Mary Elizabeth Hope Reed '41, '51
2019 Mary Mildred Sullivan Award

Each year, Winthrop recognizes an alumna for selfless dedication of time, energy and talent in service to others. The Mary Mildred Sullivan Award captures this high honor. The 2019 award recipient is Mary Elizabeth Hope Reed '41, '51, who in 2017 committed $3 million to Winthrop – the largest estate gift in university's history.

Reed's substantial gift to Winthrop established the Elizabeth Hope Reed Fellows Program, a service-focused student scholarship program. A longtime educator, she was an advocate of learning through community service. In the Fall of 2018, the first class of Reed scholars combined studying for graduate-level courses with paying it forward to the community over the course of the academic year.

President Dan Mahony highlighted Reed's generous contribution during his 2017 State of the University Address, touting it as one of the hallmarks of the Winthrop Plan. The service-specific program is one way the university is reaching its strategic goal of increasing student engagement locally and globally.

Reed, a native of Rock Hill, earned a bachelor of science degree in home economics from Winthrop in 1941 and returned to earn her master of arts degree in home economics in 1951. Reed taught home economics in the North Carolina public school system for more than 38 years.

She served as vice president and president for the Jackson County Chapter of North Carolina Retired School Personnel, a testament to her dedication to education and community.

Community service played a vital role in Reed's life. Honored for her 50 years of membership in the American Home Economics Association, Reed earned the Quality of Life Award from the N.C. chapter of the American Cancer Society for her volunteer work.

Reed was among the first to teach co-educational classes in family life education. She was a trailblazer, piloting programs in childcare and the dual role of women as wage earner and homemaker to keep pace with a changing society.