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Commencement Highlights Include Photography Major's Finish and Honorary Degrees

Winthrop University

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Commencement Highlights Include Photography Major's Finish and Honorary Degrees

Quick Facts

- Austin Harmon is one of more than 310 students receiving their undergraduate degrees on Saturday at 11 a.m. at the Winthrop Coliseum.
- President Anthony DiGiorgio also will present honorary degrees to S.C. State Senator Hugh Leatherman, R-Florence; Rock Hill Mayor Doug Echols and his wife, child advocate Sylvia Echols.



Austin Harmon

ROCK HILL, S.C. - Senior Austin Harmon ran around the halls of [McLaurin](#) as a young child while her father worked to help build the university's [graphic design program](#).

He is on her mind these days as she wraps up her Winthrop career. **Chas Harmon** passed away in 1993 of melanoma cancer, leaving behind a legacy during his five years that fellow professors and students remember today.



S.C. Sen. Hugh Leatherman

Austin Harmon is one of more than 310 students receiving their undergraduate degrees on Saturday at 11 a.m. at the [Winthrop Coliseum](#). [President Anthony DiGiorgio](#) also will present honorary degrees to S.C. State Senator Hugh Leatherman, R-Florence; Rock Hill Mayor Doug Echols and his wife, **child advocate Sylvia Echols**.

Harmon of Rock Hill treasures a booklet about her father given out during a 1994 exhibition of his art at the [Winthrop Galleries](#). There are sketches of his work and quotes from his wife, co-workers and students who remember a man of quiet confidence. They say he came to Winthrop when the design industry was constantly changing the evolution of desktop publishing, but instilled in his students a keen eye for design that computers can't replicate.



Mayor Doug Echols

In his two daughters, **Chas Harmon** instilled a love of the arts. **Austin Harmon** came to Winthrop seven years ago, left during that time to pursue an associate's degree in photography from [Greenville Technical College](#) and returned to get her bachelor's degree in commercial photography. She is first to say she wandered from major to major - painting, theatre, etc.



Sylvia Echols

Professors said she has blossomed in the last couple of years as she's discovered commercial photography, worked in video with an Atlanta internship, developed an appreciation for old cameras and participated in ham radio workshops. She counts among her supporters long-time fine arts professors - [David Stokes](#), [Phil Moody](#), [Marge Moody](#), [Paul Martyka](#), [Seymour Simmons](#), [Alf Ward](#), [Mike Goetz](#) and [Tom Stanley](#) - and newer Winthrop faculty/staff additions, [David Brown](#), [Andrea Manoni](#), Haney Howell and [Mark Hamilton](#).

She leaves with many skills and interests in several fields - photography, video and design. "I could be happy in any of them," Harmon said. Maybe she'll get a job in commercial photography, go to

graduate school at **Rochester Institute of Technology** or work in forensic photography.

It isn't clear at this point where she's headed, but **Austin Harmon** leaves with her father's implicit blessing and her professors' loving guidance.

Also on Saturday, Winthrop officials will honor:

* **Leatherman** for his unwavering commitment to preserving the state's fiscal reputation, providing leadership during the Great Recession with passage of the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act and his pragmatic approach to sound policy.

* **Doug Echols** for his vision for Rock Hill as an economic engine and sports center and his dedication to ensuring diversity among city offices, employees and boards and for providing strong mentorship to employees.

* **Sylvia Echols** for her tireless work in advocating for York County children and to reminding city residents to remember the effect on children's lives as policies are created.

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

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