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Ouachita News Bureau

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OUACHITA
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NEWS

For immediate release

Ouachita's Carl Goodson Honors Program announces grant recipients, inducts new members

By Haley Wilkerson

February 6, 2017

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

ARKADELPHIA, Ark.—Ouachita Baptist University's Carl Goodson Honors Program awarded five grants for student research initiatives, inducted more than 100 new members and presented badges to 30 honors students for successful thesis proposals at Alpha Tau's annual Black and White Reception.

"The first members of Alpha Tau created the Black and White Reception as an opportunity for honors students to gather and celebrate academic excellence and research within the honors program, to induct new members and to enjoy being together," explained Dr. Barbara Pemberton, director of the program and OBU professor of Christian missions.

Ouachita's Carl Goodson Honors Program was established more than 50 years ago to further academic excellence and to encourage intellectual growth for high-achieving students. Students eligible for the program pursue 13 hours above their regular degree plan to explore subjects not offered through the regular curriculum and conduct research under a professor for their theses. Alpha Tau is the student-led honors society for Honors Program students that coordinates community service opportunities, monthly colloquia, social events and other activities.

Several students involved in the program were awarded travel grants to further explore their areas of study and conduct research outside of the classroom. The recipients chosen for this year's grants include Anna Joie Valdez, Ben Elrod Scholar; Alex Gianelloni, Carl Goodson Scholar; and Taylor Bascue, Garrett Ham Scholar. Two students were recognized in absentia: Morgan Howard, Carl Goodson Scholar, and Ashley Sharpe, Ben Elrod Scholar, were awarded grants but currently are out of the country participating in the Hands-On program and study abroad.

"It's a dream come true. When I was in sixth grade, my advanced reading class read Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. I fell in love with the story, and, through that, with theatre," said Valdez, a junior musical theatre major from Terrell, Texas, who will use the grant to attend a six-week Shakespeare program in London through Richmond University. "I'll be doing an intensive program at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, working with professional actors, directors and technicians. I'm so grateful to Dr. Elrod and the honors committee for this opportunity."

Dr. Ben Elrod, Ouachita chancellor and former president, presented the award named in his honor.

Gianelloni, a senior Christian studies major from Magnolia, Ark., plans to use the grant during his participation in the Hands-On program through the Southern Baptist International Mission Board where he will "work with professional missionaries in order to gain valuable missions experience," he said. "I will specifically be using the money I received in order to travel around the country that I will be going to and talk to local church leaders and congregations about how they are able to contextualize the Bible and Christianity for the culture and people where they live."

Noting that winning the grant “has been able to lift a burden off of my shoulders,” Gianelloni said, “I am very grateful for its namesake and our Honors Program’s namesake, Dr. Carl Goodson, along with his son, Dr. Tim Goodson, who continues to care for us in the program.”

Bascue, a Christian studies and biblical languages major from Riverton, Wyo., said he “feels very honored” to have received a travel grant. “I am very thankful to Garrett Ham and the faculty council for making it possible.” Bascue plans to use the grant to buy books that will help his thesis research and to meet with professors and other scholars in the field of study.

Morgan Howard is a junior English and mass communications major from Lavon, Texas, and she will use her grant to study British fairy tales in Great Britain. Ashley Sharpe is a junior Christian studies/Christian missions and theology major from Houston, Texas, and she will use her grant to study Inuit philosophy in Alaska.

Speakers at the reception included Dr. Abby Dekle Russ, a 2012 Ouachita graduate and founding member of Alpha Tau and the Black and White Reception, and Ouachita President Dr. Ben Sells who gave the concluding charge to the honors program students and closing prayer. Other special guests included Dr. Ben M. Elrod, chancellor and former president of Ouachita, and his wife, Betty Lou, and Dr. Daniel Grant, Ouachita president emeritus, and his wife, Betty Jo. Dr. Stan Poole, vice president for academic affairs, and Phil Hardin, assistant to the president, and his wife, Shirley, were also in attendance. Tyler Sanders, a sophomore music business major from Arkadelphia, Ark., provided entertainment for the evening.

For more information about the Carl Goodson Honors Program, visit www.obu.edu/honors or contact Dr. Pemberton at pembertonb@obu.edu or (870) 245-5541.