



# WINTHROP MAGAZINE

SUMMER 2022



SUMMER  
*Let's go!*  
2022



# message from the PRESIDENT



Dear Friends:

Moving back to Rock Hill and settling into the President’s House has been an unusually strange yet wonderful experience. During my time at Winthrop I lived in two places—the Lodge (long gone but memorable to be sure) and Roddey, the apartments that are a stone’s throw from my new back door. When I was a student I never met Winthrop’s long-serving president, Anthony DiGiorgio, but now I walk the floors of the place he and other presidents called home. To share this beautiful space with my family – my wife, Lauren, and our daughters, Caroline and Anna Kate, is incredibly special.

Speaking of presidents, I owe a debt of gratitude to my predecessor, George Hynd, who worked for two years—during a pandemic no less—to prepare Winthrop for this presidency. I am eager to move forward with many of the initiatives he undertook. And, like you, I sincerely thank him for his service.

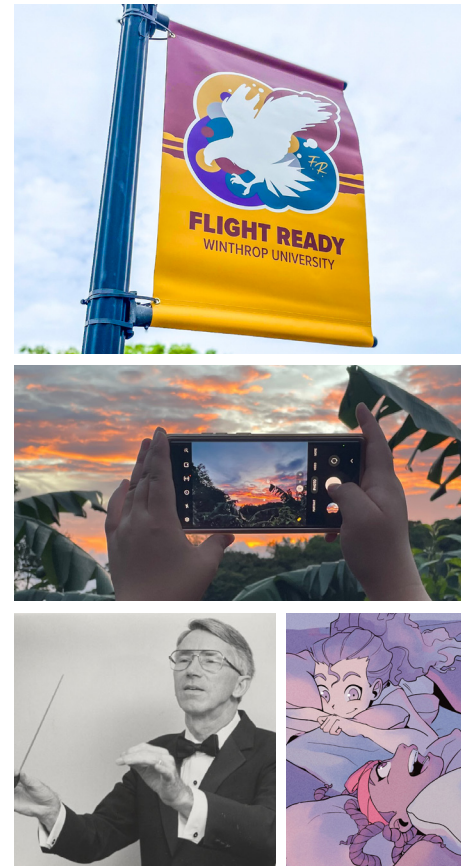
In this edition of the *Winthrop Magazine*, which has literally come together in the last few weeks, I invite you discover more about me and my plans for Winthrop. I also encourage you to read about:

- *The university’s new Quality Enhancement Plan – Flight Ready – and how it will prepare our graduates to be career ready;*
- *The timely advice delivered to our recent graduates by May Commencement speaker Jermaine Whirl ’06;*
- *Recent improvements completed through the Campus Beautification Initiative;*
- *The trip of a lifetime taken by our Close Scholars to Costa Rica;*
- *A fantastic tribute concert performed by alumni at Carnegie Hall to honor professor emeritus Bob Edgerton; and*
- *Compelling profiles on faculty member Claudia O’Steen as well as alumnae Asiah Fulmore ’18 and Jessica Koumas ’95.*

In the coming months, I hope to visit a city near you to connect and hear about your Winthrop experience. I predict stories of compelling transformation, perhaps even similar to my own. As we prepare to begin our 137th academic year, I look forward to the opportunity to listen, learn and grow. I can’t wait to partner with you to create a prosperous, sustainable future for Winthrop.

Always an Eagle,

Edward A. Serna  
President



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About the cover: Close Scholars traveled to Costa Rica in May to perform community service and to learn about the country’s culture.

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# EDWARD A. SERNA

FIRST ALUMNUS PRESIDENT READY *to* WORK



“  
*Choosing Winthrop is the best decision I could have made.*  
- President Edward A. Serna

Twelfth President **Edward A. Serna '02** has returned home to Winthrop after serving as president at public institutions in Maine and Arkansas.

During a recent interview, he answered a variety of questions on why he chose to attend Winthrop as a non-traditional student, his plans for the university, how his family is settling in to campus life, and more.

**Q: Where did you grow up?**  
A: I was born in Southern California, and my father was a defense contractor. So every few years when the defense contract changed we moved. I also lived in Colorado, Connecticut and then Georgia. My parents and brother, who is two years younger than me, still live in Georgia so it's nice to be closer to family.

**Q: How did you decide to attend Winthrop as a student?**  
A: I hit one of those milestone birthdays and decided that I needed to make a change. I had a lot

of undergraduate credit hours from multiple institutions and I wanted to find an institution where I could finally finish my degree. The mistake I had made in the past was thinking I needed a large flagship university experience or a private college experience, when I really needed an institution that fit me and my needs. Winthrop was the right size for me. Choosing Winthrop is the best decision I could have made. Everyone was truly wonderful and accommodating, and once I arrived on campus in 2002 I put my nose to the grindstone and finished my degree in one year.

**Q: What faculty members made a positive impact on you as a student?**  
A: Dr. Steven Frankforter [professor of management], who is still teaching at Winthrop, taught a capstone business course in Thurmond Building. His class synthesized all of the business classes and business experiences I had accumulated over a decade, and that class just brought it all together. Something clicked for me in that class that was the foundation for me continuing my graduate school work at Clemson and Auburn. Outside of business classes, Jack Weaver [professor emeritus of English] taught an English class on the second floor of Kinard. He would open the windows that overlooked Oakland Avenue and talk about literature. I loved that class and the way he brought it all to life for me.



**Q: What is your favorite part of being a college president?**

**A:** I love all of the different people that I get to meet. I love meeting students and hearing their stories of why they came here and their experiences here. I also love meeting community members, other college presidents and elected officials. I get to meet a lot of great people.



*On July 15, Serna met with Board of Trustees Chair Glenn McCall and Vice Chair Kathy Hudson Bigham '73.*

**Q: What is the Winthrop story to tell?**

**A:** Our story is that you're going to come to a campus that cares about your success. We want to see you be successful and leave here in a better place than when you came in. I also think that the Winthrop story has to be a part of the Rock Hill story and capitalize on the opportunities around us.

**Q: What are your immediate and long-term plans?**

**A:** It's time to take a hard look at the university's strategic plan, the Winthrop Plan, and come up with a new strategic plan that is a vision for this institution for the next five years that will be something we can all be engaged in. I'm excited about that. I'm a data-driven guy and am action oriented, so once I feel like I have a good handle on data I plan to be action focused. I want to meet with fellow higher education leaders. I just met with new USC President Michael Amiridis and we talked about possible opportunities and partnerships on academic programming. Having those conversations with other institutions, like Clemson, York Tech and MUSC, will help us add to our academic programming.

