

List of Winston-Salem Firsts and Greatests

- 1753 Winston-Salem has been a leader in the crafts movement since Lord Granville encouraged the Moravians to move here and bring their craftsmen to the area.
- 1766 Salem College (the third-oldest continually operative women's college in the United States) founded.
- 1778 The Nation's oldest continuously operating brass band formed in Salem.
- 1789 John Frederick Peter composed the six quintettes, the first classical music written in America.
- 1947 Thor Johnson of Winston-Salem became the first American born and trained conductor of a major U.S. symphony (Cincinnati Symphony.).
- 1948 The first chartered Arts Council in the United States. (Winston-Salem Arts Council)
- 1956 The Tri-States Arts Council (NC, SC and VA) was organized in Winston-Salem, (before New York State's Arts Council),
- 1960 The predecessor of Americans for the Arts was chartered here as a Winston-Salem organization and three of the six of the founding members were Winston-Salem associated.
- 1965 The nation's first residential high school and college for the performing arts was built – the North Carolina School of the Arts.
- 1974 The First community arts attitudinal study was conducted by Lou Harris in Winston-Salem.
- 1975 One of six cities in the U.S. to receive a pilot grant for art education in public schools.
- 1976 The first Annual Arts Award of the Business Committee for the Arts presented to The Arts Council of Winston-Salem
- 1995 The First statewide A+ Program (to teach reading, writing and arithmetic using the arts in the schools) was started in Winston-Salem and funded by the Kenan Foundation here
- 1998 The first film school in the world to be built inside a film set was dedicated in Winston-Salem
- 2000 First American to direct a play in London's Globe Theatre, (Dean of NCSA School of Drama Jerry Freedman, director of Joe Papp's Shakespeare in the Park, NYC, for 13 years.)

2001 First mother and daughter to be nominated for a Tony Award in theatre – Winston-Salem’s Rosemary Harris and Jennifer Ehle.

Other important accomplishments

- Most Authentic restoration of an 18th century village (Old Salem)
- World’s finest collection of 18th century European classical music (Moravian Music Foundation)
- Third largest collection of motion picture films other than the Library of Congress (at North Carolina School of the Arts)

The Winston- Salem Foundation in 2006 was listed as 17th-oldest, #39 in total assets, #36 in gifts received, and #33 in grants paid of 641 U.S. community foundations

- Finest overall comprehensive performing arts conservatory in the world, including schools of Dance, Drama, Film, Music and Design & Production and the Center for Design Innovation (North Carolina School of the Arts.)
- Six colleges and universities: Wake Forest University, Salem Academy and College, Winston-Salem State University, North Carolina School of the Arts, Forsyth Tech and Piedmont Bible College
- Oldest city Symphony in North Carolina, founded in 1946.
- Winston-Salem had more people on the National Endowment for the Arts in its first six years than any other city in the U.S., except New York (a National Councilmember, 2 Program Directors, staff members and advisory committee members.)
- Four full-time arts reporter/critics on local newspaper staff.
- Largest foundation funds with local base in North Carolina.