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The Ouachita Circle: The Alumni Magazine of
Ouachita Baptist University

Ouachita Alumni

Summer 2023

The Ouachita Circle Summer 2023

Ouachita Baptist University

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OUACHITA CIRCLE

Summer 2023

HOME



Home – person, place or thing?

“When I first stepped foot on Ouachita’s campus, it just felt like home.”

Many current students and alumni explain their journey to Ouachita with some version of this statement. In an interview, we would follow up with a question like, “But what made it feel like home?” After all, what is “home”? A place, a feeling, a person, a culture? It can be any of those – physical, personal, spiritual. It sometimes can be identified immediately – maybe a Proustian taste of an old family recipe – or it can take time to find.

I’m writing this from a new physical home in a new state as I conclude my service at Ouachita after nearly 20 years on campus. These existential questions understandably have been top of mind for me and my family lately. It’s an unsettling transition I’m sure most of you have navigated at some point, as well. I hope you’ll turn to page 8 to read Dr. Justin Hardin’s wise thoughts on the subject. As Ouachita’s recently minted vice president for academic affairs, he’s experienced more than his fair share of home-finding and -forming.

It’s also the time of year when hundreds of students are settling in to their college homes across the country. The energy of campus transforms with their arrival. And what a joy it is for Ouachita faculty and staff to watch and help each Tiger find their place physically, socially, spiritually.

You’ll meet several of these employees in this issue, some of whom have called Ouachita home for many years (like Dr. Caroline Taylor on page 10, Tim Harrell ’00 on page 12 and Karen Matros ’92 on page 22), and some who bring new perspectives and experiences to Ouachita (like Dr. Julyse Migan-Gandonou Horr on page 20). Also in this issue, we celebrate milestone accomplishments that form each of our personal stories, like Commencement (page 18), competitive and professional victories (an undergraduate success on page 16, alumni highlights on pages 24 and 25 and athletics honors on page 26) and of course Class Notes, which begins on page 28.

All these stories only scratch the surface of explaining what makes Ouachita home to so many. Maybe for you, like me, “Ouachita as home” has layers of meaning that build with time. However the years change me and add new lenses through which I’ll view the past, I know Ouachita will be a model of home that’s embedded in me forever.

Especially if you haven’t stopped by in a while, I hope you’ll plan to join us on campus soon to further your own evolving understanding of this place, this institution, this group of people. (Psst: Homecoming is right around the corner!) I’m willing to bet that a feeling of home will hit you one way or another. The Queen of the College World waits to greet you.

Brooke (Showalter) Zimny '08
Chief Marketing Officer

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ON THE BLOG

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- What not to pack for college
- Learners rather than knowers: Commencement address
- Tips to make the most of Early Registration
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OUACHITA CIRCLE

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SUBMIT ADDRESS CHANGES AND CLASS NOTES

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VISION Ouachita Baptist University seeks to foster a love of God and a love of learning by creating for students and other constituents dynamic growth opportunities both on campus and throughout the world. With foresight and faithfulness, Ouachita makes a difference.

MISSION Ouachita Baptist University is a Christ-centered learning community. Embracing the liberal arts tradition, the university prepares individuals for ongoing intellectual and spiritual growth, lives of meaningful work, and reasoned engagement with the world.

VALUES Ouachita strives to be an academic community of vision, integrity, and service grounded in the following values:

Faith. We believe that life is lived most abundantly in response to the love of God through Jesus Christ.

Scholarship. We advance excellence in teaching, learning, research, and creative expression.

Growth. We foster broad-based education, encouraging growth in intellectual, spiritual, physical, and social domains.

Character. We affirm that respect and honesty undergird responsible citizenship and stewardship.

Community. We promote a vibrant community strengthened by diversity, sustained by common aims and supportive relationships, and committed to leadership and service on campus and beyond.

CAMPUS NEWS



OUACHITA HOUSES ONE OF THE FIRST TWO UNIVERSITY-BASED LOCATIONS OF TACOS 4 LIFE



Ouachita was one of the first two colleges to welcome Tacos 4 Life to its campus when the Arkansas-based restaurant chain launched an outlet in Evans Student Center for the 2023-2024 academic year. A remodel in the student center made space for Tacos 4 Life to be located next to Chick-fil-A.

"We are thrilled to bring our mission of helping end starvation to Ouachita," said Austin Samuelson '08, co-founder of Tacos 4 Life with his wife, Ashton (Berry) '08. "We believe we can see a day where no

child goes hungry, and that starts with projects like this one.

"On a personal note," he added, "Ashton and I are extremely excited to bring Tacos 4 Life to Ouachita because our life together began there. We met at 15 during a summer camp at Ouachita, we're both Ouachita graduates and we were married on campus."

Since last fall, a team from Tacos 4 Life has worked with Jason Tolbert '98, vice president for finance at Ouachita, and with Sodexo, Ouachita's dining and catering service, on a plan to address logistical and technological requirements for housing a Tacos 4 Life restaurant at the university.

"Ouachita is home away from home for our students, and we care deeply about enhancing their student experience here," said Dr. Ben Sells, Ouachita president. "We're grateful to the Samuelsons, to Sodexo and to Jason Tolbert for helping us do so with this exciting new offering."

UPDATE



photo by Dr. Deborah (Holley) Rood '81

B.S. IN ENGINEERING PROGRAM RECEIVES ACCREDITOR APPROVAL

The Bachelor of Science degree program in engineering at Ouachita has been approved by the university's institutional accreditor, the Higher Learning Commission.

The 4-year residential program builds on the strength of Ouachita's Bachelor of Science degree program in physics and is housed in the newly formed Department of Physics & Engineering in the J.D. Patterson School of Natural Sciences.

"Earning approval from the HLC marks a monumental milestone," said Dr. Ben Sells, Ouachita president. "It reflects the foresight and faithfulness of Patterson School faculty members, whose goal is to allow our students to complete an undergraduate engineering degree while enjoying all the other benefits of academic and campus life at Ouachita."

The engineering degree program includes emphases in civil, general and mechanical engineering. It is designed to meet standards set by the Accreditation Board of Engineering and Technology and will be submitted for approval for candidacy status from ABET.

OUACHITA STUDENT MEDIA HONORED AMONG THE BEST LOCALLY, NATIONALLY

Ouachita student media earned more than 80 state and national awards for excellence in the 2022-2023 academic year, including seven national awards for the *Ouachitonian* yearbook.

The 2022 *Ouachitonian* was honored with a Pacemaker Award from the Associated Collegiate Press, a 2022 National Yearbook Program of Excellence award from Jostens Company and five national Gold Circle Awards by the Columbia Scholastic Press Association. Only three colleges nationwide are chosen as Pacemaker recipients. The *Ouachitonian* also was awarded All-American distinction by the ACP.

At the state level, the Arkansas College Media Association honored Ouachita student media with 75 awards. The *Ouachitonian* and the Ouachita Sports Digital Network were presented with the premier ACMA awards for Yearbook and Television, respectively.

In the yearbook division, Anna Roussel, a 2022 communications & media/strategic communications and political science graduate from Searcy, Ark., and Gracen (Goudy) Zucha, a 2022 communications & media/communications studies graduate from Bryant, Ark., were named Co-Designers of the Year and Caroline Johnson, a 2023 communications & media/communications studies and political science graduate from Springdale, Ark., was named Yearbook Editor of the Year.

Valeria Gomez, a 2023 communications & media/multimedia graduate from Alajuela, Costa Rica, was named Website Editor of the Year and Caroline Derby, a 2023 communications & media/multimedia, communications & media/strategic communications and political science graduate from Arkadelphia, Ark., was named TV Anchor of the Year and TV Producer of the Year.

OUACHITA FINANCE STUDENTS EARN NATIONAL AWARD FOR MANAGEMENT OF ARY FUND

A team of finance students from Ouachita placed second at the annual Quinnipiac Global Asset Management Education Forum held in March in New York City. Ouachita was awarded second place in the undergraduate core portfolio category for 2022 risk-adjusted return on the group's management of the Ary Student Investment Fund, a \$2 million stock portfolio.

The Quinnipiac GAME Forum is the largest student-run financial conference in the world, with more than 120 schools and 1,300 students in attendance. Awards are given to the top three entrants in three categories: growth, value and core. Additionally, one overall award is given in the graduate category.

"As a team, we were beyond excited to receive this award," said Connor Bjerke, a 2023 accounting and finance graduate from Oak Leaf, Texas, "as we were competing against other universities with an average enrollment of more than 20,000 students."

The process to be a part of the Ary Investment Fund team is competitive, and the team of senior finance students meets weekly to actively manage the portfolio. Their faculty advisor is Dr. Chris Brune '94, professor and George Young Chair of Business. The fund's 2022 growth is the result of management by teams spanning both the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 academic years.



OUACHITA STUDENTS WIN MULTIPLE AWARDS AT MIDWEST MODEL UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE

Seven Ouachita students participated in the Midwest Model United Nations in St. Louis, Mo. It is the first year when Ouachita students have represented two or more countries and every student won recognition for excellence.

Ouachita's delegates were Caruline Derby, a 2023 communications & media/multimedia and political science graduate from Arkadelphia, Ark.; Katie Henry, a rising senior political science and history major from Little Rock, Ark.; Elise Hicks, a 2023 political science graduate from Benton, Ark.; Noah Sanders, a 2023 Christian studies/biblical studies & theology and political science graduate from Little Rock, Ark.; Sarah Spakes, a 2023 political science and public history graduate from Benton, Ark.; Kathryn Tutty, a 2023 political science and media/strategic communications graduate from Camden, Ark.; and Emilee Webb, a rising senior English and political science double major from Leola, Ark.

Derby, Sanders, Tutty and Webb were recognized as a Distinguished Delegation; Henry, Hicks and Spakes received an honorable mention. Best Position Paper was awarded to Derby and Henry on the General Assembly's First Committee, Sanders on the U.N. Environment Assembly Committee and Webb on the General Assembly's Third Committee. Additionally, Sanders and Hicks received honorable mentions for their committee work.

OUACHITA STUDENTS EARN TOP HONORS AT GOVERNOR'S CUP

Seniors in Ouachita's Hickingbotham School of Business earned several top awards during the Arkansas Governor's Cup Collegiate Business Plan Competition in April.

Jillian Woudruff, a senior business administration/management major from Hope, Ark., placed first overall in the Winrock Automotive Small Business Division and in the elevator pitch competition. Learn more about her product, Waderbuddy, designed to help users remove duck hunting waders, on page 16.

Placing second overall in the small business division was Madison Melcher, a 2023 business administration/entrepreneurship graduate from Rockwall, Texas, with Covered by Grace, which merges the physical and digital formats of the Bible to provide a personalized user experience. She was advised by Johan Eriksson '01, visiting instructor of business administration and director of entrepreneurship programs. Melcher also won first place in the Ouachita Business Plan Competition.

Microcures, a supplemental therapy for non-small-cell lung cancer patients, secured a third-place win in the High-Growth/Technology Division. Team members included Connor Bjerke, a 2023 accounting and finance graduate from Oak Leaf, Texas; and four 2023 graduates from Ouachita's Patterson School of Natural Sciences: Jade Dorman, a biology and Spanish grad from Benton, Ark.; Keren Fernandez, a senior nutrition & dietetics and biology grad from San Pedro Sula, Honduras; Kaitlyn Montgomery, a biology grad from Montgomery, Texas; and Emma Bynum, a biology grad from Troup, Texas. The team was advised by Dr. Nathan Reyna, professor of biology.

OUACHITA SENIOR JOSHUA SPIVA PUBLISHES RESEARCH PAPER IN "POLYMERS"

Joshua Spiva, a 2023 biomedical sciences and chemistry graduate from Magnet Cove, Ark., published a research paper in the scientific journal, "Polymers."

The paper, titled "Electrospinning Drug-Loaded Alginate-Based Nanofibers towards Developing a Drug Release Rate Catalog," details the results of Spiva's research on creating a catalog to help biomedical scientists understand how drugs release from certain materials. He worked for more than 2 ½ years on the project with Dr. Sharon Hamilton, associate professor of chemistry at Ouachita, to complete research that Hamilton began with students at Delta State University, where she was an assistant professor before joining the Ouachita faculty in 2018.

