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Eight Alumni to be Honored with Awards During Homecoming & Reunion Weekend

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Eight Alumni to be Honored with Awards During Homecoming & Reunion Weekend

Quick Facts

- This year's Alumni Award winners will be recognized during the Nov. 18 Alumni Awards luncheon at 11 a.m. in McBryde Hall.



Mary "Polly" Wylie Ford '48

ROCK HILL, SOUTH CAROLINA – Eight outstanding Winthrop alumni will be honored for their service and professional achievements as Winthrop University graduates during [2017 Homecoming & Reunion Weekend Nov. 17-18](#).

This year's Alumni Award winners will be recognized during the **Nov. 18 Alumni Awards luncheon** at 11 a.m. in McBryde Hall. The winners are listed below:

Mary "Polly" Wylie Ford '48, Mary Mildred Sullivan Award

Ford graduated from the Winthrop Training School, earned a Bachelor of Science degree in physical education at Winthrop, received a master's degree in education from the University of Virginia and her Ph.D. from the University of Iowa. Returning to Winthrop to teach in 1960, Ford became chair of the Department of Physical Education two years later. During her tenure until her retirement in 1992, the department successfully completed several rigorous accreditation processes and added a master's degree program. The department also oversaw its students' entrance and participation into competitive athletics in the 1960s until the Athletics Department was created in 1975. Upon her retirement, the Mary Wylie Ford Award for professional involvement was created by colleagues and former students. Honored by the physical education department in its first class as a Distinguished Alumna in 2000, Ford has a conference room named for her in the West Center. Ford served on Winthrop's Board of Trustees as the Alumni Association representative from 2002-06.



Larry Durham '80, '87

Larry Durham '80, '87, Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award

Durham, a U.S. Air Force veteran, earned a Bachelor of Science degree in business administration and an M.B.A., both from Winthrop. The owner of Larry Durham-State Farm Insurance in Lancaster, S.C., Durham has been an agent since 1989. He also has worked as a loan officer and assistant vice president at Bankers Trust and as director of Winthrop's Small Business Development Center. A former Winthrop Board of Trustees member and former board member of the S.C. Commission on Higher Education, Durham also has served on the



Cynthia Plair Roddey '67



Delores Johnson Hurt '68



Arnetta Gladden Mackey '67



Sue Francis Meriwether Steed '67



Jay Karen '96

College of Business Administration's Advisory Board and the Alumni Board. He received the Pinnacle Distinguished Alumni Award in 2011 from the College of Business Administration.

The Sullivan awards recognize alumni for selfless dedication of time, energy and talent in service to others.

Cynthia Plair Roddey '67; Delores Johnson Hurt '68; the late Arnetta Gladden Mackey '67; and Sue Frances Meriwether Steed '67, Alumni Distinguished Service Award

The Alumni Distinguished Service Award recognizes Winthrop alumni who significantly contribute to the quality of life in their community, the development of values and morals within others and who serve as outstanding citizens.

These four pioneering African-American women quietly integrated the Winthrop campus more than 50 years ago. They were honored in October 2014 during Winthrop's commemoration of the 50th anniversary of integration. The Roddey, Johnson, Gladden, Meriwether Endowed Scholarship fund was established to honor the women and their contributions to Winthrop.

Roddey was Winthrop's first African-American graduate student, and is widely acknowledged as the first African-American woman to enroll at the university. She came to Winthrop in the summer of 1964 with two bachelor's degrees from Johnson C. Smith University, where she worked as an assistant in the library. Roddey went on to earn her M.A.T. in library science at Winthrop in August 1967. She later earned a doctorate in ministry. She worked in education – every grade from kindergarten through college level – for 55 years, retiring in April 2017. Roddey's legacy lives on at her alma mater. A former advisor to the Xi Beta Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., she served previously on Winthrop's first Black Alumni Advisory Committee and has a scholarship that bears her name. The Roddey-McMillan Record, a monthly multicultural student newspaper, also carries her name.

