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## Granddaughter of Winthrop's Organ Designer Donates His Collection of Memorabilia

Winthrop University

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# Granddaughter of Winthrop's Organ Designer Donates His Collection of Memorabilia

## Quick Facts

- Legendary Aeolian-Skinner tonal designer G. Donald Harrison designed Winthrop's organ from top to bottom. The organ bears his personal signature.
- Harrison's granddaughter, Frances Stroschio, recently presented Winthrop's Louise Pettus Archives and Special Collections with a collection of Harrison's organ-related papers.
- The collection will be on display Sunday, Feb. 14, following a 3 p.m. organ recital by Westminster Abbey organist James O'Donnell.



*D.B. Johnson Memorial Organ*

ROCK HILL, SOUTH CAROLINA – Winthrop University's famed **D.B. Johnson Memorial Organ**, an Aeolian-Skinner installed in 1955, has the special recognition of being the final organ completely designed and installed by legendary Aeolian-Skinner tonal designer G. Donald Harrison. Harrison designed the organ from top to bottom, and the organ, housed in Byrnes Auditorium, bears his personal signature.

Harrison's granddaughter, **Frances Stroschio**, recently presented Winthrop's **Louise Pettus Archives and Special Collections** with a collection of Harrison's organ-related papers, letters, promotional materials, articles, a listing of the organs built by the Skinner company and the Aeolian-Skinner company, recital and concert programs, and LP recordings of Harrison and Aeolian-Skinner organs.

The **Harrison collection gift** was the result of a chance meeting between organist **Murray Somerville**, husband of alumna **Hazel Bailes Somerville '69**, and Stroschio. Stroschio was attending an event as part of a conference that Somerville was attending. The two happened to have hotel rooms beside one another. They started talking, and that led to Stroschio commenting that she possessed Harrison's papers and materials. Somerville explained to her that it would be fitting for Winthrop to have the materials, given that **Winthrop's organ was the last complete design by Harrison**.

The collection will be on display Sunday, Feb. 14, following a 3 p.m. recital by **James O'Donnell**, world renowned organist and master of the choristers of **Westminster Abbey in London, England**.

The recital is made possible because of the Somervilles' generosity in establishing two funds - The Hazel and Murray Somerville Organ Performance Endowment and The Friends of D.B. Johnson Memorial Organ Performance Fund - that will provide programming support for the organ and create the Friends of the D.B. Johnson Memorial Organ Performance Fund Recital Series.

The establishment of these two funds will provide vital financial resources to secure some of the best musicians in the world to play on Winthrop's legendary organ.

For more information on the collection, please contact **Gina White**, director of archives, at 803/323-2210 or email [whitegp@winthrop.edu](mailto:whitegp@winthrop.edu). For more information on O'Donnell's recital, please contact the **Department of Music** at 803/323-2255, or [read more](#).

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