"Faculty at small undergraduate institutions have high teaching loads compared to research institutions, and it can be difficult to find time to publish the research conducted in their labs," Hamilton said. "This publication has been a long time coming, and I am happy to have published this manuscript to share our research with the public."

ISABELLA BEJARANO AND OTHER VOLUNTEERS RECOGNIZED FOR SERVICE

Isabella Bejarano, a rising senior elementary education major from Bogota, Colombia, received the 2023 Cargill Leadership Award at the annual University Community Service Awards banquet hosted by Ouachita's Ben M. Elrod Center for Family & Community.

The award recognizes a student whose servant leadership honors the life and legacy of Dr. Ben Elrod '52; it was established by Elrod's longtime friend Dr. Bob Cargill. Bejarano served through a number of campus programs and organizations, including ElderServe, the Tiger Serve Day Leadership Team, Backyard Bible Club and the International Club.

"Isabella has a deep love for God and a kind, compassionate heart," said Judy (Bumgardner) Duvall '82, Elrod Center director. "Many have been impacted for good under her wise and thoughtful leadership."

The banquet also recognizes dozens of other Ouachitonians who serve in a variety of ways throughout the year.

Leigh Anne (Spivey) McKinney '95, associate director, added, "The volunteer awards banquet is one of my favorite nights of the year. Having most of our volunteers in one space at the same time really gives a comprehensive picture of the breadth and depth of the Ouachita community's impact on the community around us."



COURTNEY RAGSDELL RECEIVES BSN LEADERSHIP AWARD

Courtney Myers Ragsdell, a 2023 Ouachita nursing graduate from Kansas City, Mo., received the 2022 Bachelor of Science in Nursing Young Leadership Award as a part of the "40 Nurse Leaders Under 40" leadership program from the Arkansas Center for Nursing, Inc.

The ACN presents this award to the top five BSN students in the state, recognizing recipients for their commitment to service, dedication and leadership for the advancement of nursing in Arkansas.

Ragsdell said that her nursing professors at Ouachita "have fostered in me a love for nursing, a love for learning and a love for leadership," Ragsdell said. "I could not have received this award without their impact on my life."

Outside the classroom, Ragsdell gained experience in her job as a patient care technician in a neonatal intensive care unit (NICU).

"There is nothing more sacred than new life, and guiding someone through that experience is such an honor," said Ragsdell. "It is beyond rewarding to see those babies in the unit who are able to make so much progress and eventually go home to their families."

NATURI HARRIS AND MARCUS MCGAHEE RECEIVE OUACHITA'S ANNIE ABRAMS LIVING LEGACY AWARD

Naturi Harris and Marcus McGahee have been named the recipients of Ouachita's 2023 Annie Abrams Living Legacy Award. They both will receive \$2,500.

Established in 2020, the scholarship honors the legacy of civil rights activist and Arkadelphia native Annie Abrams of Little Rock, Ark., and recognizes students who have demonstrated leadership and service within Ouachita's Multicultural Organization Reaching Equality.



Harris, a rising junior psychology and criminal justice double major from DeWitt, Ark., is a member of the Multicultural Student Programs Gospel Choir, Psychology Women in STEM and the Sociology and Criminology Society and serves as a TRIO mentor.



McGahee, a rising sophomore sociology major from Searcy, Ark., is a member of the Ouachita track team and is involved in his hometown church, Connection Assembly Church.

OUACHITA SENIOR REBEKAH WENDT PRESENTS RESEARCH AT ACS NATIONAL MEETING

During the American Chemical Society national meeting in March, Ouachita senior Rebekah Wendt presented findings based on her research using polymers to prepare core-shell nanofibers.

Wendt, a Haworth, Okla., native, graduated with a chemistry major in May. She was awarded a Student Undergraduate Research Fellowship by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education in December 2021 to conduct her research.

Wendt's research objective was to synthesize a novel wound healing material using core-shell nanofibers. She conducted her research alongside Dr. Sharon Hamilton, associate professor of chemistry at Ouachita, who specializes in polymer chemistry and wound healing. These fibers are often used for drug release purposes.

"I was basically creating a band aid," Wendt said, "and if a band aid starts to break down, what would I want in there? ... My research is one small piece of a bigger puzzle, and if this works out, this could be something that doctors use after surgery to help the healing process. Someone could take my research, and 30 years down the line my original thought could transform into something bigger."

SCHOOL OF FINE ARTS STUDENTS RECOGNIZED IN ANNUAL COMPETITIONS

Student Juried Art Show: Rising junior Tori Blum, a studio art major from McKinney, Texas, earned first place for her ceramics piece titled "Balance." There were 90 submissions for the competition, which was a record high, and 21 were selected for inclusion. Torrie Weems, a rising junior graphic design and communications & media/visual media & film double major from Lumberton, Texas, placed second with "Eclipse" and Sabaoor Esho, a 2023 graphic design and psychology graduate from Erbil, Iraq, placed third with "Kelsey."

David Glaze Music Competition: Lane Dunman, a rising junior instrumental music education major from Cash, Ark., won first place for his performances of "Clarinet Sonata in F Minor, Op. 120, No. 1" by Johannes Brahms and "Suite from the Victorian Kitchen Garden" by Paul Reade. Other finalists included Brandon Holloway, a rising junior vocal performance major from Little Rock, Ark.; Isabella Owen, a 2023 musical theatre graduate from Jonesboro, Ark.; Andrew Pierce, a rising junior music and biology double major from Benton, Ark.; and Brooke Wright, a rising junior community & family services and music double major from Gilmer, Texas.

Virginia Queen Piano Competition: Andrew Pierce, a rising junior music and biology double major from Benton, Ark., was awarded first place for his performance of Franz Liszt's "Liebestraum in A-flat Major, S. 541, No. 3" and "Virtuoso Etude No. 4," based on George Gershwin's "Embraceable You," arranged by Earl Wild. Aaron Reed, a rising sophomore worship studies and political science double major from North Little Rock, Ark., received second place. Arcrel Lee, a rising junior music major from Pine Bluff, Ark., won third place.

Shambarger Competition for Singers: Isabella Owen, a 2023 musical theatre graduate from Jonesboro, Ark., won first place for her performance of "Quando m'en vo (Musetta's Waltz)" from *La bohème* by Giacomo Puccini. Erin Bagley, a 2023 musical theatre graduate from White Oak, Texas, won second place. Brandon Holloway, a rising junior vocal performance major from Little Rock, Ark., won third place. Kieran Malmer, a rising junior choral music education major from Little Elm, Texas, won fourth place. Kyleigh Stevens, a 2023 vocal performance graduate from Hot Springs, Ark., earned an honorable mention.

SCHOOL OF FINE ARTS PRESENTED "MARY POPPINS," PREPARES FOR 2023-2024 SEASON

The Department of Theatre Arts presented its spring musical, "Mary Poppins," April 20-23 in Jones Performing Arts Center. Erin Bagley, a senior musical theatre major from White Oak, Texas, played the title role of the nanny who changed the lives of the Banks family; her friend Bert the chimney sweep was played by Mac Ricks, a rising junior musical theatre major from Carlisle, Ark. (Read more about the show at obu.edu/mary-poppins.)

To view the schedule and purchase tickets for the 2023-2024 season – which includes the 2024 spring musical, "Anastasia" – visit obu.edu/boxoffice.



photo by Sarah Dean '24



RECOGNIZING MORE THAN 400 YEARS OF SERVICE BY RETIRING FACULTY & STAFF MEMBERS

Faculty and staff members were recognized in May at a retirement celebration in McBeth Recital Hall with a reception following in Grant Plaza. Those recognized and their years of service to the university are listed below.

"For your service, faithfulness and work well done, we give thanks to the Lord. ... Ouachita will not be the same without you." – Dr. Ben Sells, Ouachita president

Genie Ashcraft

*16 years of service
Administrative Assistant in the
Huckabee School of Education*

Susan (Voris) Atkinson '83, MME '86

*19 years of service
Registrar and Director of Admissions Emerita*

Mike Ayres

*36 years of service
Director of Printing Services Emeritus*

Daren Crow

*22 years of service
Electrician*

Janice Ford '70

*48 years of service
Professor Emerita of Library Services*

Dr. Ray Franklin

*20 years of service
Professor Emeritus of Christian Missions*

Dr. Tim Hayes

*22 years of service
Professor Emeritus of Chemistry*

Tanya Jackson

*15 years of service
Administrative Assistant in the
Grant Center for International Education*

Benny Johnson

*17 years of service
Grounds Crew*

Deborah Lee

*33 years of service
Custodian*

Bill Phelps '81

*40 years of service
Chief Information Officer Emeritus*

Sherri (Greer) Phelps '81

*38 years of service
Director of Human Resources Emerita*

Dr. Mike Reynolds '77

*39 years of service
Professor Emeritus of Kinesiology*

Kevin Sullivan

*43 years of service
Facilities Shop Crew*

FINDING Home

By Justin Hardin '98, vice president for academic affairs

FOLLOWING CHRIST IN CAMBRIDGE AND CONE-BOTTOMS

It was my first time to attend a Cambridge formal hall, a posh ceremonial dinner for which the world's oldest universities are renowned. As a fifth-generation Texan and a faithful Baptist since birth, I knew everything about BBQs and potluck fellowships. But I knew next to nothing about formal halls, except that they required black tie and *sub fusc* (the flowing academic gowns we see on Harry Potter).

Cambridge college formal halls are steeped in tradition and etiquette. Back home, we had our own version of these. It was ancient practice in my church, for example, for Mrs. Betty to bring her famous homemade peach ice cream to every church fellowship. And it was considered ill-mannered to help yourself to a bowl of it before Bro. Bill blessed the food. *Everyone knew that.*

But my wife, Jill, and I weren't in the familiar environs of our church's fellowship hall. We were at a formal hall in a university approaching its 800th birthday. An ocean of time and traditions stood between us, an unwritten code that had been passed down for generations in a distant land. As we sat down to elaborately embossed silverware meticulously arranged around crested fine china, we felt very far from home.

Fortunately, a mentor had already taught us the basic conversational protocols. Before the main course, talk with the person sitting beside you on one side. During the main course, turn and talk with the person sitting beside you on the other side. After the main course, look across the table and talk with the person opposite you.

With this knowledge, we tried our best to blend in, but I hadn't considered my Texan accent. It was as thick as a Dairy Queen Blizzard. In my house, words like *yellow* came out *yalla*. And we elongated anything with the letter "I" so that words like *ice* and *hi* grew an extra syllable.

The Cambridge don seated to my left was on to my origin story from the start of our soup course, when he had asked what subject I was studying. I replied with an evangelistic, "I'm studying the New Testament and early Christianity."

My first word sparked his eureka moment, "Ah, do I detect an American accent?"

I didn't know it at the time, but his question was a textbook example of British understatement. What he really meant was: *Clearly, you must be a real-life American hillbilly!* Despite the awkward beginning, we muddled through and had a pleasant evening.

Our family lived and worked in England for a decade. During that time, we found a wonderful church family. Our kids attended the local primary school. And we developed deep friendships with neighbors. Eventually, this island didn't feel like a strange, faraway place. It was home, even if we never dropped our native tongue.

In the ninth chapter of Luke's Gospel, we are told, "When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem." At this decisive moment, Jesus says something about home in response to a man who vowed to follow Jesus wherever he went. His response to the man was chilling: "Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head." He then turns to a different man and says bluntly, "Follow me." *Having no earthly place to call home, Jesus yet calls others to follow him as lifelong disciples.*

Jill and I have been following Jesus together for a quarter of a century, during which time we've made new homes in four states and two countries. Last July, we arrived at Ouachita for the second time. The first was my freshman year almost three decades ago.

I suppose that for many of us reading this magazine, coming to Ouachita as students was our very first time to *leave* home. But for me, it felt like a home away from home. It was a nurturing greenhouse where I learned to know and be known, to love and be loved, and to grow and thrive as a follower of Jesus.

In the second poem of his magisterial "Four Quartets," T. S. Eliot mused, "Home is where one starts from." If this is true, then one might reasonably say that Ouachita *is* home. For in a profound sense, it is the place *where I started from.*

Returning to Ouachita to serve faculty colleagues and students, I pray that we will faithfully preserve and strengthen our transformative, Christian liberal-arts tradition for a new generation of Ouachitonians. That our Christ-centered learning community will cultivate Spirit-filled followers of Jesus. That this place will always be a place where one starts from – that it would be *home*.

