

9-13-2017

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Recommended Citation

Davis, Sarah and News Bureau, Ouachita, "Ouachita students honored, published in journal of essays" (2017). *Press Releases*. 418.
http://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/press_releases/418

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OUACHITA
BAPTIST UNIVERSITY



NEWS

For immediate release

Ouachita students honored, published in journal of essays

By Sarah Davis

September 13, 2017

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

ARKADELPHIA, Ark. – Ouachita Baptist University's Department of Language and Literature honored students on Aug. 30 for having their essays chosen for publication in its annual *Assayers* journal.

Assayers 26 is the 2017-2018 edition of the journal. Students submit their essays to the Department of Language and Literature each year for a panel of judges to read and rank their work. The journal allows students to share their ideas, experiences and research with the university community. The journal is used as a teaching tool in writing classes at Ouachita, and winning writers receive cash awards.

"Writing well with clarity, creativity and courage is an art," said Dr. Doug Sonheim, chair of the department, professor of English and holder of the Clarence and Bennie Sue Anthony Chair of Bible and Humanities. "The writers are being generous and giving their art to the community."

The journal includes two categories: personal essays and research-oriented papers.

Mattie Mae Dodson, a sophomore Biblical studies and English double major from Arkadelphia, placed first in the personal essay category. Laura Ward, a junior English major from Springdale, Ark., won second place; and Bonnie Gentry, a sophomore musical theatre major from Arlington, Texas, won third place. Faith Melton, a sophomore pre-professional kinesiology major from Maumelle, Ark., and Laura Ames Ocampo, a sophomore art education major from Stuttgart, Ark., received honorable mentions.

In Dodson's essay, "Under the Lights of Times Square," she describes a trip to New York while her family was going through a failed adoption. Dodson explained that it felt like "having a sibling die without the finality of a funeral."

"I used this essay as a healing process. Though my first trip to Time Square was glamorous, the rest of my life wasn't. That's what real life is: The bad things we experience emphasize the good," Dodson said. "It's a huge honor to win and it's every writer's dream to have their essay read and talked about in a classroom setting."

Haydn Jeffers, a junior English and mass communications double major from Hot Springs, Ark., placed first in the research category for her essay about Washington Irving. Victoria Anderson, a senior English and mass communications double major from Armorel, Ark., won second place; and Emily Bradley, a senior English, Spanish and secondary education triple major from Conway, Ark., won third place. Carrie Hill, a junior graphic design major from Benton, Ark., and Barrett Pfeiffer, a sophomore mass communications major from Benton, received honorable mentions.

Jeffers' essay, "Washington Irving and the Not-So-American Myth," researched how Irving, who is known as the father of American literature, had no interest in American life but was heavily influenced by traditional European folktales. Jeffers states that Irving's most famous works are retellings of popular European fairy tales.

“As a writer, I’m proud my professors thought something I wrote was good enough to publish, let alone to assign as reading for classes,” Jeffers said. “It really motivates me to keep writing and to always put as much of myself into my work as I possibly can.”

For more information, contact Dr. Doug Sonheim at sonheimd@obu.edu or (870) 245-5554.