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## Four Ouachita Students Honored as State NATS Finalists

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**OUACHITA**  
BAPTIST UNIVERSITY



**NEWS**

For immediate release

**Four Ouachita students honored as state NATS finalists**

*By Chelsea Whelpley*

March 13, 2015

For more information, contact OBU's news bureau at [newsbureau@obu.edu](mailto:newsbureau@obu.edu) or (870) 245-5208

ARKADELPHIA, Ark. – Four Ouachita Baptist University students were named finalists at the 40th annual Arkansas National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) conference held at Arkansas Tech University in Russellville, Ark., earlier this month.

Affirming that being named a finalist or semifinalist is a testament of students' hard work and talent, Dr. Margaret Garrett, assistant professor of music, said, "I am proud of all the students who attend NATS, as they work to accomplish their best singing in preparation for the event."

Founded in 1944, NATS is the largest professional association of teachers of singing in the world with thousands of members in nearly 30 countries. NATS offers a variety of lifelong learning experiences to its members. Ouachita students participated in the Arkansas conference, where participants had the opportunity to attend recitals, master classes and professional workshops and presentations in addition to the competitive auditions. This year's guest clinician was Dean Southern, who serves on the voice faculty at Cleveland Institute of Music.

Noting that she "very much enjoyed having the chance to engage the audience and bring them on a journey," Jillian Turner, a senior vocal performance major from Fort Worth, Texas, said, "NATS has always sought to encourage singers to make their quality of performance the best that it can be. It is a helpful practice trial for musicians that wish to audition in the professional music world as well as any young musician that wishes to strengthen and control nerves and become more comfortable in stressful situations."

"NATS competitions are vital opportunities for our students to hear other performers just like themselves who are studying in a university setting," said David Stanley, instructor of music. "It also puts a little bit of pressure to perform to their best ability in front a panel of professional evaluators."

The following Ouachita students were NATS finalists, in order of hometown:

**Fort Worth, Texas** – Jillian Turner, a senior vocal performance student of Margaret Garrett and Glenda Secrest, was awarded first place in the senior women division and second place in the upper music theatre division.

**Henderson, Texas** – Molly Salmon, a senior music student of David Stanley, earned third place in the senior women division.

**Rogers, Ark.** – Esther Atkinson, a freshman musical theatre student of David Stanley, earned first place in the freshman women division and first place in the lower music theatre division. John Doss, a senior music student of David Stanley, earned second place in the upper music theatre division.

Other Ouachita students named NATS semifinalists, in order of hometown, include:

**Bella Vista, Ark.** – Sarah Talley, a senior voice performance student of John Alec Briggs, was a semifinalist in the senior women division.

**Boerne, Texas** – Courtney Kelley, a freshman choral music education student of Margaret Garrett, was a semifinalist in the freshman women division.

**Crossett, Ark.** – Seth Russell, a junior vocal performance student of David Stanley and Jon Secrest, was a semifinalist in the junior men division.

**McKinney, Texas** – Lizzie Shelby, a sophomore voice performance student of Suzetta Glenn, was a semifinalist in the sophomore women division.

**Plumerville, Ark.** – Breanna Bucko, a senior choral music education student of Robin Williams and Jon Secrest, was a semifinalist in the senior women division.

**Pueblo West, Colo.** – Erin Cheshire, a junior choral music education student of Robin Williams, was a semifinalist in the junior women division.

**Russellville, Ark.** – Hannah Hines, a freshman musical theatre student of Margaret Garrett, was a semifinalist in the freshman women and lower music theatre divisions.

**Terrell, Texas** – AJ Valdez, a freshman musical theatre student of Robin Williams, was a semifinalist in the lower music theatre division.

**Wylie, Texas** – Cory Feuerbacher, a senior music student of John Alec Briggs, was a semifinalist in the upper music theatre division.

Susan Monroe and Phyllis Walker served as piano collaborators to the Ouachita students.

The OBU vocal faculty who worked with Ouachita students to prepare for this conference include: John Alec Briggs, instructor of music; Dr. Margaret Garrett, assistant professor of music; Suzetta Glenn, lecturer in music; Dr. Becky Morrison, assistant professor of music; Dr. Glenda Secrest, professor of music; Dr. Jon Secrest, professor of music; David Stanley, instructor of music; and Robin Williams, lecturer in music.

For more information about NATS or Ouachita's vocal studies program, contact Dr. Margaret Garrett at [garrettm@obu.edu](mailto:garrettm@obu.edu) or (870) 245-5271.