EVAN

LOVE GOD
& LOVE
LEARNING



**AN OCEAN OF TIME AND TRADITIONS
STOOD BETWEEN US. – DR. JUSTIN HARDIN**

Welcome Home



Dr. Justin Hardin has served at Ouachita since 2022 as vice president for academic affairs, dean of the School of Interdisciplinary Studies and professor of biblical studies. He earned his B.A. in history and biblical studies from Ouachita, a Master of Divinity degree from Samford University and two degrees from the University of Cambridge: a Master of Philosophy degree in theology and a Doctor of Philosophy degree in New Testament.



photo by Tyler Rosenthal '15

DR. CAROLINE TAYLOR NAMED DEAN OF SCHOOL OF FINE ARTS

By Felley (Nall) Lawson '88, communications & marketing manager

Dr. Caroline B. Taylor, professor of music and interim chair of the Division of Music at Ouachita, has been named dean of Ouachita's School of Fine Arts. She began providing leadership in June to the school in pursuing its goal of producing artists and scholars who integrate their intellect and faith with their art, and their art with their worldview. The school includes divisions of music and applied arts.

"I am thrilled to be appointed the next School of Fine Arts dean and excited to be in a position to continue the long-held tradition of excellence the arts have always held at Ouachita," said Taylor, who served during the 2022-2023 academic year as interim chair of the Division of Music. "I want to ensure that all students at Ouachita, regardless of their major, have the opportunity to experience and stay involved in the arts during their time here."

She added, "I hope to provide opportunities for increased visibility of the arts at Ouachita within our community and across the region. I'm looking forward to even more communication with our alumni and hope to continue to improve existing degrees while exploring new possibilities."

"As interim Division of Music chair, Dr. Taylor has demonstrated the ability to think creatively and to engage with and listen to others, which is an important part of effective leadership," said Dr. Ben Sells, Ouachita president. "Just as she has done in the classroom, as dean she will uphold Ouachita's commitment to personal investment in the lives of students and to fostering a love of God and a love of learning."

Taylor is a native of Petit Jean Mountain, Ark. At the University of Central Arkansas, she earned a Bachelor of Music Education with high honors from the Department of Music and was a *magna cum laude* graduate of the Honors College. She earned a Master of Music degree in woodwinds performance and a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in saxophone performance at the University of Georgia. Taylor taught at Eastern New Mexico University from 1993 until 1998, when she joined the SOFA faculty at Ouachita as an associate professor of music; she was named professor of music in 2005 and Department of Applied Music chair in 2018.

"I knew from my freshman year of college that I wanted to teach music at a small liberal arts college," Taylor

recalled. “Teaching and working with young adults is simply what I am called to do; it is incredibly rewarding, enjoyable and challenging. Students each have their own story to tell. It’s my job to serve as a role model and to prepare them for lives of meaningful work.”

In addition to administrative duties such as recruiting students, managing personnel and overseeing strategic planning for curriculum development, Taylor teaches Applied Saxophone, Clarinet, Oboe and Bassoon and Woodwind Methods I and II. She also coaches several of Ouachita’s woodwind chamber ensembles.

“Dr. Taylor has served Ouachita students for more than two decades as a Christ-centered faculty member and servant leader,” said Dr. Justin Hardin, vice president of academic affairs, dean of interdisciplinary studies and professor of biblical studies at Ouachita. “She has a wonderful gift for building innovative teams, empowering faculty and students and implementing creative solutions to current challenges. I am thrilled she is stepping into this new role as one of Ouachita’s academic deans.”

Students each have their own story to tell. It's my job to serve as a role model and to prepare them for lives of meaningful work.

– DR. CAROLINE TAYLOR

Taylor is an E. Rousseau Artist, a Performing Artist for the Yamaha Corporation of America and a founding member of the Arkansas Saxophone Quartet. She has performed frequently at the World Saxophone Congress, the North American Saxophone Alliance, the Navy Band International Saxophone Symposium, the College Music Society and the Hawaii International Conference on the Arts & Humanities in Waikiki Beach. She has recorded a compact disc titled “The LYNX Duo: Music for Saxophone & Percussion,” and her recent recording of “Snoqualmie Passages” by Patrick Houlihan is included on the compact disc “Ascend” from the Society of Composers and Navona Records.

Taylor’s husband of 22 years, Doug Taylor, retired recently as an IT manager at Arkansas Blue Cross/Blue Shield. The Taylors have two daughters, McKenna and Madeline, and are members of First Baptist Church, Arkadelphia.

As this issue of the Ouachita Circle was going to press, the School of Fine Arts was renamed the School of Performing Arts to more clearly reflect its programs and purpose.

For information about Ouachita’s School of Performing Arts, visit obu.edu/SOPA.

MEET DR. TAYLOR

HOMETOWN:

Petit Jean Mountain, Ark.

FAVORITE WAY TO SPEND A SATURDAY:

Relaxing with my family doing all the ordinary, day-to-day things.

INSTRUMENTS I PLAY:

Primarily saxophone, but also clarinet, oboe and bassoon

BEATLES OR STONES?

Beatles

THE ONE LESSON I WANT MY STUDENTS TO LEARN BEFORE GRADUATION:

To be curious about the world and to trust that God’s plans are better than our own!

I’M MOST INSPIRED WHEN ...

I’m surrounded by the natural world, especially the ocean or the mountains in our national parks.

MOST ADVENTUROUS THING I’VE EVER DONE:

River rafting down the Rio Grande in New Mexico

FAVORITE HOLIDAY:

July 4th – family, fireworks and food

THE BIBLE VERSE THAT MEANS THE MOST TO ME:

“Be still and know that I am God.” – Psalm 46:10

FAVORITE SOUND:

A baby laughing

LAST COUNTRY I VISITED:

Croatia

FAVORITE BREAKFAST:

Biscuits and gravy with a side of bacon

NEXT BIG PERFORMANCE:

I have been invited to perform at the World Saxophone Congress in the Canary Islands, Spain, this December!

THREE WORDS THAT DESCRIBE ME BEST:

believer, curious, persistent

TIM HARRELL '00 NAMED OUACHITA'S DEAN OF STUDENTS AND DIRECTOR OF RESIDENCE LIFE

By Anna Roussel '22, digital content coordinator

If you were to ask students to name a recognizable staff member, odds are that many would say Tim Harrell '00. With 14 years' experience as director of student life, Harrell is well acquainted with the student body. This year, however, they will interact with him in a new way as he moves into the roles of dean of students and director of residence life.

As the oldest child in his family and the first to complete college, Harrell did not have much guidance in his college search other than knowing he wanted a small, Christian school. He was introduced to Ouachita by his now-colleague Jason Greenwich '97, who currently serves as director of Ouachita's Grant Center for International Education.

"The reason people come to school here now is the reason I came," Harrell said. "It's intimate and personal, but it also feels like you're becoming part of this very big deal."

Like many other alums, Harrell found the community to be one of the best parts of the school. While a student, he served as editor of the photo lab his junior year. He admits he might not have been the most talented: it was the organizational and people-oriented parts of the job that appealed to him.

"I loved the dark room. I found my best community there," Harrell explained. "It wasn't necessarily anything I did – I just had to put the right people in the right place to create space for good things to happen."

The events he captured as a student became what he marketed later as an admissions counselor: Ouachita's culture. Then in his role as director of student life he loved helping give students opportunities to grow and guiding them to do things on their own. He wasn't creating the culture – he was providing an environment for the students to do so.

"The culture really is the thing that sells Ouachita," Harrell said. "This little school in a little town has this network and culture of support, learning and growing. That's the thing about Ouachita that is pretty unique – I like the way it's done here."

Becoming dean of students and director of residence life felt, in Harrell's opinion, like a chance to do that same work in a different way, with a new perspective and influence. He describes Ouachita as a safe place to ask questions and challenge what you know about yourself and God.

"I feel like I missed an opportunity by not asking those questions when I was that age," Harrell said. "I need to do what I can to make sure every student feels welcome, safe and heard while they're here."

"I want every student I come in contact with, whether it be someone who just can't talk to their roommate or is having a crisis, to feel special," Harrell said. "That work is an important part of what we do on campus – remembering Jesus loves each of them and created them like him, and we give them the space to be that person. Hopefully the work we do in trying to navigate whatever is going on in their lives can be our worship."

Dr. Rickey Rogers '02, vice president of student development, previously held the role of dean of students. He feels Harrell's knowledge of Ouachita and his experience serving students will prove useful in his new job.

"I'm excited to see his passion for students continue in his new role," Rogers said. "It is already evident that he's making a positive impact with ideas that will enhance residence life. I truly value Mr. Harrell's dedication to Ouachita and the students."

Harrell is thinking proactively about new ways his office can help students. By walking with them through their challenges, Harrell hopes to help them find their place in the Ouachita community by benefiting from it and contributing to it.

Harrell knows from experience the long-lasting impact a Ouachita faculty or staff member can have on the life of a student. When he and his wife, Nancy (Day) '98, lived in Illinois and were expecting their first child, Dr. Bill Downs, professor emeritus of communications at Ouachita, called to congratulate him.

"I get a little lump in my throat when I talk about it still, because it was so sweet," Harrell said. "He was fantastic like that. He called just to catch up for a minute and tell me he was proud, and that was a really big deal."

As Harrell begins a new chapter in his Ouachita career, he reflects on those like Dr. Downs who invested in him, while looking forward to doing that same work himself. He feels prepared for what might come and is excited to work with students while having a larger role in the decision-making process.

"There's a passion in trying to get it done and get it done well," Harrell said. "Like many people here, I don't take lightly the responsibility given – it's not just showing up and running a game night, it's showing up and helping these students grow."

The Harrells live in Arkadelphia with their sons Henry (15), Peter (13) and Charlie (11). Nancy is administrative assistant to the vice president for academic affairs, and their family is active in First Baptist Church, Arkadelphia.

**This little school in
a little town has
this network
and culture of
support, learning
and growing.**

– TIM HARRELL

photo by Tyler Rosenthal '15

MEET TIM HARRELL

HOMETOWN:

Minden, La.

FAVORITE MOVIE OF ALL TIME:

This is a tough one. I'm a huge fan of the ones I grew up with, like "Top Gun" and "The Princess Bride." I also love a good rom-com: "You've Got Mail" and "Return to Me." Action, like The Dark Knight trilogy. I also love getting off the beaten path with things like "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind" and "Lars and the Real Girl."

MY WIFE AND I MET:

When we both worked in the admissions counseling office here at Ouachita. She asked me to turn my music down one day in the office, and it's still a regular request she makes.

FAVORITE FAMILY TRADITION:

Friday pizza-and-a-movie night!

CURRENT TV OBSESSION:

"Only Murders in the Building" or "The Bear"

FAVORITE BOARD GAME:

Blokus – it's a family favorite.

BIBLE PASSAGE THAT MEANS THE MOST TO ME:

1 John 4:7-11

BEST THING ABOUT WORKING WITH OUACHITA STUDENTS:

I love watching students grow and change and become more than they were.

SOMETHING PEOPLE WOULD BE SURPRISED TO KNOW ABOUT ME:

My age

THE ADVICE I'D GIVE MY 18-YEAR-OLD SELF:

Maybe take it easy on the biscuits and gravy at Walt's.

FAVORITE OUACHITA EVENT I'VE PLANNED:

WOW is by far one of the best things I've been involved with. It's just so exciting! But there are so many! The campus-wide Christmas party. Bob Ross Paint Party. Freshman Luau. Outdoor movies ("A Quiet Place" down by the river at the gazebo). Capture the Flag. Rally on the Ravine for Thursday night of BOTR with mini golf and axe throwing.

THREE WORDS THAT DESCRIBE ME BEST:

I LOVE PIZZA



I HAVE SEEN FIRSTHAND THE IMPACT
COUNSELING CAN HAVE.

- DR. SANDY GILLILAND



Master's degree in counseling dovetails with Ouachita's mission

By Felley (Nall) Lawson '88, communications & marketing manager

Ouachita's newest graduate program equips students to become Licensed Professional Counselors with the skill to treat clients professionally and ethically in response to the global mental health crisis. The program gets at the heart of Ouachita's mission to prepare students for lives of meaningful work.

