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For immediate release

## **Ouachita vocal studies students earn eleven finalist honors in Southern Region NATS auditions**

*By Rachel Bruton*

November 21, 2018

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



ARKADELPHIA, Ark. – Ouachita Baptist University music students earned 11 finalist honors at the 2018 Southern Region Conference and Student Auditions held at Northwestern Louisiana University in Natchitoches, La. The competition, which is organized by the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS), was attended by nearly 400 students from colleges and universities in Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi. Of this total, 23 Ouachita students earned finalist or semifinalist honors.

“We competed extremely well, considering we’re in the region with SEC powerhouses like Louisiana State University, Ole Miss University, University of Arkansas and Mississippi State University as well as Southern Mississippi and Southeastern Louisiana University,” said Dr. Jon Secrest, coordinator of Ouachita’s vocal studies program and Addie Mae Maddox Professor of Music. “We had 11 places in the finals, and 13 if you include the two honorable mention recipients. This year, [NATS] has added honorable mention recipients to those who qualify for nationals. To have 13 finalists is outstanding, especially for a school our size.”

The competition is a three-round audition process in which students first participate in a preliminary round of auditions and receive written feedback from voice professionals in the region on how to improve their performance skillset. Following the preliminary round, students advance through a semi-final round and then a final round depending on their scores. Finalists may be awarded first through fifth place or receive an honorable mention.

Dr. Secrest said NATS auditions provide students with an opportunity to “receive written critique, prestige, affirmation of their artistic development and modest cash awards.”

“To see and hear that the fruits of their labor were recognized in this manner is very exciting and gratifying to everyone involved,” Secrest said. “For these students, it means a big shot in the arm in terms of confidence and self-awareness. Also, it provides affirmation that the hours and hours of practice and preparation are worth the investment of time.”

“Being selected as a finalist, personally, is very encouraging,” said Sharayah Wallace, a junior musical theatre major from Sherwood, Ark., who placed second in the upper college music theatre women division. “It shows that what I am studying and the work I am putting toward my major is being noticed. No matter the placement, I believe the effect of these competitions motivates us to progress and be better than we were before.”

“It felt really good to become a finalist; I felt like all my hard work paid off,” said Logan Dooley, a sophomore musical theatre major from Allen, Texas. Dooley earned first place in the sophomore men division and second place in the lower college music theatre men division. “I’m glad to have made my teachers and my school proud.”

The following Ouachita students qualified for national competition, in order of hometown:

**Allen, Texas** – Logan Dooley, a sophomore musical theatre student of Dr. Jon Secrest, earned first place in the sophomore men division and second place in the lower college music theatre men division.

**Austin, Texas** – Hannah Anderson, a sophomore musical theatre student of Dr. Glenda Secrest, earned an honorable mention in the lower college music theatre women division. She also was a semifinalist in the sophomore women division.

**Cabot, Ark.** – Elizabeth Ring, a sophomore musical theatre student of Dr. Margaret Garrett, earned an honorable mention in lower college music theatre women. She also was a semi-finalist in the sophomore women.

**North Little Rock, Ark.** – Cameron Conner, a sophomore music industry student of Dr. Jon Secrest, earned fourth place in lower college music theatre men.

**Monument, Colo.** – Katie Kuss, a freshman vocal performance student of Dr. Glenda Secrest, earned third place in the freshman women division.

**Scott, Ark.** – Dean Carmona, a sophomore music industry student of John Alec Briggs, earned fourth place in Hall Johnson Spiritual Category. Carmona also was a semifinalist in junior men and upper college music theatre men.

**Sherwood, Ark.** – Sharayah Wallace, a junior musical theatre student of John Alec Briggs, earned second place in upper college music theatre women.

**Sheridan, Ark.** – Madeline Martin, a sophomore musical theatre student of Dr. Jon Secrest, earned fourth place in lower college music theatre women.

**Siloam Springs, Ark.** – Payton Hickman, a freshman musical theatre student of Dr. Jon Secrest, earned second place in freshman men and fifth place in lower college music theatre men.

**Wylie, Texas** – Clay Mobley, a junior music industry student of Dr. Jon Secrest, earned first place in junior men and first place in upper college music theatre men.

Other Ouachita students named NATS semifinalists, in order of hometown, include:

**Alma, Ark.** – Michaela Finley, a senior musical theatre student of John Alec Briggs, was a semifinalist in upper college music theatre women.

**Bono, Ark.** – Jaden Rich, a freshman musical theatre student of John Alec Briggs, was a semi-finalist in lower college music theatre women.

**Bryant, Ark.** – Ryan Lynch, a sophomore musical theatre student of Dr. Glenda Secrest, was a semi-finalist in lower college music theatre men.

**Caraway, Ark.** – Karlee Sanders, a freshman choral music education student of John Alec Briggs, was a semi-finalist in freshman women.

**Cleveland, Texas** – Hannah Gothard, a sophomore musical theatre student of Dr. Jon Secrest, was a semi-finalist in lower college music theatre women.

**Evansville, Ind.** – Lauren Terry, a senior musical theatre student of Dr. Glenda Secrest, was a semi-finalist in upper college music theatre women.

**Holiday Island, Ark.** – Ashlynn Lockhart, a freshman musical theatre student of Dr. Jon Secrest, was a semi-finalist in freshman women and lower college music theatre.

**Minden, La.** – Melodie DuBose, a sophomore musical theatre student of Dr. Glenda Secrest, was a semi-finalist in sophomore women and lower college music theatre.

**Longview, Texas** – Rachel Webber, a senior musical theatre student of Dr. Jon Secrest, was a semi-finalist in senior women and upper college music theatre women.

**Pittsburg, Texas** – Lizzy Griffin, a senior musical theatre student of Dr. Glenda Secrest, was a semi-finalist in senior women.

**Rockwall, Texas** – Micah Brooks, a senior musical theatre student of Dr. Jon Secrest, was a semi-finalist in senior men and upper college music theatre men.

**Waxahachie, Texas** – Sam Campione, a freshman musical theatre student of Dr. Jon Secrest, was a semi-finalist in lower college music theatre men.

**White Oak, Texas** – Paige Bagley, a junior choral music education student of Dr. Margaret Garrett, was a semi-finalist in junior women.

Ouachita's collaborative pianists for the competition included Kristen La Madrid, Susan Monroe and Phyllis Walker.

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