

A woman with dark hair, wearing a pink dress and a white sash that says "South Carolina", is speaking into a microphone. She is looking slightly to the right of the camera. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Est. 1986

# THE RMR

RODDEY MCMILLAN RECORD

## Leaving a Legacy

previous Editor-in-Chief of the Roddey McMillan Record, recently competed America competition in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

A Commentary on Kevin Sheppard advocated for changes to the culture and administration surrounding Title IX

**10, 07, 2022**

# THE INSPIRATION

Rev. Cynthia Plair-Roddey, a 1967 Winthrop graduate, is a trailblazer for change. She was the first Black student to enroll at Winthrop 10 years after the Supreme Court ended segregation in public schools with their *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. Nine of her friends attended Winthrop alongside her. She was accepted to Winthrop College in the summer of 1964, where she earned a Master of Arts in teaching library science after having graduated from John C. Smith—an HBCU—with two bachelor's degrees. Roddey worked in education for 55 years before she retired in 2017.



The Roddey McMillan Record (RMR) is named after both Roddey and Sheila McMillan, which is one of the many honors that the publication has received since its inception. McMillan was the first Black woman to sit on the Board of Trustees in 1975. Before coming to Winthrop, she was one of the first Black students to integrate into the University of North Carolina and the first Black Senate attorney with the South Carolina Legislature after she earned her doctorates in law from the University of South Carolina. Both of the magazine's namesakes have broken glass ceilings for Black women across the country. When the RMR was created by Gail Harris in 1986, she was inspired by these women to establish a safe space for minority students.

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The Winthrop University Digital Commons states that the purpose of the RMR is to

*“shine a light on the many diverse cultures at Winthrop, focusing on issues, concerns and happenings of those who represent the multicultural community on campus.”*

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# WINTHROP RANKS 18TH REGIONALLY

Winthrop University ranked #18 for U.S. News And Global Report's 2022-2023 Best Regional Colleges in the South list. Winthrop also ranked in various sub-categories, such as #6 in the Best Colleges for Veterans and #7 in Best Colleges for Undergraduate Teaching. U.S. News based the rankings on a variety of things like student outcomes, faculty resources, financial resources, and alumni giving. Winthrop ranked one spot lower than the previous year, and the University's overall rank has remained stagnant for the last three years.

Despite this, some students remain optimistic about the University's future.

"While the University's rank might not be going up, there is still a lot of growth and opportunities available in multiple programs. Winthrop is still a name that holds weight as a top school across the state. You will get a job especially for degrees in STEM, Visual and Performing arts, Mass Communication, Education and more," said Julius Demunn, a senior Integrated Marketing Communication major.

University officials are notably trying to revamp and rebrand a number of programs on campus in apparent hopes of being more competitive. With new leadership under President Serna and the end of the pandemic, the University is taking steps toward the upward mobility it seeks, including implementing a new Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) called 'Flight Ready' for the Fall 2022 semester. The plan seeks to promote career readiness for students post-graduation under the accrediting standards of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). The University appears to be on the other side of its identity crisis post pandemic.

