

Ben Roach '77
2019 Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award

Each year, Winthrop recognizes an alumnus for selfless dedication of time, energy and talent in service to others. The Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award captures this high honor.

This year's 2019 recipient is Ben Roach. His ties to Winthrop began with family members who were Winthrop graduates, all the way back to his great aunt Emmie Sams, who graduated in 1913. At the time of his birth, his mother Jackie Roach '54 was a recent Winthrop graduate who married his father Ernest Roach.

As a child, he became one of the Winthrop family's campus children, often spending many hours with his dad at work on campus. His visits to campus planted the seed of interest that led to his later employment. Roach would witness the many transformations that were happening to Winthrop's facilities, academic programs, construction and renovations.

He attended Clemson University where he majored in electrical engineering and later earned a Bachelor of Science in business administration from Winthrop in 1977, working part-time at Winthrop all during his college years. During his senior year, he was privileged to be among the individuals involved in the burial of Mrs. D.B. Johnson in the Winthrop Chapel upon her death at the age of 100 years old.

In December of 1972, Roach began working part-time at Winthrop. At the time, lots of changes were on the horizon, including the university's move to co-education and an increase in enrollment. In 1978, he became a full-time Winthrop employee as the second generation of his family's three generations – Ernest, Ben, and Steven – to serve Winthrop and the state of South Carolina. He has received four Presidential Citations for his efforts on campus and going beyond the scope of work, including assisting with four fires and the devastation of Hurricane Hugo to the Winthrop campus. He has worked with historians and Winthrop University Louise Pettus Archives to document such significant moments in Winthrop's rich history. He has served Winthrop as a staff member for 47 years. He is currently an engineering associate with Winthrop's facilities management.

Roach has served in many positions – from fire fighter to assistant chief – in community fire departments, including Clemson University Fire Department (3 years) and the Newport Volunteer Fire Department (45 years). He is married to Terry Roach who worked for Carolinas Medical Center before becoming disabled in August 1993. He spends his days taking care of Terry and his mother Jackie. Last, but not least, he continues to spend his days taking care of Winthrop as well.