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Scholarships Honor Legacy of Long-time Macfeat Educator

Winthrop University

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Scholarships Honor Legacy of Long-time Macfeat Educator

Quick Facts

- Two scholarships have been established to honor Nancy Craig Thomas '41.
- Thomas served as head staff member at Macfeat Early Childhood Laboratory School for 25 years.
- Thomas attended Macfeat Early Childhood Laboratory School, Winthrop Training School and then Winthrop College.



Nancy Craig Thomas '41

ROCK HILL, SOUTH CAROLINA - After hearing **Nancy Craig Thomas '41** recount many wonderful memories throughout her 25 years as head staff member at **Macfeat Early Childhood Laboratory School**, her daughter decided to honor her life-long association with Winthrop University by establishing **two scholarships** – an annual restricted scholarship and an endowed scholarship - in her name.

"I wanted to honor Mother by giving other Winthrop students majoring in **early childhood education** additional means to continue their education," said daughter **Nancy Thomas Wofford '67**, an **art** and **education** major who lives in Greenville, South Carolina. "In a way we are also honoring the valuable legacy of Miss Minnie Macfeat, (Winthrop Class of 1888), who established her experimental laboratory school here at the Training School."

Thomas' personal association with Minnie Macfeat goes back to 1925 at age five when she and her sister attended Macfeat's experimental school. "I have fond memories of playing with the other children in the classroom at the Training School. Dr. (David Bancroft) Johnson would drop by each week to check on us," Thomas recounted. "One of the main reasons my parents moved to College Avenue was to be close to Winthrop's experimental kindergarten school."

Johnson, Winthrop's founder and first president, provided an opportunity for Miss Macfeat to study at the renowned Montessori School in Rome in 1912, and, upon her return, provided her with a place to establish a laboratory school modeled after Montessori's and to make her dream come true here in South Carolina.

Thomas, who still resides in Rock Hill, went on to graduate in 1937 from the Winthrop Training School and earned a degree in early childhood education and history from then Winthrop College in 1941. After years as a full-time kindergarten teacher in area churches, she was asked by Dorothy Forsyth to serve as head staff member for Macfeat Nursery, a position that brought her great joy until her retirement. She was also active throughout her career in the South Carolina Association for Children Under Six.

Her happiest memories teaching at Macfeat were when "the children came pouring in each morning through the front door." She noted that Macfeat "...was the perfect environment; it provided children with the right kind of stimulation and the right kind of rules."

"There are many teachers in our family, and Mother helped educate hundreds of Rock Hill children during their preschool years. **A scholarship is a great way to honor her, her love of teaching and love for her students,**" her daughter said.

Each scholarship will be awarded annually to a junior or senior early childhood education major who has at least a 3.0 GPA. First preference will be given to students from York, Lancaster, and Chester

Counties.

For more information, please contact **Monica Bennett**, director of communications, at 803/323-2236 or email bennettm@winthrop.edu.

[\[Back to Previous Page\]](#)

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