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Annual Christmas Tree Lighting Blends Old and New Traditions

Winthrop University

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Quick Facts

- The tree lighting will be Friday, Dec. 4, at 6 p.m. on the Tillman Lawn.
- Candy canes, cookies, cocoa and cider will be served.
- This tradition began in the late 1800s.



ROCK HILL, SOUTH CAROLINA — In 2010, the Trees S.C. organization designated the Southern magnolia on the Tillman Hall lawn as one of its Heritage Trees, which honors trees that “evoke great community spirit.”

The beloved magnolia will certainly evoke community spirit once more when it takes center stage at the **Winthrop University Christmas Tree Lighting** on Friday, Dec. 4.

Beginning at 6 p.m., students, faculty, staff and the surrounding community will watch a dazzling performance by the **Winthrop RockHettes**, hear spirited carols from **Vision of Prayze** and count down as **President Dan Mahony and his family** officially light the Christmas tree. Cider, cocoa, cookies and candy canes will be served. All are invited.

People who have enjoyed the Christmas tree lighting in the past will notice the magnolia shines brighter than ever. New LED lights were installed in 2014, retiring the previous lights that had been in use for 50 years.

“The new lights are a reminder of the holiday season and the cheer that spreads from Winthrop to the surrounding community,” said **Brittany Phillips**, campus relations coordinator. “We are excited to continue to share this Winthrop tradition.”

What’s not changed: how the tree stands as a symbol of hope and tradition on Winthrop’s beautiful campus.

Hosted by the Student Alumni Council, the annual Christmas tree lighting serves as the official kick-off for the **city of Rock Hill's ChristmasVille event** and signals the start of the Christmas parade. The tradition began in the late 1800s, when students, faculty and staff would gather in the Tillman lobby to decorate a small tree. In 1935, they began to decorate the magnolia on the lawn.

For more information, contact Brittany Phillips at phillipsb@winthrop.edu or 803/323-2145.

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