**Q: What campus changes impressed you the most since your time as a student?**

**A:** The addition of Vivian Moore Carroll Hall is so impressive with the trading room floor. Hardin Garden is so nice as well. I enjoy walking our dog, Cooper, through Hardin each evening. Also, during my time as a student I didn't visit the President's House so now it's so awesome to live there surrounded by all of Winthrop's history.



*Bob Thompson, a longtime Winthrop supporter and former trustee, visited with Serna on July 12.*



*Serna with wife Lauren and daughters Anna Kate (right) and Caroline (left)*

**Q: Are you a sports fan?**

**A:** Lauren, my wife, and I love basketball so we plan to be at the basketball games. Lauren was a junior college volleyball player so we of course will attend volleyball games. That's just another wonderful part of the job – attending the different teams' games is a great way to meet people.

**Q: What are you excited about in your first year?**

**A:** I didn't get to attend my own graduation in 2002 because I had already started my graduate work at Clemson, so presiding over my first

Commencement ceremony in December will be really special. I am also excited to celebrate my 20th Winthrop class reunion at Homecoming and Reunion Weekend this November!

**Q: Any final thoughts?**

**A:** My family and I are just very excited to be here. This is my dream job. I love this university and want to see it continue to thrive. I look forward to the work ahead.

[Learn more about Serna and his family.](#)



# PREPARING to FLY with a NEW QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN

For nearly 100 years, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) has awarded Winthrop University with accreditation to award its respective degrees.

## What does accreditation mean?

The accreditation means that Winthrop has an appropriate mission for higher education; has resources, programs and services to aid in that mission; and maintains and assesses defined educational objectives consistent with the mission and offered degrees.

## What goes into that process?

Part of the reaccreditation process involves developing and implementing a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). The QEP reflects and affirms the commitment of SACSCOC to enhancing the quality of higher education in the southeast region and to focusing attention on student learning. As the SACSCOC On-Site Review Team returned to Winthrop this year for its regular reaccreditation process, members

and the campus community were introduced to the university's new QEP: **FLIGHT READY.**



## FLIGHT READY

WINTHROP UNIVERSITY

Vice Provost for Academic Affairs Meg Webber directed the QEP proposal process. "This is the third QEP I've directed," she said. "In my experience, successful QEPs have support both from the grassroots and from leadership; to create this for Flight Ready, we utilized large, representative committees as well as survey and focus group methodologies."

Through a two-year process that included 45 Winthrop faculty, staff, students and alumni in three separate working groups as well as more than 400 faculty, staff, students and alumni participating across three different questionnaires, multiple interviews, and a focus group, the Winthrop University community identified enhancing career readiness as both a priority and an opportunity. This objective aligns with the university's substantial number of first-generation and Pell-eligible students who may have fewer numbers of friends and family available as informal mentors in the types of professions for which they're preparing. While many areas of campus already discuss and offer a variety of career readiness opportunities, Flight Ready ensures that Winthrop students learn how to manage and develop their careers, with enhanced opportunities to begin doing so during their first semester at Winthrop.

## How do we define "career readiness?"

"A foundation from which to demonstrate requisite core competencies that broadly prepare the college-educated for success in the workplace and lifelong career management," per the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE).

NACE's eight career readiness competencies begin with "Career and Self Development," which is the core focus of Flight Ready. This competency includes "proactive development of oneself and one's career through continual personal and professional learning, awareness of one's strengths

and weaknesses, navigation of career opportunities, and networking to build relationships within and without one's organization."

Simply, Winthrop graduates will understand both that they need to, and how to, manage their careers.

## What does that mean?

Students will be able to connect relevant courses and majors with identified personal strengths and interests and develop themselves through continual learning and navigating career opportunities such as career fairs, internships and mentoring.

## How will we accomplish this?

Focusing on "Career and Self-Development," Flight Ready will include several components: (1) Learning about all eight NACE Career Competencies in the First Year Experience course, with completion of the nationally recognized Strong Interest Inventory to better understand their own professional areas of interest. Winthrop's Center for Career Development and Internships will administer the Strong Interest Inventory to all students in ACAD 101 courses. (2) Faculty training to provide faculty with strategies and tools to create career development linkages and opportunities more intentionally within the curricula. (3) Creating and launching an alumni mentorship network open to all interested Winthrop students, regardless of major.

"Of course, we are excited about how Flight Ready will prepare students to become increasingly career-ready alumni," Webber continued. "What's also important, however, is how implementing this initiative is a collaborative endeavor. It's going to strengthen the connections that Winthrop has among its students, faculty, staff, alumni and employers and make more visible the interdependencies between college and workplace preparedness."



# JERMAINE WHIRL URGES STUDENTS to MANAGE THEIR TIME



May Commencement speaker **Jermaine Whirl** '06 interviewed for his first job at a fast food restaurant in a suit. He so impressed his future boss that he was hired the same day for the line cook's position and received a 50 cents-an-hour raise based on his presentation.

Now president of Augusta Technical College, Whirl has risen rapidly through the ranks in higher education administration. The line cook story was one of several inspirational moments Whirl shared with the Class of 2022 during the two May 7 ceremonies.

He listed four pieces of advice for Winthrop's newest alumni members: the easiest way to remember them is to remember the word TIME. "Each day we're blessed with 24 hours. Everyone uses it differently ... What do we do with our lives while on Earth?" asked Whirl.

As an economics major, Whirl said he learned that life is all about choices. "Our choices dictate

our outcomes. So far, each of you already made the choice to invest three, four, five or possibly six years to earn your bachelor's degree," Whirl said. "Now it's TIME for you to move into your next phase of life."

He advised students to:

- Trust their guts and be flexible. Whirl said upon graduation, he wanted to work for a bank and specifically work for the Federal Reserve Bank. He applied to many banking jobs but never received an interview. He moved forward with plans to earn an M.B.A. He took a job out of his field serving S.C. Department of Social Services' custody teenagers that needed assistance moving into the military, college or directly into the workforce. That led to a job teaching at a two-year institution, and Whirl stayed in academics. In his role as president, he now works with area businesses, banks and such groups as the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta.

