

DOROTHY PERRY THOMPSON

Each year, the African American Studies program sponsors the Dorothy Perry Thompson (DPT) Colloquium in African American Studies and the African American Experience. Who was this important woman?



Dorothy Thompson Perry

June 25, 1944 - January 4, 2002

Dorothy Perry Thompson was born in Springfield, SC and grew up with her siblings Edna, Norman, James, Andra, and Todd in the Wheeler Hill neighborhood that figures so prominently in her poetry. She graduated from Booker T. Washington High School in 1962 and received her B.A. in English from Allen University in 1968 and her Master of Arts in Teaching from the University of South Carolina, Columbia, in 1974. After teaching in the public high schools, including Riverside High (Greer), Lower Richland High (Hopkins), and Dreher High (Columbia), she returned to USC-Columbia, where in 1987 she became the second African American in the school's history to earn a Ph.D. in English and the first African American to complete a creative writing dissertation there, under the direction of James Dickey.

At her death in January of 2002, Dr. Thompson was Professor of English at Winthrop University. She coordinated Winthrop University's African American Studies program and taught various courses for the department of English.

Dr. Thompson's Publications: Among her publications are three collections of poetry (*Fly With The Puffin* - 1995, [Priest in Aqua Boa](#) - 2001, and *Hurrying the Spirit: Following Zora* - 2002), the anthology [Out of the Rough](#) - 2001, and numerous essays and chapters on literary topics.

Who was Dr. Thompson? Dr. Thompson was a gifted and respected scholar, teacher, and poet. Moreover, she was a beloved mentor, friend, and a tireless advocate for ensuring that the African American voice was heard on campus and in the greater community.

What was Dr. Thompson's role in Winthrop's AAMS program? Dr. Dorothy Perry Thompson was hired by Winthrop University to teach courses in African American Literature, American Literature, poetry, and creative writing. In 1990, Dr. Thompson approached the Dean of Arts and Sciences proposing a minor in African American Studies. In February 1990, a committee of nine was appointed by the Dean of Arts and Sciences to serve on the African American Studies Minor Committee. The committee's charge was to explore the feasibility of designing a minor in African American Studies. Dr. Thompson was asked to serve as chair of the Committee.