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Mrs. Gale Nesius DiGiorgio, First Lady Emeritus

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Mrs. Gale Nesius DiGiorgio, First Lady Emeritus



Winthrop University First Lady Emeritus Gale DiGiorgio has often been introduced by her husband, President Emeritus Anthony DiGiorgio, over the years as “my partner in all things.”

That partnership was much in evidence on the Winthrop campus throughout 1989-2013, when Mrs. DiGiorgio, a former college Dean of Students in her own right, took on the honorary position of First Lady of Winthrop. From that role, she created an exemplary model of service to both the campus and the community.

A native of Kentucky, Mrs. DiGiorgio received her undergraduate degree from West Virginia University and a master’s degree in Guidance and Counseling from Ohio University. In addition, she completed advanced studies in Adult and Continuing Education at Rutgers University. For a cumulative 22 years, she worked in student affairs administration at Ohio University, Binghamton University, The College of New Jersey, and was Dean of Students at Arcadia University.

Upon moving to her adopted state of South Carolina when her husband was named Winthrop’s ninth president in 1989, Mrs. DiGiorgio immersed herself in civic and community affairs. She was invited to join the board of the Greater Rock Hill [United Way](#), eventually becoming the first female to serve as chair, and then the first local United Way campaign chair to raise \$1 million in an annual campaign.

It was that early experience with various United Way agencies in Rock Hill that Mrs. DiGiorgio credits with leading her to emphasize the well-being of children in later civic work.

"I had worked professionally with college students throughout my career, but this experience gave me the opportunity to understand in depth the obstacles that many families with children have to their even considering higher education," she says. Learning more about dropout issues led to learning more about teen moms, many of whom lack parenting skills. That led to exploring early child brain development and its impact on a child's potential for success in kindergarten and elementary school, she recalls.

Those experiences led Mrs. DiGiorgio to chair Communities in Schools (a national dropout prevention program in Rock Hill and Fort Mill,) as well work with Success by Six, the City of Rock Hill's Commission for Children and Youth, the York County Alliance for Children and the [Boys and Girls Club](#). In addition, she has volunteered annually as a tutor with the outreach ministries of [Oakland Avenue Presbyterian Church](#).

Another area of service for Mrs. DiGiorgio has been the Fine Arts Association and the [Arts Council of York County](#), which awarded her with its highest volunteer award, the Ben Ardrey Volunteer Award, in 2005.

At Winthrop, Mrs. DiGiorgio has been an occasional instructor to Winthrop undergraduate students and a dedicated mentor and role model for student affairs professional staff. Because of those accomplishments and life example, Winthrop's [Division of Student Life](#) created and annually awards the Gale N. DiGiorgio Woman of Achievement Award.

In 2012, the Winthrop [Board of Trustees](#) awarded Mrs. DiGiorgio an honorary doctoral degree in recognition of her many achievements and countless contributions to Winthrop University and Greater Rock Hill.

In April 2013, the Winthrop Board of Trustees honored her again by naming her First Lady Emeritus, effective July 1, 2013. The DiGiorgios make their home near Tucson, Arizona, following his retirement from the university in Spring 2017.

