

28 January 2025



Re: Dr. McNair's Legacy at Winthrop

Dear Colleagues,

Today is 39th anniversary of the Challenger explosion that killed Dr. Ronald E. McNair and his fellow astronauts. Again this year, representatives from Winthrop McNair will attend the Candlelight Vigil at Dr. McNair's Life History Center in his home town, Lake City, SC.

The undergraduate research and graduate degree achievements of our students and alumni honor Dr. McNair's trailblazing legacy. Since 2009, the U.S. Department of Education has funded Winthrop's Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement (TRiO) Program funding to support the doctoral pursuits of outstanding undergraduates from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Winthrop's McNair program now serves at least 30 undergraduates every year and at least two-thirds of each cohort are first generation college students from low-income families. Winthrop has served 210 McNair participants in all, including our most recent cohort of 30.

Here are a few bragging points about Winthrop's McNair program.

- 38 of our alumni have doctoral degrees.
- At least 115 of our alumni have earned at least one graduate or professional degree.
- 98% of participants are currently enrolled or persisted to earn their bachelor's degree.
- Our Scholars' faculty-mentored research projects have earned so many awards, I cannot give you an accurate count.

Winthrop McNair students and staff inspire me every day with their humility, breadth of knowledge, resilience, compassion, and principles. The expertise and support of their faculty mentors; discernment of the [Advisory Board](#); work of the McNair staff; and investment of President Serna, the Board of Trustees, our Provost, and the good folks in Finance & Business, Academic Affairs, HR, and the Foundation. Employees in very division of our campus contribute to the success of our program, especially staff in University College/OSS, Grants & Research, IT, Financial Aid, Records and Registration, Student Financial Services, Residence Life, Printing Services, Accounts Payable, and Institutional Effectiveness. You are probably reading this letter because of your work to support McNair. Thank you.

For more information about Winthrop's Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement (TRiO) Program, please check out our website (<https://www.winthrop.edu/mcnair/>). Learn more about Dr. McNair here: <https://youtu.be/C1BalnZZx9s>.

Thank you for all you do to support McNair Scholars, Mentors, and staff.
-Cheryl

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