Hurt graduated in 1968 as the first African-American undergraduate with honors. Her four-year stay was funded by the NAACP Legal Defense Fund. She was a marshal, vice-president of the school's Phi Kappa Phi National Honor Society and was named to Who's Who Among American Colleges and Universities, along with other honors. She continued her education by earning a M.S. from the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism in New York City. She is a civil rights, journalistic and entrepreneurial trailblazer with professional experience as a news reporter/anchor, non-profit administrator, business owner and educator. Hurt retired from Charlotte-Mecklenburg schools in 2012 and joined the League of Women Voters Charlotte Mecklenburg two years later. In 2016, she became, and continues as, president - only the second African American to lead the organization in its nearly 100-year history.

Mackey was one of the first African-American undergraduate students to enroll at Winthrop. She came to the campus as a 17-year-old graduate of Emmett Scott High School. Mackey finished her B.A. in biology in December 1967 and while a student, roomed with Delores Johnson Hurt '68. After graduation, Mackey gave 30 years of service and retired as a plant manager at Hoescht Celanese, also known as Celanese



Zainab Ghadiyali '09

Corporation, a Fortune 500 global technology and specialty materials company. She passed away in 2009.

Steed was the first African-American student to earn a degree at Winthrop in May 1967. She transferred to Winthrop in the fall of 1964 from Tennessee Agricultural & Industrial State University (now Tennessee State University). At Winthrop, she roomed with Delores Johnson Hurt '68 and the late Arnetta Gladden Mackey '67. She earned a M.A.T. degree in biology from The Citadel in 1975. A third generation teacher, Steed started in education as a Head Start program assistant teacher in Lancaster, S.C., in 1967. Later that year, she began her high school teaching career which spanned 39 years at Laing, Moultrie, and Wando high schools in the Mt. Pleasant area of Charleston County. Steed retired in 2006 and after stints as a substitute teacher, counselor and assistant site coordinator at an after school program, she retired again in June of 2017.

Jay Karen '96, Alumni Professional Achievement Award

The Alumni Professional Achievement Award recognizes significant contributions alumni have made to their fields while exemplifying high moral and professional ethics.

Karen holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Winthrop, a Master of Arts degree in American history from the College of Charleston and is a Certified Association Executive (CAE) by the American Society of Association Executives. Karen is the CEO of National Golf Course Owners Association, where he leads the trade association and its initiatives to support the success of the golf course business. Prior to that appointment, Karen was CEO of Select Registry, a portfolio of more than 300 premier boutique hotels, inns and B&Bs. He also has worked as president and CEO of the trade association representing owners of small, independent lodging businesses.

At Winthrop, Karen was a former member of the Alumni Executive Board, the Credentials Committee of the Alumni Executive Board, Annual Giving Advisory Council, Young Alumni Council member and Winthrop Alumni Admissions Volunteer.

Zainab Ghadiyali '09, Outstanding Young Alumni Award

The Outstanding Young Alumni Award goes to an alumni, age 35 or younger, whose service to the university, service to the community and professional achievements have reflected positively on all alumni and the university.

After earning her Bachelor of Science in chemistry at Winthrop, the Mumbai, India, native started to pursue a Ph.D. in health economics at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, then changed course after participating in – and winning – an on-campus hackathon competition hosted by Facebook. Ghadiyali switched to UWM's Industrial Engineering and Computer Science graduate programs. At Winthrop, Ghadiyali built business models to sustain public health initiatives in underserved areas of India and Peru, and traveled to Germany on a Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst, or German Academic Exchange Service, scholarship. She worked in Berlin at the largest university hospital in Europe and as a result of her research, published her findings in "Alternative Medicine" on how to deal with post-traumatic stress syndrome. Ghadiyali has since co-founded the award-winning non-profit wogrammer, which reaches more than two million people and is changing the way stories are told about women by highlighting the technical accomplishments of women in engineering. She currently works as a product manager for Airbnb in San Francisco, California. Ghadiyali was listed by Foreign Policy magazine among the Top 100 Global thinkers of 2015.

For more information about the ceremony or the 2017 Alumni Awards, contact the Office of Alumni Relations at 803/323-2145 or alumni@winthrop.edu.

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