

# THE JOHNSONIAN



Photo Courtesy to Winthrop University Students for Survivors

Students congregated on the campus green to protest the alleged mishandling of students sexual assault investigations.

## Students stage sit-in in response to university's mishandling of sexual assault investigations

A student organization, Winthrop University Students for Survivors, staged a sit-in on the campus

Bryn Smyth  
smythb@mytjnow.com

In response to Winthrop University mishandling sexual assault investigations, as written about in a story published by The Johnsonian on March 24, students staged a sit-in on the campus green on April 7.

The sit-in was planned by a new student-founded organization called Winthrop University Students for Survivors. The organization encouraged those in attendance to wear teal in order to show support for people who have endured sexual assault.

"We felt like Winthrop needed to do better and actions needed to come out of this, so with a group of my Delta Zeta sisters, we said, 'Something needs to come out of this. What are we going to do?' Then two of my sisters said, 'We heard good things about a sit-in,' and then we said, 'Okay, let's see how this goes,' and now there's a lot of people here, so it's great," said Rebecca Knockemus, one of the organization's leaders.

Multiple students in attendance participated in holding up signs that expressed their most urgent messages to university officials. Other students did not hold up signs but participated in chants that reiterated their purpose in attending and their opinions about the university's actions regarding sexual assault investigations.

Caleb Sample, a sophomore modern languages major, held a sign that said, "Winthrop employs sexual predators."

"I'm here because there is a faculty whom my tuition is paying the salary of, and I do not know who it is, and I do not know who to avoid in order not to get assaulted," said Ami Hughey, a freshman theater, technology and design major. "I am here because there is an evident lack of justice, and there is suppression of female voices, and women are not safe at Winthrop right now."

Hughey held a sign that said, "Winthrop sides with rapists."

Hughey was key in leading chants during the sit-in. Students echoed her in chanting sayings such as, "Hold them accountable," "Silence is not an option," "Don't protect your daughters. Educate your sons," and "My tuition is not for an abuser's salary."

Even though the sit-in was student-led, there were still some Winthrop faculty and staff who were seen supporting the cause.

"I'm just here to show support and pass out the ribbons, of course, and let everybody know that we do hear you, and we do care and that it does not just happen to students; it happens to everybody. And so it is

something that I think is important to shed light on, and I am glad y'all are doing it," said Amy Sharpe, executive assistant to the dean of students.

Multiple students in attendance chose to participate in order to stand in solidarity with people that they know who have endured sexual assault while at Winthrop.

"I came here because Winthrop has been kind of terrible about addressing students' concerns about sexual assault. I know people who have had issues with sexual assault on campus and brought it up to Winthrop, and nothing was done about it. ... I feel like people should be able to feel safe on campus," said Lyn Horton, a junior English major.

"One of my closest friends was sexually assaulted, and Winthrop said they couldn't do anything because it was female on female, so they just ignored her and told her to be quiet, so I am here for her," said Maloree Wheeler, a freshman early education major.

"I am here today because I provided the water bottles for everyone here and because this is really important," said Scooter Mistretta, a junior musical theatre major. "Winthrop is protecting people who have assaulted people, and Winthrop is actively still paying those assaulters, and that is awful. I also know somebody whose case has been personally mishandled to an egregious extent."

At the sit-in, students also shared their opinion of the online program, Not Anymore, which Winthrop requires students to take before the start of each school year. The program covers drugs and alcohol, stalking and sexual assault.

"I am sick of what Winthrop has been doing. They make us take this course, Not Anymore, so why are they making us take a course when they can't even do anything about someone who has been sexually abused on our campus? Then, as soon as we try to challenge it, they try to ignore us and say there is nothing they can do about it. Yes, there is. Why give us a course on this stuff if you are not going to do anything about what your course is trying to prevent," said a student who opted to not have their name revealed.

It was the intention of Winthrop Students for Survivors, in staging the sit-in, to gain the attention of Winthrop officials. At the April 9 Board of Trustees meeting, there was discussion centered around the sit-in.

"A hot topic with students has been Title IX. For those of you who are unaware, an article came out in The Johnsonian in the past couple of weeks, and it really brought up

▶ see [Protest](#) pg. 2

## BREAKING:

Shooting leaves five dead including former WU supervising physician and medical director



Dr. Robert Lesslie, his wife Barbara, pictured, and two of their grandchildren were victims of the shooting.

Anna Sharpe/The Johnsonian

## Shooting leaves six dead, including former WU supervising physician and medical director

Authorities were called around 4:45 p.m. on Wednesday to the Rock Hill home where the mass shooting occurred

Bryn Smyth  
smythb@mytjnow.com

\*Editor's Note: This story originally appeared on The Johnsonian's website at [mytjnow.com](#).\*

A shooting at a Rock Hill home Wednesday evening has left six dead. The victims included former Winthrop Supervising Physician and Medical Director Dr. Robert Lesslie, 70, along with his wife, Barbara, 69, and two of their grandchildren, 5 and 9, according to a press release from the York County Coroner's Office.

Authorities were contacted around 4:45 p.m. on Wednesday, April 7. Lesslie, his wife and two grandchildren were deceased upon authorities' arrival.

There were two other people, air conditioning technicians, working outside the home who died as a result of the shooting. According to the coroner's report, James Lewis, 38, died at the Lesslie home. Robert Shook, 38, sustained injuries from the shooting and was taken to Atrium Medical Center, where he died on Saturday evening, according to WBTV.

Lewis leaves behind three children to whom he was a single father. Shook leaves behind three children as well as his wife, according to WBTV.

Before the York County Sheriff's Office identified the suspect, locals were told "to remain in their homes and lock your doors during the search for the suspect," according to the York County Sheriff's Office Facebook page.

Authorities then found the suspect in a nearby home. The suspect was identified as former NFL player Phillip Adams. Adams killed himself early Thursday morning, according to The Charlotte Observer.

Rep. Ralph Norman, a friend of the Lesslie family, talked with WBTV on Thursday and stated that Adams was a former patient of Dr. Lesslie.

"He was treating him and stopped giving him medicine and that's what triggered the killings from what I understand," Norman said.

Adams's family suspects that his history of head

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## ◀ Shooting from front

injuries caused by football might have influenced his turn to violence. Lauren Adams, Adams's sister, told USA Today Sports. "His mental health degraded fast and terribly bad. There was unusual behavior."

"Adams's brain will be studied to determine whether he had chronic traumatic encephalopathy, or C.T.E., a degenerative brain disease associated with repeated hits to the head, according to Sabrina Gast, the coroner in York County," The New York Times reported Friday.

"It can take months to receive a diagnosis for the disease, which has been linked to mood disorders, memory problems, impulsive behavior and other issues, and has been found in hundreds of former football players."

According to WSOCTV.com, "Dr. Robert Lesslie was well-known in Rock Hill as a doctor, author, loving father and grandfather, and an active member of his church."

Lesslie and his wife had four children and eight grandchildren, according to his online biography.

"For more than 25 years, I worked in and directed several of the busiest ERs in the Charlotte, North Carolina area. I have also served as medical

director of the emergency department for almost fifteen years at Piedmont Medical Center. There, I taught and certified the hospital staff in basic and advanced life support," Lesslie wrote in his online biography.

Lesslie was also the supervising physician and medical director at Winthrop University for over 25 years, according to an email sent by Interim President George Hynd on Thursday morning.

"The Winthrop community is shocked and deeply saddened by the mass shooting yesterday involving four family members and two workers outside of Rock Hill," Hynd wrote. "Our thoughts and prayers are with the families of the victims. I am writing because Winthrop has a connection to this tragedy of which many of you are likely unaware.

"[Lesslie's] contributions to our community were wide ranging, and students, in particular, have long benefitted from referrals to his practice when additional care was needed beyond our scope. I personally will be forever grateful to him for the advice and counsel he provided to our COVID-19 response team as we opened the campus last fall to residential living and learning.

"We simply would not have been able to successfully open and provide on-site quarantine and isolation support if it were not for Dr. Lesslie."

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## ◀ Protest from front

some sort of tension on campus and a feeling of unrest," said Student Body President Brandon Jackson at the board meeting. "And students are still talking about it.

"Just this week, in fact, there was a peaceful protest outside of the campus center on the campus green from 5:30 to 7. ... It was simply students congregating together and standing up for what they believe in and using their freedom of speech to talk about events that were highlighted on campus."

# York County COVID-19 Data

To view more of our weekly COVID-19 data visit our website by scanning the QR code



## About The Johnsonian

The Johnsonian is the weekly student newspaper of Winthrop University.

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Our offices are located in suite 104 in the DiGiorgio Campus Center.  
Phone: (803) 323-3419  
Email: editors@mytjnow.com  
Online: mytjnow.com

### LETTER POLICY

Letters and feedback can be sent to editors@mytjnow.com or by mail at The Johnsonian, 104 Campus Center, Rock Hill, S.C. 29733. Comments submitted online at www.mytjnow.com may be printed as letters and may be shortened for space and edited for clarity. Please include

your name, major and year if you are a student; your name and title if you are a professor, or your name and profession if you are a member of the community. Letters, cartoons and columns reflect the opinion of the authors and are not necessarily the opinions of The Johnsonian Staff.

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## Faculty and student representatives address Board

CSL Chair Brandon Jackson and Faculty Representative Adolphus Belk brought up several community concerns with the Board of Trustees

**Chase Duncan**  
duncanc@mytjnow.com

Faculty Representative Adolphus Belk and Student Representative Brandon Jackson addressed the Board of Trustees at their April meeting with a report covering Winthrop community concerns.

The faculty and student reports followed summaries from various Board committees and covered concerns and feedback on various events since the last report. Belk opened his report by recognizing the passing of former and current Winthrop faculty members who had passed away since the last meeting, including former mass communications professor William Fisher, former music professor Bruce Thomson, and mathematics professor Danny Turner.