Set to launch in Fall 2024*, Ouachita's low-residency Master of Arts degree program in counseling with a specialization in clinical mental health counseling trains students in the assessment, diagnosis and treatment of mental and emotional disorders. It's designed to earn accreditation from the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs, which represents the gold standard for counseling education program quality.

And like every one of Ouachita's 60-plus degree programs, it's grounded in a biblical worldview. Students will be taught from a Christian understanding of their chosen profession and can graduate with the tools to offer effective, well-informed, faith-integrated therapy.

The Master of Arts degree in counseling is housed in the Sutton School of Social Sciences at Ouachita. It has been developed under the leadership of Dr. Sandra Gilliland, professor and director of the mental health counseling program. Gilliland holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from Northern Arizona University; she earned master's degrees in theology and in marriage and family counseling and a doctorate in psychology and counseling, all from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

"Dr. Gilliland is creative and enthusiastic, an extraordinary classroom instructor, and she has a heart overflowing with love for God and his purpose," said Dr. Kevin C. "Casey" Motl, professor and dean of the Sutton School. "Her expertise and experience will give our program a steady hand at the wheel as we grow in the years to come."

Gilliland is also a licensed marriage & family therapist and has maintained an active private counseling practice for more than 13 years.

"I have seen firsthand the impact counseling can have, first in my own life and then in the lives of the brave and remarkable clients I have had the privilege to work with over the years," Gilliland said. "One of the challenges I've seen increase during the past several years is clients requesting Christian counselors but there just are not enough therapists to meet the demand. This is our chance to help respond to this critical need."

For Ouachita's undergraduate psychology majors, the Master of Arts degree in counseling offers the possibility of a seamless transition to post-graduate study. But no background in psychology is required for admission to the master's program, and there's no

ceiling on age – which makes it a potential great fit for those re-entering the job market or contemplating a career change.

"When I first started seeing clients at the tender age of 22, it was pretty hard to convince people I had much wisdom to offer," Gilliland recalled. "Some seasoning with time and life experience can really help returning students offer excellent perspective and support for clients."

To earn a master's in counseling at Ouachita, students must complete 63 credit hours, including four on-campus intensives and nine clinical credit hours. Because the low-residency format offers online access and scheduling flexibility, Gilliland said, "We can equip students from anywhere without asking them to leave their own communities that need help."

Licensed Professional Counselors can pursue careers in a variety of settings, including community mental health centers, hospitals, residential treatment facilities, schools, rehabilitation centers, private counseling agencies, prisons and group homes.

"The last several years have revealed a deep, durable demand for mental health services and support, as an individual public health concern and as a community need," said Motl. "This is an ideal time for Ouachita to launch a graduate program in clinical mental health counseling because the expertise is needed, the job opportunities for trained and licensed counselors are and will remain abundant, and Ouachita's Christ-centered identity and culture will enrich the rigorous training our students will receive by contextualizing their work within the grace and love of the Lord."

Gilliland explained the added value of the faith component within Ouachita's exacting counseling coursework.

"Effective counselors deal with issues of significance like the meaning of life, healthy relationships, self-acceptance, grief and loss, trauma and purpose. Many clients want to know that their therapist holds a similar worldview on these critical issues," Gilliland said. "We want to train our students to be ethical and effective therapists for whoever needs their help and to specialize in responding to those who are specifically seeking faith-based Christian counseling."

As a Christ-centered learning community, "We offer a hope that does not diminish," Gilliland added. "This is a wonderful way for our students to get out into the field and have a voice that points people to lasting solutions and meaningful change."

Applications to Ouachita's Master of Arts degree program in counseling open on Jan. 1, 2024, for enrollment in August 2024.*

For more information, visit obu.edu/counseling-ma.

**pending approval from the Higher Learning Commission*

WOODRUFF TAKES WADERBUDDY FROM THE CLASSROOM TO THE STAGE TO THE SLOUGH

By Anna Roussel '22, digital content coordinator

When Jillian Woodruff graduates in December, she will not just leave with a diploma – she will walk away with a new business, a potential patent and, most importantly, a new sense of confidence as she enters the workforce. All of this was made possible through the encouragement and mentorship she’s received during her time in the Hickingbotham School of Business.

A key part of the Ouachita experience is the chance to participate in real-world exercises that equip students for their future careers. One way the school of business accomplishes this is by hosting business plan competitions that feed into the Arkansas Governor’s Cup.

Woodruff, a business administration/management major from Hope, Ark., took home two first place wins at the Governor’s Cup for her product “Waderbuddy” after placing second in Ouachita’s on-campus competition. She won the overall small business division, which includes both undergraduate and graduate competitors and comes with a \$10,000 cash prize, as well as the overall elevator pitch competition, which brings a \$1,000 cash prize.

Woodruff felt inspiration strike in class one day while reflecting on years of duck hunting with her father and their constant struggle trying to remove their waders.

“Usually after the end of a hunt, my dad is holding on to the side of the truck while I’m trying with all of my might to pull the boot of his waders off,” Woodruff explained. “I started to think that there has to be a product to fix this – one where balance and an easier removal was combined.”

The inception of any new product requires a series of trials and errors. Woodruff spent time researching whether similar products existed, deciding what Waderbuddy should look like and nailing down the financial side of the project. During this process, she met with three different manufacturers to find the right partner in constructing her invention.

When figuring out the tedious details surrounding money, she said having Dr. Chris Brune ’94 as her advisor helped tremendously to fill in the gaps and create a successful plan. Woodruff found his help in crafting the plan, practicing her presentation and building her confidence to be invaluable. Brune is professor of finance and George Young Chair of Business at Ouachita.



This, in Woodruff's opinion, is one of the most valuable parts of the Hickingbotham School – the personalized nature of the student and faculty relationships. She said the encouraging environment that her professors create is part of what helps her thrive.

“When you're a business student at Ouachita, you are not a number – you're a face and a name,” Woodruff said. “You can tell that the professors want to see you succeed and do everything in their power to make sure that your time in their class is well spent. They try to make a connection with the students, and I feel that is what makes Ouachita so unique. I cannot imagine having gone to school anywhere else.”

Supportive professors are not the only resources offered to students in the Hickingbotham School – dedicated alumni invest in students during each stage of their college experience. Woodruff was especially complimentary of Frank Hickingbotham's '55 contributions to the school, which include funding annual trips for each cohort of students to visit business locations in the region each year.

I STARTED TO THINK THAT THERE HAS TO BE A PRODUCT TO FIX THIS.

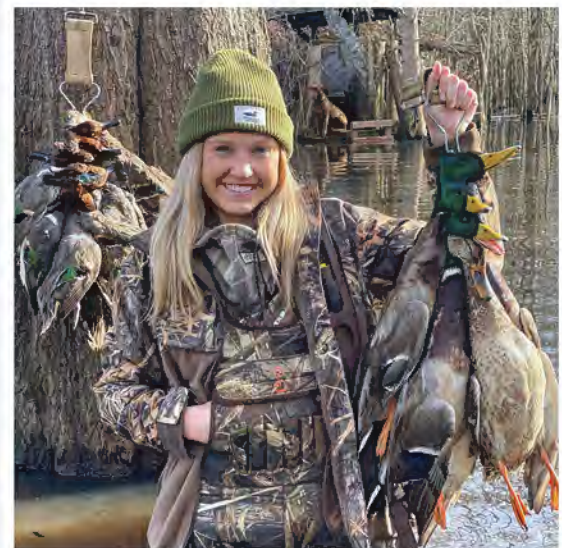
- JILLIAN WOODRUFF

“We get to meet some people in leading corporations and talk to them and hear about their experiences,” Woodruff said. “Some are Ouachita alums, and we get to hear about their experience leaving ‘the bubble’ and entering the real world of business.”

Woodruff plans to launch Waderbuddy in February and run it on the side while working a full-time job in sales. The opportunity to immerse herself in the business world and strengthen her skills has built the confidence she needed to continue, she said.

“I feel, in such a casual world now, it is good to know how to correctly navigate the business world, and my classes have taught me that,” Woodruff said. “I have had so many encouraging people push me to put myself out there and not be afraid of the sharks in the business world. I now know I'm capable of owning my own business.”

To stay informed about the Waderbuddy or to inquire about an order, email info@standingsteady.com.



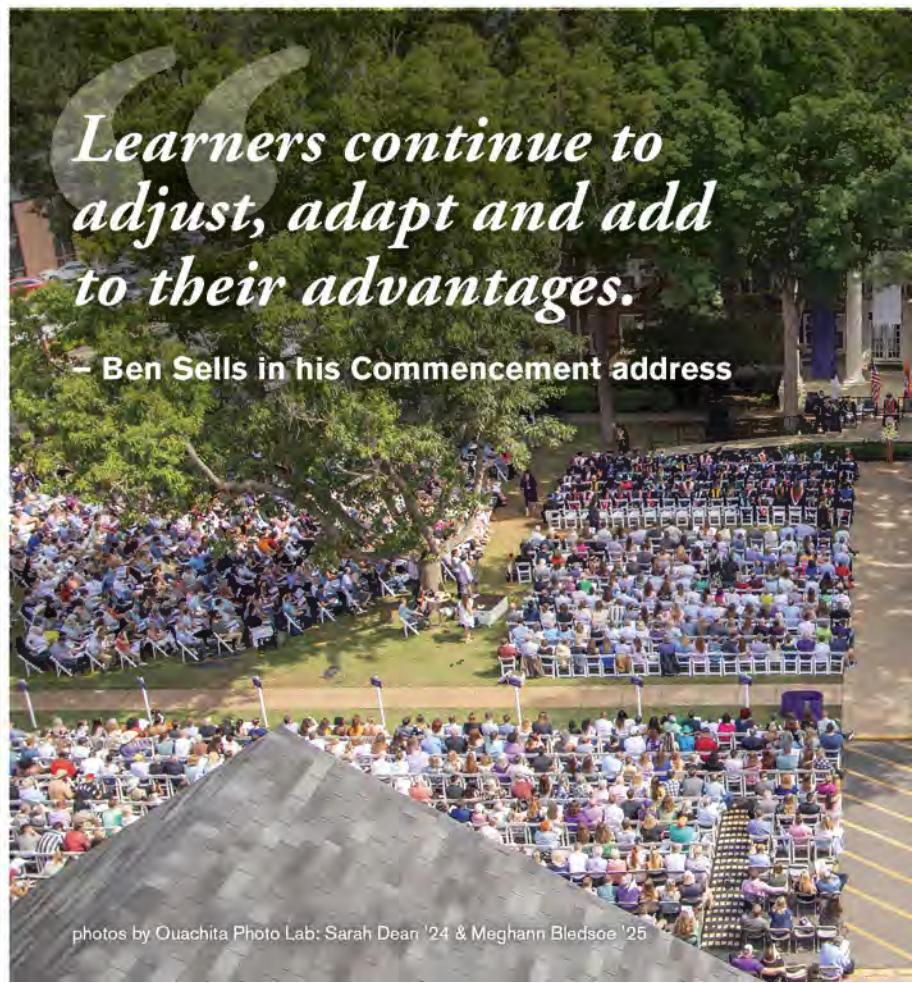
COMMENCEMENT 2023 HONORS LARGE UNDERGRAD COHORT AND PIONEERING GRAD STUDENTS

During its 136th Spring Commencement on the front lawn of Cone-Bottoms Hall on Saturday, May 13, Ouachita honored more than 400 students with the highest number of degrees conferred by Ouachita in more than 40 years. Graduates earned nine types of degrees or certificates, including the university's first Master of Education degrees in curriculum & instruction and Master of Science degrees in nutrition.



409
DEGREES
CONFERRED
THE MOST IN 40+ YEARS

136th
SPRING
COMMENCEMENT
— MAY 13, 2023 —



Learners continue to adjust, adapt and add to their advantages.

— Ben Sells in his Commencement address



18 | OUACHITA CIRCLE

photos by Ouachita Photo Lab: Sarah Dean '24 & Meghann Bledsoe '25



See full event coverage at:
[OBU.EDU/2023GRAD](https://www.obu.edu/2023grad)



SETTING A NEW COURSE

Ouachita saw its first-ever graduates in two master's programs at 2023 Commencement. Grads and program directors reflect on the significance of this important milestone for the Master of Education degree in curriculum & instruction and the Master of Science degree in nutrition.