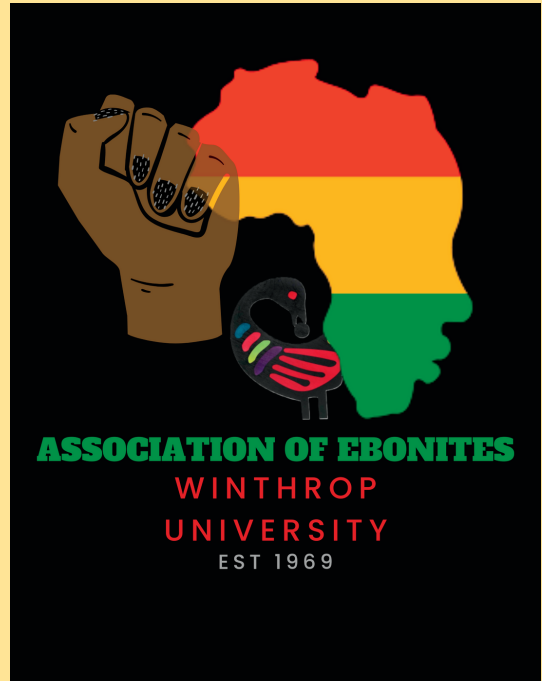


*Photo Via The Palmetto Report*

# The Winthrop University Association of Ebonites

## returned to campus last spring after several years of inactivity.

Founded in 1969, they are both the oldest and largest student-led organization that has been active on campus. Like The Roddey McMillan Record (RMR), it was built by minorities, with a mission to promote awareness of the Black community on campus through various educational and cultural avenues. Attorney Sheila McMillan, for whom this magazine is partially named after, was also intimately involved in the organization as their fourth president. She will appear at the organization's panel event later this month. The Association is listed on the Winthrop University website as being service and advocacy-oriented.



*Photos via Gwendolyn Glenn*

The name acts as an umbrella for several sub-organizations, including a contemporary Hip-Hop dance team, a praise dance team and a Gospel choir that all focus on performance. They also have a CORE event planning committee and generalized community service commitments. Some of their previous ambitions included working with Adopt-A-Highway, Winthrop Idol, and voter registration.

In addition to their relationship with African American Studies, they are also preparing to build connections with a number of other organizations run by people of color such as the NPHC. “I really just want to help in any way that I can to spread knowledge of Winthrop’s rich black history,” says Tae Burris, a sophomore business administration major new to the group.

The first event of the semester will be held on Oct. 11 from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. in Dina’s Place. It will be a discussion panel featuring Pat Brown, Sheila McMillan, and Adolphus Belk Jr.- the founding president of the Ebonites, the fourth president and the current Chair of the African American Studies Minor, respectively.

Students interested in joining are encouraged to contact Ky Abdur-Rahim or Jennifer Dixon McKnight.

# Abortion Rights in South Carolina

**Many courthouses around the nation, including the steps of the Supreme Court, erupted in protest in the wake of the *Dobbs v. Jackson* decision this summer.**

American women marched and chanted in opposition of what they alleged to be severe government intervention into private matters. Though the immediate aftermath was felt across the world- with Britain, France, and Germany's leaders publicly condemning the decision-, the long-term effects of this decision are only beginning to surface.

"I feel that if you are not a woman, and you are not in that particular woman's shoes you should not have the right to control whether or not she carries into the world a new life." said Ivy Grenage, a former Winthrop History Education major.

Grenage's sentiment is not unpopular in the Palmetto State. Republican Sen. Katrina Shealy stated to the 41 men in the South Carolina Senate that they would be better off "listening to their wives, daughters, mothers, granddaughters and looking at the faces of the girls in Sunday School classes at their churches."

She continued to condemn their rhetoric in an impassioned speech: "You want to believe that God is wanting you to push a bill through with no exceptions that kill mothers and ruins the lives of children — lets mothers bring home babies to bury them — then I think you're miscommunicating with God. Or maybe you aren't communicating with Him at all," Shealy said before senators added a proposal allowing abortions if a fetus cannot survive outside the womb.

Winthrop University's campus has had spirited debate on abortion access in South Carolina. The Johnsonian released an article in mid September with varying opinions on the failed near-total abortion ban passing through the Palmetto State's legislature.

One stakeholder in this debate that many feel were not adequately included was black and minority women.

Black women are 3.5 percent more likely to die because of pregnancy related issues according to a study conducted by the Population Reference Bureau Those causes of death include but are not limited to Postpartum Cardiomyopathy, Preeclampsia, and Eclampsia. These death rates also seem to be higher in black women. The Symptoms of Preeclampsia and Eclampsia include nausea and vomiting, high blood pressure, shortness of breath due to fluid in the lungs, and changes in vision including temporary loss of vision according to the Mayo Clinic. These symptoms can be detected early on in pregnancy before preeclampsia or eclampsia is diagnosed, which is usually around 20 weeks. Patients have the option to take low doses of aspirin in order to lower their blood pressure and they also have the option of an abortion.

In states like Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana and Texas though, abortions have been banned with no exemption for any circumstance. Preeclampsia and Eclampsia untreated can lead to death and severe health complications for the mother and the fetus.

Ectopic pregnancies are another condition that can create pregnancy complications. Ectopic pregnancies are pregnancies that take place outside of the uterus. The most common treatment for ectopic pregnancies is a medication called methotrexate which essentially eliminates the pregnancy and is still considered an abortion. States who have a complete ban on abortion or have no exception for ectopic pregnancies put women at risk of death because eliminating the pregnancy is the only way to cure an ectopic pregnancy.