- Invest in themselves and others. Whirl said he has five degrees and still signs up for classes related to technology, leadership, finance and other short courses/programs that add depth to his tool belt. "But don't forget to invest in others. Your parents, siblings, friends, co-workers. Mentor others," he said, "or serve on community boards and be active in your community."
- Mind their manners. "Keep your name and personal brand in good standing. Watch

what you say, watch what you post on social media. Be mindful of the company you keep. My father use to say, 'don't hang around zeros... anything times zero equals zero.'"

- Exhibit excellence in everything. "People respond when you do more than what's required. If your supervisor asks for a report to be done by Friday at noon, turn it in Wednesday and see what happens. No one ever got in trouble for doing more than what's required. It will set you apart!"

## More on Whirl



the college's vice president for economic development and corporate training.

Whirl's higher education studies began at Winthrop where he first served as an academic advisor/tutor to provisionally admitted students in the LEAP program. He also volunteered in the offices of institutional advancement and alumni relations, where he led the Student Alumni Council.

Over the years, Whirl has served on regional and national boards, taskforces and committees. His work has been acknowledged through multiple awards and recognitions, including Winthrop's Alumni Professional Achievement Award.

A Charleston native and second-generation technical college graduate, Whirl earned his Associate of Arts degree at Trident Technical College, a bachelor's degree in economics at Winthrop, a Master of Business Administration degree at Charleston Southern University, a second master's degree in adult education and community leadership at Armstrong State University (now Georgia Southern University) and a doctorate in organizational leadership at Valdosta State University.

[Listen to Whirl's full Commencement speech.](#)



# REVITALIZING WINTHROP PROJECT *by* PROJECT



Quaint and colorful seating and gathering areas, vibrant street banners, eye-popping window clings and freshly manicured outdoor spaces have been added over the spring and summer months, infusing a boost of Eagle pride and beauty into campus.

These latest projects, most of which were funded by private gifts to the **Campus Beautification Initiative – Revitalizing Winthrop** – reflect the dedicated effort to keep Winthrop beautiful, accessible and attractive for prospective students and their families, current students, faculty, staff and community members.

“The projects completed through the Campus Beautification Initiative have enhanced the overall look of campus and made a positive and dramatic impact on our ‘curb appeal’ as we welcome prospective students and their families each day,” said James Grigg, associate vice president for facilities management. “We are grateful to the generous donors who have enthusiastically given to this important initiative.”

Since debuting in 2021, the Campus Beautification Initiative – Revitalizing Winthrop – has provided the opportunity and resources to respect

the university’s history by contributing energy, vision and engagement to the campus’ physical surroundings.

Faculty, staff, students and alumni have come together to plant shrubs, spread mulch and contribute time and “sweat equity” to various projects around campus. Members of the Rock Hill and Charlotte alumni chapters recently were on campus to spruce up the area around McLaurin Hall. **View the completed projects to date.**

In total, more than 90 people have pledged a year of service or have volunteered time to the Campus Beautification Initiative.

## How You Can Help

Contributions of time, talent, energy and financial support are appreciated.

To make a gift, visit University Advancement's **giving page** and select Campus Beautification Fund. To volunteer your time to a project, please visit the **volunteer page**.



*Recent beautification initiatives have included, above and clockwise, branded window clings, planting shrubs and weeding flower beds, hammock frames, new banners and seating areas.*



# COMING FULL CIRCLE

**Jessica Koumas** '95 counts herself among a small group of people who has seen every square foot of Winthrop's beautiful campus. She's toured each building, classroom, office, common area, food venue and outdoor space: she literally saw it all as part of her work on the university's recent Campus Master Plan.

As an interior designer with **Quackenbush Architects + Planners**, the contracted firm charged with creating a physical campus blueprint for Winthrop's future, Koumas served on a team that worked for more than a year to deliver a prioritized, phased master facility plan for the main campus and the athletics, recreation and research complex.

"It was such an honor to be a part of this important process for my alma mater," said Koumas, of Lugoff, who earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts in interior design. "One of the first tasks we accomplished was conducting a complete campus tour. We went through every single building on campus and it took about three days. It brought back so many wonderful memories of my time as a student."

During her tour, Koumas noted the campus' improved walkability, and how that change led to many positive aspects, including more green spaces and an enhanced heart of campus that now includes the DiGiorgio Campus Center, the West Center, Hardin Garden and more.

*"It was such an honor to be a part of this important process for my alma mater."*

- Jessica Koumas

## Looking Long Term

Early in the process, Koumas and her team took photographs of each space, combed through each building's history and evaluated each space's existing conditions in order to make recommendations on what could be possible long term.

"We essentially created our roadmap and then went into scenario planning based on current and future needs," said Koumas, who has spent her career designing projects for higher education institutions, healthcare facilities, K-12 school systems and more.

"What I love about the process is that I am involved from beginning to end. I'm there from the initial focus group interviews to the final presentations, and it's a rewarding journey," said Koumas, whose middle son, Jarrett, studies exercise science at Winthrop.

Koumas noted that faculty, staff, student and alumni survey and focus group feedback yielded valuable information that guided the group throughout the process. "We learned that people love the look of Winthrop and its historic feel, and as an alumna and designer, I wholeheartedly agree. We obviously kept that in mind the entire time," said Koumas.

## Planning for the Future

Koumas and her team noted that Winthrop boasts great campus assets. "Many of the existing facilities just need some renovation to help them live up to their potential," she said.

Koumas also shared some key takeaways from the soon-to-be-finalized proposal: "One area of focus should definitely be a residence hall plan, which will in turn be a huge recruitment tool. Our proposal includes improving upon existing assets with renovations, addressing residence halls and then looking at constructing new academic

facilities long term when enrollment numbers determine that is the next step," shared Koumas, who was a resident advisor in Phelps Hall during her time as a student.

Throughout the year-long project, Koumas credits Winthrop's facilities team with making the process as smooth as possible. "The entire facilities team is passionate about Winthrop. They are constantly thinking about the campus and what improvements can be made. During my time with them, they were eager to implement high-impact and low-cost suggestions, like the installation of swings and hammock frames, to make an immediate impact on the campus," she said.

## Next Steps

With the planning stage of the project nearing completion, Koumas' team continues to add final touches to the report and create detailed 3D renderings. The finalized report will then be shared with Board of Trustees' members and the university's leadership team.

