



Fall 12-14-2005

English Professor Chosen as Recipient of Kinard Award

Winthrop University

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Winthrop University, "English Professor Chosen as Recipient of Kinard Award" (2005). *Winthrop News 2005*. 178.
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12/14/2005


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English Professor Chosen as Recipient of Kinard Award

Quick Facts

- Bird will be honored at the Dec. 17 undergraduate commencement exercises.
- He has taught 20 different courses and has shown creativity and thoughtfulness with curriculum innovations for the new General Education program.



John Bird

ROCK HILL, S.C. - Known as a gifted and imaginative teacher, **John Bird** has demonstrated his creativity and high standards in teaching a multitude of courses for the Department of English at Winthrop University. He is the recipient of this year's **James Pinckney Kinard and Lee Wicker Kinard Award for Excellence in Teaching**.

He will be honored at the Dec. 17 undergraduate commencement exercises with the university's Kinard award, which is based on dedication to teaching, reputation on campus for teaching, and reputation among students. The award was established in honor of former Winthrop president James Pinckney Kinard and his wife, Lee Wicker Kinard, in 1984 by their family.

"Receiving the Kinard Award is a huge honor. I immediately thought of the list of names of previous recipients," Bird said. "I'd like to thank my colleagues in my department and all across Winthrop, but especially my students, who give me the energy and the excitement to keep on trying to be the best teacher I can be."

Bird came to Winthrop as an associate professor of English in 1993 and was promoted to professor earlier this year. He has taught a total of 20 different courses at Winthrop and has shown creativity and thoughtfulness in helping with curriculum innovations for the new General Education program. University administrators praise him for his innovations in preparing new courses and for his love of teaching.

"Dr. Bird creates a classroom environment in which students want to do well because they don't want to disappoint him," wrote **Gloria Jones**, chair of the Department of English, in nominating Bird. "Somehow John establishes a collaborative learning atmosphere that is demanding, yet non-threatening."

He teaches courses in composition, critical thinking, American literature and critical theory. He also has taught topics of special interest such as environmental literature and his primary research topic, Mark Twain.

Bird currently is the editor for "**Mark Twain Annual**," which is housed in the **Department of English**. He also is particularly interested in criticism, theory and American literature and culture, especially 19th-century American literature.

In addition to serving on Academic Council and chairing the Graduate Faculty Assembly, Bird is president of the **American Humor Studies Association**. He has published various articles on Mark Twain, Henry David Thoreau and other 19th-century American writers and is completing a book, "Figuring Mark Twain: Mark Twain and Metaphor."

Prior to coming to Winthrop, **Bird** taught English for several years at Converse College where he earned the Kathryne Amelia Brown Teaching Award in 1992. He also was a visiting assistant

professor or graduate assistant at the Eastman School of Music, University of Wisconsin-Madison, University of Rochester and Appalachian University.

Bird earned his B.S. and M.A. from Appalachian State University. He has a Ph.D. from the University of Rochester.

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