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Medal of Honor in the Arts Honors Five at April 1 Ceremony

Winthrop University

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Medal of Honor in the Arts Honors Five at April 1 Ceremony

Quick Facts

- During this ninth year for the awards, the university will honor: David Bancroft Johnson (posthumously), founder and first president of Winthrop; Joanne Lunt, emeritus professor of dance; Hazel and Murray Somerville, church musicians and music directors, and Alf Ward, emeritus professor of art and design.
- will be given a hand-crafted medal made by Ward in what is the most prestigious award granted by the College of Visual and Performing Arts.



D.B. Johnson

ROCK HILL, S.C. - Winthrop University's [Medal of Honor in the Arts](#) will celebrate the contributions of its founding president, two retired professors who contributed greatly to their fields of dance and design/silversmithing and a couple who devote themselves to music during a special evening on April 1.

During this ninth year for the awards, the university will honor: **David Bancroft Johnson** (posthumously), founder and first president of Winthrop; **Joanne Lunt**, emeritus professor of dance; **Hazel and Murray Somerville**, church musicians and music directors; and **Alf Ward**, emeritus professor of art and design. The ceremony is set for 8 p.m. in [Johnson Hall](#).



Joanne Lunt

Each will be given a hand-crafted medal made by **Ward** in what is the most prestigious award granted by the [College of Visual and Performing Arts](#). Previous recipients have represented a cross section of the arts.

In addition to performances by faculty and students, a **Medal of Honor scholarship** will be presented during the evening to **Michelle McMurray**, a sophomore dance performance major from Inverness, Fla.



Murray Somerville

Read more for the biographies on each of the recipients:

David Bancroft Johnson

David Bancroft Johnson, founder and first president of Winthrop, is recognized today as one of South Carolina's great educators.



Hazel Somerville

As the superintendent of the Columbia City Schools in South Carolina, he witnessed the chronic shortage of trained teachers and conceived the idea of a teacher training institution. He traveled to Boston to lobby Robert C. Winthrop, chairman of the Peabody Education Board, a philanthropic organization involved in upgrading Southern education, to contribute money to the school's founding.

Winthrop Training School for Teachers, named in honor of its benefactor, Robert C. Winthrop, opened its doors in 1886 with 19 students and one teacher. By 1895, the school moved to Rock Hill where Johnson put emphasis on the arts with a series of concerts, plays, readings, and lectures. On his travels to Europe, **Johnson** formulated ideas about educational practices and how the arts could be further incorporated into Winthrop life.



Alf Ward

Johnson, who served as Winthrop's president from 1886 until his death in 1928, never wavered in his belief in the importance of the arts for a well-rounded education. Twenty-two years after his death Johnson was chosen Educator of the Half Century by leading college and public school educators, newspaper editors, and prominent layman.

One of **Johnson's** lasting legacies was his commitment and support of an arts program and curriculum, which has manifested itself today in the form of the College of Visual and Performing Arts.

Joanne Lunt

Joanne Lunt joined the Winthrop faculty in 1974 as an associate professor and dance specialist in the Department of Health and Physical Education.

During her 26 years, she helped shape the university's dance program, focusing on dance curriculum, dance standards, licensure, teacher education and program accreditation both at Winthrop and in her professional affiliations.

When the School of Visual and Performing Arts was formed in the mid-1980s, dance joined theatre in the newly named Department of Theatre and Dance. **Lunt** pointed to the approval of the B.A. in dance degree with a dance certification specialization track at Winthrop as a highlight and the culmination of more than 20 years of steady growth in the dance program.

Lunt remained a professor of dance until her retirement in 2000. She called her time at Winthrop a journey that was stimulating and educational because of her active involvement on campus and with professional organizations. She served on and/or chaired every university-wide committee at Winthrop at least once.

Lunt contributed greatly to the South Carolina Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, the Southern District Association of the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, and in the National Dance Association/American Alliance of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, earning awards from several of the groups.

Murray and Hazel Somerville

Murray and Hazel Bailes Somerville have made music central to their lives.

Born in London, England, **Murray** is a church musician and artistic director of Music City Baroque, Nashville's professional ensemble for historically informed performance. His wife, Hazel '69, is a native of York, S.C., and serves on the faculty of Vanderbilt University as artistic director of the children's choruses at the Blair School of Music.

The couple met in New York City when studying at Union Theological Seminary. Both have known Winthrop organist David Lowry longer than they have known each other.

As a solo organist, choral and orchestral conductor, **Murray** has performed and recorded widely in the United States, Europe and Africa, including a 1974 recital appearance at Winthrop. As a church musician, he has served congregations in Connecticut, Florida, Tennessee and Harvard University in Massachusetts. Murray was named an Associate of the Royal School of Church Music for his contributions to sacred choral music.

Hazel directs close to 100 children in six choruses at Blair. Her groups have collaborated with the Nashville Symphony, Music City Baroque, and the Boston Camerata, among others, and have recorded for labels such as Decca, Naxos and Erato. Her choruses also have toured widely in Europe and the United States.

Hazel has run workshops and directed choir festivals for the Royal School of Church Music throughout this country. As a church musician, she has served churches in New England, Florida and the Carolinas.

In 2009, Hazel was one of the Winthrop alumni invited to perform during an organ recital commemorating the restoration of the D.B. Johnson Memorial Organ in Byrnes Auditorium.

Alf Ward

A native of Great Britain, Alf Ward has more than 40 years of higher education experience in institutions in the United Kingdom and the United States. His academic journey began when he was appointed professor of Art and Design at the University of London in 1966.

While there, **Ward** was instrumental in designing the Design Technology program for British schools, which became a major part of the high school system in England in 1984 – it has since been implemented in many countries around the world. **Ward** has served as head of the Department of Silversmithing, Jewelry at the Sir John Cass College of Art in London, taught at the University of Michigan and the Center for Creative Studies in Detroit, and became director of the Appalachian Center for Crafts in Tennessee in 1985.

In 1989, he joined the Winthrop faculty as chair of the Department of Art and Design.

As an internationally known designer, **Ward** served as consultant designer for Spink & Sons in London (by appointment to her Majesty the Queen), where he designed and produced presentation pieces for: the Royal Family, Revlon of Paris, the Royal Air Force and the United Arab Emirates, among others. In 2006, the Victoria and Albert Museum in London purchased a piece of his silversmithing for their permanent collection. During his tenure at Winthrop, **Ward** created the university's Mace and Medal of Honor in the Arts medallion, two of many elegant works designed by this outstanding artist and craftsman.

In 1998, **Ward** received Winthrop's Distinguished Professor of the Year Award. He retired from Winthrop in 2006 and was awarded emeritus status shortly thereafter. He continues to work as a studio artist, teach part-time for the Department of Fine Arts, work closely with Winthrop's M.F.A. students and as a program consultant for design technology.

Tickets for the **Medal of Honor ceremony** are \$25 per person or \$40 per couple.

For information about tickets, contact Amanda Stewart, Office of Development, at 803/323-2150.

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