“Between them, they’ve made many wonderful contributions towards the university to help it advance it in the state and in the regions beyond it, and for their service we are

grateful,” Belk said. “They have certainly made Winthrop a better place.”

Belk also spoke on some of the actions taken by the Academic Council, including decisions to push the deadline to withdraw from classes to April 23 and the elimination of the requirement for students to compete required writing classes within the first 75 hours of their undergraduate experience because of difficulty enforcing the rule.

Belk announced that counseling professor Jennifer Jordan will replace him as faculty chair and faculty representative for the Board of Trustees beginning next academic year.

Belk brought forth faculty concerns on issues relating to the state ordered back-to-work protocol that requires all faculty members to return to campus. He said that some members of faculty are hesitant to return to campus due to the still-lurking presence of the pandemic, and asked that the Board

and Hynd assure the Winthrop community that safety is still the university’s top priority.

Belk also spoke on the surge of anti-Asian and Pacific Islander hate crimes and sentiment in the past year, and brought up recent experiences from faculty and staff members, including an incident where a professor was verbally harassed by a student and told to “go back to China.”

“Words matter. The tone that we set matters. And it’s important right now that Asian American and Pacific Islander faculty and staff be supported by their institution. A lot of conversation has already taken place by campus police and members of the Asian-American Pacific Islander faculty affinity group, and for my own part I will be introducing a resolution at the next faculty conference to express our support for them,” Belk said.

Jackson’s report on Council of Student Leaders decisions and student feedback

followed afterwards. Jackson began by addressing student feedback on advising and how it can be improved. He said that many students said they enjoyed connecting with their advisors on a more personal level, but felt they didn’t have enough time during the advising appointment to speak to them. He also said some students had issues where they asked academic questions that advisors couldn’t immediately answer, and suggested that advising could be improved by having professors direct students to other sources for important information.

Another issue Jackson addressed was student concerns over recent information regarding Title IX and sexual assaults on campus. Jackson said that there have been “tensions brought up on campus” and “feelings of unrest” that culminated in an unorganized group of students peacefully protesting on Campus Green earlier last week.

## Police Blotter

A roundup of crime on campus

**Sarah Hassler**  
staff writer

On March 31, the Reporting Officer (R/O) was conducting stationary speed limit enforcement at the intersection of Columbia Avenue and Winthrop Alumni Drive. The R/O observed a dark colored Nissan Rogue driving at 34 mph. The speed of the vehicle was verified utilizing the RADAR unit in patrol vehicle #52.

The R/O conducted a traffic stop on the Nissan Rogue at the intersection of Camden Avenue and Fairfield Avenue. The R/O made contact with the driver, who had no Winthrop affiliation, and informed the driver that he had been driving 14 mph over the speed limit on Winthrop Alumni Drive.

It was at this time that the driver informed the R/O that his driver’s license had been suspended two months ago. The R/O had Winthrop police dispatch enter the driver’s information into NCIC. Winthrop police dispatch was unable to verify whether his driver’s license was suspended.

Sgt. Reid informed the driver of this issue. The driver explained to Reid that he knew his driver’s license was suspended because he never went to the DMV to retake his driving exam.

The R/O issued the driver a warning for speeding and a traffic ticket for driving under suspension. The driver was able to contact his mother and she was able to pick up both him and the car.

On March 31, the Reporting Officer and Officer Rodgers were conducting vehicle maintenance at the 7-Eleven at 1001 Oakland Ave. Upon entering the store, the 7-Eleven store clerk stated that there was a suspicious vehicle that had been parked behind his vehicle for three hours, and he believed that the suspect was trying to steal his license plate.

The R/O and

Rodgers proceeded to make contact with the suspicious vehicle. Once contact was made, the R/O observed the suspect sleeping in the driver’s seat and some money on the front passenger seat and floorboard. Rodgers attempted to wake up the suspect, and after several attempts, he finally awoke.

Rodgers could immediately observe by the suspect’s slurred speech, dilated eyes and inability to speak coherently that the suspect was possibly under the influence of narcotics. Rodgers asked the suspect if he had taken any drugs. The suspect stated that he had taken a Xanax before arriving at the 7-Eleven gas station.

Rodgers asked the suspect if he would consent to a search of his person. The R/O and Rodgers detained the suspect by placing him in handcuffs, double locking them and checking for proper fit.

During the search, Rodgers discovered a clear box that contained a white powdery substance in the suspect’s right front pocket and a blue straw in the suspect’s left front pocket that also contained a white, powdery substance. The R/O identified the suspect as having no Winthrop affiliation and dispatch confirmed that the suspect’s license was suspended.

Rodgers observed a small bag of pills in the driver’s seat of the vehicle and began a probable cause search of the vehicle. Rodgers discovered a small bag of pills between the center console and the front passenger seat, along with multiple 10, 20 and 100 dollar bills scattered on the passenger seat and floorboard, totaling \$361. Rodgers also discovered a digital scale in the center console.

While continuing the search, Rodgers discovered a Rhode Island and

## Letter from the editors: University response to mishandled assault investigations excuses behavior and does little for survivors

The Johnsonian editorial board addresses Hynd’s response to mishandled assault allegations

**Savannah Scott**  
scottss@mytjnow.com

An email sent by Interim President George Hynd to the Winthrop community following the publication of an article detailing the university’s handling of sexual assault allegations was not an adequate response to an outraged student body.

This highly defensive email is practically a shrug of the shoulders towards students who brought forth their hurt and trauma in hopes their university would step up for them. This email is evidence that Winthrop officials did the bare minimum by only focusing on the ways in which officials acted in accordance with protocol.

There was no direction to the Office

**Anna Sharpe**  
sharpea@mytjnow.com

of Victim’s Assistance nor any mention of how a student should report assault. This was an attempt to justify behavior and brush off scrutiny from students. It did not address the unreleased climate survey from 2017 that identified 75 student participants who described instances of sexual assault that happened on campus.

Building a relationship of trust between the student body and the faculty and staff who are tasked with not only educating students, but nurturing future generations of the educated populace, should be a priority for Winthrop University.

The fact that Hynd’s email to the Winthrop community neglected

**Bryn Smyth**  
smythb@mytjnow.com

to even mention the names of the survivors, Phillips and Marindin, who willingly shared their stories with the Winthrop community in hopes of raising awareness and preventing future trauma for fellow eagles, demonstrates the school’s commitment to indifference and apathy towards the problems that Winthrop students face while being on campus.

How can students trust that the faculty and staff won’t ignore, manipulate or prey on them when previous incidents demonstrate a pattern of cynical skepticism and disbelief towards stories from abused students?

The story sparked

**Chase Duncan**  
duncanc@mytjnow.com

valid criticisms of a flawed investigation process that is not exclusive to Winthrop, and Phillips and Marindin are not the only students who have endured this faulty process. Winthrop officials should look at how they handle these allegations, and even if they are doing things ‘by the book,’ we should be asking: Is this enough?

Responses like these only discourage victims from coming forward. Such responses also perpetuate a toxic culture of silencing survivors. As a university that requires students to complete “Not Anymore,” Winthrop needs to make students who speak up about assault a priority.

▶ see [Police](#) pg. 4



Jamia Johnson/The Johnsonian

A \$2 trillion plan is being proposed by Biden to fix miles of roads and bridges in the United States.

# Biden proposes \$2 trillion infrastructure plan

*Biden's infrastructure plan targets cleaner energy, low-income housing and transportation*

Taylor Sallenger  
staff writer

President Joe Biden pitched his \$2 trillion infrastructure plan, calling it a “once-in-a-generation investment in America” in his remarks on March 31.

By raising corporate taxes, Biden wants to increase and revolutionize America's infrastructure by highlighting affordable housing, cleaner energy methods and railways, as well as creating millions of jobs for Americans.

Biden's hope is that providing incentives for certain companies to make electric vehicle batteries in the United States will lower the price of electric vehicles — and that will encourage more Americans to utilize electric vehicles since car pollution is one of the country's largest contributors to greenhouse gases.

In an action he calls the “Clean Electricity Standard,” Biden hopes to attain a clean energy grid that will

eventually halt the country's use of fossil fuels while promoting the use of zero-carbon energy sources.

“Any kind of economic activity or infrastructure change directed at climate change (like greater reliance on alternative energy) is going to take a long time to have an effect, so it's way too early to tell if there will be a lasting effect,” said Dr. John Holder, a professor in the Department of Political Science.

American railways may also see a big makeover as a result of this proposal. There are plans to add over 30 new routes to America's Amtrak system, in addition to adding more than 20 trips to existing Amtrak routes. These major adjustments could add daily trips in the Amtrak system to 15 states by 2035, allowing additional areas in the country to be connected by railroads.

While Biden's plan has the potential to benefit infrastructure, support for this bill

is lacking in many areas. Republicans are likely to vote against it if it is brought up in Congress due to its price tag, among other factors.

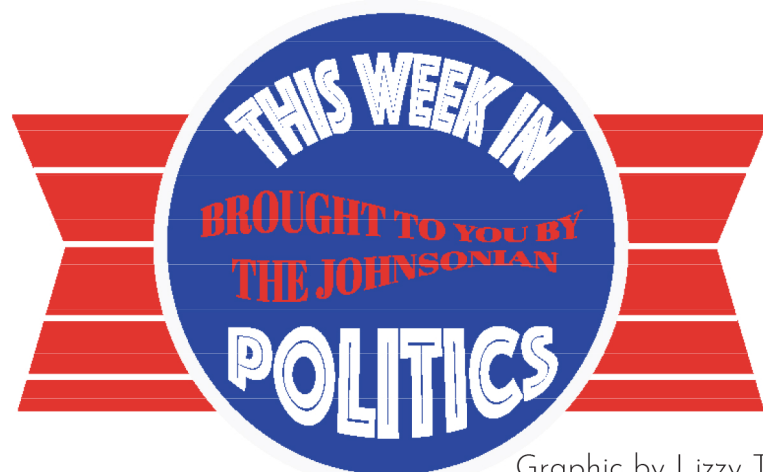
“I don't see this getting very much Republican support if any,” Holder said. “This bill has a very broad definition of ‘infrastructure,’ and there's pretty solid Republican opposition to spending that much.”

