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NEWS

For immediate release

Dr. J.D. Patterson, noted Ouachita supporter, remembered for life of ministry and service

By Trennis Henderson, OBU Vice President for Communications

March 28, 2017

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ARKADELPHIA, Ark.—Dr. J.D. Patterson, a noted alumnus, benefactor and former trustee of Ouachita Baptist University, died Sunday, March 26, at age 90.

University trustees affirmed Dr. Patterson's lifelong commitment to Ouachita by naming the J.D. Patterson School of Natural Sciences in his honor in 2002. A 1947 Ouachita alumnus, he received Ouachita's Distinguished Alumnus Award in 1984 and an honorary Doctor of Science degree in 1999. He served two terms on the Ouachita Board of Trustees from 2005 through 2011.

"During a recent visit with Dr. Patterson, he talked about his love for Ouachita and his love for missions," said Ouachita President Ben Sells. Noting that "Ouachita is known for its strong science program," Dr. Sells added, "Dr. Patterson's support and partnership is one of the reasons this is true."

Dr. Patterson, who earned his D.D.S. degree from Washington University School of Dentistry in St. Louis, practiced dentistry in Searcy, Ark., for more than 60 years until his retirement in 2015. He was a member of the Arkansas State Dental Association and the American Dental Association. He also served in the U.S. Army as a First Lieutenant Dental Officer at Sukiran Hospital in Okinawa, Japan, during the Korean War.

Known for his strong commitment to missions, Dr. Patterson helped finance and lead numerous stateside and international mission trips, providing dental and medical care to thousands of children and adults. His mission endeavors took him around the globe, including more than 20 projects in Brazil, Chile, China, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Haiti, Kenya, Panama and Tanzania. He was honored by the American Dental Association for meritorious service to the people of Brazil.

Dr. Tim Knight, dean of the Patterson School of Natural Sciences, noted that "Dr. Patterson had a direct influence on my life but he also impacted many students he never met. Over the years, his contributions to Ouachita include our Patterson Summer Research Program, funds to remodel facilities and funding for both international students and missionary kids, as well as hosting students on medical mission trips.

"Dr. Patterson's influence has impacted students for decades and will continue to impact students for generations to come," Dr. Knight added. "I traveled to Brazil with him twice, and it was never a dull moment with Dr. Patterson!"

A generous Ouachita benefactor, Dr. Patterson funded a number of academic initiatives. In addition to establishing a scholarship in honor of his parents, Dr. Jesse and Elizabeth Patterson, he funded the E.A. Provine Chair of Chemistry in memory of his former professor, the J.D. Patterson Chair of Biology, two laboratories in Harvey Jones Science Center and the annual Patterson Summer Research Program.

"Dr. J.D. Patterson has been a great friend to the natural sciences at Ouachita," reflected Dr. Joe Jeffers, the Charles S. and Elma Grey Goodwin Holt Professor of Chemistry and Pre-Medical Studies and former dean of the Patterson School. "J.D. had a whimsical sense of humor. He liked to have fun and he liked folks around him to have fun. One had to be on one's toes around J.D."

“J.D. was very dedicated to Ouachita,” Dr. Jeffers said. “During a renovation of Hamilton Moses Science Building to become Moses-Provine Science Center, J.D. borrowed the money to fund the renovation so it could be done during the summer. When we were trying to get our fledgling summer undergraduate research program off the ground, J.D. was there to support us. He funded the first few years out of pocket while he was setting up an endowment to fund it indefinitely.”

Noting that Dr. Patterson “often took Ouachita students on mission trips to Brazil,” Dr. Jeffers added, “In the Amazon jungles, several of those students got to pull teeth – under supervision, of course.”

In an essay published in *Ouachita Voices: Celebrating 125 Years of Academic & Christian Excellence*, Dr. Patterson cited the influence and impact of such mentors as Dr. Provine and Mrs. Denty, the cafeteria dietician, who provided him opportunities to gain leadership responsibilities during his undergraduate years.

“Why did everything work well for me? Was it because I was willing to work?” Dr. Patterson wrote. “My basis – education – helped me climb the ladder of success.”

Dr. Patterson and his wife, Nancy, who passed away in 2004, were the parents of three daughters, Dr. Beth Patterson of Searcy; Amy Patterson of Sherwood; and Jo DeGroat of Jackson, Miss., all of whom are Ouachita graduates.

“As we celebrate Dr. Patterson’s life and legacy, our university family also expresses sympathy for and appreciation to his daughters and other family members,” Dr. Sells said. “We also honor the memory of Mrs. Nancy Patterson, who partnered with him in ministry and service.”

Visitation will be held from 6 to 8 p.m. on Thursday, March 30, at Valley Baptist Church in Searcy. A memorial service is scheduled for 2 p.m. on Friday, March 31, also at Valley Baptist Church. Arrangements are being handled by Roller-Daniel Funeral Home in Searcy.