



LEADERSHIP PROFILE

Executive Director

Winston Family Foundation

Jacksonville, FL

"Enhance the dignity of man by encouraging people "to be" rather than "to seem."

- Mission of the Winston Family Foundation

The Context

James H. Winston was a proud native of Raleigh, North Carolina. He found an ideal partner in Mary Burgman, married her and wholeheartedly embraced her hometown of Jacksonville, Florida. Across the cycles of an entrepreneurial career that spanned six decades, Jim built a lasting reputation as a creative businessperson, a savvy investor, and a tenacious civic leader. A classic entrepreneur, Mr. Winston liked to get things *done*.

Jim and Mary Winston were inseparable, and they made a great team that positively affected their community with a philanthropic spirit instilled by family, encouraged by the values of the time, nurtured by their faith and driven by things they cared deeply about – education, their church, the needs of young people and the health of their hometown and the places they loved.

Mr. Winston was a positive, fun person with an intense intellectual ability, and he was a trusted mentor, friend and advisor to many. He was also a methodical, disciplined philanthropist. While he rarely made large gifts, he valued civic engagement, and he was a loyal supporter of causes he held dear, especially those involving education, youth development and the arts.

The Winston Family Foundation was first established in 1986 as the James H. Winston Charitable Foundation; the name was changed in 2003 to reflect a desire for greater family involvement in the Foundation's work. During his lifetime, the Foundation's assets were modest—never more than \$2.5 million—and its grants were remarkable for their consistency rather than for their size.¹ Prior to Mr. Winston's death in September 2018, the Foundation operated without formal structure or professional staff, as is customary for a foundation of its size at the time.

¹ In addition to grants from the Foundation, Mr. Winston made other contributions from his personal funds

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Mary and Jim Winston



*The Winston Family YMCA, reflecting
Mr. Winston's many years
of service to the organization*

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Jim Winston was a visible leader for numerous causes and initiatives, but he was very private about his own financial affairs; apparently, only his accountants knew the true extent of his holdings. It was therefore a surprise to even his closest associates when, upon his death in September 2018, the Winston Family Foundation received bequests of well over \$100 million. (At this writing, the endowment stands at approximately \$160 million.)

Given the opportunities for strategic impact such an asset base presents, the Board of Trustees has launched the present search for an Executive Director who can serve as the face of the Foundation while working closely with the Board to shape its future work.²

During his lifetime, Mr. Winston built a strong record of effective leadership, but he left very few guidelines about the Foundation, deferring instead to the philanthropic spirit and collective aspirations of its family-dominated Board of Trustees. Accordingly, the trustees have devoted considerable time to developing a shared vision for the Foundation and exploring different avenues for consequential grantmaking. That process continues and will intensify upon the Executive Director's appointment.

The Winston Family Foundation is governed by five geographically dispersed trustees, including Mr. Winston's two adult children, his two nephews (the adult children of his brother, Charles M Winston Sr.), and his sister's son-in-law.

At present, the Foundation is staffed with one full-time employee, Mary Ross, Mr. Winston's long-time administrative assistant, confidante and office manager. The nature and size of the Foundation's ultimate staff will be determined in consultation with the Executive Director.

² A prior search for Executive Director was started in late 2019/early 2020, just as the Covid-19 pandemic was taking hold. That search was suspended in mid-2020.

The Mandate

The inaugural Executive Director of the Winston Family Foundation will inherit a bold mandate with few constraints: Pursue big ideas that honor the history and vision of Jim and Mary Winston.

Among the managerial responsibilities typical of such a role, the Executive Director will be expected to address several overlapping priorities:

- **Board engagement and cohesion.** The five members of the Winston Family Foundation's Board of Trustees share a commitment to bold aspirations, but their individual styles, experiences, passions and preferences differ. An understanding of family dynamics will be essential to the Executive Director's success, as will a communications style that ensures that even the most vigorous discussions are conducted with respect.
- **Strategic vision and leadership.** Working in concert with the Board, the Executive Director must lead the development of the Foundation's programmatic vision and plans for implementation of that vision while representing the Foundation's interests in local, regional and national philanthropic circles.
- **Community engagement and grantmaking.** Mr. Winston was known for his annual operating support of a number of legacy grantees, many of them based in Jacksonville. The Foundation will continue to do important work in Jacksonville, but its commitment to transformative impact may mean a smaller number of larger grants rather than routine support of operating budgets. The Foundation expects to be proactive in developing and testing opportunities for significant impact in Jacksonville and elsewhere.