“To use the example of our congressman, Ralph Norman, he's opposed not only because of the price tag but because the bill involves ‘things in here that are simply not the federal government's job!’ (That's from a statement posted on his Facebook page).

The example he uses is funds to rehab and maintain privately owned buildings. I think most of his Republican colleagues agree with him.”

Winthrop University students are excited about a possible change in infrastructure in the country, though some worry about the possibility of Biden's plan not making it through Congress.

“I think if it is done right, it'll be a huge addition to the country. It's America, though, so I honestly do not think that his plan will go through as it benefits everyone and not just the upper classes,” said CJ Wiley, a sophomore business administration major.



Graphic by Lizzy Talbert

Other students are excited about the possibility of a much-needed transportation update throughout the country.

“I'm excited to see whether the Amtrak system will actually be updated. It's an important part of our country's transportation, so seeing it be extended and made better would be nice,” said Giselle Mesa, a freshman psychology major.

For something with as hefty of a price tag as this bill, it is questionable whether Biden's proposal will actually pass and whether the country's infrastructure will get its revolutionary makeover.

◀ Board from pg. 3

He said that the CSL has submitted a letter to university leadership and President George Hynd that summarizes the concerns of students as more students come into the school next academic year.

Finally, Jackson spoke on student concerns regarding the elimination of Common Time, which was previously allotted to students on Tuesday and Thursday late mornings to participate in culture events and experience extracurricular activities. Jackson said that many students wish to see it return in the future, and personally expressed support for it's return though he won't be at the school to experience it.

◀ Police from pg. 3

a Georgia license plate on the rear passenger side seat. Dispatch ran each license plate and advised that neither license plate had been stolen.

The R/O then read the suspect his Miranda rights from a card given to him by the SCCJA.

Rodgers requested the Rock Hill Police Department to assist with a test kit of the narcotics. Officer Thomas Marco (RHPD) and Sgt. Daniel Burkhart (RHPD) arrived on the scene to assist.

Because of the possibility of the substance being fentanyl, it was best determined by Rodgers and Burkhart that the substance should be sent to a lab for testing. Burkhart contacted the York County Multi-jurisdictional Drug Enforcement Unit (YCMDEU) to advise on the appropriate criminal charges that should be made.

The R/O requested for Interstate Towing & Fleet Services to tow the suspect's vehicle. The R/O filled out a tow slip of the suspect's vehicle, which included an inventory report as well. Marco stayed with the vehicle while the R/O and Rodgers transported the suspect to the Rock Hill City Jail.

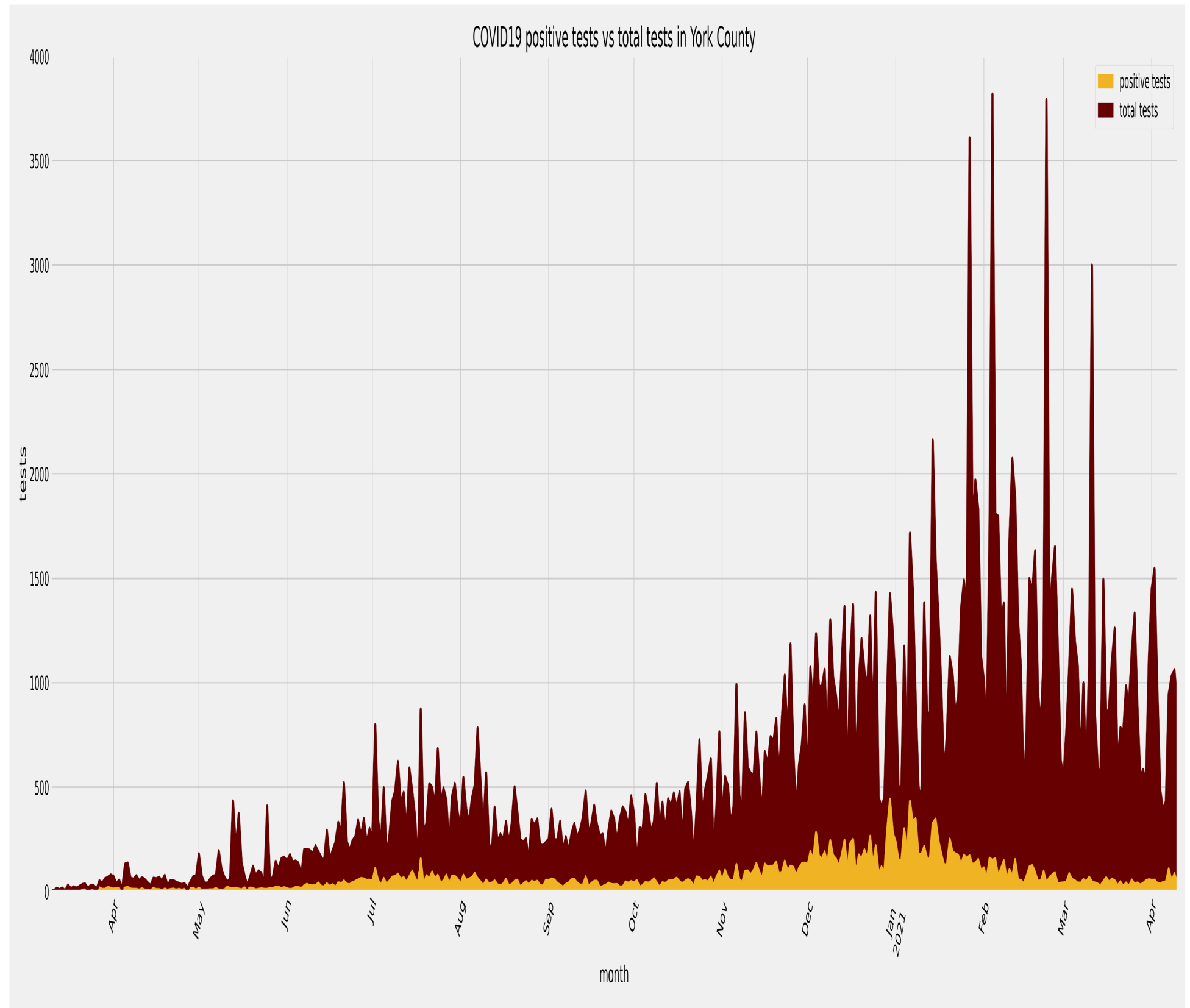
After arriving at Rock Hill City Jail, Agent Sean Leary of the YCMDEU advised that YCMDEU would take over the case. The suspect was released into the custody of Leary, as were the narcotics and cash that were found in the vehicle.

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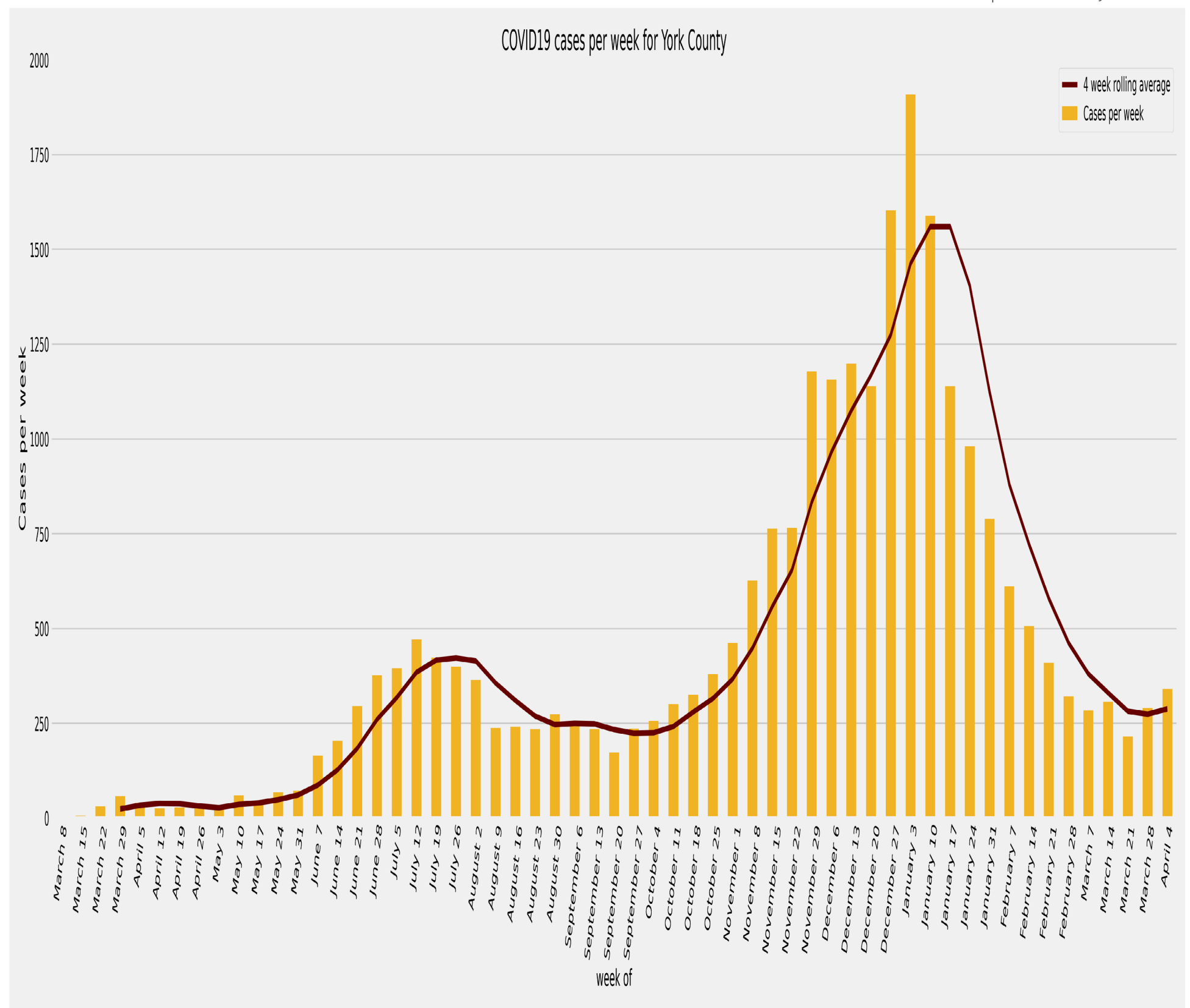
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# York County COVID-19 Data