This diverse group of educators embodies the attributes of Christ, our Master Teacher. It was an honor learning with them! By following their impactful calling, I'm confident they will have lasting influence on generations. Congratulations, graduates!

- DR. GAIL HUGHES, DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE STUDIES IN EDUCATION

I feel more confident in the methods of instruction that I provide to my students as well as the curriculum that I help to develop with my team. This program allowed me to grow as an educator and enhanced my career, and I will forever be thankful I did it.

- LINDSAY YEAMANS, M.ED. GRADUATE IN CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION

It was exciting to see our very first master's degree graduates honored during the May ceremony. The Dietetic Internship (DI) and Master of Science (MS) degree in nutrition are now combined into one MS/DI program with the first cohort starting this August, and I'm just glad I have a front row seat!

- HOLLY KYZER, MS/DI DIRECTOR

The Master of Science program in nutrition enhanced my nutrition knowledge and helped me become a better Registered Dietitian. My instructors were there for me at every step of my journey to my future career.

- ASHLEE CARTER, M.S. GRADUATE IN NUTRITION



Julyse Migan-Gandonou Horr

Director of Applied Behavior Analysis Program and Assistant Professor of ABA

By Felley (Nall) Lawson '88, communications & marketing manager

With a toddler and a newborn, Dr. Julyse Horr and her husband, Corey, are in that early phase of parenthood when sleep is a rare treat and your most valuable currency can be Cheerios and Goldfish crackers.

In the midst of being mom at home to Calliope-Reine, 2 ½, and Penelope-Jeanne, 5 weeks old, Horr has embraced a role in her professional life that's required her to nurture new graduate programs through their infancy at Ouachita.

Horr (rhymes with "saw") is the director of Ouachita's low-residency master's degree programs in applied behavior analysis, the science of behavior and learning. ABA-based therapy is recommended as an effective evidence-based treatment of choice for autism spectrum disorders. But nationwide, there's a critical shortage of ABA practitioners, known as Board Certified Behavior Analysts®.

Ouachita's graduate program in ABA – the first in Arkansas – began in May 2020 to help address this shortage. A Master of Science degree program came first; Horr, a Doctoral-level Board Certified Behavior Analyst® and Licensed Behavior Analyst, joined the faculty as a visiting professor that fall in time to work with the inaugural cohort. In January 2022, Horr became ABA program director.

"I know behavior, but you know your child."

The ABA program is housed in Ouachita's Patterson School of Natural Sciences, where Dr. Tim Knight '84 serves as dean.

"I don't know anyone more passionate about their vocation than Julyse Horr," said Knight. "She is a fantastic teacher and even better colleague. Our ABA program is successful because of her leadership."

The flexibility of the program's online format allows Horr to teach from her home in the suburban Tampa Bay, Fla., area, where her family attends Palm City Church and where Horr maintains a consulting agency.

In addition to teaching Ouachita's first three ABA cohorts, Horr has overseen the development of a Master of Arts degree in ABA, launched in August 2023 with a group of six that includes professionals working in areas outside of autism and developmental disabilities. Under her leadership, the M.A. and M.S. pathways now offer new curriculum, research opportunities and comprehensive test prep for the notoriously challenging BCBA® exam.

For both the M.S. and M.A. pathways, Horr is committed to "training the next generation of compassionate, quality-driven scientist-practitioners."

"ABA is a science, and this program is preparing our students to be scientists," Horr said, "but I also want them to be understanding of clients and families and to be patient with them.

"As behavior analysts, sometimes we can get arrogant because we are the experts on behavior as a subject matter," she added. "So my motto as a clinician – and what I used to tell families of clients I worked with – is, 'I know behavior, but you know your child. Let's work together and help me help you.'"

More than 40 Ouachita ABA graduates serving families as BCBA®s and 22 current students learning in the field already are making a difference in the lives of many.

"I am incredibly proud of our ABA graduates for their hard work, dedication and perseverance," she said. "They'll make Ouachita proud by using the science of behavior with commitment, integrity, humility, compassion and a love of Christ to serve and be a blessing to many individuals and families."

Karen (Stabley) Matros '92

Director of Student Financial Services

By Jon Merryman '00, director of alumni relations

Karen Matros is passionate about a few things – her family, her alma mater and serving others. Matros began working for Ouachita even before she graduated, serving part time in admissions counseling while she finished her degree. She graduated in May of 1992, was married a week later in Berry Chapel to Brant Matros '93 and began working full time in admissions that summer.

When Cone-Bottoms Hall re-opened in 1994 after an extensive renovation, Matros was part of the first group to fill an administrative office in the historic building. From 1998-2010, she stepped away from Ouachita to raise her sons.

"It was one of the most difficult things I had to do," she said. "I had to look at Dr. [Andrew] Westmoreland, who I respected greatly, and quit a job I loved dearly." Westmoreland '79 was serving as executive vice president at the time and was named Ouachita president that summer.

In 2010, Matros returned to Ouachita to serve in the Offices of the Registrar and Academic Affairs before transitioning in 2014 to financial aid, where she now serves as director of student financial services.

"Karen brings a breadth of experience to leading our student financial services team with two decades of service in a variety of departments at Ouachita," said Jason Tolbert '98, vice president for finance. "She is on the front lines of making sure our students can attend. Her knowledge and steady leadership give me the confidence to know our students are well served. Her work impacts almost every student who sets foot on our campus."

"We want students to graduate
having their lives changed."

For Matros, even in a highly numbers-focused role, she keeps students at the forefront.

"We don't want students just to get accepted and come to Ouachita. We want them to graduate having their lives changed," Matros said. "The trajectory of my life changed here. Where would I

be without Ouachita? I believe in a Ouachita education and am thankful I can come to work knowing what I do makes a difference."

It takes a team to keep up with constantly changing federal regulations and guidelines related to financial aid. Maintaining excellent records and staying in compliance helps show the federal government that Ouachita acts with integrity. Matros' team in student financial services is also passionate about providing students with excellent service and care while being good stewards of Ouachita's budget and resources.

"Last year our team dispersed \$48 million in federal, university, state and private aid. That's a lot to manage," she said. "I am so thankful for my team, their commitment to Ouachita and their commitment to serving our students and families well."

As a reflection of this excellent work, Matros was named to the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) Financial Aid Administrators Commission in July.

"I am thankful for the CCCU and the advocacy they provide on behalf of faith-based institutions like Ouachita," Matros said. "I'm looking forward to serving as a resource to other colleagues in similar roles at CCCU institutions around the country."

Matros and her husband, Brant, live in Arkadelphia and are active members of First Baptist Church. Their son John Franklin '18 and his wife, Shelby (McCollett) '18, and their son Brandon '20 and his wife, Emma (Shortes) '19, all live in Little Rock.



Brett Rogers '90

PEOPLE ARE THE PRIORITY

By Felley (Null) Lawson '88, communications & marketing manager



Ouachita has been a home away from home for every student who's lived in campus housing. Every year for Tiger basketball student-athletes, it's also a home away from home for the holidays.

Since their season begins in early November, teams spend nearly all of Thanksgiving and Christmas break in Arkadelphia practicing. That's not a typical holiday vibe, but it has its own recollections, traditions and distinct brand of family.

Brett Rogers '90 remembers. Rogers transferred to Ouachita in the spring of his freshman year and walked on to former Coach Bill Vining's 1986 squad. Vining is a '51 Ouachita alum.

"The basketball team ended up becoming my social club. It's not a huge group of people – 15, maybe 20," Rogers said. "We spent every Thanksgiving and Christmas together, which means there'd be two or three weeks where we were the only people on campus. There wasn't a lot going on in Arkadelphia. That was back in the old VHS tape days – we watched episodes of Andy Griffith until we were blue in the face."

There were always shared meals – sometimes at the Vining's home, sometimes in the cafeteria – and always gigantic appetites.

"They hated to see us coming on all-you-can-eat Tuesday nights at the Waffle House," Rogers said.

Weightlifting, drills and a lot of running were packed into those practice sessions. Rogers was happy to leave the running behind after he graduated from Ouachita. These days, he stays in shape playing competitive pickleball.

But that basketball brotherhood also afforded him friendships, memories and a Ouachita experience he continues to value deeply. This makes sense for Rogers: a family man who operates a family business, who prioritizes relationships and wouldn't think twice about going out of his way to help an old friend.

Rogers is president of Capital Technology Group in Little Rock, which provides technical support, consulting and imaging equipment to small and mid-size businesses around the state. He works with his brothers Byron (vice president) and Bryce (customer service representative). Before a spring rebrand to better define its scope, the company was Capital Business Machines – a Small Business Administration Top Family-Owned Business of the Year.

The Rogers brothers also got to work for many years with their dad, the late Bill Rogers, who launched the family's first venture in 1975 when he started City Business Machines.

"He was quite respected because he did business the right way," Rogers said. "He cared about people and was always real big on treating them well."

As a student, Rogers found his dad's example reinforced at Ouachita. As a Ouachita trustee, he sees it today.

"While Ouachita emphasizes academics, it's much more than books, papers and formulas. It prepares students to become well-rounded, to face the real world," he said. "There's a common thread that runs through the campus, the coaches, the professors, that helped prepare me to run a business and to live life right. Without sounding too cliché, it can be summed up in one statement: 'People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.' At Ouachita, people care."

Rogers and his family are longtime active members of Geyer Springs First Baptist Church in Little Rock. He and his wife, Shelly, have two grown children, Carson Rogers and Callie (Rogers) Andrus '21.

Dan Turner '94

PARTNERING THROUGH PROSECUTION

By Anna Roussel '22, digital content coordinator

When Dan Turner '94 was preparing for law school as a political science student at Ouachita, he never would have predicted using campus as a makeshift courthouse – a pivot during the pandemic to accommodate social distancing requirements – or being honored on campus for his work prosecuting one of the most notorious sex offenders in the state.

While a student, Turner took classes like constitutional law and judicial process from professors including Dr. Doug Reed and Dr. Hal Bass, who fueled his desire to enter the legal field. He was not sure where this would take him in his career until seeing a practicing attorney at work firsthand.

“The second year of law school you get to clerk, and I interned at the prosecuting attorney’s office in Little Rock,” Turner said. “I just fell in love with prosecution. I knew that I wanted to be in the court room; I didn’t want to sit behind the desk and push paper all day.”

Turner has done much more than push paper the past 26 years. Prior to being elected prosecuting attorney for Clark County, he served as a deputy prosecutor for Pulaski, Garland and Clark counties for more than 20 years. He said he feels a calling and sense of duty to the community, not just to convict people, but to help them.

Following his success in the landmark case against offender Barry Walker, Turner was recognized at the local child safety center’s annual banquet for his role in helping bring healing and hope for Walker’s more than 30 child victims in the region. Turner’s work also garnered the attention of former Gov. Asa Hutchinson, who in turn appointed him to the Arkansas Sex Offender Assessment Committee. The committee reviews and approves guidelines for the sex offender assessment process.

“Children are the most vulnerable victims, and what’s awful about that is the offenders are often the very people entrusted to care for them,” Turner said. “I have a strong conviction to prosecute those cases because someone needs to stand up and fight for those kids.”

Turner also was a leading consultant in creating Ouachita’s new criminal justice program that launched in Fall 2022. One of the priorities of the program is to bring working professionals in the American criminal justice system into the classroom. In addition to emphasizing during the program development process the need for law enforcement to learn to interact constructively with the court system, Turner will teach a Criminal Procedure course this fall. He said he hopes that by using cases he has prosecuted personally as case studies in class, the lessons will feel more interactive and allow students to ask honest questions.

“It’s important for these students to have an understanding of how our judicial system works – it’s the only branch of government where all of us as citizens can directly participate,” Turner said. “When we finish, I hope they have a greater appreciation for the criminal justice process and the rights we all have.”

Turner and his wife, Cindy (Staton) Turner '94, have three children, Abby (Turner) Dean '21 (23), Cole '24 (21) and Cate (17) and are members of Second Baptist Church of Arkadelphia.



photo by Meshali Mitchell

TIGERS HIT HIGH MARK IN GAC ALL-SPORTS STANDINGS, SPORTSMANSHIP

By Brian Ramsey, assistant athletic director for communications

The Tigers finished fifth in the 2022-23 Great American Conference All-Sports standings, the university's highest finish in the 12-year history of the league. Ouachita led the league after the fall with championships in football and women's cross country. In the winter, both the men's and women's basketball teams made the GAC tournament semifinals. Baseball and men's tennis capped the year on a high note with NCAA tournament appearances. Other teams with winning seasons included men's cross country, women's soccer, volleyball, men's swimming & diving, women's swimming & diving and wrestling.

