



## **2024 Mary Mildred Sullivan Award Mrs. Glenda Pittman Owens, Class of 1959**

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Each year, Winthrop recognizes an alumna for selfless dedication of time, energy and talent in service to Winthrop and others. The Mary Mildred Sullivan Award captures this high honor.

The 2024 recipient is Mrs. Glenda Pittman Owens, Class of 1959, a librarian, teacher and role model to all alumni who wish to demonstrate a lifelong commitment to public service.

Mrs. Owens came to Winthrop from her family's farm in Lancaster County where she grew up. A first-generation college graduate, she began her many years of volunteer leadership serving as president of Bancroft Hall during her junior year, graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in library science. After a brief career as a teacher and librarian, she became a full-time mother to raise her three children. Her husband, Jerry, is a graduate of Furman University and the Medical University of South Carolina. After serving on the faculty of the Medical University for 10 years, he entered private practice in nephrology. During this time, Glenda Owens remained active in community and civic affairs, volunteering for many worthwhile causes.

Mrs. Owens embodies an alumna who earned a good education, followed a disciplined life of hard work, and has dedicated herself to community service, including giving back to her alma mater. She has served on the Alumni Executive Board (1991-2000; president 1997-1999), served as a cabinet member for the "A Lasting Achievement" campaign (1998-2003), worked as reunion gift chair for her class, as a leader in the Charleston Alumni Club and hosted several admitted student receptions in her home. Following a term on the Winthrop University Foundation Board (1996-2000), she was elected by the S.C. General Assembly in 2000 to a position on Winthrop's Board of Trustees. She served as board secretary and chair of the University Relations Committee from 2003-2006. In February 2009, Mrs. Owens was presented a resolution in her honor for her nine-year meritorious service on the Winthrop University Board of Trustees.

In 1999, she received the Alumni Distinguished Service Award from the Winthrop Alumni Association, which recognizes a dedicated alumna/us who supports the growth and development of Winthrop through their service to and/or support of programs and objectives established by the university, who significantly contributes to the quality of life in their community, the development of overall values and morals within others, and serves as an outstanding citizen in their own right.

Mrs. Owens said remaining active with Winthrop has been a natural extension of her education. Her Winthrop experience opened up a new world of challenges and opportunities as well as gave her the skills to become a productive citizen.

Mr. and Mrs. Owens are frequent visitors to campus to attend academic, sporting and entertainment events. As major donors, the pair contributed to the success of the "A Lasting Achievement" capital campaign and have been exemplary role models and loyal contributors to the Winthrop annual fund.



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In 2006, then-President Anthony DiGiorgio announced the naming of the Glenda Pittman and Charles Jerry Owens Hall. The \$6.5 million academic building broke ground in March 2006 and was opened in 2007. At that time, Owens Hall was unlike any other Winthrop facility, serving a number of students' academic needs under one roof. "My years of service at Winthrop have been a real joy. I feel very fortunate that I have had the time to serve and that Jerry and I have had the resources to give. Without an education, this would not have been possible," Mrs. Owens said at the time. "Half of the joy of having something is sharing it with others."

Mrs. Owens has been active in her community in Charleston, serving on the board of the South Carolina Medical Association Auxiliary; the Charleston County Medical Auxiliary, where she also served as president; president of the Riverland Terrace Garden Club and tutor with the Trident Literacy Association. In 2003, she was named State Volunteer of the Year by the National Kidney Foundation of South Carolina. She is an active member of Ashley River Baptist Church, having served as the youth division director, preschool division coordinator and on various committees.

Mrs. Owens resides in Charleston with her husband, Jerry. They have three children – Bevin, Derek and Allison – and four grandchildren – Claire, David, Samantha and Rachel.