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## Winthrop Faculty Members Honored For Service and Dedication

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## Quick Facts

- Melford Wilson, professor of political science and director of the International Center, will be awarded the Distinguished Professor Award.
- The Outstanding Junior Professor Award will go to Ron Parks, an assistant professor of music, who has demonstrated a commitment to inspired teaching, creative scholarship and devoted service to students.



Melford Wilson

ROCK HILL, S.C. - The **two professors** selected for the top faculty awards this spring at **Winthrop University** have distinguished themselves in their departments through outstanding service and strong dedication to their students.

**Melford Wilson**, professor of political science and director of the International Center, will be awarded the **Distinguished Professor Award**. The **Outstanding Junior Professor Award** will go to **Ron Parks**, an assistant professor of music, who has demonstrated a commitment to inspired teaching, creative scholarship and devoted service to students.



Ron Parks

For their accomplishments, the two will be honored at the May 7 undergraduate commencement exercises at [Winthrop Coliseum](#).

**Wilson**, whose academic career has included serving as vice president for academic affairs and as chair of the Department of Political Science, has worked at the Rock Hill institution since 1967. His award, which is the highest award Winthrop can bestow upon a faculty member, is presented in honor of his exceptional skills in teaching, his significant research or creative effort, his high standing among professional colleagues, and his service to the university and community.

"This award means so much to me because Winthrop has a very special place in my heart, and Winthrop University is the Distinguished University!" Wilson said.

He holds a bachelor's degree in mathematics from Wofford College, a master's degree in Asian studies and a doctorate degree in international relations, both from American University. He served as department chair from 1970-75 and 1979-84 and director of the International Center from 1990-1996. He took over the International Center again in 2003 after he returned to teaching full time after seven years as vice president for academic affairs.

Wilson is the founder of the Model United Nations program at Winthrop and was a Fulbright professor at Shanghai International Studies University in China in 1985. He also has visited more than 45 countries.

Winthrop officials noted that few people have the breadth and knowledge about China that Wilson has. "Melford's most notable expertise is in the actual, work-a-day dealings of Chinese life. Whether in Shanghai or on the Silk Road, he understands Chinese culture in its many variations," noted **Debra Boyd**, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, in nominating Wilson.

Wilson is credited by political science department chair Karen Kedrowski for "bringing the world to Winthrop and Winthrop to the world." The center has helped bring a record number of foreign

students on campus, signed contracts with 14 institutions for Winthrop students to study abroad and has encouraged faculty exchanges.

Active in community affairs, Wilson was on the Rock Hill City Council from 1978-84. He has been on the city's planning commission, the zoning board of appeals and on the Rock Hill Economic Development Corporation from 1982-86, including two years as its chairman.

A more recent addition to the Winthrop faculty, **Parks** joined the university in 2002 and is assistant professor of music composition, technology, and theory, and director of the Winthrop Computer Music Labs.

"I am honored and flattered to receive this year's Outstanding Junior Professor Award at Winthrop. The level of teaching, scholarship, and creative activity demonstrated by the junior faculty at Winthrop is extraordinary. To have been selected from among such a talented and accomplished group for this honor is very gratifying," **Parks said**. "The support and encouragement I have received from my peers in the Department of Music, the College of Visual and Performing Arts, and the University has been exceptional. I am extremely grateful for the opportunities Winthrop has provided for me to continue my quest to improve my teaching and to pursue my creative endeavors."

**Parks** is one of eight composers from around the country selected for the **2004-05 Copland Award** which includes a composing residency at the Aaron Copland House. He is the first professor from Winthrop selected for the residency at the Copland House, which was home to one of America's most celebrated and influential musical figures. His selection flags him as a prominent emerging American composer in the contemporary music scene and will provide him with numerous opportunities to develop new contacts in New York and nationally to help promote his work, his students' careers, and Winthrop's work.

**Don Rogers**, chair of the Department of Music, said Parks has almost single-handedly created a state-of-the-art computer music laboratory since his arrival. He also organized and hosted the **Region IV Conference of the Society of Composers** in the fall. "In a short time, Dr. Parks has become a major contributor to the positive academic and musical atmosphere of our department," Rogers said.

**Parks** earned a B.M. in music composition from the N.C. School of the Arts, an M.M. in composition from the University of Florida and a Ph.D. in composition from the University at Buffalo.

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