# LEAVING A LEGACY



Photos via Tatianna Davis

Tatianna Davis, an alumnus of Winthrop and previous Editor-in-Chief of the Roddey McMillan Record, recently competed in the Ms. Wheelchair America competition in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

*“I want to break the stigma that people with disabilities cannot work,” Davis said. “We can only work if we are given the chance to, and I want to create more opportunities for us.”*

For the state competition, Davis had to submit an application and essay, interview and give her platform speech. Her platform as Ms. Wheelchair South Carolina is “YES WE CAN and YES WE WILL!”, with a focus on “enrolling people with disabilities into trade programs to help get them into the workforce” Davis said. To prepare for the national competition, Davis had to submit an application telling the judges about herself and her previous advocacy efforts. Additionally, she had to prepare a 2-minute

platform speech in front of judges. “The criteria of the speech included my platform, what I had done as a state title holder and what I will do as Ms. Wheelchair America,” Davis said. Davis was also required to participate in two mock job interviews that were scored by judges. “Aside from technical work, I had to prepare my outfits,” Davis said. “I definitely believe in the saying ‘when you look good, you feel good,’ so I definitely wanted to showcase my personality through my outfits every day.”

Each day of the national competition has included a day full of events such as workshops, judging sessions and getting to know the other state title holders. “Friday night was speech night, and I was excited to finally get dressed up and showcase everything I prepared for”, Davis said. “I spent the majority of the day rehearsing my speech over and over.” The following Saturday was crowning night for Ms. Wheelchair America where Davis was chosen to be a part of the top five and was prompted to answer two questions from the judges.

Tatianna Davis, an alumnus of Winthrop and previous Editor-in-Chief of the Roddey McMillan Record, recently “I was nervous for the results and grateful to be called in the top five and blessed to meet other women,” Davis said. At the end of the event Davis received 2nd runner up and the best speech award. “I felt the most accomplished I’ve ever felt,” Davis said. “I felt as though I had reached my purpose to reach many people with this platform. With this competition over, I’ve received many opportunities.



Now that the competition is over, Davis is planning to visit and collaborate with the other state title holders as many of their platform goals overlap. “In the future I plan to continue advocating for those who cannot advocate for themselves,” Davis said. “I plan to work with companies in the states of South Carolina to establish the first career fair hiring those specifically with disabilities.”

# Majors in Danger...?

## **Students and faculty are worried about the future of specific University departments and programs due to rumors regarding reduced funding from administration.**

The hiring process for new faculty at Winthrop is also a complicated process. The position has to be approved and the budget has to be checked to ensure that the University can hire someone new.

Although Winthrop has a reduced number of faculty, Judge explains that there are no current plans to cut back on any existing programs at Winthrop.

“We are actually talking about ways that we can add more interesting, exciting programs for students”, Judge said. “It may not mean eliminating a program, but it may mean talking about how we can better deliver, you know, that maybe we can combine a couple of programs to make it even more dynamic.”

Judge, President Serna and other administration members want to ensure that the students know that they are being honest and realistic.

“The University seems dedicated to restructuring in a way that is going to serve the students and best make use of resources,” Judge said. “I think getting that message out there will aid you all in rebuilding some of that lost trust between the students and the University.”

The Editor-in-Chief of the Roddey McMillan Record interviewed the Winthrop Provost, Dr. Peter Judge, to gain clarity on whether there is truth to these rumors circulating around campus on September 19, 2022.

When there are rumors concerning the status of programs on campus, students tend to gravitate toward their professors to find out if these rumors are true. Many students feel them to be their only line of communication on University decisions. Judge explains that faculty do not always know everything going on with these decisions.

“Students shouldn’t always take a musing by a faculty member [as fact]... sometimes they don’t have the right picture,” Judge said. “And we want to be transparent, we want to be honest, you know, we’re not hiding anything. Sometimes it just takes time to figure out what we’re going to do and then to communicate it.”

Judge explained that the budget reduction process is not something that happens quickly, but is relatively long and complicated.

