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Ouachita News Bureau

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By Tiffany Lee

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ARKADELPHIA, Ark. – Micah Brooks, a senior musical theatre major from Rockwall, Texas, won first place in Ouachita Baptist University's 21st annual Mary Shambarger Competition for Singers on Tuesday, Feb. 19.

"I'm still shocked and grateful for what was sincerely an unexpected announcement, and I'm proud to have been considered so highly among many performers I consider so much higher than I do myself," Brooks said.

Along with earning first place, Brooks received \$500 for his performance of Flaherty and Ahrens' "I Was Here" from the musical *The Glorious Ones*. Brooks is a student of Dr. Jon Secrest, Addie Mae Maddox Professor of Music, and was assisted on the piano by Kristen La Madrid.

"I have participated in this competition each year for the past three years now," Brooks said. "Preparing for a performance among so many singers of such high quality demands of me a determination for excellence and growth which I find invaluable."

The Mary Shambarger Competition for Singers was created as an opportunity for Ouachita students to expand their musical repertoire while gaining experience performing and auditioning in a professional setting. The competition is held in honor of Mary Shambarger, professor emerita of music at Ouachita. Shambarger served on the music faculty of Ouachita for 32 years as a classroom teacher, voice instructor and choir director. The competition repertoire rotates each year among musical theatre, arias and art songs; this year's competition featured musical theatre selections.

Second place and \$300 was awarded to Clay Mobley, a senior music industry major from Wylie, Texas, who is a student of Dr. Jon Secrest. Mobley performed Henry Krieger's "The Devil You Know" from *Slideshow* and was assisted by Phyllis Walker on piano.

Third place and \$200 was awarded to Zachary Myers, a senior musical theatre major from Fort Smith, Ark., and student of Dr. Glenda Secrest, professor of music. Myers performed Andrew Lipka's "What Is It About Her?" from *The Wild Party*. He was assisted on the piano by Phyllis Walker.

"It was such a humbling feeling [to place]," Myers said. "To be recognized for my hard work and to share that with some of my closest friends is seriously the best feeling in the world."

Fourth place and \$100 was awarded to Michaela Finley, a senior musical theatre major from Cedarville, Ark., and student of John Alec Briggs, lecturer of music. Finley performed Jason Robert Brown's "Just One Step" from *Songs of the New World* and was accompanied on the piano by Phyllis Walker.

Honorable mention and \$50 was awarded to Melodie DuBose, a sophomore musical theatre major from Minden, La. She is a student of Dr. Glenda Secrest and was accompanied on the piano by Phyllis Walker. She performed Stephen Sondheim's "The Last Midnight" from *Into the Woods*.

For more information, contact Dr. Jon Secrest, professor of music and coordinator of Ouachita's vocal studies program, at secrestj@obu.edu or (870) 245-5134.

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