wise ’53
Patricia Creech Berry ’54
Nancy Pusser Burgess ’54
Elizabeth (Eva) Evans Gilbert ’54
Beverly Culler Bennett ’55
Renetta Holliday Finklea Davis ’55
Barbara Warren Edmunds ’55
Ruth Mae Sherer Jones ’55
Margaret Saverance ’55
Patricia Armstrong Mullen ’56
Rose Marie Croxton Baker ’58
Eleanor Potts Corbett ’58
Betty (Jean) Brooks Morse ’58
Betty Smith Sinnott ’58

1960s

Esther DeHay Gardner ’60
Martha Carson Henderson ’60
Carol Suhrstedt Kennedy ’60
Sara McCain Stewart ’60
Nancy Rodgers Robertshaw ’61
Margaret (Tassie) Collins Boshamer ’62
Julianne McElveen Brown ’62
Dorothy (Scottie) Hodge ’62
Brenda O’Dell Pitts ’62
Rebecca (Mattie) Medlin Seawright ’62
Paula Timmons Stacy ’62
Jane Miller Waters ’62
Linda Rogers McKee ’63
Renee Nell Wade Anderson ’64
Janice (Dianne) Curry Boulware ’64
Mary Ellen Reese Groce ’64
Jo Ellen Ausband Hardwick ’64
Patricia (Carolyn) McCullough

Langdon ’64
Louise (Leppy) Evans Spears ’64
Katherine Elizabeth Musso Tomlinson ’64
Eunice Paul Cox ’65
Elizabeth Scheffey Santos ’65
Barbara Ayres Ward ’65
Dale Hayes West ’65
Aletha (Diane) Stokes Brown ’66
Ellie Wall Cottingham ’66
Gloria Adams Dixon ’66
Sallie Murdock Glass Ferrell ’66
Arianne Graddick ’66
Paula (Gayle) King Hedrick ’66
Brenda Cauthen Hood ’66
Leila Potts Long ’66
Sara Stackhouse McDonald ’66
Mary (Betty) Cotton Owens ’66
Frances Blondell Kennedy Andrews ’67
Lucy David Ward ’67
Judy Sullivan Suttles ’68
Judy Hill Bullard ’69

1970s

Carole (Yvonne) Hinson Maskus ’70
Anna Arant Seastrunk ’70
Rebecca Harper Thrower ’70
Donna Davis Freeman ’71
Rebecca (Becky) Walden Smith ’71
Samantha (Sammy Jo) Josephine Stone ’71
Sarah Pomer Irene Surface ’71
Marilyn Harwood Cook ’72
Louise (Lou) Dillingham ’72
Malinda Jennings Holroyd ’72
Paula Rogers Jones ’72

Virginia Dantzler Wooten ’72
Susan McCants Brant ’73
Deborah (Debbie) Lewis Gladden ’73
Rebecca (Becky) Newsome Inabinet ’73
Celia Jones Peggy Richardson ’73
Susan Plyler Baker ’74
Betty McGraw Porterfield ’74
Angela Matthews Benedetto ’75
Edward Newton ’75
James Payne ’75
Lynn Suddeth Dobbins ’76
Joan Grantham Thomasson ’76
Delesa Forrest Vaughn ’76
Larry William Littlejohn ’77
Ella Bratton Messer ’77
Mary (Mary Jo) Simmons ’77
Jane Yount White ’77
Renee Jenkins McFalls ’78
Beverly Timmons Jordan ’79

1980s

Amy Carol Ussery ’81
Marion Warren Stanback ’87
Berta Martin-de-Nicolas ’88

1990s

James Spratt ’92
Shea Edward Marsden ’94
Yanilka (Nicky) Martinez Andrews ’96
Rose Koshar Zukiewicz ’98

2000s

Frank Polk ’00
Margaret (Meg) Moore Small ’05
Tara Cameron Steele ’05

MILESTONES

IN MEMORIAM

1940s

Mary (Bobbi) Spencer Beard ’44
Georgie Madeleine Keller Shuler ’44
Lucy Gilchrist Cairney ’47
Pauline Palles Costas ’47
Arline Settlemyer Holt ’47
Bessie (Maurie) West Ogle ’47
Lavinia (Merle) Bethea Cox ’48
Jackie Hardee Howard ’48

Sarah (Dorothy) Sullivan Reid ’48
Norma Willcox Bradley Thornbrough ’48
Marian Chuan ’49
Doris Legare Dayhoff ’49

1950s

Norma Sansbury Cooper ’50
Ellen (Ruby) James Herring ’50

Mary (Lou) Lewis Prongay ’50
Lucia Hannaford Daniel ’51
Ruth (Betts) Wallace Davis ’51
Pat Calvert Garner ’51
Betty Bell Holland ’51
Katilene Lanford Holmes ’51
Carolyn Phillips Jeffcoat ’51
Josephine Reid Briggs ’52
Virginia (Marguerite) Keith Bushnell ’53



*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** so we can update our information.

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**Recent graduate and scholarship recipient
Bailey Grinolds '25 was photographed by
Sarah Kesler '18, '20.*