“We have had to cut in some places, we have had to cut the numbers of courses offered because we have to sort of reduce our number of adjuncts,” Judge said, noting that though it was happening, it was not a “tremendous amount” by his measure. “We have also had a number of (full-time) professors who have resigned because they found other jobs. We are in the process of determining how many of those people we can replace.”





# CAMPUS LIFE

Photos By Ainsley McCarthy, Kimberly Boensch, and Blair Coleman



"These photos are taken to represent daily student life" -Blair C.

# A commentary on Kevin Sheppard

Since his appointment, Sheppard has strongly advocated for changes to the culture and administration surrounding Title IX at the University, including proposing the creation of a Title IX Student Ambassador program and his “Creating the Culture Shift” initiative.

Many have raised concerns regarding the previous handling of Title IX cases, complaints, and complainants, and the campus community was hopeful that the new coordinator would be able to influence this situation. Previous articles from The Johnsonian and The Roddey McMillan Record have expressed concerns and called for action to involve student voices in the Title IX process, and it appears that Sheppard has heeded this request.

“...One thing that I did talk about [during the hiring process] was having not just a town hall, but multiple town halls, multiple events and programs put in place where, again, the partnerships can be formed with the students and the student organizations. Because again, the students are what I would call the foot soldiers on the ground. They’re more in tune with what’s actually going on in the residence halls, what’s going on around campus and things of that nature,” said Sheppard in an interview with The Johnsonian following his appointment last November. Sheppard has spoken of numerous student-lead initiatives, but there has been delay in implementing them beyond the planning stages.

Sheppard held interest meetings for his new Student Ambassador program on September 19 and 20, 2022, discussing Title IX, what he planned for the Ambassadors to do for the community and for the Title IX office, and updates regarding his work since his appointment.



Title IX Coordinator and ADA Compliance Officer Kevin Sheppard Sr. began work on his proposed Title IX Student Ambassador program, to the relief of the concerned University community. Winthrop University welcomed Sheppard on November 1, 2021.

Despite his enthusiasm regarding his appointment, there have been periods of inaction from the new coordinator. Sheppard suffered an injury in April, resulting in several surgeries on his arm. This injury explains his absence from campus in Spring 2022 and the delay of proposed initiatives and programming. Students, faculty, and staff appear hesitantly optimistic that these programs and initiatives will create the momentum needed to change attitudes and the culture that has lingered at the University in recent years. Advocacy groups have expressed interest in this initiative and have begun to promote this opportunity for students to spearhead changes and influence the culture surrounding sexual assault and Title IX at Winthrop University. The momentum Sheppard desires appears achievable due to the availability of motivated students and staff who want to help create the changes he promised.

Survivors have been calling for action from the new coordinator since his appointment and it is crucial that there is accountability for the delay in addressing the extent of inappropriate and unprofessional conduct standards that have been set by previous incidents. While there is some understanding to be extended to the new coordinator due to his injury, Title IX is a vitally important federal law that protects students in a way that requires frequent and extensive communication with students, faculty, staff, and administration. The University must continue to have high standards and expectations for Sheppard, especially as he recovers and returns to campus.

This is the first issue of The Roddey McMillan Record for the 2022-2023 academic year. The publication, which is one of the oldest multicultural newspapers in the country, is now rebranded into a magazine.

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# EDITOR'S NOTE



When I became Editor-in-Chief of this publication, I knew it would require a great deal of time, patience and tenacity to lead this magazine and staff to its first issue. However, I also knew that I could not make that journey by myself. I want to take a moment to extend a special thanks to the faculty advisors, writers, colleagues and sources that made this transition possible. Your insight and skillset made this issue what it is, and it was a pleasure to collaborate with you. This publication was built by students who saw a need to platform minority perspectives, and I intend to continue that mission in the topics I delegate and the relationships I build. Thank you to everyone who continues to read.

I am a sophomore music major with a concentration in music technology. I am Principal Cellist on the Winthrop Symphony Orchestra, and the Community Service Chair of the Black Nerds Association (BLERD), aside from my position in Student Publications. You are welcome to send us messages via Instagram and Twitter, or to leave your thoughts in the suggestion box outside of the Student Publications office.

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**Ravyn Rhodes**  
Editor-in-Chief

**The Roddey  
McMillan  
Record**

OCT. 07, 2022

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