During the pandemic, The Johnsonian wants to keep you up to date with the number of positive cases in the York County area. Each week we will have weekly data charts informing you of what is new



Philip Nelson/The Johnsonian



Philip Nelson/The Johnsonian

April 14, 2021

# Remembering Bennie Bennett

## A Winthrop legend we lost too soon

Matthew Shealy  
shealym@mytjnow.com

As a member of the inaugural Winthrop men's basketball team, Bennie Bennett is forever etched in Winthrop history.

A native to Clarendon, SC, Bennett began his collegiate career at Newberry College before following head coach Nield Gordon to Rock Hill. In their first competitive season (1978-1979), the Eagles went 25-10 as Bennett scored an impressive 411 points (12 points per game).

During the 1980-1981 season, Bennett became the first player ever to record 1,000 points at Winthrop. Forty years later, only 25 other Eagles have joined him in the elusive 1,000-point club.

His 1,296 points, which he amassed in just three seasons at Winthrop, still stand as tenth-most all-time in program history.

Bennett's name appears numerous times in the Winthrop record book: eighth all-time in field goals made (497), ninth all-time in free throws attempted (402), eighth all-time in free throws made (302), eighth all-time in assists (362) and sixth all-time in assists per game (3.6).

Along with being top-10 in several single-season stat categories, he's also one of only four Eagles to ever play in (and start in) 39 games during a single season, which he accomplished with his teammates Charlie Brunson, Tim Raxter

and Rick Riese during the 1980-1981 season.

I never knew Bennie Bennett, the basketball player. But as a student in Newberry County, I was lucky enough to know "Mr. Bennett" — superintendent of the Newberry County School District.

As a kid, 6-foot-1 Mr. Bennett seemed like a giant to me. It wasn't just his height but the fact that he held such a prominent position in the community. It felt like a privilege to get to shake his hand and pose for a picture with him at a school board meeting every now and then after being recognized for some sort of achievement.

At the time, I didn't even know Winthrop existed, much less that I would be a

student there before too long. I didn't know how successful Winthrop basketball had been during its short existence, and I certainly didn't know that Mr. Bennett was, in a way, a "founding father" of the program.

I wish I had known more about Winthrop at the time and how deeply rooted Mr. Bennett was (and still is) in Winthrop basketball history so that I could have asked him about his playing days.

But I also wish I had gotten the chance to ask him about some more impressive things he did in his life after his college basketball career.

Mr. Bennett was a teacher and a basketball coach at Clover and Fort Mill

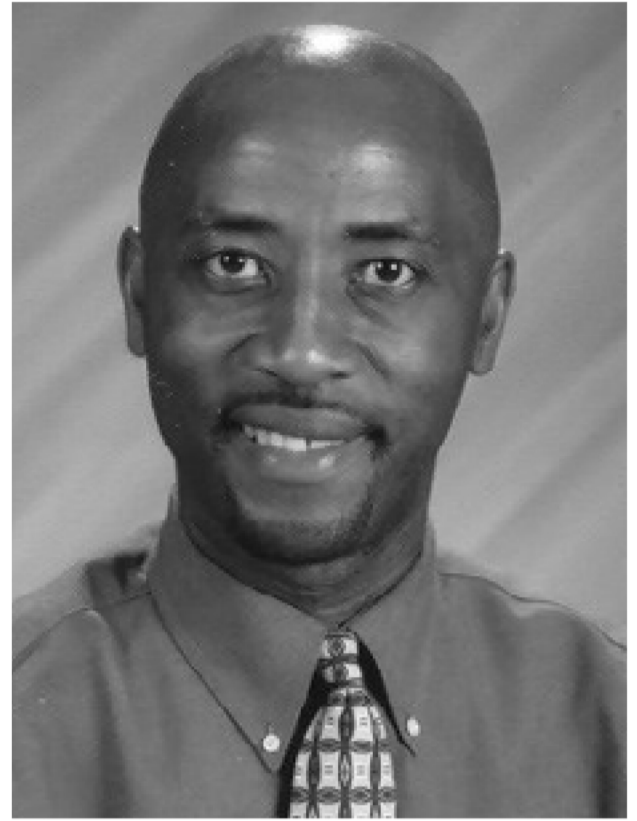


Photo courtesy to Winthrop Athletics

high schools — but he wasn't just any teacher or coach. He was a five-time Region Coach of the Year, and he was once named Fort Mill High School Teacher of the Year.

He served as an athletic director, assistant principal, principal, superintendent and probably wore many more hats during his education career.

Mr. Bennett was recognized as one of Winthrop's first distinguished alumni in physical education in 2000. And in 2006, he was inducted into both the Winthrop Athletics Hall of Fame and the York County Sports Hall of Fame. I'm so glad he was here to see these honors.

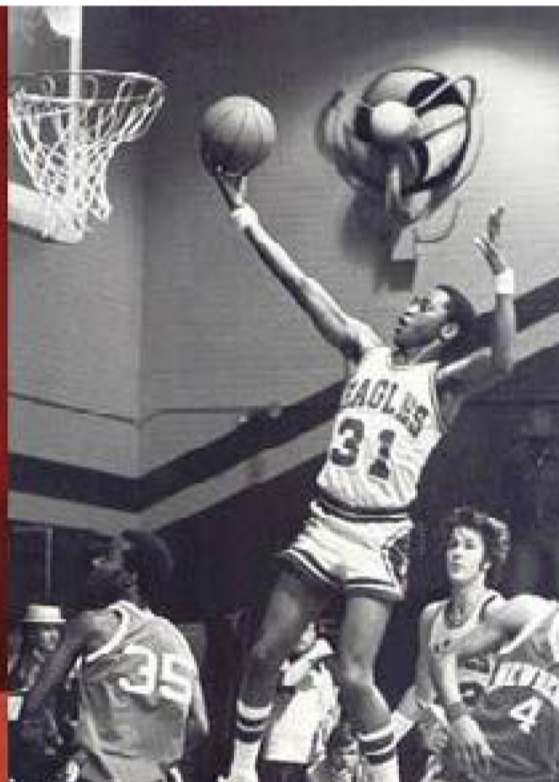
It's been five years since the death of Bennie Bennett. He tragically lost his life in a car accident on April 16, 2016. It was a huge loss for the

people of Newberry County and so many others who he had touched throughout his life.

After his passing, Winthrop Basketball retired Bennett's jersey number during a special ceremony on Homecoming Day in November of 2016. A framed No. 31 jersey now hangs in the Eagle Club Room in Winthrop Coliseum in his memory.

I always thought Mr. Bennett had a nice, genuine smile. I can only imagine how big he was smiling this past March as he watched his Winthrop Eagles once again competing in the NCAA Tournament.

Though he's no longer with us, may the legacy of Bennie Bennett — the player, coach, superintendent and everything in between — live on for years and years to come.



# Highlights from Winthrop Quadrangular Twilight

Lily Fremed  
fremedl@mytjnow.com

The Winthrop Quadrangular Twilight on April 9 was a successful Friday afternoon for the Eagles as they captured 16 first-place finishes and set 14 personal records. Although a few of the invited teams were unable to make the meet, Coker, Presbyterian and Morris were able to join Winthrop out on the Irwin Belk Track.

To start off, junior Olivia Esselman took first in the 800-meter with a time of 4:59.54 and the 1,500-meter with a time of 2:29.99.

Freshman Madeline Simmons came in second place in the

1,500-meter, beating her previous personal record by over ten seconds with a time of 5:12.01, followed by another freshman, Morgan Ruff, who also set a PR with a time of 5:17.84.

For the men's team, Will Metcalf-Shull took first in the 1,500-meter and third in the 800-meter with a time of 2:11.56,

Freshman Austin Spencer placed third with a PR time of 4:13.28, followed by freshman Darren Frasier in fourth with a PR time of 4:16.40 and sophomore Marvin Brooks in fifth with a PR time of 4:19.22.

In the 400-meter hurdles, freshman Anna Pylar set a PR time of 1:16.08,

earning her a second-place finish.

Two seniors, Teyah Floyd and Malik Harper, took first for their team's 100-meter and 200-meter race. Floyd earned times of 12.89 and 26.95, respectively, while Harper finished with times of 10.86 and 22.43, respectively.

Sophomore Malik Donald set a PR for the men's 200-meter, finishing in fourth.

Sophomore Jeremiah Boyd took first in the men's 5,000-meter with a time of 16:35.30 and second in the men's javelin with a throw of 35.83 meters.

Following Boyd was freshman Max Davis in second with a PR time of 17:03.35.

Finishing third in the women's 5,000-meter was sophomore Katie Weber, who set a PR time of 21:32.12.