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- **Organizational and team leadership.** As the Foundation's strategic vision and programmatic priorities take shape, the Executive Director must build a complement of staff and advisors that reflect an unflagging commitment to excellence, accountability and open communications.

Two examples of recent grant decisions are emblematic of the emerging thrust of the Foundation's work:

- **June 2019:** [The Winston Family Initiative in Technology and Adolescent Brain Behavior](#) is advancing research on the effects of Internet usage on adolescent brain development. Based at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, The Wifi Initiative took form after conversations initiated by one of the Foundation's trustees, and it was launched by the Foundation's largest grant to date. The effort to understand the impact of social media on the adolescent brain has already attracted considerable attention, as evidenced by a recent Forbes article, available [here](#), and a documentary on the topic in development.
- **August 2021:** [Lift Jax](#), established in 2017, is an initiative of business and community leaders working to eradicate generational poverty in Jacksonville. Lift Jax is a member of [Purpose Built Communities](#). (Mr. Winston had been a friend to Purpose Built's founder, Tom Cousins, as well as to two of its primary funders.) The trustees were impressed by the opportunity Lift Jax presented for lasting impact in a specific neighborhood in the Foundation's home market.

Although quite different from one another programmatically, both Lift Jax and The Wifi Initiative hold great promise for their intended beneficiaries. One is a decidedly local extension of a model tested and refined in some two dozen other US communities. The other is a pioneering

effort into uncharted waters, with national and even global implications. And while each differs from Mr. Winston's traditional grants, both are consistent with the Foundation's core values, as captured in the Trustee Handbook (quoted nearby).

The Board of Trustees is excited by the early progress of these investments, and it is eager to explore other opportunities for outsized impact. What's missing is day-to-day leadership: an Executive Director working in concert with the Board to refine the Foundation's strategy; build the team, processes and infrastructure to support that strategy, and then make the strategy tangible through the hard work of research and grantmaking.

The Location

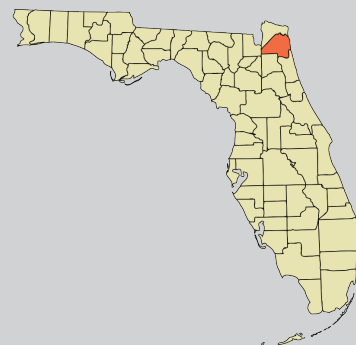
Based in Jacksonville, Florida, the Winston Family Foundation is currently housed in space designed to accommodate Mr. Winston and his staff. In due course, the Foundation expects to relocate to a more vibrant space that represents its exciting future.

For those less familiar with the region, Jacksonville (highlighted in the adjacent map) is located on the St. John's River in northeast Florida, the heart of the [First Coast](#). It is the most populous city in Florida and the largest city by area in the contiguous United States.

Among many other features, Jacksonville hosts the country's largest urban park system and its third largest naval complex after Norfolk and San Diego. The city is home to four *Fortune 500* companies, a strong regional banking system, the Gator Bowl, the Jacksonville Jaguars and such cultural attractions as the [Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens](#), the [Museum of Contemporary Art Jacksonville](#) and the [Times-Union Center for the Performing Arts](#). There are nine institutions of higher learning in Jacksonville, among them the state's oldest historically Black college.

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We believe that under God all life is interconnected, with the understanding that no one is excluded. We are grateful to be a part of life, and it is our gratitude that inspires us to help others. Our gratitude is the wellspring of our joy.



Jacksonville enjoys milder weather than much of Florida, with mean daily temperatures ranging from the low 50s in January to the low 80s in July.

The region has a rich nonprofit heritage, but there are very few foundations with assets equal to or greater than those of the Winston Family Foundation. Information on the nonprofit sector is available from such sources as [The Nonprofit Gateway](#), an official site sponsored by the city, the [Nonprofit Center of Northeast Florida](#), and the [Community Foundation for Northeast Florida](#). [Visit Jacksonville](#) and the [JaxChamber](#) offer other perspectives on the region.