"This proposal is a roadmap for next steps. It provides a good plan of action for short- and long-term solutions," said Koumas. "I'm excited to know how Winthrop's future could look!"

Koumas noted that while the campus has undergone changes since her undergraduate days, one aspect hasn't changed. "Winthrop is just a fantastic place. I had a truly wonderful Winthrop experience as a student, and I have truly enjoyed my time working on this Campus Master Plan. Winthrop's physical campus may change over time, but it's core values and student-focused vision will always remain unchanged."

**Learn more about the Campus Master Plan process.**



# CLOSE SCHOLARS *in* COSTA RICAN CULTURE IMMERSE THEMSELVES **CULTURE**



Costa Rica's dedication to the environment astounded 13 group members on a recent Close Scholars' trip to the country.

Eleven scholars and two chaperones spent May 15-23 traveling in the heart of the Central American country to learn about its culture and food while enjoying the ecotourism and adventure for which Costa Rica is known.

Two outings – one interacting with young children at an orphanage in La Fortuna and the second lending a hand in a sustainability project at the Instituto Monteverde – reinforced the spirit of service that these students embrace at Winthrop with their participation in the Close Scholars program.

Rising senior Miguel Caldwell said the reforestation project proved to be a powerful experience. "In Costa Rica, the environment is so respected. Over the course of the trip, we learned a lot about the locals' relationship with nature, but the reforestation project allowed us to see this relationship in living color," said Caldwell, an elementary education major from Camden and the incoming Council of Student Leaders' chair.

Jewel Edwards '22 said she admired the Costa Ricans' dedication to preserving the environment

and their efforts to save wildlife. At the institute, she helped pack soil into tree bags to enable the saplings to survive and learned more about the important role trees play in the ecosystem. Edwards and a few others also toured a sloth rescue site, home to nine sloths that had been injured and could no longer live in the wild.

Shelia Burkhalter, vice president for student affairs who accompanied the scholars, said the group was collectively impressed with the true and abiding respect for nature and the planet they witnessed. "Costa Rica's pura vida (pure life) mantra is reflected in the use of nature for both food and medicine, the 98 percent of the country's energy coming from renewable sources, and the respect and concern for all things – including bugs – in the natural world," she said.

## Second Close Scholars' Exploration Trip

Traveling to a different country for a global experience as well as community service added a new component of the Close Scholars experience. The Springs Close Foundation established the Close Scholars program 20 years ago to provide scholarships to students while reinforcing the belief that leadership skills and social consciousness can be enhanced through participation in volunteer service.

The Global Close Scholars trip to Costa Rica marked the second Close Exploration trip funded by the Springsteen Foundation in service of philanthropist Anne Springs Close's vision of a global perspective for Close Scholars. The first group traveled to London, England, and Paris, France, in December 2019.

Organizers intended the Costa Rica trip to be a very different kind of experience, Burkhalter said, because it involved four cities within one country, centered on nature/sustainability, involved physical adventures and included community service, which is the foundation of the Close Scholars program.

The trip also allowed some scholars to push past their fears to spend immersive time in nature interacting with wildlife and conquering 13 zip lines and eight hanging bridges. Psychology major Nastajia Hamilton '22 wrote about conquering her fear of riding horses during what she described as an amazing two-hour experience through the mountains and valleys.

As an advisor to the group, Burkhalter was most impressed with the scholars. Several students had never flown and many had never left the country. "Yet, they leaned into all of the experiences with curiosity, positivity and openness," she said. "Everyone with whom they interacted found them to be friendly, nice, respectful and responsible."



## Students Reflect on Trip's Positive Impact

Chia Yang '22 said the trip made her more appreciative of her family's use of herbs for medicinal purposes. "I always thought it was fake or that they just made it up," said Yang, a business administration major. "As I grew older, I came to realize that sometimes nature is the best medicine."

A visit to the Jauri Tropical Farm in San Carlos resonated with her. "Listening to Costa Ricans' way of medicine truly reminds me of my family and makes me appreciate Mother Nature's medicine all the more," she wrote of her impressions.

Miguel Caldwell said the trip showed him that life can be simple and beautiful. "In my experience, as an American, the grander the better. However, in Costa Rica, everything was so simple yet so impactful. The people in Costa Rica understand that the relationship with our Earth is a two-way relationship. They give to the environment and treat the environment with care just as they expect from the environment."

**Learn more about the Close Scholars and the Global Close Scholars program.** To make a gift to these life-changing programs, please contact the Division of University Advancement at 803/323-2275 or toll-free 800/801-1083.



# ALUMNI HONOR MUSIC MENTOR at CARNEGIE HALL



James Kevin Gray '99

Sonja Sepulveda '74, '75

Rick Bean

Alumni who coordinated a June 25 tribute for Emeritus Professor of Music Bob Edgerton at New York City's Carnegie Hall called the event a celebration of different moments of time in his career.

During Edgerton's four decades at Winthrop, he influenced thousands of budding musicians.

Sonja Sepulveda '74, '75, loved that Edgerton attended the June performance and heard

firsthand the results of his years of mentoring. A former student and long-time conductor, she served as the guest conductor for the evening, guiding singers and musicians through five movements of a Jazz Mass, two choral arrangements by Edgerton, "Somewhere" from West Side Story and his version of the "Battle Hymn of the Republic."

"How often do you get to thank the person who helped make who you are as a professional?"

asked Sepulveda, who has served as the artistic director of the Palmetto Voices Spiritual Ensemble and as director of the Winston-Salem Youth Chorus, in addition to teaching chorus in colleges and leading choirs to perform around the country, in Europe, Canada and Mexico.

One aspect that made the performance special was that the composer of the Jazz Mass joined Edgerton in the audience.

James Kevin Gray '99, who collaborated with friend Rick Bean to write the piece, spoke of honoring his mentor, Edgerton. "I'm so glad that we as a team utilized this incredible performance as an opportunity to honor a man who has meant so much to so many," Gray said. "Truly, he is a monument to the best of what it means to be a professor at Winthrop."

Herbert Johnson '01, '13, was one of two soloists in the Jazz Mass movements, which featured a 120-member choir and a four-piece ensemble of musicians. He has performed at Carnegie Hall several times and each time has been overwhelmed with emotions.

"I experience a radiating feeling of honor, pride and humility all in one. To know that I am standing on the same stage that just about every famous musician has performed on is unexplainable! It's like I feel their presence and souls lingering in the atmosphere, and so it fuels my soul to make my performance even more meaningful," said Johnson, who is director of choral activities for Sumter High School and Morris College.

