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Ouachita retirees honored for more than 200 years of combined service

By Trennis Henderson, vice president for communications

May 10, 2018

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ARKADELPHIA, Ark.—Six retiring faculty and staff members at Ouachita Baptist University, including four longtime faculty and staff who were honored with emeritus status, were recognized during a campus retirement reception held May 2 in Walker Conference Center.

The four emeriti recipients include Dr. Scott Holsclaw, honored for 33 years of service; Phil Hardin, 26 years of service; Dr. Phil Rice, 25 years of service and Sharon Cosh, 25 years of service. Other retirees who were honored include July Hollingsworth, 33 years of service, and Shirley Hardin, 26 years of service. Luke Owens, who served at Ouachita for 34 years, retired in October 2017 and was not present for the retirement reception. The seven retirees represent a combined total of 202 years of service at Ouachita.

Dr. Scott Holsclaw began teaching at Ouachita in 1985. He holds degrees from the University of Kentucky, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and New York University. During his 33 years at Ouachita, he has served as professor of theatre arts, assisted in the planning for construction of Jones Performing Arts Center, established the musical theatre major and served for several years as the dean of the School of Fine Arts.

Ouachita President Ben Sells affirmed Dr. Holsclaw's "thorough understanding of the balance between the arts and the Christian walk," noting that he "has spent countless hours teaching, preparing, and directing campus productions."

Phil Hardin, a 1973 graduate of Ouachita, has served at his *alma mater* since 1992, working with five university presidents. He also holds a master's degree from the University of Texas. For 26 years he has served in a variety of roles at Ouachita, including assistant to the president for administration, director of alumni affairs, director of institutional research, university compliance officer, and Title IX coordinator.

Dr. Sells noted that Hardin "consistently has demonstrated a high level of discernment and discretion. Phil is the epitome of someone who serves without seeking to draw attention to himself," he added. "Many significant things have been accomplished at Ouachita through Phil's effective service."

Dr. Phil Rice has taught at Ouachita since 1993. He has been a professor of business administration and is the founding dean of the Frank D. Hickingbotham School of Business. In addition to helping the School of Business gain accreditation from AACSB, he led in the construction of Hickingbotham Hall in 2006, outlined the “Four-Year Experience Program,” served for a decade as Ouachita’s Faculty Athletic Representative for the NCAA and Gulf South Conference, and has continued to teach part-time and assist the school with ongoing accreditation work since stepping down as dean in 2008.

“Phil has been faithful in making sure students are well prepared for life after college, whether that involves graduate school or a meaningful job,” Dr. Sells said. “He has prepared many students for lives of meaningful work and has demonstrated both high moral character and tremendous integrity.”

Sharon Cosh, a 1996 Ouachita graduate, has served at Ouachita since 1993. She also holds a Master of Arts degree in teaching English as a Second Language from Carson-Newman College (now University). She helped start the ESL program at Ouachita which has been making an impact for 25 years. In addition to her years of full-time service, Cosh has served as secretary in the Pruet School of Christian Studies, an adjunct instructor of ESL, assisted the director of Campus Ministries, and has spent many summers recruiting students and helping develop the Study Abroad program. She has been the longest-serving staff member in the history of the Grant Center for International Education.

“Sharon has lovingly and faithfully worked with international students in welcoming them to Ouachita and has helped cast a vision for many others by equipping them to serve cross-culturally,” Dr. Sells said, adding that her “work and ministry go hand in hand and demonstrate how loving God should be our primary identity and everything else should flow from that.”

Judy Hollingsworth has been working at Ouachita in Student Accounts since 1984. She has spent her entire 33 years serving in Student Accounts.

“Judy has demonstrated a number of character qualities that line up with Ouachita’s vision, mission and values,” Dr. Sells noted. “She has been a steadfast and faithful servant. She values education and that comes across in everything she does. She also has demonstrated the qualities of patience, organization and proficiency.”

Shirley Hardin graduated from Ouachita in 1974 and has worked here since 1992. She has worked in both the Office of Development and the Registrar’s Office. In addition to her current role as assistant registrar, she previously served as a development officer and in a support staff role.

Describing Hardin as “a person of high integrity,” Dr. Sells said, “She is faithful, committed and cares about the students and about the university as a whole. Her attention to detail has proven very helpful throughout the years.”

Luke Owens began serving at Ouachita in Facilities Management in 1983. He retired in October 2017 after 34 years of service.

Expressing appreciation for Owens’ many years of service to the campus community, Dr. Sells noted that Owens “retired in the fall and he’s already on his next adventure.”

Citing the long-term impact of the seven retirees, President Sells added, “Ouachita won’t be the same without you. We thank the Lord and we thank you for coming to Ouachita, for staying at Ouachita and for finishing well.”