In the men's 400-meter, sophomore Brandon Edmond took first with a PR time of 49.77, BARELY beating his teammate, freshman Triston Morgan, who had a PR time of 49.78. Another freshman, Antonio Florence, also set a PR with a time of 57.57.

Out on the field, freshman Elizabeth Barnett matched her personal record for the women's pole vault with a height of 3.05 meters.

Senior Grant Houmiel also matched his personal record

for the men's pole vault with a height of 3.65 meters, tying for first with a member of Coker's team.

Junior Taylor Anderson took first in the women's long jump with a leap of 5.46 meters, only 0.1 meter shy of her PR, while senior Colby Thorn took the men's first place with a jump of 7.16 meters.

Sophomore Libby Roush secured first for women's discus with a throw of 39.61 meters and sophomore Ambar Nunez-Gomez earned a third-place spot with her PR toss of 32.68 meters.

Nunez-Gomez also finished first in women's hammer with a throw of 46.06 meters, followed by Roush's second-place

finish and PR of 43.33 meters, which was almost three full meters more than her previous best.

Bethany Wise also set a PR in hammer with a 42.06 meter throw. Sophomore Jacob Furland took first in the men's hammer with a hurl of 55.35 meters.

Scoring his fifth first-place finish of the spring season, senior Jalen Hodges finished the men's high jump with a height of 2.08 meters. Lastly, senior Evan Hailes captured the men's triple jump with a jump of 14.51 meters.

Next up, the Eagles will travel to Charlottesville, VA for the UVA Invite April 16-17.

## Golf Goes to Big South Championship Women compete this weekend, men compete early next week

Lily Fremed  
fremedl@mytjnow.com

In just two months both men's and women's golf participated in half a dozen tournaments, unlike previous seasons in which matches were separated throughout the fall and spring semesters.

This adjustment, however, did not slow the athletes' excellent performance, as both teams are now headed to the Big South Championship. Traveling to Ninety-Six for the event, the women will compete on April 15-17, while men play April 18-21.

Head Coach Kevin Pendley will lead the men's team into the championship. Pendley was named Big South Coach of the Year in 2013 and 2015 and was inducted into the 2008 Winthrop Athletics Hall of Fame and the Big South Conference Hall of Fame in 2010.

Last week Freshman Austin Mosher was named the Big South Conference Men's Golf Co-Freshman of the Week, sharing the title with Radford's Bryce Corbett, as both tied for tenth at the Golfweek Spring Invitational April 5-6.

Mosher is ranked 16th in Big South with a stroke average of 73.86, following junior Ryan Tattan who is ranked sixth with a 72.46 average.

This will be the first time Women's Head Coach Kasay Gambrell is leading the Eagles into a conference championship since she joined Winthrop Athletics in August of 2019.

"I am excited to be heading into the Big South Conference. We've worked hard all year and can't wait to see how we perform," Gambrell said. "I know they are ready to compete and are excited to get the chance to play."

"It is the best feeling in the world to be advancing to

my first Big South Championship," Regan Clifford said.

A freshman, Clifford has diligently worked through this semester to balance both course work and the busy sporting schedule.

"At the beginning of the season I wasn't sure if I was going to be in the top five on the team because my game wasn't at its best, but I continued to work hard and got my game to where it needs to be just in time for the biggest tournament of the year," Clifford said.

At the Golfweek Spring Invitational on April 6, the final tournament of the regular season, Clifford posted the team's second-lowest round with a 4-over 75.

Fellow freshman Valentine Savioz marked another exceptional game of her collegiate career with her second Top-10 finish of the season and first Top-10 in a 54-hole event.

"Some words of advice or encouragement I give them is to really focus on the present moment. It matters what they do in this moment right now and not what happened previously or what could happen in the future," Gambrell said.

Also at the tournament, sophomore Makenna Brindley led the team in Par-3 scoring at 2-over and junior Sarah Funderburg finished T13, marking her second time in the Top-15 this season.

Savioz and Clifford led the team in Par-4 scoring with +11, and Winthrop finished the afternoon fifth out of eight overall.

"I have learned so much these past couple months. My goals for next season are to stay positive throughout my round of golf because I have learned how a negative attitude can affect my game so much and it doesn't benefit me to be negative and be

so hard on myself," Clifford said.

Academically, Clifford has set a personal goal to earn a GPA of 3.5 or above for the remainder of her years at Winthrop.

"I know it is only going to get harder from here but I'm ready for the challenge and I'm excited for my next three years as a student-athlete," Clifford said. "I love being a collegiate athlete and having a rigorous schedule is fun and there has never been a dull moment at Winthrop being an athlete."

Senior Whitney Carter is also very eager to attend the championship with her teammates.

"To advance to the Big South Championship is very exciting. We work hard to have the best attitudes we can whether we are practicing or playing so that we can always be ready," Carter said.

Even though this year did not go as planned, Carter has taken advantage of the time to finish up undergraduate requirements for Athletic Training. "Following graduation, I plan to become an Athletic Trainer in the high school setting. I'm not sure how much competitive golf I'll do, but I'll definitely play for fun," Carter said.

"After the season ends I will sit down with each player individually and go over goals for the summer. As golf is an individual sport, everyone is different in what they need to accomplish to get better," Gambrell said.

Although there are no set plans for the fall season, Head Coach Gambrell is looking at a normal fall season with five tournaments. But until then, it is time to cheer for the Eagles as they enter the Big South Conference Championship.

Jada Strong  
staff writer

Aisha Weixlmann is a sophomore this year at Winthrop University. She's a Sociology major and a pitcher on Winthrop's softball team.

Weixlmann has been playing softball since the age of six. She's from Charlotte, NC where she grew up with her mom.

"When I was a kid, me, my mom, and a coworker of hers went to watch his kid play," Weixlmann said. "My mom encouraged me to play and I didn't really like it at first. I was playing third base and I didn't really like it."

"But then I saw this girl on [the] mound playing the pitcher position. And then that's when I got into it. I just wanted all the attention to be on me," she joked. "Sadly that's how I was. But it's what I'm good at and I enjoyed it so I continued to pursue it and hoped to earn a scholarship."

Choosing where to go to school for athletes who plan on playing sports in college is a big decision. They'll want to go to a college where they know they have the best chances, especially if they plan on going pro.

"I choose to come here because the [former] coach of our team, Coach Cook, recruited me, and because the campus is so close to where I live in Charlotte," Weixlmann said. "I'm only about 20 minutes away from home."

"All my friend's parents back at home talked about how they went to Winthrop, and how they described it as a challenging school, academic-wise. I think the challenge element is what made me choose to come here, to have a better education academically-speaking and for softball as well."

Weixlmann said she has enjoyed her past two years here immensely.

"I like the vibe of this place," she said. "Even though I'm a student-athlete and because of that it can be harder to get into extracurricular activities, I've [taken] some time to get into some outside [of softball] activities. And I've taken the time to experience how this campus is growing."

Although Weixlmann is now



Photo courtesy to Winthrop Athletics

a sociology major, she had thought about going the more "traditional" route for athletes, majoring in exercise science before she changed her major.

"I actually decided to change it when I was working at Carowinds over the summer and a police officer came up to me and said, 'You have a really intimidating face.' Which is a weird thing to hear coming from a police officer, but he started talking to me about what he does as a patrol officer and I started to get interested. I had never been interested in a job like that as a potential career choice."

Weixlmann went to her advisor for some career guidance and decided she wanted to pursue a career as a crime scene investigator (CSI).

"When I talked to my advisor, we decided on changing my major to sociology on crime analysis."

Even though she has found a new passion outside of her original plans, she's not tossing out softball either.

"I'm going to finish my degree, and see if I can go pro, but if not, I'll enroll in the police academy and make my way up to being a CSI," she said.

Weixlmann is currently coming off from last week's games against Presbyterian College, in which the Eagles won three games to none. After every game, Weixlmann and the team go out to get ice cream.

"One of the most fond memories I've had so far being on the team is that after every game we go to PW's Ice cream place, which is the best ice cream place in Rock Hill," she said. "We just talk about the game, whether we win or lose. And we

discuss plays and just have a good time. The friendships I've made on the team has been so important to me. These girls are my life."

Although this season for Aisha has been great, it hasn't always been easy.

"I've started out this season a little rough. This year was a rough patch — I had some personal issues going on within my family and it impacted my performance in a negative way. I had just gotten into my head a lot and I was frustrated because I had not felt satisfied with my performance. Earlier in the season it was just a breaking point. I actually just hit my peak last week when we played against [North Carolina] Central," she said.

Weixlmann is also passionate about women in sports. She said she was disappointed when the news broke that the women's basketball teams were receiving unequal treatment to the men's teams at the recent NCAA Tournaments.

"It was really disappointing to see. I thought we were going up with women's sports," she said.

"That's why it's so important for women to be vocal about playing sports. Don't let others tell you what you can't do. If anything, if they say that, that can be motivation to prove them wrong. You can do it if you believe it and set your mind to it, because that's what sports are. It's a very mentally and physically working sport," she said.

Weixlmann and the softball team are back in action this weekend against USC Upstate, with a game on April 16 at 4 p.m. and games on April 17 at 2 p.m. and 4 p.m.

