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NEWS

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Ouachita Special Collections opening honors Hickey, Holley and Knight

By Trennis Henderson and Rachel Gaddis

March 13, 2016

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

ARKADELPHIA, Ark.—Honoring the lives of three longtime Arkansas leaders, Ouachita Baptist University's Riley-Hickingbotham Library recently hosted the opening of special collections that reflect each of three men's life work. The collections include an array of papers and other memorabilia donated in honor of Glenn Hickey, Bob Holley and John Knight. A fourth collection features extensive government records from the city of Arkadelphia.

The three honorees, who all have ties to Ouachita, served in diverse leadership roles throughout their careers. Hickey was a former missionary to Brazil and director of missions for Pulaski Baptist Association, Holley was the longtime director of Discipleship Training for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention and Knight was director of the Arkansas Department of Aeronautics.

Welcoming guests to the special collections opening, Interim President Charles Wright said, "I have had the privilege of knowing all three of these people. On behalf of Ouachita Baptist University, we are grateful to receive the papers of these great gentlemen, these godly men.

"I can't tell you how significant and how important it is for a university like Ouachita to receive papers of this quality," Dr. Wright added. "It says something about the intellectual atmosphere on our campus and in our library."

Dr. Ray Granade, OBU's director of library services, expressed appreciation to "the folks who were generous enough to donate" materials for the collections as well as the library and archives staff and student workers "for their hard work in making the collections available."

Dr. Byron Eubanks, professor of philosophy, voiced gratitude for the Hickey family providing papers in memory of Dr. Hickey who passed away in 2013. Dr. Hickey's sister, Glenna Lybrand, and his son, Daniel Hickey, were among family members and friends who attended the opening.

Dr. Hickey graduated from Ouachita in 1949, where he sang in a barbershop quartet and met his wife, Dorothy. Hickey answered the call to ministry in 1952, and, in 1964 he and his wife were appointed as Southern Baptist international missionaries to Recife, Brazil. During their time there, Hickey served as pastor of Igreja Central da Ibura, taught at North Brazil Baptist Theological Seminary and served as president of the board of directors of the American School of Recife. After returning to the United States, Hickey served as pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Batesville, Ark., and as the director of missions for Pulaski Baptist Association, serving a total of nearly 60 years in ministry

Noting that one of Dr. Hickey's missionary colleagues described him as "a Renaissance missionary because of his pursuit and use in ministry of a wide variety of interests including preaching, teaching, writing, counseling, learning languages, singing, ham radio, snow skiing and cycling," Dr. Eubanks said, "I think it's safe to say Glenn was a person of great mental and physical energy and talent."

Citing the Glenn Hickey collection of “sermon notes, news clippings, correspondence and sound recordings of church services, the OBU quartet and church duets with Dorothy,” Dr. Eubanks added, “We’re pleased to dedicate that collection.”

Dr. Jeff Root, dean of OBU’s School of Humanities, spoke on behalf of his father-in-law, Bob Holley, who was not able to attend the opening due to health issues. He and his wife, Lucille, currently live in an assisted living retirement community in Arkadelphia. Their daughters, Anita Pumphrey and Dr. Deborah Root, chair of the Rogers Department of Communications at Ouachita, were among family members attending the event.

Bob Holley entered the ministry after graduating from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1954. He was an education minister for 14 years in churches throughout Arkansas, including Conway, Little Rock, McGehee and West Memphis, as well as in Montgomery, Ala. Holley joined the Arkansas Baptist State Convention staff in 1968, where he served for 29 years, including 24 years as director of Discipleship Training. In this role, Holley worked with Arkansas Baptist churches to develop Discipleship Training programs, senior adult ministries and deacon training, among other initiatives, to enhance church outreach and membership development.

“It is my pleasure and honor this morning to say a few words about my father-in-law, Bob Holley,” Dr. Jeff Root said. “He did a tremendous amount of work all over the state, including training churches in discipleship, deacon care and marriage and family ministry. That training continues to bless people all over the state.

“We were very pleased to be able to come to Ouachita and say that he has a collection that he would like to donate to the university,” he added. “He connected to so many people and ministered to so many people through the years.”

John Knight retired in 2014 following 27 years with the Arkansas Department of Aeronautics. He and his wife, Rose, are the parents of Dr. Tim Knight, dean of Ouachita’s Patterson School of Natural Sciences, and Todd Knight, OBU’s head football coach.

According to Dr. Tim Knight, each of the collections being dedicated is “even more unique and more special than most of us realize. They’re a window to the past. These gentlemen got to do something that was their passion.”

Concerning his father’s collection, “it’s history, it’s aviation, it’s agriculture, it’s industry, it’s the small towns in Arkansas that may not have had an airport that now have one or have one that is now better quality,” Dr. Knight noted. “If you start thinking about how all of those things are connected, you can see the uniqueness of this type collection.”

Dr. Knight said his father’s leadership involved “nearly a 30-year career at the Department of Aeronautics that spanned a handful of governors, both Democrat and Republican. ... Over the course of nearly 30 years, he’s got his picture holding a check and shaking the mayor’s hand of most every small community in the state of Arkansas because they got funding to improve their airport and he delivered the check.”

John Knight attended the University of Arkansas at Monticello before working in private industry from 1968 to 1988. He then worked for the Arkansas Department of Aeronautics for 27 years, receiving numerous honors and awards from local, state and federal government, as well as from civic and aviation organizations. Knight was assistant director under Gov. Bill Clinton and was appointed director by Gov. Jim Guy Tucker in 1992, where he served until retiring in 2014.

In addition to the three personal collections, Arkadelphia city government records were added to the library’s special collections. The city of Arkadelphia became the Clark County seat in 1842 and has since grown into the political, economic and cultural center of the county.

Dr. Doug Reed, chair of the OBU Department of Political Science, noted that the collection includes Arkadelphia city ordinances and council minutes “from the end of the Civil War until 2001” as well as city manager correspondence from 2000 to 2014. He said the Arkadelphia collection will allow researchers and the general public to access significant historical documents as well as gain the opportunity to “better understand the ongoing work of the city.”

The mission of archives and special collections in the Riley-Hickingbotham Library is to contribute to the preservation and transmission of culture by identifying, protecting and making available materials of enduring value that document life on the university campus, in Clark County and in the state of Arkansas.

For more information, contact Dr. Wendy Richter, OBU archivist, at richterw@obu.edu or (870) 245-5332.