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Janet Gray Selected as Recipient of Kinard Award

Quick Facts

- During the 11 a.m. ceremony at Winthrop Coliseum, the university will award 279 degrees to graduating seniors and an honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters to Charlotte, N.C., businessman and philanthropist Irwin "Ike" Belk.
- The James Pinckney Kinard and Lee Wicker Kinard Award for Excellence in Teaching will go to Janet Gray, associate professor within the Department of Theatre and Dance.



Janet Gray

ROCK HILL, S.C. - An exceptional theatre faculty member who is a first-rate designer will receive a prized faculty award for teaching during the Dec. 18 undergraduate Commencement.

Also during the 11 a.m. ceremony at [Winthrop Coliseum](#), the university will award 279 degrees to graduating seniors and an honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters to Charlotte, N.C., businessman and philanthropist **Irwin "Ike" Belk**.

The **James Pinckney Kinard and Lee Wicker Kinard Award for Excellence in Teaching** will go to **Janet Gray**, associate professor within the Department of Theatre and Dance. Established by the Kinard family in honor of former Winthrop President James P. Kinard and his wife, Lee Wicker Kinard, the award is given annually to the faculty member who has demonstrated a dedication to teaching.

In addition to teaching full time, Gray has served as the primary costume and stage make-up designer for the department for the past 12 years. Promoted to the rank of associate professor in 2008, she continues to work in the theatre profession. Her professional costume design work, which was recognized by the Kennedy Center's American College Theatre Festival in 2006 and 2008, is extensive, including work at the New Stage Theatre in Mississippi, Flat Rock Playhouse in North Carolina and the S.C. Children's Theatre in Greenville, S.C.

Due to the courses she teaches, Gray comes in contact with every major and minor in the department in the classroom or through costume designs when students are cast in productions. Gray's accessibility, her willingness to assist and work closely with students at nights and on weekends, and her skillful implementation of hands-on learning techniques have helped impart design and technology skills that are practical and aesthetic in nature to students. Winthrop design/tech majors leave the university with substantial portfolios, thanks to Gray's commitment to helping students on capstone projects and with independent studies in costume design and construction.

Gray joined the faculty in 1998. She holds a B.A. in history and dramatic literature from the University of Texas at Austin, a B.F.A. in theatre from Stephen F. Austin State University and an M.F.A. in theatre design from Tulane University.

Belk to receive honorary degree

President Anthony DiGiorgio will confer an honorary degree on Belk to thank him for his many contributions to Winthrop and to higher education in the Carolinas. A member of the family that established the Belk department store chain, Belk was president of Belk Finance Company where he handled real estate, finance and investments. He was elected to the N.C. House of Representatives in 1959, the N.C. Senate in 1963 and was appointed by President Clinton as the United States' public delegate to the 54th United Nations General Assembly in 1999. He also has served on the University

of North Carolina Board of Governors.

Belk competed in track at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and has given back to the sport significantly over the years. In 2005, Winthrop's Irwin Belk Track was dedicated to honor Belk's generous involvement with the university.

Belk also has given to other major projects at Winthrop, including commissioning the bronze eagle on front campus.

Graduate Commencement also scheduled

Winthrop will hold its **graduate Commencement** on Dec. 16 at the Winthrop Coliseum where 82 students will receive master's or specialist degrees. The ceremony begins at 7 p.m.

Students who graduated in August, which includes 57 undergraduates and 35 graduates, have the option of participating in the December Commencement activities.

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