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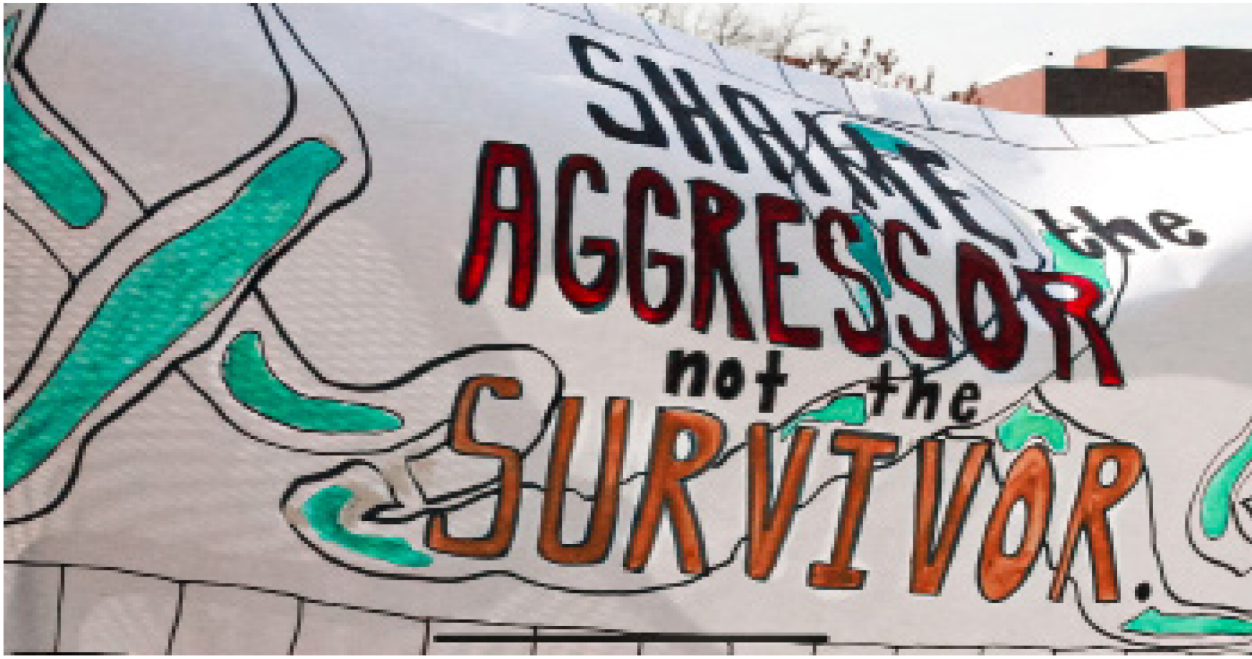
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# A&C the Johnsonian

April 14, 2021

## Rape Culture in the media

*Where is rape culture present in the media?*



Tate Walden/The Johnsonian

Allison Reynolds  
staff writer

An article from ScienceDirect journal entitled “Exploring rape culture in social media forums” defines rape culture as, “a society that fosters and encourages rape by teaching males and females that it is natural and normal for sexual relations to involve aggressive behavior on the part of males.” Rape culture is obviously present in today’s society and has shown no signs of going away anytime soon.

One of the most prominent components of rape culture is victim blaming. Victim blaming is especially present when men get raped and sexually assaulted. Examples of victim blaming include expressing things like: “It was okay because she had alcohol,” “He probably loved it. All men love getting lucky,” “They were passed out, so they were fair game.”

A good example of rape culture in the media is when rape

culture and mentions of rape are hidden in songs. The song “Blurred Lines” by Robin Thicke is a popular example. In the music video, Thicke and the other two singers on the track, Pharell and T.I., are featured staring at girls in ‘provocative clothing.’ The song also features lyrics such as “I know you want it” and “The way you grab me/must wanna get nasty.” Both of these lyrics feed into the rape culture belief that women who dress a certain way must want to have sex. Also, the second one slightly brings up the idea that someone cannot change their mind about a sexual act at any point in time before or during, which is not true.

The way that rapists are portrayed in the news media is another thing that promotes rape culture and also decreases the number of victims who are debating on coming forward or not. For example, according to Meg Dalton of the Columbia Journalism Review, when an

athlete is convicted of rape, sexual assault, or even accused, the media portrays them as “good, young men with such bright futures ahead of them.” They are never portrayed as what they actually are: abusers and rapists.

A huge component of society that feeds into rape culture are gender stereotypes. Men are often stereotyped as being hypersexual and sometimes even violent and aggressive. Women are often stereotyped as being meek, gentle and family-oriented. According to a Weebly article entitled Rape Culture in Media, “Stereotypical femininity generally depicts women as sex objects that are young, thin, and smaller than men. Women tend to be categorized as housewives, sidekicks, martyrs, and victims in films and T.V programs, emphasizing their stereotypes by demonstrating passive and dependent roles.”

“There’s this whole thing with men bringing up how boys

get raped too, but only bring it up when they feel threatened by women/females presenting people talking about how bad rape culture is,” said freshmen sociology major Andy Jones. “And men who have been sexually assaulted feel like they can’t speak up because of the whole ridiculous outdated notion of men having to be strong.”

“Often times rape is portrayed as happening to just an unlucky or out of place girl by this random stranger of a man and the incident happened on the flick of a dime,” said freshmen musical theatre major Evan Overton. “But in reality, it’s men and women, being assaulted by people they know, and may even trust.”

Rape culture is something that has become increasingly present in our society. Therefore, it has become increasingly present in the media as well. To put a stop to this, we must break the stigma of rape culture.

## Documentary film review on Seaspiracy

*This new Netflix documentary should be added to your list*

Sam Hyatt  
staff writer

Before reading this article, please know that it will discuss abuse towards animals and enslavement of people. Additionally, topics and facts included in the documentary will be included throughout the article.

Over the weekend, I watched the new Netflix documentary, *Seaspiracy*. Since the release of the film, I have seen several posts on social media concerning viewers’ eye-opening experiences. As someone who loves the ocean and sea life, I knew I had to watch it.

The documentary was a lot to take in because it was fact after fact after fact. But the information was interesting and kept my attention.

British filmmaker, Ali Tabrizi, began this documentary in hopes to document his love for sea life, but before filming he began researching the environmental harm that humans are causing to the ocean and of that living in it. Tabrizi was seeing that numerous dead whales were washing onto beaches and their stomachs were full of fishing nets and plastic.

As the filmmaker and his friend were filming, they began finding more and more issues concerning the ocean. Starting off in Tiji, Japan, the filmmakers were met by police and were told to stop recording along with erasing the footage immediately. However, they were then able to see fishermen

conducting a dolphin drive. This is where the fishermen use their boats to corral dolphins into a small cove and begin killing them. The Japanese do this for the meat and because they believe dolphins are pests.

After this, the film moves on to discuss the same issue happening with whales and sharks. The animals are slaughtered by the hundreds. The documentary points out how harmful this mass murdering of sharks and whales is to the ocean and for us.

Whales release phytoplankton which absorbs carbon dioxide. This is crucial to the current issue of climate change, and without whales, the world will not have phytoplankton to absorb the excessive amounts of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere. The film additionally discusses the significance that sharks have in the ocean as they are able to maintain a balance in the food chain.

It was shocking for me to learn that the commercial fishing industry in other parts of the world are enslaving their people to work on these ships. Some of the people who escaped their enslavement were interviewed anonymously and shared their horrific and unimaginable experiences. Towards the end of the documentary, the filmmakers do not give a clear answer on how we can begin to fix the problems that are taking place involving the mass murdering of sea life and commercial fishing all over the world.

## What you should read this summer

*Books to consider reading for 2021 summer break*

Sam Hyatt  
staff writer

The end of the semester is just around the corner and college students are already looking for plans with their friends for summer break. While some do not enjoy sitting down to read a novel, others look forward to the endless amount of time they have to read without other responsibilities or deadlines.

There are thousands of options to pick from to read this summer along with various

genres and authors. It can be hard to know what to read with so many options. Do you want to read a new book or reread an older book, or do you want to read a book published long ago?

“In the past, I’ve read the series *Mortal Instruments* and *Red Queen*,” said senior conservation biology major, Jesse Martin. “This summer I want to read some of Sarah J. Maas’ books because I’ve seen a lot of them on Tik Tok.”

Magazines like the *New York Times* and

*Vogue*, along with publishing companies such as Penguin Random House are always suggesting new books for people to read during the upcoming seasons.

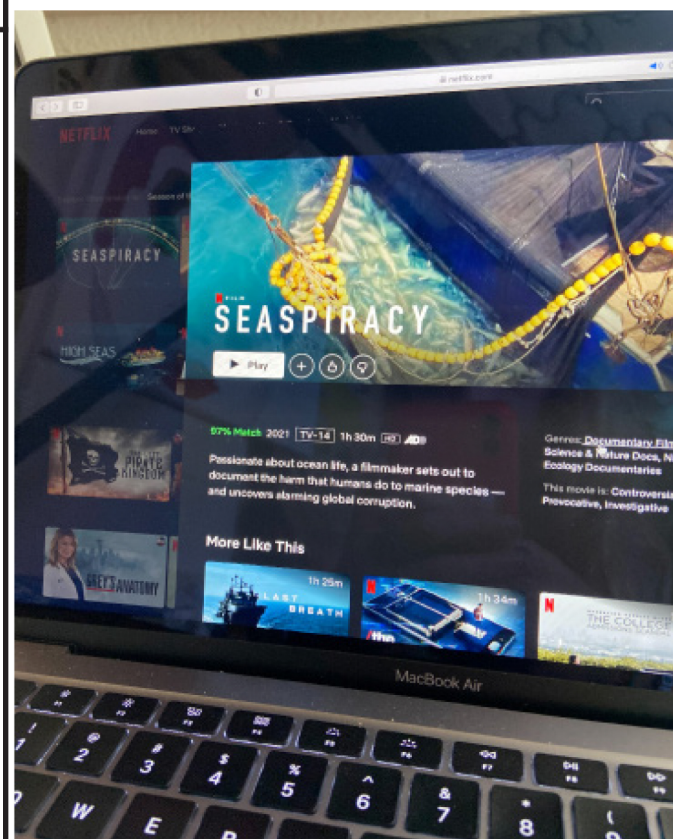
For summer 2021, Penguin Random House is suggesting about twenty books they believe readers will enjoy while sitting on the beach or relaxing inside to stay out of the high temperatures this summer is likely to bring.

