



Fall 9-22-2005

## Winthrop Alumna Gives Generous Donation for Organ Restoration Fund

Winthrop University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.winthrop.edu/winthropnews2005>

---

### Recommended Citation

Winthrop University, "Winthrop Alumna Gives Generous Donation for Organ Restoration Fund" (2005). *Winthrop News 2005*. 204. <https://digitalcommons.winthrop.edu/winthropnews2005/204>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Winthrop News and Events Archive at Digital Commons @ Winthrop University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Winthrop News 2005 by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Winthrop University. For more information, please contact [bramed@winthrop.edu](mailto:bramed@winthrop.edu).



09/22/2005



All News

Archives

RSS News Feeds

Winthrop in the News

# Winthrop Alumna Gives Generous Donation for Organ Restoration Fund

## Quick Facts

- The gift from Hazel Bailes Somerville of the Class of 1969 comes in the midst of a restoration campaign during the organ's golden anniversary.
- Money from the campaign will be used to renovate the organ's pipe work, install a digital memory system, replace the leather components and rebuild the organ's console.

ROCK HILL, S.C. - A Winthrop University alumna and former music student recently donated **\$25,000** to help preserve the **D.B. Johnson Memorial Organ** in **Byrnes Auditorium**.

The gift from **Hazel Bailes Somerville '69** comes in the midst of a **restoration campaign** during the organ's golden anniversary.

**Somerville**, who is the artistic director of the Blair Children's Chorus at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tenn., recalls many memorable Winthrop experiences centered around the organ and the skillful teaching of **organist David Lowry**.

"I have always been a bit of a dreamer," said **Somerville**, a York, S.C., native who in her college days, yearned to travel. "I don't know if David Lowry knew that he was fueling that dream through organ class, but that is what happened."

She longed to listen to organs in Germany that had been played by J.S. Bach or to hear organs in France to see if "those big French pieces" were being performed properly on Winthrop's famed organ. Somerville succeeded in visiting many European organ venues.

"I was just as awed as I thought I would be," she said. "I also realized that these historic instruments were magnificent works of art that required the care of builders, players and patrons long after the original planners had died."

Her realizations prompted the gift, one of the largest contributions to the campaign to date. Somerville, who earned degrees from Winthrop and New York's Union Theological Seminary where she studied organ, voice and choral conducting, urges other Winthrop graduates and supporters to donate to the organ restoration campaign. **Rock Hill organist Shirley Fishburne '72 and '73 and former Board of Trustees chair and local attorney David White** are leading the effort to raise **\$400,000** for the restoration.

Music still plays a crucial role in Somerville's life. Under Somerville's direction, members of the six groups that make up the full Blair Children's Chorus have performed with the Nashville Symphony, at the Renaissance Center in Dickson, Tenn., in local schools and churches and in concerts at Blair School of Music. They also have toured in North Carolina, Florida and California.

**Somerville** moved to Nashville in 2003 from Boston where she was the artistic director of Youth pro Musica-The Greater Boston Youth Chorus. Appearances of her Boston choruses include three performances on nationwide television with the Boston Pops under the direction of Keith Lockhart; performances and recordings with the internationally known Boston Camerata under the direction of Joel Cohen; an appearance on National Public Radio's program "From the Top"; collaborations with

choral groups at Harvard University; and an appearance with the Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra under the direction of Isaiah Jackson.

The **D.B. Johnson Memorial Organ**, which is named after Winthrop's founding president, is widely regarded as one of the most valuable and historic organs in this part of the country. The Boston company that built it, the **Æolian-Skinner Organ Company**, constructed some of the finest mid-twentieth century instruments in the U.S. Winthrop's organ is one of the few in the country to have been adjusted by **G. Donald Harrison**, Æolian-Skinner's legendary president.

Money from the campaign will be used to **renovate the organ's pipe work, install a digital memory system, replace the leather components and rebuild the organ's console**. To date, the university has commitments of about \$170,000.

A series of concerts in South Carolina and Georgia have helped promote awareness of the organ campaign. A 50th anniversary concert is set for Nov. 4 at 7 p.m. in **Byrnes Auditorium**.

For more information, contact the **Office of Development** at 803/323-2150.

---

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

IN THE HEART OF THE CAROLINAS

|                                      |                                   |                                  |  |  |                                    |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|--|------------------------------------|
| <a href="#">A-Z Site Map</a>         | <a href="#">Board of Trustees</a> | <a href="#">Email</a>            | <a href="#">Finance &amp; Business</a> | <a href="#">Office of the President</a>    | <a href="#">Tuition &amp; Fees</a> |
| <a href="#">Accessibility</a>        | <a href="#">Calendars</a>         | <a href="#">Emergency/Safety</a> | <a href="#">Financial Aid</a>          | <a href="#">Online Learning (Graduate)</a> | <a href="#">Visit the Campus</a>   |
| <a href="#">Alumni &amp; Friends</a> | <a href="#">Directions</a>        | <a href="#">Employment</a>       | <a href="#">Library</a>                | <a href="#">Records &amp; Registration</a> | <a href="#">Visitors Center</a>    |
| <a href="#">Arts</a>                 | <a href="#">Directory</a>         | <a href="#">Family Programs</a>  | <a href="#">Majors &amp; More</a>      | <a href="#">Residence Life</a>             | <a href="#">Wingspan</a>           |