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Jami Hodgins Selected as Inaugural Recipient of the Roddey, Johnson, Gladden, Meriwether Scholarship

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Jami Hodgins Selected as Inaugural Recipient of the Roddey, Johnson, Gladden, Meriwether Scholarship

Quick Facts

- Jami Hodgins, an English major from Florence, was selected as the inaugural recipient of the Roddey, Johnson, Gladden, Meriwether Scholarship.
- The scholarship is named for Cynthia Plair Roddey '67, Delores Johnson Hurt '68, Arnetta Gladden Mackey '67 and Sue Frances Meriwether Steed '67, who became the first African-American students to enroll at Winthrop.
- In total, 10 corporations and foundations, four Winthrop student organizations and 176 individuals made generous contributions to the scholarship.



Jami Hodgins

ROCK HILL, SOUTH CAROLINA – More than 50 years ago, Cynthia Plair Roddey '67, Delores Johnson Hurt '68, Arnetta Gladden Mackey '67 and Sue Frances Meriwether Steed '67 became the **first African-American students to enroll at Winthrop**. The recent endowment and awarding of the **Roddey, Johnson, Gladden, Meriwether Scholarship** commemorates their achievement as a **significant milestone in Winthrop's history**.

Established in 2014 to honor the 50th anniversary of Winthrop's integration in 1964, the **\$25,000 endowed fund** will provide Winthrop scholarships to South Carolina residents who have financial need, with first preference given to minority students.

Winthrop President Dan Mahony described the scholarship as a **meaningful tribute to a watershed moment in**



Fulfilling the Promise

Winthrop's history.

"The Roddey, Johnson, Gladden, Meriwether Scholarship is a **fitting honor for the trailblazing women who courageously and with quiet dignity integrated the university's campus**," said Mahony. "They paved the way for the **access and diversity that have become hallmarks of today's Winthrop experience**."

Jami Hodgins, an English major from Florence, was selected as the inaugural recipient of the Roddey, Johnson, Gladden, Meriwether Scholarship. "It is such an honor to be considered comparable in caliber to the fine women who came before me and paved the way for my ability to become an engaged student at Winthrop. This scholarship will afford me a generous amount of much needed assistance," said Hodgins, who, after graduation, hopes to work for a non-profit organization, serve others, and make a direct impact on the local and global community.

Several major gifts helped create the Roddey, Johnson, Gladden, Meriwether Scholarship, including a **leadership gift from the estate of Susan Ledford Rust**, a longtime math teacher at Myers Park

High School in Charlotte, North Carolina, and previous adjunct at Winthrop and more recently Clinton College (then Clinton Junior College). Winthrop's Greek organizations made impressive contributions as well, including a **\$2,500 gift from Winthrop's National Pan-Hellenic Council**. In total, **10 corporations and foundations, four Winthrop student organizations and 176 individuals made generous contributions to the scholarship.**

Caroline Rust Ward '97, daughter of Susan Ledford Rust, said that kicking off the fund-raising campaign for the Roddey, Johnson, Gladden, Meriwether Scholarship with a leadership gift from her mother's estate seemed like a natural choice.

"Teaching was what drove my mother as an individual. She believed that the way she could impact the world the most was through education," said Rust Ward, who noted that her mother also knew Roddey personally from her work as a math instructor at Clinton College.

At Winthrop, Roddey, Johnson, Gladden and Meriwether took paths suited to their own situations and individual talents.

Roddey was a married graduate of Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte who enrolled at Winthrop to pursue a library science degree. Johnson, a native of Columbia, was chosen by her high school guidance counselors and the NAACP Legal Defense Fund to apply to be the first undergraduate student on the Winthrop campus. She majored in French. Rock Hill resident Gladden, now deceased, soon followed Johnson, and the two lived together on campus. Mackey majored in biology. Meriwether, also a biology major, transferred to Winthrop from Tennessee Agricultural & Industrial State University (now Tennessee State University), and later became the first of all the students to earn a Winthrop degree.

For more information about the women, [watch a video entitled "Fulfilling the Promise"](#) that Winthrop produced for the integration anniversary.

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

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