## Instilling a Love of Music into Students

Meanwhile, the number of Winthrop alumni who attended or were involved in the production, including alto sax soloist Jack Murray '95 who also played in the tribute, delighted Edgerton. "To see Winthrop talent performing on this prestigious stage was a golden moment for Winthrop. I also am so proud of Kevin Gray, whose Jazz Mass – a groundbreaking extended



musical work – achieved its national premiere at Carnegie Hall. It was Winthrop music week in N.Y.C.," said Edgerton, who stays active in choral activities while enjoying retirement.

For many Winthrop music students, Edgerton fanned a love of music and appreciation for different genres of music. Gray first met Edgerton in 1994 when Gray, a high school student from the small town of Westminster, visited Winthrop for S.C. All-State Chorus.

"I remember approaching him that weekend with a manuscript copy of a piece of music I was composing. Amid a very busy schedule, he took a few moments to peruse through it. This made quite an impression on me and was one of the main reasons that I chose to study at Winthrop," Gray said.

To this day, before Gray publishes a piece of music, Edgerton is one of the two people he sends proof copies to before sending it to his editor.

For Gray and so many others, Edgerton's mentoring continues.



A photograph of Claudia O'Steen in her studio. She is wearing a white sleeveless top, a chunky white necklace, and light blue jeans. Behind her is a corkboard with various papers and a pink tassel, and a rack of dark, textured fabric or paper samples.

# COMING UP ROSES *for* CLAUDIA O'STEEN

Claudia O'Steen's esteemed art career began in a garden.

O'Steen's grandfather grew roses of all different colors in his garden in Florence, Alabama. Her grandmother would cut a single stem, put it in a bud vase and set it on the kitchen table, where O'Steen would sit and draw the roses on plain white paper with a no. 5 pencil.

But she never felt the confidence and comfort to call herself an artist until she became a student at Watkins College of Art.

"I have been making art for as long as I can remember," said O'Steen, Winthrop's newest Outstanding Junior Professor and one of Art-Connect's most recent 'Artists to Watch.' "I was encouraged [at Watkins] to share my ideas and aesthetic interests with many of the teachers who helped expand my technical skill and develop my

artistic methodology. The first artwork that I consider to be the work that began my current trajectory was my undergraduate thesis installation."

In addition to her B.F.A. in studio arts from Watkins, O'Steen also holds an M.F.A. in digital + media from the Rhode Island School of Design and completed coursework in art history and design at the Cité Internationale Universitaire de Paris. She's also been awarded residencies at Rural Projects, The Wassaic Project, Montalvo Arts Center, The Arctic Circle, The National Centre for Contemporary Art and more.

She has exhibited stateside—the Atlanta Contemporary and INT'L Paperworks in North Dakota being some of the most recent—and internationally: the Bath Photography Festival in the United Kingdom; the Festival of Lights in Sweden; the Lacuna Festival in Spain; and the Salamanca Arts Centre in Australia, just to name a few.

## Attempting the Impossible

O'Steen enjoys exploring relationships in her work – between herself and the landscape; between time and measure; and how our experiences within those places warp and realign those relationships. With each exhibit, she indirectly asks the audience to "take on an active role," internally moving among O'Steen's understanding of a place, the research or history behind that places, and their understanding of it based on what they are overall experiencing in the exhibit.

"I develop tools to document my activities and my efforts at understanding the changing landscape, to isolate mistakes and record failures, and to reveal phenomena," she said. "Seeing, counting, and measuring are ways of understanding. Creating tools to record and quantify these measurements allow me to understand them in relation to myself."

For example, in one of her current collaborations, O'Steen studied the effects of climate change on Lake Superior and the Great Lakes System at the Keweenaw Observing Station. She and her collaborator, Aly Ogasian, created portable sculptures that also function as observational instruments, measuring wind, waves, visibility, water level and temperature.

"Growing up, I always wanted to be an artist or a paleontologist, which makes sense with my current art practice, because it involves a lot of fieldwork," she continued. "Because my work is often site-specific, projects usually unfold in phases."

Those phases: conducting research in her studio; visiting the site for in-depth fieldwork; returning to the studio to reflect on the relationship between the two; and experimenting with a variety of media and materials. The typical result? A unique integration of fieldwork, sculpture, digital media, drawing, video and performance, which O'Steen then takes back to the landscape – "a very cyclical process."

O'Steen does not fear failure in her artistic endeavors and sometimes even embraces it, often attempting things she knows to be impossible. She considers each experience as a step along the journey, like when she created analogue instruments to record tidal changes in Russia, knowing the data would reflect human error.

## Encouraging Experimentation

O'Steen joined the Winthrop community in 2018 and has developed courses emphasizing both digital media and interdisciplinary studies; worked across departments on projects strengthening different artistic expressions; and created a new concentration in expanded media.

With her aforementioned interest in relationships, she has a new one to explore: the symbiotic one between practicing art and studying art.

"In my practice and in my teaching, I move back and forth from analogue to digital and back again, and I encourage students to look outside the field of art for inspiration in their work," she said. "I also encourage a lot of experimentation. The goal with this is to get students to move fluidly between making and thinking, so that they begin to find analogy between their research and the things that they are making."







After the young Princess Amaya gets in trouble, she's grounded to Earth as punishment, but slowly loses all memories of Gemworld, her beloved home planet. But when Gemworld falls into danger, Amaya's old friend Topaz finds her and asks for help. Together with Amaya's best friend, Autumn, the trio return to Gemworld to save the day!

That's the plot for DC Comics' 2021 graphic novel "Amethyst: Princess of Gemworld," illustrated by **Asiah Fulmore '18**.

"It's a classic hero story of friendship, adventure and coming of age," said Fulmore, a visual communication design graduate. "When I got the script, I was super inspired by the friendships between the characters. It reminded me so much of all the old cartoons and anime I used to watch and how warm the relationships were between the characters. I wanted to recreate that."

While the Amethyst character and her friends made their first appearance in a 1983 comic, Fulmore's art showcases why representation matters. Black Entertainment Television recognized Fulmore as one of its "5 Black Women Illustrators Who You Should Know," pointing out how she "adds a wonderfully colorful palette to the graphic novel and comic book industry that would make any art lover excited to be in such a fantastical place."

