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ROCK HILL, SOUTH CAROLINA – A long-time Rock Hill legislator and Winthrop University alumnus will share his story at Convocation.

The event, which is set for 3 p.m. on Aug. 25 in Byrnes Auditorium and held two hours before the university’s first class for the fall 2014 semester, serves as an official welcome to new freshmen and their induction into the Winthrop community of learners.

Keynote speaker Gary Simrill earned his B.S. in business from Winthrop in 1991 and was elected to the S.C. General Assembly the next year representing District 46.

Elected every term since then, the Republican legislator now serves as Assistant Majority Whip and is a member of the House Republican leadership. He is a senior member of the House Ways and Means Committee, where he chairs the Economic Development and Natural Resources Subcommittee.

Simrill has put his seniority to work for his alma mater in recent years by winning a series of six-figure one-time appropriations to assist in the upkeep of Winthrop’s historic buildings. He came to the university’s rescue after the Owens Hall fire in 2010 when he pushed for passage of legislation to have the academic building restored and back in service just nine months after fire and water devastated its interior.

Simrill is president and CEO of Carolina Motorworks in Rock Hill.

Acting President Debra Boyd will preside at the Convocation ceremony. New students will be welcomed to Rock Hill by Kathy Bigham ’73, chair of the Winthrop University Board of Trustees; Doug Echols ’77, mayor of Rock Hill; Ian Deas, chair of the Council of Student Leaders; and John Bird, faculty representative.

Immediately following the ceremony, Boyd and her husband, Warren, will lead students out of Byrnes and toward Tillman Hall in the traditional Blue Line procession.

The community picnic will follow on the lawn in front of Tillman Hall and Margaret Nance Hall at 4 p.m.

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