Additionally, Ouachita teams earned more GAC Sportsmanship Awards than any other school in the league. The Tigers won the award in men's basketball, women's cross country, men's cross country and women's tennis. This is the third consecutive year for women's tennis to earn the honor and the second straight win for men's cross country.



photo by Sara Dean '24



photo by Levi Dade '23

NINE TIGERS EARN ALL-AMERICA HONORS

Throughout the 2022-23 season, nine Tigers earned All-America honors for their athletic accomplishments, and six earned All-America honors for academics. Four Tiger athletes appeared on both lists – G. Allen (baseball), Alex Blanchar (men's tennis), Jaymee Dotson (women's soccer) and Peyton Stafford (football).

Ouachita's other athletics All-Americans include: Anthony Chairez (football), TJ Cole (football), Joe Couch (football), Phil Exner (men's tennis) and Johnny Green (wrestling). Other academic All-Americans include football players Connor Flannigan and Kendel Givens.



G. ALLEN

photo by Baseline Photography



ALEX BLANCHAR

photo by Washburn Athletics



JAYMEE DOTSON

photo by Wesley Klück '77



PEYTON STAFFORD

photo by Wesley Klück '77



Q&A WITH NEW HEAD SOFTBALL COACH JEFF JACKSON

Jeff Jackson was named head coach of Ouachita's softball program in June. He has coached at the club and high school levels in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex since 2010, and 100% of his players earned an athletic and/or academic scholarship offer to play collegiate softball. His complete bio can be found at OBUtigers.com.

Q: Why Ouachita?

Jackson: I fell in love with Ouachita the first time I stepped foot on campus back in 2015. [Former Ouachita softball coach] Mike McGhee had a lot to do with this, and in a very short time, he became a friend and a mentor. I was and still am inspired by the way he represented the university and the way he took care of his team. It was obvious that God has his hand on this place and the people here. I can't think of a better place to mentor tomorrow's leaders.

Q: By the time this magazine is in the hands of the readers, what goals do you hope to have accomplished already?

Jackson: First and foremost, get to know the team. I hope to lay a foundation of trust with each individual player, gain an understanding of who they are and their paths to Ouachita as well as their expectations, challenges and goals. Assistant Coach Tobi Koonce and I would also like to get our top 10 recruits on campus this summer.

Q: What is your favorite thing about the game of softball?

Jackson: It's just a beautiful sport that perfectly correlates to life. On every pitch, there is an opportunity for each individual on the team to win in that moment. And then, in an instant, we have a chance to reset and do it all over again – the next pitch.

Q: How does Ouachita's vision of a "love of God and love of learning" fit with your vision for Ouachita softball?

Jackson: In every aspect of our student-athlete's day, it is my goal that the team represents Ouachita's vision and values, to lead the program in such a way that the girls' faith is evident in how they carry themselves, how they play and how they perform in the classroom.

Q: How does your faith inform your coaching philosophy?

Jackson: Giving back and communicating with empathy are central to my personal faith. I am always encouraged by the fact that our God is full of grace; it is wonderful to know that we are unconditionally loved. My goal as a leader has always been to lead without judgment and to coach with compassion.

Q: Now that you've started the recruiting process, what's important to you? What are you looking for in a potential student-athlete?

Jackson: From a softball perspective, it's important that we can see that the player is a good teammate, has knowledge of the game and is locked in on the field. It's easy to tell the players who love being on the field, are aware of their surroundings and know and respect the game. Coach Koonce and I agree we must find girls who love Ouachita first and are driven to earn a degree, then we can determine if they are a fit for the softball program. I also pay close attention to their interactions with their coaches, family and faith.

Q: How have your experiences in the business world been beneficial to your coaching career?

Jackson: I developed the "Three Cs" of leadership early on in my business career and they have served me well as a coach – Cadence, Consistency and Communication. In short, develop a cadence, stay consistent and always communicate. Limiting surprises and being clear in expectations go a long way in earning the respect, trust and ultimate elite performance of a team.

Q: When you're not coaching or recruiting, what do you enjoy doing?

Jackson: My first choice would be to spend time with my girls, Katie and Natalie '20. I have always enjoyed cooking out but have recently taken it to another level. They got me an offset smoker for my birthday last year, so smoking meats low and slow is a lot of fun for me – and it sometimes results in a visit from the kids!



NEW MULTIPURPOSE TRACK & FIELD COMPLEX

The Track & Field Complex is a high priority to support student athletes and the health and fitness needs of the entire campus community. We're in the final campaign stage, raising the funds needed to complete this important project. - Dr. Ben Sells, Ouachita President



SCAN THE QR CODE FOR MORE INFORMATION OR VISIT OBU.EDU/TRACKCOMPLEX



2022-2023 SEASON GREAT AMERICAN CONFERENCE

WOMEN'S GAC CROSS COUNTRY CONFERENCE CHAMPS

MEN'S CROSS COUNTRY FINISH 4TH IN THE CONFERENCE

MEN'S GAC TRACK & FIELD 800M CHAMPION

WOMEN'S/MEN'S GAC TRACK & FIELD-23 EARN ALL HONORS

WOMEN'S/MEN'S GAC CROSS COUNTRY SPORTSMANSHIP AWARD

STEVE GUYMON NAMED WOMEN'S GAC CROSS COUNTRY COACH OF THE YEAR

FALL 2023 GAC CROSS-COUNTRY PRE-SEASON RANK: WOMEN #1 & MEN #3

#1 WOMEN'S TRACK & FIELD
NCAA DIVISION II
HIGHEST TEAM GPA (3.80)

620% INCREASE



CROSS COUNTRY AND TRACK & FIELD
ATHLETE ENROLLMENT
FROM 15 IN FALL 2019 TO 108 IN FALL 2023

STUDENT-ATHLETES REPRESENTING 50 ACADEMIC MAJORS



CLASS NOTES

connecting the circle

1970s

Dr. Gary Rice '70 retired in December after 36 years with BASF (previously Engelhard). For the last 32 years, he led construction and operation of a research and development laboratory in Union, N.J., for engine testing and validation of catalytic converters for diesel applications.

Tommy Thomason '71 retired as professor emeritus after teaching journalism for 35 years at Texas Christian University.

Russ '78 and Karen (Claiborne) Porter

'77 recently celebrated 25 years of owning Rockwall School of Music. The school serves more than 850 students in weekly private lessons, employs more than 50 teachers and provides instruction in eight instruments as well as voice. Russ previously served 24 years in church music, and Karen previously served 20 years as a public school music teacher. They have two adult children, **Kristen (Porter) Ainsworth '03** and **Ryan Porter '07**.



1980s

Chip Broadbent, M.M.E. '80, has moved back to Arkansas after 39 years in Norfolk, Va. As a full-time music educator with Norfolk Public Schools, he also performed with the Virginia Chorale, the Virginia Opera and the Virginia Symphony Chorus. He served in the music program of the First Presbyterian Church of Norfolk for 20 years and for 10 years as artistic director of the Hampton Roads Men's Chorus. Now living in Little Rock, he's looking forward to reconnecting with other Ouachita alumni and entering the local arts community.



Thirty members and several beaus of the **Pi Kappa Zeta women's social club** at Ouachita met for a reunion Sunday, Feb. 26, at Whole Hog Café in Little Rock. Organized by **Vicki (Lowry) Haydon '79**, the afternoon get-together was a fun time of sharing memories and renewing lifelong friendships. *Photo by Ed Rayman*

Margo (Bearden) Turner '86 published *Gathered to Her People: A Small Collection of True Stories by Christian Women Who Hold Heartache and Hope*, which is available at gatheredtoherpeople.com. A portion of the proceeds are donated to Tacos 4 Life or Dillon International, Inc.

1990s

Meredith Archer '98 began serving as director of women and singles at Hunters Glen Baptist Church of Plano, Texas, in July.

Sarah (Stanley) Henry '98 is director of community & special events for the Conway Area Chamber of Commerce. She lives in Conway, Ark., with her husband, Patrick, and two children, Max and Molly.

Mark Phelan '99, an associate professor of philosophy at Lawrence University since 2011, was selected to participate in The Council of Independent Colleges' New Currents in Teaching Philosophy Institute, held in July in Baltimore, Md. The program is supported by the Mellon Foundation, and only 33 faculty members were chosen for this year's gathering.

2000s

Mark McGowan '00 serves as training and development manager with Birkman International in Houston after 13 years on staff with Cru.

Jeffrey Verlander '00 began serving in July as chief operating officer for World Gospel Outreach, a mission organization working in Honduras and Belize. He oversees operations in both countries as well as the U.S.

Robyn (Anders) McCoart '02 was awarded the 2023 Dean Weese Outstanding Coach Award by the Texas Association of Basketball Coaches.

Marie Bryant '04 married Daniel Mayer. They live in Hot Springs, where Marie is an insurance agent. Daniel is an international missionary. Together, they share six children.



JOIN US FOR FUN WITH FRIENDS AND FELLOW ALUMS

while supporting current and future Ouachita students.



FORE Ouachita Little Rock
Monday, Sept. 11
 CHENAL COUNTRY CLUB

FORE Ouachita NWA
Monday, Nov. 13
 TOP GOLF ROGERS



STEPPING UP FOR OUACHITA LUNCHEON HONORING

*Janet (McCain) Huckabee '76 and
 Governor Sarah (Huckabee) Sanders '04*

Friday, Nov. 17
 CHENAL COUNTRY CLUB

For more information, contact: Carrie Roberson
 robersonc@obu.edu • 870.245.4278

Sign up to attend or sponsor:
obu.edu/steppingup

Brittany (Williams) Rhoades '05 was inducted as a Clinical Nurse Specialist Institute Fellow by the National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists.

William Hunt '08 serves as manager of Ruggles Wilcox Funeral Home in Arkadelphia, Ark.

..... 2010s

Alex Ray '11 was elected to a 2-year term as chairman of the board for the Arkansas Advanced Energy Association.

Mikki (Gaines) Curtis '12 earned her Ph.D. in higher education administration from Liberty University in May.

T.C. Squires '12 self published *Isaiah the Knight*, a children's book that joins his young adult novel *The Struggle for Probana* to be available on Amazon.

John Butler '14 and Jessica Hargis '16 were married on May 20 at The Baker in North Little Rock, Ark. Jessica works as a clinical pharmacist at Option Care Health in Little Rock. John works as an attorney in North Little Rock.



McCall Guttridge '15 married Tim Epperson on Nov. 19, 2022. They live in Plano, Texas, where McCall teaches pre-k for Frisco Independent School District and Tim works as a tax accountant at a public accounting firm.



Dalaney Thomas '15 has been elected to the Board of Directors at CJRW in Little Rock, Ark. She is a senior account manager and has served at the agency since 2015.

Bonnie Magee '16 married Cody Sparks on July 2, 2022. They live in Cabot, Ark.

Brittany (McElroy) Crow '17 serves as assistant director of the Little River Baptist Association Pregnancy Resource Center in Nashville, Ark.

Morgan Howard '18 married Caroline Clough on Dec. 31, 2022.

Allison Biggers '19 married Tripp Croom on May 27. They live in Jonesboro, Ark., where Allison works as a speech language pathologist.



Isabel Dodds '19, married Chris Cyr on July 9 in Conway, Ark. They reside in Chattanooga, Tenn., where Isabel teaches piano and Chris is associate professor of mathematics and department chair at Covenant College.



FUTURE TIGERS

Leah Bushey '02 welcomed son Caleb James on Feb. 28, 2022.



Bryant Adams '03 and his wife, Sarah, welcomed daughter Mary Catherine on Sept. 28, 2022.



Daniel Smith '12 and his wife, Halle, welcomed daughter Raleigh Ann on Nov. 21, 2022.

Aubrey (Elliott) Adams '12 and her husband, Nick, welcomed son Johnathan Elliott on Dec. 18, 2022.



Katherine (Melson) Justus '15 and her husband, Gregory, welcomed daughter Ellianne Faye on June 8, 2022.