"Representation is very important in the comics industry," Fulmore said. "It's historically a very white and male-dominated industry, so now that comics are having a comeback, it's important that they connect and work with BIPOC and LGBT+ communities. Kids and youths of all races and creeds should be able to see themselves and feel represented by the media they consume; it has such a beneficial effect on their confidence and sense of self."

“  
Representation is very important in  
the comics industry.  
”

- Asiah Fulmore

While she's always loved drawing, Fulmore, who currently calls Columbia home, never actually considered art as a career until her junior year of high school. When she toured Winthrop, she met with now-retired design faculty member G. David Brown. They talked for two hours, and by the end of her visit, she knew she wanted to be a Winthrop Eagle.

### Like a Family to Me

"The class sizes were super small, and Professor Brown was so cool and knowledgeable," she explained. "I knew I could get great one-on-one instruction and find a place for myself there. The Department of Design was like a family to me." She and her fellow illustrators and designers formed a bond, and she still considers them "some of the coolest, most creative" people she's ever known.

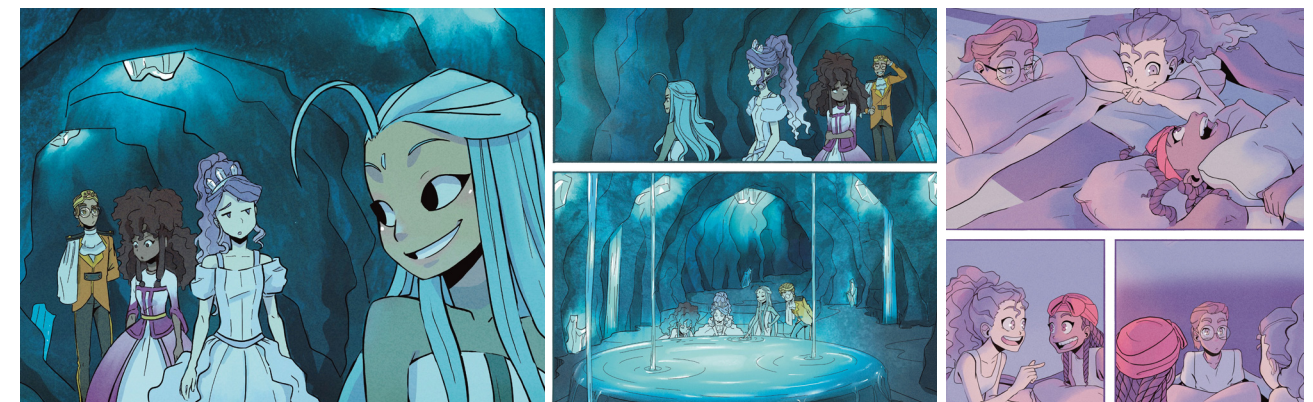
After graduation, Fulmore worked at a library and then joined the Society of Children's Book Writ-

ers and Illustrators (SCBWI). She began taking a master class at Benedict College with Sanford Greene, an accomplished comics illustrator and Eisner Award winner, and continued working with him. She also displayed her work at SCBWI's conference in Los Angeles.

Then, she got *the* call: her editor from DC Comics – the powerhouse behind Batman, Superman, Wonder Woman and other popular superheroes – reached out and asked if she would illustrate Amethyst.

"I feel really good about the response to it," she said. "I had the opportunity to visit some schools, and it was so nice to see the kids really connecting with the book. It gave me the warm fuzzies!" As for the future...Fulmore has already started work on a new, yet-to-be-announced comic.

"I'm working with a client for a pitch and some fun other children's books! As for DC Comics... who knows what the future holds?"





## Program Recognized as One of Top in Country for Preparing Future Math Elementary Teachers



The undergraduate elementary teacher preparation program has been named among the best in the nation when it comes to ensuring future elementary teachers have the essential content and skills they need to teach mathematics.

The National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) is a national research and policy organization that regularly evaluates the core requirements and practices of more than 1,100 programs that prepare future elementary teachers. In a recent report, Winthrop’s undergraduate program earned an A+ designation for its requirements in elementary mathematics. It is among only 79 programs in the nation and one of three in South Carolina to earn this distinction as an “exemplar” in the new report.

NCTQ evaluated programs for their coverage of both the key mathematics content that elementary teachers need as well as how to teach those concepts.

Winthrop stood apart by meeting 100 percent of the instructional goals across each of the elementary mathematics topic areas.

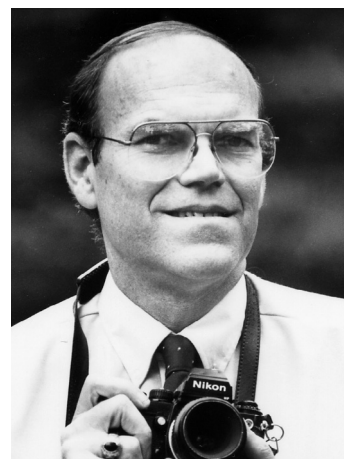
## Fall Exhibition to Honor Late Photographer Joel “Nick” Nichols

Anyone photographed by long-time Winthrop Photographer Joel “Nick” Nichols would have heard “Just one more.”

Nichols spent 46 years taking photographs of important events and daily life on campus and activities in the community. He passed away in December 2020.

He will be remembered with a photography exhibition, entitled “Just One More...’ Celebrating the Life and Work of Joel “Nick” Nichols,” that opens Sept. 16 in the Louise Pettus Archives and Special Collections. Several mini-exhibitions will be installed around campus and in Rock Hill that will showcase his work.

The exhibitions will remain up through Homecoming and Reunion celebrations in November. For more information, contact the archives, 803/323-2334.



## Andrew Besmer Named 2022-23 Thompson Scholar

Andrew Besmer, an associate professor of computer science, was recently announced as the university’s 2022-23 Thompson Scholar.

The monetary award, generated through the Robert and Norma Thompson Endowment, which was established during the university’s first capital campaign, supports work on projects that strengthen the academic, intellectual and co-curricular life of the university.

Besmer plans to use his time as the Thompson Scholar to restart the hack-a-thon computing competitions that he coordinated before the COVID pandemic started in 2020. He worked with several local companies to sponsor the contests involving Winthrop students, York Tech students, high school students and community members.

