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Trennis Henderson

*Ouachita Baptist University*

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**OUACHITA**  
BAPTIST UNIVERSITY



**NEWS**

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For additional information, contact the OBU News Bureau at 870-245-5206

## **Charles Wright, retired Fine Arts dean, named interim president of Ouachita**

*By Trennis Henderson, OBU Vice President for Communications*

ARKADELPHIA, Ark.—Dr. Charles Wright, professor emeritus of music and retired dean of Ouachita Baptist University's School of Fine Arts, has been named interim president of Ouachita, according to Jay Heflin, chair of the university's Board of Trustees.

Dr. Wright will serve in the interim role following the completion of Dr. Rex Horne's tenure as president at the end of July. Dr. Horne, who has served since 2006 as Ouachita's 15<sup>th</sup> president, recently announced his resignation to accept the presidency of Arkansas' Independent Colleges and Universities.

"We are very pleased to have Dr. Charles Wright serving as Ouachita's interim president," Heflin said. "Dr. Wright has dedicated his career to serving Ouachita in numerous ways. He is the ideal individual to help lead us during these days of transition."

Heflin said Dr. Wright's "understanding of where we have been and where we need to go will allow for a smooth transition from Dr. Horne's leadership to our next president. Dr. Wright's understanding of the Ouachita culture will be very encouraging to all of Ouachita's constituencies. He is an individual we all respect and trust greatly.

"Dr. Horne served Ouachita extremely well during his nine-plus year tenure," Heflin added. "He led us through some very challenging days, and we are in a much stronger position as a result. We are thankful for his leadership and guidance during his time with us and wish him and Mrs. Horne much success as they continue to follow God's calling in his new role."

Dr. Wright, who retired in 2004 following a 40-year career at Ouachita, returned to the university staff in 2013 as a development officer. He holds three degrees from Ouachita: a Bachelor of Arts degree in speech and drama, a Bachelor of Music Education degree in choral music and a Master of Music Education degree in choral music. He also holds a Doctor of Education degree in music education from North Texas State University (now the University of North Texas).

His responsibilities at Ouachita included teaching choral music education courses, conducting and voice. He served as conductor of the Ouachita Singers for 25 years and conducted the Concert Choir until his retirement in 2004. The Charles W. Wright Choral Rehearsal Hall in Mabee Fine Arts Center is named in his honor.

Dr. Wright was named dean of Ouachita's School of Music in 1982 and served in that role until 1996 when the School of Music and the departments of art and theatre were restructured to create the School of Fine Arts. He served as School of Fine Arts dean until his retirement. Dr. Wright also served as acting

vice president for academic affairs from 2001 to 2003 and was vice chair of the presidential search committee that recommended Dr. Horne as president.

“While I believe it will be impossible for me to replace President Rex Horne even for a relatively brief interim,” Dr. Wright said, “I am very grateful to Mr. Jay Heflin, chairman of the Ouachita Board of Trustees, and to each of the trustees for this high honor and for the confidence they have placed in me. I have spent most of my life at Ouachita and my love for her and our faculty, staff and students has no boundaries.

“Dr. Horne has been an exceptional administrator as president and has gained the love and trust of our faculty, staff, administration and students,” Dr. Wright added. “We all deeply regret that he is leaving and will certainly miss him. My personal challenge is to assist in every way possible to help Ouachita continue to make the amazing progress she has made under his astute leadership.”

Dr. Wright’s wife, Margaret, also retired in 2004 after serving 35 years at Ouachita. Mrs. Wright, who passed away in 2013, had served as professor of accounting and chair of the Division of Business and Economics as well as director of corporate and foundation programs. They have one daughter, Kimberly, a music graduate of Ouachita, who has been a member of the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra for the past 20 years.