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Winthrop University

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English Professor John Bird Named New Bryant Professor

TOPEKA, SOUTHERN CAROLINA - Winthrop University has selected Professor John Bird as its Margaret M. Bryant Professor for the Department of English.

The selection was announced on Aug. 19 by Acting President Debra Boyd.

The Bryant professorship rewards outstanding teaching, scholarship and service to Winthrop and helps enrich the department through support of faculty. Created in 1997, the Margaret M. Bryant Professorship is given in memory of Winthrop’s first graduate to earn a Ph.D.

Boyd said Bird is an excellent choice because he excels in all areas of faculty life. He is a respected and gifted teacher, known for his use of innovative and creative techniques in the classroom. He also is a nationally-recognized scholar on Mark Twain. And he serves as the Faculty Conference Chair and the faculty representative to the Board of Trustees.

As the leader of the Teaching and Learning Center, Bird writes a weekly teaching reflection entitled "The Weekly Reader." Karen Kedrowski, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, noted: "I eagerly open his emails because I so enjoy his essays and find insightful advice that helps me be a better teacher and student mentor."

In addition, Bird is the author of “Mark Twain and Metaphor” (University of Missouri Press, 2007), as well as articles on Mark Twain, Henry David Thoreau and American humor.

This spring he was elected to a two-year term as president of the national Mark Twain Circle of America, which is the most important academic association of Twain scholars and enthusiasts. He is the founding editor of The Mark Twain Annual, the group’s academic journal published by Penn State University Press.

Bird received his Ph.D. from the University of Rochester and his master’s and bachelor’s degrees in English from Appalachian State University. He teaches courses in American literature, critical theory and critical thinking.

As the fourth recipient of the Margaret M. Bryant Professor of English Award, Bird will join fellow Winthrop faculty members Jane Smith, Gloria Jones and William Naufftus as Bryant professor awardees.

For more information, contact Judy Longshaw, news and media services manager, at 803/323-2404 or e-mail her at longshawj@winthrop.edu