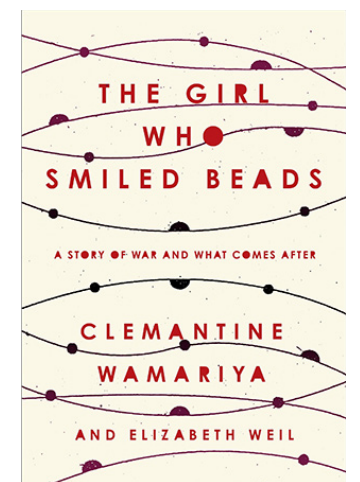
## 2022-23 Common Book Selected

“The Girl Who Smiled Beads,” by Clemantine Wamariya, has been selected as the university’s **2022-23 Common Book**.

A New York Times bestseller, the book shares the story of two sisters who fled the Rwandan massacre in 1994. The two migrated through seven African nations in search of safety while also enduring and escaping refugee camps and ultimately gaining asylum in the United States. The author’s experiences along this journey, including the piercing differences between her experiences and those of her older sister, are a moving and complex account of the atrocities of war, as well as the power of the human spirit.

The topics of diversity, cultural awareness, and global connectedness raised in the book remain as relevant as ever in society and continue to be themes that are important to Winthrop’s mission and overall learning goals.

Incoming freshmen and transfer students received the book during the summer and will participate in Common Book programming throughout the academic year.





## Alumna Honors a Family Tradition of Philanthropy

When Janet Lyman Heinhold '63 considered making a planned gift to Winthrop, she wanted to do so in memory of her aunt, the late Sara Claude Henderson Caston, whose own philanthropy impressed Janet at a young age.

Caston, affectionately known to family members as Aunt Claude, was valedictorian of her high school class, yet she never attended college. She chose instead to work and fund the education of her brothers, one of whom was Heinhold's father. Thankfully for Heinhold, her aunt's generosity didn't end there.

"When my mother died during my sophomore year at Winthrop, Aunt Claude became a surrogate mother to me," said Heinhold, "and she always valued education."

While Caston never obtained a college degree, her hard work earned her a distinction that made the entire family proud. After taking the helm at her father's optometry business in Columbia, Caston eventually became the first licensed female optician in South Carolina. Heinhold attributed this achievement to her aunt's passion and commitment as a lifelong learner, recalling fondly how Caston loved to travel and take on new challenges like studying Spanish when she was well into her late 80s.

Heinhold's Winthrop degree in elementary education was the foundation for a long and dedicated career of teaching until her retirement from the Aiken County School District in 2008. Her love for Winthrop and her aunt will be realized in the establishment of The Sara Claude Henderson Caston Endowed Fund. The fund will



Janet Lyman Heinhold, above, recently made a planned gift in memory of her aunt, the late Sara Claude Henderson Caston, left.

benefit senior education majors who demonstrate financial need with preference given to those who have participated in community service.

"I just thought establishing this scholarship would be a great way for me to help Winthrop and honor Aunt Claude for all she did for our family," said Heinhold.

Heinhold's decision to invest in the future with an estate gift is one of the many ways to make a profound impact at Winthrop. For more information on how you can make a difference, please visit the [Office of University Advancement website](#).

## Celebrating Generosity

After a long pause for in-person activities during the pandemic, advancement staff were happy to welcome donors back for two signature events this spring. Rhonda

Brockman Demumbreum '99 received the Jessie Williams Little Leading the Way Award at an April 21 dinner honoring outstanding mentor teachers from multiple school districts. Festivities continued on April 22 when approximately 150 donors and students gathered for the inaugural all-campus scholarships and endowments celebration luncheon. This event celebrated scholarship recipients from each academic college and served as a way to thank donors for their generous philanthropy to Winthrop.



Jessie Little '73, left, congratulated Rhonda Demumbreum '99, right, at the Leading the Way awards dinner.



Donors were able to meet their scholarship recipients at an April 22 luncheon.

### Thank You, Donors!

The 2022 Day of Giving, held April 26-27, raised nearly \$127,000 for a variety of scholarships, funds and initiatives. Thank you to everyone who contributed! Take a look at where these vital gifts were allocated:

WINTHROP FOUNTAIN RESTORATION FUND  
**\$60,656.33**



WINTHROP FUND  
**\$25,337.73**



GIFTS to OTHER SCHOLARSHIPS and FUNDS  
**\$22,717.00**



COLLEGE of BUSINESS DEAN'S EXCELLENCE FUND  
**\$6,256.94**



EAGLE CLUB  
**\$5,354.96**



COLLEGE of EDUCATION DEAN'S EXCELLENCE FUND  
**\$3,065.42**



COLLEGE of ARTS & SCIENCES DEAN'S EXCELLENCE FUND  
**\$2,071.60**



COLLEGE of VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS DEAN'S EXCELLENCE FUND  
**\$1,460.00**





## Legacy Families Celebrated



The Alumni Association celebrated its first cohort of graduating legacy students (above) at the May 6 Legacy Family Reception. Alumni Executive Board member Lisa Raye Hund '94, '94, '98 delivered remarks at the event. Sandra Daws '85, alumni executive board member at-large, and her daughters, Hannah McMillan Dutton '16, Leah McMillan '18, '20, and Kristen McMillan '20, '22, shared their legacy family story. Each student received a com-

memorative legacy token, and 55 legacy students walked across the Commencement stage on May 7.

Incoming freshman legacy students also were celebrated in June during Orientation at a special reception. Take a look at some of the fun photos (below) that our legacy students and their family members took to celebrate their legacy status

[Learn more about the growing Legacy Program.](#)



## Be a Part of Homecoming and Reunion Festivities!

Save the date for Homecoming and Reunion 2022, Nov. 11-12! Make plans to come home to Winthrop and celebrate. If your class year ends in '2 or '7 you are celebrating a milestone reunion this year. Homecoming and Reunion will have something for everyone, including virtual events and in-person activities. Visit the [Homecoming website](#) for details on Homecoming and Reunion events.



## Homecoming and Reunion T-shirt Design Winner Announced

The winner of the 2022 Homecoming T-shirt design contest is Adrienne Houston Bryson '16, '17! The Homecoming T-shirt will be available for purchase Aug. 1-Oct. 10 via the Alumni Association website so that alumni can wear the shirts on campus during Homecoming and Reunion events, Nov. 7-12. Homecoming T-shirts purchased after Oct. 10 will be received after Homecoming and Reunion Weekend. Check the [Homecoming website](#) and the Alumni Association social media accounts for the link to purchase.