Jenna (Cummings) Martin '12 and her husband, Zach, welcomed daughter Mason Layne on Oct. 20, 2022.



Morgan (Brothers) Smith '16 and her husband, Grant, welcomed daughter Mallorie George on Nov. 23, 2022.



Breanne (Smith) Goodrum '13 and her husband, Caleb, welcomed daughter Astrid Iris Smith on Aug. 4, 2021.



Luke and Samantha (Griffin) Jamison '17 welcomed daughter Brighton Rose on Jan. 30.



Emily (Treadway) McLarty '13 and her husband, Kyle, welcomed daughter Kerris Kyle on July 3, 2022.



Mason '18 and Athen (Wilkerson) Clay '22 welcomed son Riggins Cole on March 7 in Scottsdale, Ariz.



Teddy '13 and Allie (Wade) Cross '15 welcomed son Theodore Daniel on Feb. 17.



Mary Grace (Hill) Freeman '19 and her husband, Tyler, welcomed son James Dawson "J.D." on Jan. 19.



Colby '14 and Jessica (Ashcraft) Harper '16 welcomed son Oliver Scott on Jan 16. Jessica earned her Doctor of Nursing Practice degree from the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences in 2022 and works as a family nurse practitioner in Centerton, Ark. Colby serves as a pastoral assistant at University Baptist Church in Fayetteville, Ark.



FACULTY & STAFF NEWS UPDATE

MEGAN FOSHEE SELECTED FOR NURSING LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Megan Foshee, assistant professor and coordinator of the nursing simulation lab, was selected for the National League for Nursing's 2023 Leadership Development Program for Simulation Educators. The year-long initiative is part of the NLN Leadership Institute, which includes 41 nurse educators and 15 simulation educators chosen from colleges, universities and healthcare institutions.

SHERRY KUHN NAMED SUPPORT STAFF MEMBER OF THE YEAR

Sherry Kuhn, senior cash manager and grant specialist in the Office of Business Services, was named the university's 2022-23 Support Staff Member of the Year. She was selected for demonstrating outstanding performance, supporting of the university's mission and relating positively to others. She has served at Ouachita for more than 15 years.

WESLEY KLUCK APPOINTED TO ARKANSAS STATE MEDICAL BOARD

Dr. Wesley Kluck '77, university physician, was appointed by Arkansas Governor Sarah (Huckabee) Sanders '04 to serve on the Arkansas State Medical Board through 2028. Kluck has received a "Best Doctors in Arkansas" award every year since 1999 and has served on Ouachita's administration in various roles since 2005.

JASON TOLBERT APPOINTED TO THE ARKANSAS ETHICS COMMISSION

Jason Tolbert '98, vice president for finance, was appointed to the Arkansas Ethics Commission by Bart Hester, president pro tempore of the Arkansas Senate, to serve through March 2028. Tolbert has held Ouachita's lead finance role since 2015.

GAMMA PHI ALUMS LAUNCH SCHOLARSHIP CAMPAIGN

By Felley (Nall) Lawson '88, communications & marketing manager

On Saturday, July 29, alumnae of the Gamma Phi women's social club gathered in Little Rock to launch a campaign that will raise money to endow a scholarship fund benefiting current members of the club at Ouachita.

Marianne (Morrisett) Gosser '55 made the initial donation to the Gamma Phi Endowed Scholarship fund, which will support deserving women students in Gamma Phi who demonstrate exceptional academic potential, leadership skill and a strong commitment to community service. Before scholarships can be awarded, a minimum of \$50,000 must be raised to establish the endowment. When gifts to the endowment exceed that amount, the fund can provide multiple scholarships.

Fundraising efforts will be directed by the Gamma Phi Endowed Scholarship Committee, led by Selena (Kesner) Bartmier '84 and Susan Cheatham '83.

Founded in 1944, Gamma Phi has a longstanding commitment to fostering academic excellence, leadership and sisterhood among its members; in recognition of this tradition of achievement, gifts to the scholarship fund may be made to honor or memorialize a Gamma member for her impact on the life of the donor.

There are three ways to make your tax-deductible contribution to Ouachita, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization:



Alumnae who gathered July 31 to launch the Gamma Phi Endowed Scholarship fundraising campaign included (left to right, front) **Marianne (Morrisett) Gosser '55, Selena (Kesner) Bartmier '84, Susan Cheatham '83; (middle) Sandra (Ziegenhorn) Teague '83, Carrie (Casey) Davis '84, Jennifer Burchfield '90, Donna (Trigg) Adkins '81, Cammie (Stephens) Landholm '84, Mona (Moore) Tullos '83, Lisa (Pruitt) Easter '84, Gay Anthony '86; (back) Lou Anne (Scroggins) Emrich '85, Gayle (Grayson) Felton '81, Ruth (Reaves) Green '84, Lisa (Moore) Jett '82.**

- Make a one-time gift by check or online payment.
- Set up a recurring donation by automatic withdrawal.
- Establish a directive in your will.

Please note "Gamma Phi Endowed Scholarship" on all donations to ensure proper application. To honor or memorialize a Gamma Phi member with your contribution, note the

member's name on your gift. The Office of Development at Ouachita will make every effort to ensure the appropriate notifications are made.

Make online donations at www.obu.edu/give. For more information about the Gamma Phi Endowed Scholarship, contact Brant Matros in the Office of Development at (870) 245-4273 or matrosb@obu.edu.

OUACHITA - BEYOND CAMPUS

ONLINE AND GRADUATE PROGRAMS AVAILABLE

UNDERGRADUATE ONLINE DEGREE PROGRAMS

- B.A. or A.A. in Christian Studies**
- B.A. in Interdisciplinary Studies**
(degree completion)
- B.A. in Organizational Leadership**
(degree completion)
- B.A. in Psychology**
- RN-to-BSN** (for licensed registered nurses with no restrictions)

GRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAMS

- M.S. or M.A. in Applied Behavior Analysis**
- Master of Business Administration**
- M.Ed. or Graduate Certificate in Curriculum & Instruction**
- M.S. in Nutrition + Dietetic Internship**
- M.S. in Exercise Science**

COMING FALL 2024: **M.A. in Counseling**
**pending approval from the Higher Learning Commission*



Learn more at: OBU.EDU/GOE

IN MEMORIAM

We remember the following friends who recently passed away, listed with their class years and dates of death.

1940s

Jarrell Bayron Felton '49 • June 21, 2023

Frances (Hoffmann) Stevens '49 • March 30, 2021

Marianne (Hestir) Williams '49 • Feb. 9, 2020

1950s

Sallie (Dollins) Franks '50 • Feb. 23, 2023

Martice Edwin Attaway '51 • April 29, 2023

Clyde E. Harris, Jr. '52 • March 22, 2023

James W. Johns '52 • Oct. 15, 2022

John L. Malone '53 • March 12, 2023

S.D. Hacker '55 died April 26, 2023. S.D. pastored six churches and was director of missions for three Arkansas associations. He served in training capacities with the



Arkansas Baptist State Convention, was a member of the Williams Baptist College Board of Trustees, received Ouachita's first Director of Missions of the Year award, served as president of Arkansas Missionaries Fellowship and wrote Sunday school lessons for *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*. Preceded in death by wife Lois and son David, S.D. is survived by daughters Sherry (Hacker) Lawrence '75 and Vicky Norton and seven grandchildren.

Lamar Watkins '55 • May 5, 2023

James Edward "Buddy" Cheshier '56 • June 23, 2023

Billy J. Hogue '56 • March 22, 2023

Barbara (Peacock) Hickingbotham Wood '56



died May 19, 2023. She was a longtime member of Immanuel Baptist Church of Little Rock, where she served in many ways including starting the Prayer Shawl Ministry. She served as regional director of Green Thumb/Experience Works, Inc., Arkansas executive director of the National Society to Prevent Blindness and as Arkansas Secretary of State Kelly Bryant's director of internal affairs. She was a member of the Parkway Village Board of Trustees, 55 Plus Advisory Council for Baptist Health Medical Center, Rotary Club and American Management Association. Barbara is survived by husband Roy Wood, sons Herren and Todd Hickingbotham and five grandchildren.

1960s

Earl M. Jones, Jr. '60 • April 1, 2023

William Richard "Dick" Norton '60 • July 9, 2023

Mary Ellen (Venable) Brogdon '61 • April 18, 2023

Phillip Edward Franz '62 • June 2023

David Lavine Booth '63 • May 6, 2023

Ralph Marvin Cloar Jr. '63



died April 5, 2023. Following a successful career as an accountant, he graduated from the University of Arkansas School of Law. He received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Arkansas Trial Lawyers Association, which he served as president, and an Outstanding Lawyer Award from the Arkansas Bar Association. Ralph served as a deacon and Sunday school teacher at Calvary Church of Little Rock. Preceded in death by wife Kary and daughter Mary Virginia Struthers, Ralph is survived by daughter Lynn Cooper and son Ralph Cloar, III, and five grandchildren.

Molly Helen (Goforth) Kircher '64 • June 18, 2023

David Lowell Osmon '64 • May 8, 2023

Rebecca "Kay" (Moore) Sims '64 • May 24, 2023

Clinton Harper '65 • June 5, 2019

James Roy Lawrence '65 • Feb. 23, 2023

Peggy (Gullage) Lewis '65 • March 7, 2023

Eddie Rettstatt '65 • March 14, 2023

Ann (Pollard) Tatom '65 • Nov. 15, 2022

Beverly (Glover) Duncan '66 • May 18, 2023

Freddie Marrion Gay '66 • May 20, 2023

Evern Hunter Browning '69 • March 31, 2023

1970s

Wayne Green '70 • Feb. 7, 2023

Robert Charles McMennis '73 • April 13, 2023

Clyde Edward "Eddy" Watson '73 • Feb. 18, 2023

Bertha Mae (Gough) Irvin '75 • April 12, 2023

Helen (Pickett) McCmel '75 • March 15, 2023

Forrest Dale Bohlen '76 • May 11, 2023

Ottis James Cooper '76 • May 10, 2023

Phillip Pittman '76 • May 31, 2023

Amanda Pauline (Collins) Bowles '77 • June 11, 2023

Rose Bud Higgs '78 • June 6, 2023

..... 1980s

Michael “Mike” Ray Southern ’80 •
July 15, 2023

Lisa (Castleberry) Tucker ’80 • March 29, 2023

John Frederick “Fred” Ball, II ’82 •
July 14, 2023

Linda Marie (Wallace) Tapson ’82 •
June 8, 2023

Maureen (Leonard) Thomas ’82 •
May 31, 2023

Victor Bryan Webb ’84 •
April 15, 2023

SETH MCDOWELL REMEMBERED FOR AUTHENTICITY AND KINDNESS

By Felley (Nall) Lawson ’88, communications & marketing manager

Seth McDowell, 22, of Benton, Ark., died July 30. A graduate of Bauxite High School, McDowell was working toward an English and secondary education double major at Ouachita Baptist University and was a former member of the Tiger football team.

“To know Seth was to be charmed by his authenticity,” said Jennifer Burkett Pittman, chair of Ouachita’s Department of Languages & Literature. “I join his family and friends in grieving this tragic, tragic loss.”

McDowell was “absolutely loved by everyone he met because of his charm.



It was impossible to make him mad and easy to grab his attention,” said Gary Storment, a Christian studies/biblical studies & theology Ouachita graduate who became friends with McDowell during summer practices on the basketball court at Bauxite High School when the two were 14 years old.

McDowell and Storment pledged the Beta Beta men’s social club together at Ouachita. Josh Wallace, an engineering physics major from Arkadelphia, Ark., was a member of their pledge class, too. As an Arkadelphia Badger, Wallace had played high school football against McDowell; as Ouachita Tigers, he and McDowell were teammates.

“Seth always found ways to include and respect everyone around him, to reach out to people who weren’t the most outgoing,”

Wallace said. “He could make anyone around him laugh, even if that meant making fun of himself at times.”

Kenta Jones, a kinesiology graduate pursuing a master’s degree in exercise science at Ouachita in the fall, was a Tiger freshman defensive back in July 2019 when he met McDowell – also a freshman defensive back.

“Seth was a determined, kindhearted person,” Jones said. “We were from completely different cultures, but he accepted me no matter what others would think of him. When I called him ‘Seff’ instead of ‘Seth’ the first time I met him, he never corrected me because of my accent. He told everyone to call him ‘Seff’ instead.”

