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Winthrop Women's Coalition Event to Shine Light on Local Civil Rights Contributions

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Contact Information

News & Events
 200 Tillman Hall
 Rock Hill, SC 29733, USA
 803/323-2236
 803/328-2855 (Fax)

Winthrop Women's Coalition Event to Shine Light on Local Civil Rights Contributions

March 18, 2019

HIGHLIGHTS

- The April 9 panel discussion will be held at 7 p.m. in Dina's Place in the DiGiorgio Campus Center.
- The event is part of Winthrop's Common Book programming.
- This year's Common Book, "Something Must Be Done About Prince Edward County: A Family, a Virginia Town, a Civil Rights Battle," deals with how a small Virginia town reacted when the Supreme Court decided in 1954 that having separate public schools for black and white students was unconstitutional.

ROCK HILL, SOUTH CAROLINA – A member of "The City Girls," an educator and activist who has an extensive knowledge of the local history of the civil rights movement, and the daughter of the "Martin Luther King Jr. of Rock Hill" will serve as panelists for an April 9 [Winthrop Women's Coalition](#) event entitled, "**Hidden Figures of The Civil Rights Movement: Segregation and Activism in Rock Hill**"

The event is part of Winthrop's Common Book programming. This year's **Common Book, "Something Must Be Done About Prince Edward County: A Family, a Virginia Town, a Civil Rights Battle,"** deals with how a small Virginia town reacted when the Supreme Court decided in 1954 that having separate public schools for black and white students was unconstitutional.

The three women will discuss the struggle to integrate schools and businesses in Rock Hill.

The April 9 panel discussion, which will be moderated by [Jennifer Disney](#), chair of [Winthrop's Department of Political Science](#) and faculty liaison to the coalition, will be held at 7 p.m. in Dina's Place in the DiGiorgio Campus Center. The event is free and open to the public.

Winthrop First Lady Laura Mahony, founder of the coalition that was launched in March 2017, said that she is proud to have these local women on campus to share their experiences, and the contributions of others who could not attend, to Rock Hill's civil rights movement. "The role of women and other hidden figures in the local civil rights movement is not often discussed. Each of our panelists is connected to the movement and will provide insight on how women and other unsung heroes fought for equal justice and through their efforts helped shape the history of the city that we call home."

Panelists are:

Phyllis Thompson Hyatt

Hyatt, a member of the City Girls, is a graduate of Emmett Scott High School, Friendship Jr. College and Benedict College. She and six other Rock Hill City Girls joined forces with other civil rights protesters, including the Friendship 9, in their quest for equal justice. On Jan. 31, 1961, the City Girls were present at the lunch counter sit-in that resulted in the arrest and incarceration of the Friendship 9. The only difference in their protest was that the women were not arrested because the county jail did not have adequate facilities for the women. Hyatt went on to teach for six years and also worked as a telecommunications engineer for 30 years. She is an active member of Foundation A.M.E. Zion Church. She also is a member of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority (Rock Hill Alumnae Chapter), Daughters of Elks, treasurer of the Friendship 9 Board, ambassador to the Pine Ridge Neighborhood Association and president of the Emmett Scott Class of 1960.

Gladys Feely Robinson

Robinson has significant knowledge of the local civil rights movement and will share stories of those contributors who cannot attend the event. She graduated from Emmett Scott High School, Johnson C. Smith University, the University of South Carolina, Winthrop University, where she received an educational specialist degree in 1981, and Nova Southeastern University, where she earned her Doctor of Education. She worked for the Rock Hill Housing Authority, Charleston County School District, Lancaster County School District, Friendship College, Winthrop and the Rock Hill School District. She has served in many roles, including chair of the African American Cultural Resource Advisory Committee for the city of Rock Hill, a member of the NAACP, the S.C. and National Educators Association, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority and the Freedom Walkway Nominations Committee. She played a pivotal role in the planning and construction of the African American Business District Monument and she currently chairs a major initiative to establish an African American Cultural Museum in Knowledge Park. She is the recipient of the 2016 MLK Dream Keepers Award and the 2018 B.E.L.L. Most Outstanding Community Impact Award.

Darnell Ivory

Ivory is the daughter of Rev. Cecil Ivory, a hidden figure of the civil rights movement who often was referred to as the "Martin Luther King Jr. of Rock Hill." Ivory was the pastor at Herman Presbyterian Church, local president of the NAACP, and leader, activist and trainer of non-violent disobedience during the struggle against segregation in Rock Hill. Ivory will share her father's contributions and his personal papers with attendees.

About the Winthrop Women's Coalition:

The Winthrop Women's Coalition was founded on the idea that women's strength is at its best when women work together and that a relationship with the institution is mutually beneficial: the institution fosters the individual to succeed and the individual helps to support the institution. In the coalition, one will find a connection to other women of diverse personal and professional backgrounds, and opportunities for personal and professional enrichment while helping to contribute to the university's mission and philanthropic needs.

To learn more about the coalition, please visit www.winthrop.edu/winthropwomenscoalition.

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