While Jacksonville is the Foundation's official home, the Foundation has significant ties to North Carolina as well, especially to Chapel Hill and Raleigh. Mr. Winston was a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of UNC, and several family members took their degrees there; one is a former chair of the UNC Board of Trustees. Two of the Foundation's five trustees live in Raleigh. (Two live in Jacksonville as well; the fifth lives in Miami Beach.)



University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

The Relationships

<i>The Executive Director reports to</i>	Winston Family Foundation Board of Trustees
<i>And will develop and manage</i>	A staff the size and profile of which have yet to be established
<i>And works closely with</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual trustees • Committees of the Board • Local, regional and national leaders with experience or expertise in matters of interest to the Foundation
<i>While stewarding other key relationships, such as</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major philanthropies in Florida, North Carolina and elsewhere • Program partners and collaborators • Regional and national thought leaders on issues relevant to the Foundation's programming • The Foundation's consultants, program advisors, legal counsel, investment counsel and auditors

The Candidate

Winston Family Foundation has been in existence for some 35 years, but for present purposes it more closely resembles a start-up with history. The Foundation's first full-time Executive Director must have the sensitivity to establish trust relationships with Board members while leading the development of both strategy and staff. Such an effort will require a leader with a special mix of empathy, tenacity, humility and confidence—an entrepreneur with one foot in Jacksonville while leading the exploration of worthy issues elsewhere.

As is often the case with family foundations, the Executive Director must be both student and teacher, manager and mentor, an active listener and deft communicator who embraces the joy of learning.

As a group, the trustees are open to candidates with a variety of backgrounds. While grantmaking experience per se is not an absolute prerequisite, the most appealing candidates are likely to have had enough experience in formal philanthropy to know the questions to ask while avoiding the pitfalls their less experienced peers might succumb to.

Every bit as important as philanthropic experience will be a candidate's first-hand experience navigating family systems and family dynamics. The dynamics at play within the Winston Family Foundation are neither more nor less complicated than those in other comparable circumstances; the key is to understand that family dynamics developed over decades are always at play in such situations.³

³ The [National Center for Family Philanthropy](#) is an excellent resource on such matters. Ginny Esposito, NCFP's founder and long-time CEO, now a Senior Fellow, is a consultant to the Winston Family Foundation.

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The ideal candidate will possess the confidence to act combined with the humility to ask.

Candidates of greatest appeal are likely to offer a compelling mix of the following experiences and characteristics:

Expertise: The ideal candidate will possess...

- A record of impactful leadership in a significant community-based context, preferably encompassing endowments and grantmaking
- A respectful, empowering and facilitative style characterized by the commitment to do great work
- A strategic mindset and an entrepreneurial spirit; the facility for seeing the possibilities inherent in raw ideas, sifting and testing the best ones for further exploration
- Experience working with families or family boards made up of independent thinkers with diverse life experiences, goals and operating styles
- Significant intellectual acumen and an active sense of curiosity; a leader who enjoys vigorous discussions without taking disagreements or dissension personally
- An informed perspective on transformative grantmaking but not a specific agenda as to what form such grantmaking should take
- Respect for the Foundation's heritage and aspirations for its impact
- The confidence to act combined with the humility to ask

Culture: The Foundation seeks an executive who is...

- Courageous, creative and tenacious in pursuit of ambitious opportunities for sustainable impact
- An artful relationship-builder who also knows how to say "No" with grace and respect

- Personable and inspiring, someone who invites participation, collaboration and accountability
- An engaging discussion partner
- Ambitious for the Foundation and the initiatives it chooses to support; a leader who derives genuine pleasure from others' accomplishments
- Invested in the Foundation's home community, representing the family's interests and the Foundation's with integrity and good humor
- Joyful in the pursuit of bold objectives.

For potential consideration
or to recommend a prospect,
please email appropriate materials to
WFF@BoardWalkConsulting.com
or call **Sam Pettway** or
Patti Kish at 404-262-7392.

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