## Fountain Restoration Project Nearing Goal

As of June, \$384,847 of the needed \$500,000 has been raised in support of the Fountain Restoration Project. Based on the funds raised to date, Winthrop has begun the initial steps of the design process and the restoration process is slated to begin in November pending state approvals. To view new updated renderings of the project, make a gift to the project or learn more, please visit the [Fountain Restoration website](#).



## 1971

South Carolina Governor Henry McMaster presented **Stephen Penland** of York with the Order of the Palmetto, the state's highest civilian honor, for his contributions in the development and promotion of the state's Christmas tree industry.

## 2001

**April Lee Singleton** was named Teacher of the Year at Midland Elementary School in Galivants Ferry.

## 2004

**Lolita Rowe** has been named assistant university archivist for outreach and engagement at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill.

## 2005

**Ryan Hvitlök** is the community and economic development director for the city of Moline, Illinois.

**Christy Matkovich** was named principal at Springfield Middle School in Fort Mill.

## 2010

**Rick Langdale Jr.** has been named the new band director at Clover High School.

## 2012

**Allysha Ramcharan** of Columbia is the assistant principal at White Knoll High School.

## 2016

**Shayna Foxworth** of Rock Hill received a Master of Liberal Arts with a concentration in political and civic engagement from Winthrop.

**Darleen Romenick** of Fort Mill is the principal at Riverview Elementary School.

## 2017

**Drew Alewine** completed his first season as assistant coach for Carolina University's women's and men's volleyball teams in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

**Holly Morgan** of Monroe, North Carolina, joined the Washington Daily News as a general assignment reporter.

## 2018

**Jennie Montgomery** of Greenville has joined gaming app company Skills Gap as its people engagement and experience manager.

## Let Us Hear from You!

Do you have a new job, were recently married, welcomed a baby or experienced another life-changing event that you would like to share with the Winthrop family?

If so, please let us know by submitting the alumni update form which can be found at [www.winthrop.edu/alumniupdate](http://www.winthrop.edu/alumniupdate).

# Thank You!

After more than two years of leading Winthrop as interim president, Dr. George Hynd and his wife, Alison, have officially re-entered retirement life, and we wish them the best!

Thank you for your selfless leadership during unprecedented times. Winthrop is certainly a better place for your having been here.

*Once an Eagle,  
Always an Eagle!*





## BIRTHS

Deon Omar Dash Sr. '05, a girl,  
Zuir Jemá Dash

Liisa Burk Doyle '09, a boy,  
Austin Doyle

Ameryliss Hicks Flowers '07,  
a girl, Nala Karnley

## IN MEMORIAM

## 1930s

Elizabeth Foreman Sims '39

## 1940s

Dorothy Bryant Sells '42

Martha Newton Gibson '43

Anne Humphreys Glassford '43

Frances Murphy West '43

Mary Bridges Lentz '44

Margaret Dawes Edwards '45

Betty McElveen Dixon '46

Vera Wilson Johnson '46

Rachel Quarles McCalla '46

Aleph Abernathy Woolfolk '46

Doris Miller Buist '47

Barbara (Bobbie) Feagle '47

Kathryn Moore Gaillard '48

Sarah Simons Thorndike '48

Mary Herrick Lucas '49

Margaret Thomson McCallum '49

## 1950s

Doris Ogburn Erkes '50

Billie Sue McCarty '50

Anna Jones Smith '50

Autumn (Patricia) Ballentine Frick '51

Jessie Clark Rast '52

Doris Altman Gasque '54

Edith McConnell Koon '54

Nancy Rushton Ayers '55

Nancy Carter Parks '56

Margaret Williams Blackford '59

Patricia (Patsy) Box Heaton '59

## 1960s

Josephine (Jody) Mayer Carlson '60

Lucia Blackmon Teague '60

Patricia Edwards Smith '61

Nancy Hudson Hawfield '62

Lulu (Barry) Gibson Webster '63

Patricia Jones Truett '65

Ann Funderburk Wages '65

Pamela (Pam) Hughes Cooper-Smuzynski '66

Frances (Carolyn) Patterson Rowland '66

Mayo Irene Walker '66

Rosemary Branyon Grant '67

## MARRIAGES

Jalitha Latish Moore '03 to  
Lawrence Jarrett

Bradie Lauren McKay '18 to  
Jacob Landon Lambeck '18

Patricia (Pat) Rambow Robertson '67

Frances Joyner Gorsuch '68

Katheryn (Kathy) Hooker Johnson '68

Diane Holden King '68

## 1970s

Linda Crocker Goings '70

Anna Suzette Knight '70

Marie Jackson Moore '70

Virginia Wienges Smith '70

Lillian Dyches Kmiecik '71

Faye Redfearn Thomas '72

Linda (Kay) Geddings Dunbar '73

Doris Ezell-Schmitz '73

Harriette (Ellen) Pridmore Green '73

Jerome (Jerry) Kyle Gunderson '73

Janice Stevenson Jones '73

Michael Sisk Paris '73

Margaret Jackson Bundy '75

Joe Lee Gordon '76

Betty Harden Hensley '76

Wilhelmenia B. Lawrence '76

Sheila Pawlyk Moran '77

Susan Whittier Vinson '77

Dannie Wade Bright '78

John McCully Lesslie Jr. '78

James Chalmers Grier III '79

## 1980s

Thomas W. Hullett Sr. '80

Mary Ann Starnes '81

Larry Russell Jenkins '88

Harold C. Brookshire II '89

## 1990s

Melissa Ward Hunter '91

Robert (Bob) James Paul '91

Bonnie Poston Putnam '95

Terry Dewayne Sims '97

Leslie Renee Watson '99

## 2000s

Farena Jessica Bradley '02

Evan Vaughn Adams '07



# LEAVE A LASTING LEGACY

Winthrop established The D.B. Johnson Society to honor Winthrop's founding president and his enduring legacy. The society comprises a loyal group of individuals who have included Winthrop in their estate plans. These alumni and friends support the university's vision for tomorrow through wills, trusts, annuities, life insurance or other planned gifts.

Every gift, regardless of size, makes a difference in the lives of generations to come. Please consider joining the D.B. Johnson Society and make quality public education for all part of your legacy.

Contact the Office of Planned Giving at 800/801-1083 or e-mail [giving@winthrop.edu](mailto:giving@winthrop.edu) to get started on your gift planning.