Penguin Random House suggests different genres. *Black Girl Call Home* by Jasmine

Mans is a book that was released this year. The book is full of poetry that examines the experience of being a daughter in America, while also discussing the experience of being a “queer black woman.”

Senior MAT English student, Julia Wheaton, said, “Where the *Crawdads* Sing by Delia Owens was a book that I read last summer, and I remember hanging onto every word. It was definitely a book that you won’t be able to help but read in one sitting.”

► see Summer pg. 9



Kaily Paddle/The Johnsonian

**Seaspiracy was released on Netflix on March 24.**

► see *Seaspiracy* pg. 9



# Artist Spotlight: Renee Holliday

**Mari Pressley**  
staff writer

Masters in Fine Arts Student Renee Holliday came back to school after working on her nursing degree and taking ceramic classes on the side just for fun. “You know, I love art. I loved it when I was a child and then got away from it when I got older. And so just one class opened everything back up for me, so I completely switched gears, much to my husband’s dismay, and left my nursing career path and decided to pursue art,” Renee said.

Coming to Winthrop as an adult transfer student, pursuing and finishing her undergraduate degree in metals, Renee started off in ceramics and jewelry, then decided to shift gears a little bit. Renee said, “I have, over the past five years, been working in jewelry and textiles. I love fiber. I actually- I love materials as a whole. I like to experiment and play with all the things. So I’ve made work out of hair rollers. I have made work out of hair ties. My work traditionally stems out of women’s roles, women’s expectations, things that women surround themselves with, also with motherhood. So I am a mother of two children. And so being a mom, that has directly affected being a student. They’re different identities and roles and so my work is- I can’t get away from that. It’s just so ingrained in who I am and what I do.”

Renee’s development as an artist has mainly come through experimentation. With her love for materials, she likes to manipulate and figure out new ideas. “‘what could this be’, because a shirt isn’t just a shirt. What happens when I unstitch it, restitch

it, fashion it into a brooch? Like that’s to me, exciting and accessible. ... one of the things I realized is that my work really handles and tackles and deals with accessibility. As an issue of being accessible, but also not being accessible to a lot of people, which included me growing up, I come from a working class background,” Renee said.

While both of her parents worked full time jobs, the world of art museums and painting and sculpture was not anything Renee had access to. “We didn’t go to museums and we didn’t go see paintings. Now I could craft. I could go about my yard and pick up sticks because I grew up in the woods, like in the country, and I could go all my things and make things with what was at hand.

And so my work that completely plays into and has influenced how I am as an artist and a mother and how I raised my family. And so my materials these days are all reclaimed and found materials because I wanted to not only be accessible in a visual standpoint, from a financial standpoint, from a material standpoint, from all of those things, you know, there’s lots of ways to access art,” said Renee.

Renee’s graduate program is three years long. In her second semester, Renee faced serious health issues with one of her children, and had to completely step away from the program to be able to take care of her children.

Renee said, “It did a lot of things and put a lot of things in perspective as life events usually do. But it also changed the way in which I was working at that time. And in my explorations, I was working on a very, very large scale, kind

of moving towards more sculpture, less jewelry and having to completely step away. ... So it’s one of those things where taking a hardship, something that is truly life altering and allowing it to be a positive moment and a moment of positive change. So this is going to sound crazy, but I’m really grateful for that.”

As Renee considers herself a “nontraditional student,” she has worked hard to come back to school. After taking an 18 year hiatus from her first college experience, Renee came back to school as an adult. While it was difficult coming back to school with young children and knowing not only the demands of having children, but the demands of school, Renee saw this experience as a moment of pride.

“There was the fear of the reality that if I stepped away, I might not come back. Because life shows up and things get in the way. And it’s as a parent, there’s always that struggle of: do I put school before my children or do I put my children before school? How do these two intersectional life, beings, and events, and identities? How can they fit together instead of being one or the other? That’s actually, again, a huge part of my work. The title of my thesis exhibition is ‘Yes/And’ instead of ‘either or’ because life doesn’t exist in an ‘either or’ experience. Or a bubble. We get all of these things. We get the ‘Yes/And’ experience. And so my work really revolves around that. So, yeah, those are the challenges, lots of them. But that’s okay. I’m still here,” Renee said.

As a jeweler, Renee views her art as work that is “for the body to be worn.” As a woman growing up

in the eighties and in the south, Renee says that she was taught to “really kind of demean [herself] for others.” The artist raising two young daughters would like to break those cycles.

“My work, jewelry, how this relates is a way to really own my own body, accentuate my own body, celebrate my own body. And so I like to say and believe that not only do I have to make work for the body, I make work about the body. ... I am a feminist at my core and, you know, not to get too much into it, but anyone who’s ever survived any type of sexual assault or trauma, usually one of the first questions that society tends to ask is, ‘What were you wearing?’” Renee said.

“The words, the language surrounding survivors and putting blame on survivors because of what they wear or what have you, is wrong. It’s outdated and should never, ever be spoken or even be in the conversation. And so my work really revolves around challenging those notions and allowing the wearer of my jewelry to objectify the clothing instead of the clothing objectifying the wearer, which is often how clothing is perceived. What we put on our bodies really says who we are as people, as individuals. Which is beautiful and it’s a celebration but sometimes those around us can take that the other way and use what we wear as something that’s negative. And it shouldn’t be. It’s not. And I seek to challenge that,” said Renee.

Renee’s work will be displayed in the Elizabeth Dunlap Patrick Gallery in the 2020-2021 MFA Thesis Exhibition II taking place from April 19 to March 7.

## ◀ Summer from pg. 8

Another suggestion from Penguin Random House is Malibu Rising by Taylor Jenkins Reid. This book is a thriller that tells the story of a few teenagers who throw a party but then experience an event that will forever change their lives.

For those who enjoy mystery and suspenseful books, Stephen King, who is known to write books that have twisted and unexpected plots, has many choices to choose from this summer. Later is his newest novel that was released in March of this year. On Aug. 3, 2021, his novel Billy Summers will be released. However, it can be preordered now

and can be a great book to wrap up summer reading.

Ashley Moore, a senior secondary education English major, said, “I recommend reading Sold by Patricia McCormick. The book targets young adult readers but it touched on some tough topics that are relevant today that can be eye-opening.”

During this time of the year and throughout the summer many books stores have sales on their books and have recommended reads set up on shelves near the front of the stores. However, sometimes checking out a used bookstore is the best place to find hidden gems for lower prices.



Emma Crouch/The Johnsonian

Books like “The Great Gatsby” and “The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn” are considering a part of classic books.

## ◀ Seaspearicy from pg. 8

However, I do know that this generation of college students and those younger than us are passionate about seeking justice and a way to make the world a better place to live. Since the release of the documentary on Netflix, many organizations that support recycling and sea life are speaking out about the false claims made against them in the film. It’s hard to

know which information to trust, which means it is necessary that we continue to conduct our own research if we want to fix this problem.

Even though the documentary is a little long and requires a lot of attention to keep up with the topics being discussed, it is a documentary that I will be recommending to my friends and others.

April 14, 2021

## Georgia's recent election law is the new Jim Crow 2.0

*Georgia's voter suppression law; Republicans are actively taking measures to make it harder for Democrats to vote*

Wren Brooke  
staff writer

On March 25, Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp signed into law "A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT," a bill that apparently no one wanted their name on. Here's why this untitled bill is one of the worst cases of voter suppression we have seen in decades.

According to NBC News coverage of the bill's announcement, Kemp justified the law saying, "Significant reforms to our state elections were needed. There's no doubt there were many alarming issues with how the election was handled, and those problems, understandably, led to a crisis of confidence."

For those of you who may remember the Georgia lawmaker

who was arrested for knocking on Kemp's door, this is that same law that the governor insisted to sign behind closed doors.

Bitterly disappointed by the 2020 presidential election loss, here are the overhauls that Georgia Republicans have made to the state electoral system:

The early voting period has been lengthened, but those who wish to vote absentee must be able to provide a driver's license or some other form of state ID. Those who do not hold either of those must follow a stringent process of additional proof of identification.

Drop boxes for early voting ballots now cannot be placed in libraries or other local government buildings that would be more convenient for voters. Now, they can only be

placed in designated early voting locations. Additionally, during the last four days of the election where it is too late to mail in a ballot, early voting drop boxes will also be closed.

You might recall the fiasco when a phone call was leaked between former President Donald Trump and Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger, where Raffensperger, a Republican, refused to "find" more Republican ballots for the president.

Under the new election reform law, the Georgia Secretary of State no longer serves as chair of the State Elections Board. That position is now decided by the Georgia General Assembly, currently a Republican-led legislature.

The legislature now



Micheal Yelton/The Johnsonian

Georgia instated stricter voting laws.

▶ see [Georgia](#) pg. 11

## Journalists are not 'the enemy'

*Those in power are endangering journalism*

Sam Hyatt  
staff writer

The media is an ever-growing source through which people can obtain the latest news about current events happening in their city, country and around the world. Articles and videos are easily accessible through online outlets and are constantly being circulated within social media accounts.

What that means is that, because it has become easier for misinformation to spread, a way has also been made for extremists to mobilize against those few journalists out there who are simply trying to report the facts.

According to Reporters Without Borders, in 2020, the United States ranked 45 out of 180 countries for world press freedom.

Within the past few years, the job of being a journalist in the U.S., as well as in other parts of the world, has become extremely dangerous. Many journalists have been arrested or killed in the act of reporting. In 2020 during the Black Lives Matter protests,

many journalists were arrested and injured while documenting the events.

Along with these extreme experiences, journalists also receive backlash from those with opposing beliefs.

