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College of Visual and Performing Arts Recognizes Four at Medal of Honor

Winthrop University

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College of Visual and Performing Arts Recognizes Four at Medal of Honor

Quick Facts

- This is the eighth year for the awards ceremony, which is by invitation only.
- Each recipient will be given a hand-crafted medal made by former arts professor Alf Ward in what is the most prestigious award granted by the College of Visual and Performing Arts.



Joyce Hall

ROCK HILL, S.C. - Winthrop University will celebrate the contributions of a leading voice teacher in New York music circles, an international arts advocate, a long-time nature painter and an experienced dance teacher during a special evening on April 16.

The **Medal of Honor in the Arts** will honor this year's recipients: **Joyce Hall** of New York City, N.Y.; **Morenga Hunt** of Charlotte, N.C.; **Carl Blair** of Greenville, S.C.; and **Wrenn Cook** of Columbia, S.C.



Morenga Hunt

Each will be given a hand-crafted medal made by former arts professor Alf Ward in what is the most prestigious award granted by the **College of Visual and Performing Arts**. This is the eighth year for the awards ceremony, which is by invitation only. 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 **Jacci Deininger**, a senior theatre education major from Summerville, S.C.

Read more for the biographies on each of the recipients:



Carl Blair

Joyce Hall

Joyce Hall stands out for her many contributions as a professional singer and, at present, a leading teacher in New York music circles.

She holds a Bachelor of Science in Music cum laude with double majors in voice and music education from Winthrop College, a Master of Music Literature and a Performer's Certificate in Voice from the Eastman School of Music.

Her extensive singing career included leading roles in opera and musical theatre with companies across the United States as well as concerts and recitals. Music theatre students from her studio appear in virtually all Broadway casts and tours. The technical focus of her teaching for musical theatre students has been to adapt classical singing techniques to the styles of the contemporary American musical theatre.



Wrenn Cook

Currently an adjunct professor of voice in the musical theatre department of Marymount Manhattan College in New York City, **Hall** was the recipient of the 2007 Alumni Professional Achievement Award from Winthrop University.

A native of Rock Hill, **Hall** began nursery school at the MacFeat Nursery School on the campus of Winthrop at an early age. Her K-12 years were spent at Winthrop Training School where there were many opportunities to participate in performance and master seminars at Winthrop. **Hall** has remained active in the alumni organization as well as taught master classes in the Department of

Music.

Morenga Hunt

Morenga Hunt is known throughout the arts community as an educator, administrator and an international consultant to community-based organizations in the United States and Europe. His goal has been to ensure that the arts are not only valued now, but in the future by providing arts experiences for children at all grade levels.

He is a familiar face in York County because of the services and programs he provided during his role as vice president of education at the N.C. Blumenthal Performing Arts Center for 11 years through 2009. The programs he directed while at the Blumenthal Center received national recognition, awards, and support.

He advised the Arts Council of York County in the preliminary planning phase of its new Community Performance Center and is currently serving as a consultant with them on fund raising and community engagement. He also is serving as the S.C. Arts Commission's consultant for its statewide Arts Participation Projects.

Hunt has served on numerous non-profit boards, including Arts North Carolina. He has volunteered as advisor, committee member and sometimes mentor to various arts, education and non-profit organizations, including the Arts and Sciences Council in Charlotte. From 1990-97, **Hunt** was director of the Nia Cultural Center in Manchester, England, where he led and directed this middle-scale theatre in presenting culturally diverse performing arts.

The Ohio native holds a bachelor's and a master's degree from Ohio State University in English education and education administration. He also has been active in human rights, civil rights and social justice causes for nearly three decades.

Carl Blair

For 41 years, Carl Blair was professor of art at Bob Jones University in Greenville, S.C. Retired since 1998, he continues to paint and exhibit throughout the Southeast. He has encouraged the work of other artists as co-founder and president of Hampton III Gallery Ltd. in Taylors, S.C., one of the oldest and most established commercial galleries in the Palmetto State.

Blair's works, which use nature as his point of departure, have been included in exhibitions in more than 100 museums, galleries and universities and in numerous national and international collections. In 1995, the Greenville Museum hosted a major retrospective of his work over 40 years.

Blair contributed to the state's art appreciation as a commissioner of the S.C. Arts Commission from 1987-1996 and as chairman in 1994 and 1996. In 2005, Blair received the highest award for a South Carolina artist, the Elizabeth O'Neill Verner Lifetime Achievement Award.

Born in Atchison, Kan., **Blair** holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the University of Kansas and a Master of Fine Arts from the Kansas City Art Institute and School of Design.

Wrenn Cook

Wrenn Cook serves as program coordinator for dance at Columbia College and director of the South Carolina Center for Dance Education. Her teaching experience spans more than 30 years; she has taught dance in private studios and higher education settings since 1976, including 12 years in PreK-12 public schools.

Cook is a recipient of the South Carolina Dance Association's Dance Educator of the Year (1996), President's Service (2001), Advocacy (2003), and Honor (2007) awards. She has been active in the development of dance standards, curriculum, and assessment at the state level since 1989 and has presented at numerous state and national dance and education conferences. She has written and implemented more than 43 grant projects since 1990 for various arts education initiatives. She was awarded a Faculty Leadership Award in 2009 from Columbia College.

Cook holds a Bachelor of Arts in political science from the University of South Carolina and a Master of Education in divergent learning from Columbia College. She is currently a candidate for the Ph.D. in Social Foundations of Education at USC.

Three of the honorees will present master classes while on campus:

- **Cook**, roundtable discussion on issues in dance, gender and race with dance majors on Friday, April 16 at 2 p.m. in [Johnson Hall 205](#).
- **Hunt**, "Arts for Learning, Arts for Life," on Thursday, April 15, at 11 a.m. in Johnson Theatre. This session is open to the public and will offer a free cultural event for students.
- **Hall**, workshop for music majors on Friday, April 16, from 11 a.m.-12:15 p.m., [Conservatory of Music](#).

For more information, contact Amanda Woolwine, director of the Office of Special Projects, at

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