



Fall 11-1-2013

Long-Time Associate English Professor, Writer Passes Away

Winthrop University

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Recommended Citation

Winthrop University, "Long-Time Associate English Professor, Writer Passes Away" (2013). *Winthrop News 2013*. 221.

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Long-Time Associate English Professor, Writer Passes Away

Quick Facts

- Scott Ely joined the Winthrop faculty in 1987.
- An open house for faculty, staff, students and friends will be from 2-5 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 3, at 330 Marion Street in Rock Hill.



ROCK HILL, S.C. -- Celebrated novelist, writer and beloved Winthrop University Associate Professor of English Scott Ely passed away on Thursday, Oct. 31. He was 69 years old.

When The Charlotte Observer interviewed Ely in 2005 about one of his novels, he said "It's [writing] what I do. It's why I'm here."

In his illustrious writing career, Ely wrote hundreds of short stories and several novels. Calling upon his year as a soldier in Vietnam, Ely crafted the acclaimed sniper novel "**Starlight**." Other notable works include "**Pitbull**," "**A Song for Alice Loom**," "**Plumb's Bluff**," "**The Dream of the Red Road**," "**The Elephant Mountain**" and "**Eating Mississippi**," the latter of which prompted an invitation to read at the 12th Annual Delta Blues Symposium in Arkansas. He was the only novelist asked to do so. He also published multiple anthologies and had his own collections

of short stories published as books.

Born in Atlanta, Ga., and raised in Jackson, Miss., writing quickly became Ely's focus. He earned degrees from the University of Mississippi and a master's in fiction from the University of Arkansas, where he used "Starlight" as his thesis.

He joined Winthrop in 1987. He shared his life with his wife, poet Susan Ludvigson, a Professor Emerita of English at Winthrop, and two daughters. They split their time between Rock Hill and their home in France.

Ely received multiple awards during his career, including: an invitation to residency at Chateau de Lavigny in Switzerland; National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship; the Rockefeller Fellowship to Bellagio, Italy; and the Charles J. Finger Award in Fiction by the University of Arkansas Press. One of his short stories, "Lady of the Lake," was featured in an edition of the Best American Short Stories. His stories were featured in publications across the world, such as "The Antioch Review," "The Southern Review," "Shenandoah," "Gettysburg Review," "Kansas Quarterly" and "The Ohio Journal." His works received starred reviews in the New York Times, Publisher's Weekly, The Washington Post, Kirkus Reviews and Booklist.

“While at Winthrop, Scott’s own writing success both guided and inspired his students, particularly those pursuing a specialization in creative writing,” said former **English Department Chair and current Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Debra Boyd** in a message to the campus. “Please keep Scott’s family in your thoughts.”

“He’s taught generations of South Carolina students,” said **Department of English Chair Gregg Hecimovich**. “He was a consummate artist and very successful writer. He’s greatly missed.”

An open house for faculty, staff, students and friends of Ely will be from 2-5 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 3, at **330 Marion Street in Rock Hill**.

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