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Recommended Citation

Henderson, Trennis and Ouachita News Bureau, "Five Ouachita retirees honored for combined total of 133 years of service" (2017). *Press Releases*. 393.

https://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/press_releases/393

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Five Ouachita retirees honored for combined total of 133 years of service

By Trennis Henderson, OBU Vice President for Communications

May 10, 2017

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ARKADELPHIA, Ark.—Five retiring faculty and staff members with a combined total of more than 130 years of service to Ouachita Baptist University were honored during a campus retirement reception held May 3 in Walker Conference Center.

The honorees included Dr. Joe Jeffers, professor emeritus of chemistry, who taught 46 years at his alma mater; Charolette Allison, executive secretary to the president emerita, who served with six Ouachita presidents over 31 years; Julia Jones, assistant professor emerita of Spanish, who taught at Ouachita for 16 years; Jacque Cash who served 21 years in the campus post office; and Vicki Crossno who served 19 years in building services for facilities management.

Affirming the retiring faculty and staff members' contributions to Ouachita, President Ben Sells noted that "we are honoring faithfulness to the Lord, to Ouachita, to one another and to students. You've been motivated by a calling, satisfaction of work well done, the opportunity to shape students and the fellowship of a college community.

"It's very important that we take a few moments to cast a spotlight on you and express our gratitude to you," he added. "Ouachita won't be same without you. We thank the Lord for you coming to Ouachita, for staying and for finishing well."

In addition to the retirement recognitions, the three faculty and staff members honored with emeritus status by the Ouachita Board of Trustees are Dr. Jeffers, Allison and Jones.

Dr. Jeffers has served since 2013 as the Charles S. and Elma Grey Goodwin Holt Professor of Chemistry and Pre-Medical Studies in the Patterson School of Natural Sciences. He previously served 10 years as the founding dean of the Patterson School and held the W.D. and Alice Burch Chair of Chemistry from 1995 to 2003. A 1966 Ouachita graduate, he holds his Ph.D. from Purdue University.

The Ouachita Student Senate presented Dr. Jeffers the Outstanding Teacher Award in 1991 and the Central Arkansas chapter of the American Chemical Society named him Professor of the Year in 2004. He co-founded Ouachita's Faculty Colloquium in 1974 and was presented Ouachita's Purple and Gold Heart Award in 2004 on the 30th anniversary of the colloquium's founding. He recently published the book, *Frederick Sanger: Two-Time Nobel Laureate in Chemistry*.

Reflecting on his decades of service at Ouachita, Dr. Jeffers said, "I would like to think that my greatest impact with students has been challenging them to develop the study and thinking skills that will serve them for a lifetime. Albert Einstein said, 'Genius is 1 percent talent and 99 percent hard work.' I paraphrase him to say, "Success is 10 percent smarts and 90 percent sweat." We can't all be geniuses, but we can all make the most of our capabilities if we are willing to work."

Charolette Allison, a former Ouachita student, has served in the president's office since 1986, working in the administrations of Dr. Daniel Grant, Dr. Ben Elrod, Dr. Andy Westmoreland, Dr. Rex Horne, Dr. Charles Wright and Dr. Ben Sells.

"I treasure most the lifetime friendships made with students, staff, faculty and trustees," Allison said. "Ouachita people are the best to be found anywhere. They make Ouachita the right choice for people, young and old, to learn and prepare for future careers and service to God and their communities.

"Having the privilege of serving alongside six Ouachita presidents as receptionist, secretary and later executive secretary was beyond my wildest dreams," she noted. "All six men are unique individuals who loved the Lord and Ouachita, serving tirelessly for the good of Ouachita. I thank God for them and the impact they've had on my life and on my family's lives."

Julia Jones, a graduate of Henderson State University, has taught Spanish at Ouachita since 2001. She previously taught English and Spanish at several high schools throughout southwest Arkansas as well as at Rich Mountain Community College and Cossatot Community College.

"I could never imagine being in a place where my students are a constant Christian witness to me," Jones reflected. "They never fail to amaze me every year."