Often at MAGA/Trump rallies, journalists are treated with aggressive hatred and even violence just for reporting information.

The worst case of aggression was seen during the insurrection of the Capitol building this past January. On numerous occasions, extremists became violent and rude toward journalists after being fact-checked on the information attendees were sharing with others.

Former President Donald Trump often aimed hatred at the press. Trump used the phrase "enemy of the people" numerous times throughout his term when addressing the media. He did this because he felt as if the media, especially left-leaning news sources, was attempting to destroy his administration.

▶ see [Journalism](#) pg.11

## Gaetzgate: one man's political plunder

*U.S. Rep. Matt Gaetz has been accused of soliciting underground sex and drug rings*

Autumn Hawkins  
staff writer

At the end of March, U.S. Rep. Matt Gaetz became the focus of a federal investigation regarding sex trafficking.

The Justice Department launched an investigation when allegations of Gaetz paying an underage girl for sex became public. The allegations also implied that Gaetz paid to travel with this child so as to abuse her while his family was on vacation.

In a public statement, Gaetz vehemently denied these claims, saying that the federal government was "attacking him."

The investigation began when Florida tax collector Joel Greenberg indicated that Gaetz was a part of his criminal activity. In June of 2020, Greenberg was arrested for stalking, exploitation of a minor via sex trafficking and identity theft. During his interviews with the Justice Department and Florida police, Greenberg gave authorities information that connected to the Gaetz investigation.

The Justice Department is currently under the impression that Greenberg would "recruit" women sold into sex trafficking so that Gaetz could have sexual relations with them.

In 2018, Gaetz sent Greenberg \$900 via Venmo, a money transfer app. Over the following twenty-four hours,



Micheal Yelton/The Johnsonian

U.S. Rep. Matt Gaetz has allegedly solicited underground sex and drug rings.

Greenberg sent varying amounts of money to three underage girls. It was determined that the three sums added together equate to the amount Greenberg received from Gaetz.

Greenberg then sent these girls Gaetz's contact information, leading to the two men connecting with these girls online multiple times.

Since Greenberg was arrested, Gaetz has deleted the data cache of his Venmo transaction history, which is another piece of evidence that the Justice Department found suspicious during their investigation.

On Twitter, Gaetz publicly stated that

the investigation was a smear campaign led by the Justice Department and that the claims were impossible to prove. During this string of tweets, Gaetz went on to demand that the investigation be made public, so the masses can see that he is innocent.

A week later, Gaetz told The New York Times that he was unsure what the reasoning behind the investigation was — a direct contradiction to his posts on social media.

In April, Gaetz began capitalizing on these accusations by asking his supporters for financial contributions.

In a leaked email,

Gaetz refers to the allegations of him hiring sex slaves as "his dating life" (a fact that does not paint him in the best light). The conclusion of this email included a link where Gaetz's supporters could financially donate to "help put an end to fake news."

This email conveniently shifts the blame from Gaetz to the women he exploited and the Justice Department for opening an investigation while somehow still being able to beg for money.

As of April 8, Gaetz is facing the social consequences of this investigation. Greenberg's attorney has stated that he may testify as a witness against Gaetz during the trial. A billboard with the message "Matt Gaetz wants to 'date' your child" has been constructed in Gaetz's Florida district, making it difficult for the congressman and his constituents to ignore the allegations.

He has also lost several members of his staff. Devin Murphy and Luke Ball resigned from their positions under Gaetz shortly after the investigation became known, stating that they did not want to be associated with the type of man who would exploit trafficking victims.

While Gaetz has hired a team of lawyers, a trial date has yet to be announced by the Justice Department.

▶ see [Sexual Assault](#) pg.11

◀ Journalism from pg. 10

Because of this, many of his supporters began to believe the same and act out against journalists.

However, Trump never said anything against Fox News, as they tend to lean in favor of the political right-wing, especially when it comes to their editorial shows. And interestingly enough, much of the content Trump claimed to be “fake news” by other news sources consisted of his speeches and other times that he was, in fact, speaking live on camera.

Of course, when watching a news channel, it is usually obvious which political party is being supported. It’s not unusual for Republicans to watch Fox News and Democrats to watch CNN. In this situation, journalists are being told what stories to cover and how to make these stories fit their agenda.

“I feel as if no matter who is talking, their individual beliefs will always influence what they say,” said Jayon Babb, a junior religious studies major. “Their response and coverage will try to push you to what they believe.”

Unfortunately, many media sources are believed to be part of the reason our country is extremely divided.

How can media sources begin to unite the country instead of dividing it?

To begin, although journalists need to

hear the opinions of the citizens, it is necessary that they report strictly facts about events, people and other topics.

In the last year, there was constant backlash from media sources either concerning Trump or current President Joe Biden. Rather than news sources strictly focusing on the negatives of the opposing candidate, there should be an equal amount of information about both people.

“As a future journalist, it’s a shame that the news is not being trusted,” said Morgan Alexander, a senior mass communication major. “The divide in our country has caused us to not trust half of what the media says.”

For those who distrust the media and yet still want to stay informed and up to date on the events happening in the world around them, it can be hard to find a middle ground. Though it may feel difficult sometimes to find them, there are factual, unbiased news sources, such as the Associated Press, PBS News, Reuters and The Hill.

As for other media outlets, there should be a way to find a middle ground that will allow journalists to not be in danger when covering stories and bridge the gap between the people in the United States.

# Why Elementary Reassignment Option 4B

## was the right decision

*Rock Hill Schools Board of Trustees’ decision to reassign and close three schools in Rock Hill is better for the community*

Mary Hicks  
hicksm@mytjnow.com

On Feb. 8, the Board of Trustees for Rock Hill Schools voted 4-2 in favor of implementing the Elementary Reassignment Option 4B for the 2021-22 school year.

At the end of this school year, Finley Road, Belleview and Rosewood elementary schools will be closing their doors, with the possibility of repurposing the buildings. This decision will affect about 3,700 students.

Many parents have expressed concern, frustration and even sadness about this change. However, it is a change in the right direction toward greater diversity, equity and development for students and their families, as well as the overall community of Rock Hill.

Implementing the Elementary Reassignment Option 4B is not a decision that the board took lightly; it had been in the works for two years.

CN2 Today reported that “The board says all three schools have low enrollment numbers, some below 60-percent, aging buildings that need repairs, and board members say they wanted to simplify attendance zones as some students were attending a school that was not close to their home.”

Finley Road and Belleview have been in existence for so long (since the late 1950s) that many parents, and possibly even some grandparents, were students at these very locations them-



Emma Crouch/The Johnsonian

**Ebenezer Avenue Elementary School is one of the many schools in the Rock Hill school district.**

selves. Many parents have expressed that their children are comfortable at these particular schools. Even some teachers have shown strong emotion to the idea of leaving the buildings. However, while it is completely understandable the struggle to accept this change due to the emotional ties, at the end of the day, children — as well as their parents — must keep in mind that an integral part of life that strengthens development and expands the mind is change.

Change in environment and within social circles is absolutely key to the personal and mental growth of human beings. And it can impact children in a very positive way if handled carefully.

WBTB reported that Rock Hill Schools Superintendent Dr. Bill Cook “said the district had not updated the school placement map in almost 20 years.”

In addition, the plan does consist of some

possible accommodations, such as “information about ‘grand-fathering’ rising 5th graders who are now assigned to attend a different school in August 2021,” which is mentioned on the Rock Hill Schools website.

Not only can change of scenery and exposure to new potential friends stimulate brain development, but parents also must recognize how significant this decision is in connection with taking action against racism and modern-day unintentional segregation.

To gain a better understanding, let’s look at some demographics for these schools. Finley has 68.8% of African Americans, 21.5% white, 5.2% two or more races, 4.0% Hispanic and 0.3% Asian as well as Indian American, according to SchoolDigger.com.

Many of the other schools throughout Rock Hill that the children will now be

joining are majority white. Take Cherry Park Elementary School of Language Immersion, for example. 63.1% is white, while 17.5% is African American, 4.4% is two or more races, 13.6% is Hispanic, 0.8% is Asian and only 0.5% is American Indian.

Bringing these schools together will not only create more racial diversity but also socioeconomic. The percentage of free or discounted lunch recipients at Finley is 99.1%, whereas, at Cherry Park Elementary, it is only 22.6%.

Though it may feel scary, especially following an unstable time due to the pandemic, the community needs this. Rock Hill is full of growth and diversity, but what good is it if children are unable to learn among other students who come from different ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds?

◀ Sexual Assault from pg. 10

Republican-led legislature.

The legislature now has the power to temporarily suspend local election officials pending a formal review of their conduct. What this means is that in Democrat-led counties where the officials counting the ballots are likely also Democrats, the legislature can now choose to push them aside during elections and install their own officials.

By far, the strangest provision to this untitled bill is that volunteers can no longer provide food, water or folding chairs to voters waiting in line. This appears to be in response to the latest election, where many of the Democrat-led areas had long lines of voters waiting for hours at a time, and most Republican areas had much shorter wait times.

The justification given for banning this was that it opens the possibility of abuse in the form of influencing voters, despite

there being no history of this. In fact, this volunteer system seen across the country is known for being nonpartisan and a gesture of goodwill to encourage voter participation.

The last provision of the bill, Section 53, reads, “All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.” Essentially, Section 53 rubber-stamps the removal of any existing or future law that is in conflict with it until this legislature itself is removed or changed.

In his March 25 press conference, President Joe Biden responded to the bill saying, “This makes Jim Crow look like Jim Eagle.”

This is one of the worst cases of voter suppression going back to Jim Crow times. Protestors have been demonstrating since its signage. But Kemp has largely refused to speak on the subject except for the initial press conference.

◀ Georgia from pg. 10

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