“Seth always cared, and he was always supportive,” Storment added. “I know he was a Christian, and I know that a resurrection is coming. Death does not have the final say.”

Sarah Smith, instructor of English at Ouachita, was McDowell’s academic advisor.

“The narrator in a book Seth and I both loved writes, ‘You will know me by my voice.’ I was blessed to know Seth by his voice: the voice of a gifted storyteller, a perceptive reader of the human condition on and off the page and a kind, genuine, generous young man,” Smith said. “He will be sorely missed.”

McDowell is survived by his fiancée, Jessalyn Ahrens, a junior elementary education major from Dewitt, Ark., and family including his parents, Bo McDowell and Misty Haeber; brother, Cade McDowell; and two sisters, Faith McDowell and Addison Moore. A celebration of McDowell’s life was held Friday, Aug. 11, at Family Church in Bryant.

Bradley Wayne Sutton ’87 died March 28, 2023. At Ouachita, Brad was a member of Student Senate, Baptist Student Union and the Kappa Chi men’s



social club. He was a graduate of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and was worship leader at FBC Highland Village, Texas, and FBC Little Elm, Texas, before starting Point Church in Little Elm with his wife, Gretchen. Brad was full of joy, fun and genuine love for others – his family most of all. As his daughter says, the only thing he loved more than his family was Jesus. In addition to Gretchen, Brad is survived by sons Benjamin and Will Sutton, daughter **Shelby (Sutton) Cox ’17** and one granddaughter.

Ida Annette Collier ’88 • May 15, 2023

Jimmy Dale Turner ’89 • April 17, 2023

..... 1990s

Kenneth Neal McClenny ’98 • July 15, 2023

..... Faculty

Marvin Arnold Lawson died Aug. 7, 2023. He is remembered professionally as a witty, kind and passionate band director from



Smackover, Hazen and, ultimately, at Ouachita, where he served 30 years on the faculty. While at Ouachita, he adapted the fight song “Will the Circle Be Unbroken.” In 1972, Marvin became the first conductor of an Arkansas All-State Band who had once been an All-State Band member. To honor Marvin, a band composition titled “With Sounding Trumpets” was dedicated to him by Dr. Francis McBeth, longtime professor of music at Ouachita. Preceded in death by wife Nancy, he is survived by sons **Arnie ’85** and **Alan Lawson ’87** and three grandchildren.

WHISENHUNT NURSING EDUCATION CENTER DEDICATED

By Felley (Nall) Lawson '88, communications & marketing manager

Ouachita dedicated the new Whisenhunt Nursing Education Center in March with a celebration of the faculty, staff, renovation teams and donors who brought the project to fruition, as well as the significant impact Ouachita's nursing department has as it prepares nurses to serve across the state and beyond. The center opened for the 2022-23 academic year to serve the university's Department of Nursing and other healthcare-related academic programs.

"As a Christian university, we believe that God involves people in his larger redemptive purposes; that he chooses to include Christian nurses – women and men who are called to be compassionate and competent – to extend care and comfort, help, healing and hope. In doing so, the profession of nursing can also be a ministry," said Dr. Ben Sells, Ouachita president. "To our supporters, your partnership has gotten us to this day. It's an investment in preparing these kinds of nurses, who seem more important than ever."

During his remarks, Sells also announced for the first time that the final capstone gift to complete the project was made by Gene '83 and Kathy Whisenhunt of Little Rock, and the facility is named in their honor. In May, the Whisenhunt family gathered in Arkadelphia to cut the ceremonial ribbon on the building.

The Whisenhunt Nursing Education Center is the outcome of reimagining, expanding and equipping space acquired by Ouachita in 2002 and previously used as the university's Hammons House for guests. In February 2021, the university undertook planning to transform the existing 4,400-square foot structure into a 6,600-square foot, state-of-the-art clinical education facility. Construction began in Summer 2021 and was complete in time for the opening of the Fall 2022 semester.

In the WNEC, students gain essential clinical experience in the safety of a controlled setting. The center includes the six-bed Everett Clinical Skills Lab, the Turnage Medication Room and five simulated hospital patient rooms (Mercy Acute Classroom; Baptist Health OB/GYN Classroom; Saline Health System Community Health Classroom; Arkansas

Children's Pediatric Classroom; and CHI St. Vincent Emergency Room Classroom). High-fidelity simulation manikins replicate real-life scenarios, allowing students to practice assessment, clinical skills and communication without risk of harm to patients. Manikins were provided by Blue & You Foundation for a Healthier Arkansas and Roy & Christine Sturgis Trust of Dallas.

Other instructional spaces in the Whisenhunt Nursing Education Center are the Home Classroom with smartboard technology and seating for 40 students, and the Berryman Conference Room with digital audio/video recording and playback of student performance in simulated patient experiences. Students may

study or relax in the Hammons Student Lounge or Dunklin Courtyard, and faculty meet students and prepare for class in the Hunter Faculty Suite.

Ouachita's Department of Nursing now serves more than 100 students and offers two pathways for students to obtain a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree. A four-year residential program is available on Ouachita's Arkadelphia campus, and a RN-to-BSN option is available as a fully online, degree completion program to those who already are registered nurses. The residential program has received initial approval from the Arkansas State Board of Nursing.

Learn more about Ouachita's Department of Nursing at obu.edu/nursing.



Gene '83 and Kathy Whisenhunt of Little Rock gathered with their family in Arkadelphia to cut the ceremonial ribbon on the Whisenhunt Nursing Education Center at Ouachita. The family includes (front row) Barry '10 and Haley (Whisenhunt) '12 McCaskill, Noah Harrell, Hayes McCaskill, Gene Whisenhunt, Layne McCaskill, Kathy Whisenhunt, Tassie Whisenhunt, (back row) Bubby '13 and Mary (Whisenhunt) '13 Harrell, Collin Harrell and Jared Whisenhunt '15. Photo by Madeline Raine.



A HOME FOR THE TIMES

When I was six, my family moved into a president's home as my father took the helm at a Baptist university. Early on, I discovered that he put loose change in his briefcase and

didn't seem to mind that I collected the coins. In time, I started reading his papers, sparking my interest in Christian higher education.

He encouraged my interest, allowing me to be involved in campus life. I loved it! He mentored and encouraged me as my career unfolded. Many of my patterns, like preparing speeches, follow his; you'll even find loose change in my backpack. People who remember him in that role tell me we look and sound alike.

As a child, I couldn't know how much I would be shaped by life in that president's home. And without my father, it's difficult to imagine being in the role I fill now.

Regrettably, my parents passed away a decade before Lisa and I moved into Ouachita's president's home.

While the two homes – and perhaps the presidents filling them – are similar, the times are different. Then, Christian colleges were growing significantly. Now, higher education faces national decline, with about 1 million fewer college students than just four years ago.

Then, what it meant to be a Christian college was clearer. Today, it's less so. I meet with parents of prospective students who visit campus and frequently am asked: "What does Ouachita mean by being a Christian university?"

Parents have noticed that being a Christian university has become less clear as institutions with similar origins have diverged over time, a fact reflected in their rhetoric, student life experiences and more. Many institutions founded with Christian missions no longer are categorized as Christian.

Of the country's 3,000 universities, fewer than 200 are distinctly Christian, like Ouachita. And the number is declining as Christian colleges close each year. There are so few because it's so hard. It requires a special commitment from all involved.

Ouachita is a *university*, intent on being academically excellent. That commitment is reflected in stellar student outcomes, such as high graduation and placement rates, establishing Ouachita as a leading institution of higher education in our region and beyond.

Ouachita is also *Christian*, intent on being Christ-centered. That promise is reflected in our biblical commitments, affiliation with the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, faith of faculty and staff and a student

population that describes itself as Christian – at a rate of 90%. Parents report that our Christian identity is the leading reason for selecting Ouachita.

I have a vivid memory from one of my father's speeches when he drew from John 14:2-6, where Jesus says, "in my Father's house are many rooms" and "I go to prepare a place for you."

This truth reminds me that in our work of Christian higher education, then and now, it's ultimately about a promise of a better Home.

I'm grateful for the generations who came before us who faithfully and effectively stewarded this Christian university. As we start our 138th year, I believe this commitment helps explain our institutional momentum and the unique kind of college home we provide for our students. Yes, we aim to prepare students to pursue their preferred job or graduate school, but equally as important, we seek to form students to pursue Jesus in all areas of their lives as they move forward to establish homes of their own.

*It's ultimately
about the promise
of a better Home.*

Ben Sells, Ph.D.
President

OUACHITA BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

HOMECOMING

& Family Weekend



HOMECOMING & FAMILY WEEKEND SCHEDULE

Thursday, Sept. 28

TRUCKS & TUNES

4-7 P.M. | 5TH & OUACHITA STREETS

Enjoy dinner from local and regional food trucks! Cash and cards accepted.

MEN'S SOCCER VS. FORT HAYS STATE UNIVERSITY

4 P.M. | KLUCK FIELD

TIGER TUNES

7:30 P.M. | JONES PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

Friday, Sept. 29

HOMECOMING PURPLE PLAZA PARTY

11 A.M.-1 P.M. | GRANT PLAZA/CAMPUS LAWN

Amidst waving purple banners you'll find games and activities planned by campus clubs and orgs, live music, a pep rally and a BBQ lunch on the lawn! Cash and cards accepted for lunch.

RAIN LOCATION: OUACHITA COMMONS

OUACHITA REUNION DINNER

6 P.M. | TIGER ALLEY (5TH ST. BETWEEN JPAC AND JSC)

Celebrating the classes of 1983, 1993, 2003 & 2013. All classes welcome! Details and tickets at obu.edu/homecoming

WOMEN'S TENNIS REUNION DINNER

7 P.M. | WARD TENNIS CENTER

TIGER TUNES

7:30 P.M. | JONES PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

Saturday, Sept. 30

NEW FOR 2023: TIGER FEST! TAILGATE & BRUNCH

9-11:30 A.M. | KLUCK PAVILION, CLIFF HARRIS STADIUM

Join us for fellowship and fun! Campus groups will host drop-ins, a delicious brunch will be served (cash and cards accepted) and a CubZone for kids will be provided free of charge.

CROSS COUNTRY/TRACK & FIELD REUNION

9 A.M. | CREWS INDOOR ATHLETIC FACILITY

ALUMNI SWIM MEET

9 A.M. | WAGGONER POOL, SPEC

PRE-GAME ACTIVITIES

11:30 A.M. | BENSON-WILLIAMS FIELD, CLIFF HARRIS STADIUM

HOMECOMING FOOTBALL GAME

NOON | BENSON-WILLIAMS FIELD, CLIFF HARRIS STADIUM

Tickets available at obutigers.com

CONE-BOTTOMS FRONT PORCH PICNIC

AFTER THE GAME | CONE-BOTTOMS LAWN

Celebrating 100 years of Cone-Bottoms Hall.

Featuring live music by Clay Mobley '20 & Kelsey Lamb '14

SENIOR WALK RIBBON CUTTING: CLASS OF 2022

3:30 P.M. | IN FRONT OF MABEE FINE ARTS CENTER

HOMECOMING STREET FESTIVAL

4-8:30 P.M. | TIGER ALLEY

Grilled fajitas, street tacos and more will be served.

Cash and cards accepted.

RAIN LOCATION: OUACHITA COMMONS

MEN'S SOCCER VS. NEWMAN UNIVERSITY

4 P.M. | KLUCK FIELD

TIGER TUNES

5 P.M. & 8:30 P.M. | JONES PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

TO LEARN MORE, VISIT:
OBU.EDU/HOMECOMING

MAKE YOUR OUACHITA EXPERIENCE YOUR OWN



Whether you've been to Ouachita a thousand times or you've just heard stories from family, come visit and experience Ouachita for yourself!

FALL 2023 VISIT EVENT DATES:

- SEPT. 4** • TIGER DAY
- SEPT. 27 OR 28** • EXPLORE! Ouachita, Tiger Tunes
- OCT. 27** • TIGER DAY
- NOV. 11** • BATTLE OF THE RAVINE
- NOV. 17** • TIGER DAY
- DEC. 1** • A FESTIVAL OF CHRISTMAS



PLAN A VISIT!
SCAN THE QR CODE OR GO ONLINE:
obu.edu/visit