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For immediate release

Ouachita hosts 2019 state NATS competition, receives 18 finalist awards

By Madison Cresswell

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ARKADELPHIA, Ark.— Ouachita Baptist University hosted the 2019 Arkansas National Association of Teachers of Singing competition (NATS) Feb. 22-23 on Ouachita's campus. Ouachita students earned 18 finalist honors, with six students receiving first place honors.

"It is a privilege to host this event, but also a great deal of work," said Dr. Jon Secrest, Addie Mae Maddox Professor of Music and coordinator of Ouachita's vocal studies program. "Ouachita enjoyed significant success in these auditions, and many of our colleagues from throughout the state commented on our excellent facilities during their visit."

In addition to Ouachita's music students, students from Arkansas State University, Arkansas Tech University, Harding University, Henderson State University, John Brown University, National Park College, Southern Arkansas University, University of Arkansas, University of Arkansas at Fort Smith and University of Central Arkansas competed this year.

The competition is judged by NATS members from other educational institutions and private studios. Judges provide students with written critiques following their performances, offering feedback on musicianship, artistry, expression and other factors.

"The competition provided students the opportunity to receive written critique, prestige, affirmation of their artistic development and modest cash awards," Secrest said.

Cameron Conner, a sophomore music industry major from North Little Rock, Ark., was named a finalist and received second place in the lower college music theater division. "I prepared for this competition by finding and memorizing pieces, spending many hours in the practice rooms and making sure my voice stayed in the best condition," Conner said. "I love tournaments like NATS because they give me an opportunity to perform and express myself creatively. It also challenges me to think outside of the box as far as entertaining an audience.

“NATS performances have really helped me reach my full potential, and I feel blessed to attend a college that hosts competitions like these,” he added.

The following are finalists from Ouachita, listed 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 third place in the lower college music theatre men division.

Arlington, Texas – Bonnie Gentry, a senior musical theatre student of Dr. Jon Secrest, earned first place in the junior women division and was a semifinalist in the upper college music theatre women division.

Austin, Texas – Hannah Anderson, a junior musical theatre student of Dr. Glenda Secrest, earned first place in the sophomore women division and was a semifinalist in the lower college music theatre women division.

Bentonville, Ark. – Scotty Scott, a senior musical theatre student of Dr. Jon Secrest, earned first place in the upper college music theatre division.

Bowie, Md. – Jhonika Wright, a senior musical theatre student of Dr. Glenda Secrest, earned second place in the upper college music theatre women division.

Colorado Springs, Colo. – Bailey Brown, a senior music education student of Dr. Glenda Secrest, earned third place in the junior women division.

Monument, Colo. – Katie Kuss, a freshman music and Christian studies/Christian ministry student of Dr. Glenda Secrest, earned second place in the freshman women division.

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

Rockwall, Texas – Micah Brooks, a senior musical theatre student of Dr. Jon Secrest, earned second place in the senior men division and third place in the upper college music theatre division. Jessie Brunson, a senior vocal performance student of Dr. Jon Secrest, earned third place in the senior women division.

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

St. Paul, Ark. – Hannah Saunders, a senior musical theatre student of Dr. Margaret Garrett, earned third place in the upper college music theatre women division and was a semifinalist in the senior women division.

Wylie, Texas – Clay Mobley, a senior music industry student of Dr. Jon Secrest, earned first place in the junior men division and second place in the upper college music theatre division. Libby Villegas, a senior music industry student of Dr. Margaret Garrett, earned second place in the senior women division and was a semifinalist in the upper college music theatre women division.

Wynne, Ark. – Emma Lawyer, a sophomore musical theatre student of Dr. Glenda Secrest, earned third place in the lower college music theatre women division.

The following are additional semifinalists from Ouachita, in order of hometown:

Arkadelphia, Ark. – Madi Tate, a freshman music student of Dr. Margaret Garrett, was a semifinalist in the freshman women division.

Bryant, Ark. – Ryan Lynch, a sophomore musical theatre student of Dr. Glenda Secrest, was a semifinalist in the lower college music theatre men division.

Caraway, Ark. – Karlee Sanders, a freshman music education student of John Alec Briggs, was a semifinalist in the freshman women division.

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

Cleveland, Texas – Hannah Gothard, a junior musical theatre student of Dr. Jon Secrest, was a semifinalist in the lower college music theatre women division.

Conway, Ark. – Abby Shourd, a sophomore music education student of Dr. Margaret Garrett, was a semifinalist in the sophomore women division and in the lower college music theatre women division.

Fort Smith, Ark. – Zachary Myers, a senior musical theatre student of Dr. Glenda Secrest, was a semifinalist in the upper college music theatre men division.

Garfield, Ark. – Cedar Valdez, a junior musical theatre student of Dr. Jon Secrest, was a semifinalist in the upper college music theatre men division.

Greenwood, Ark. – Alex Marrin, a junior musical theatre student of Dr. Glenda Secrest, was a semifinalist in the junior men division and in the upper college music theatre men division.

Holiday Island, Ark. – Ashlynn Lockhart, a freshman musical theatre student of Jon Secrest, was a semifinalist in the lower college music theatre women division.

Little Rock, Ark. – Mallory Cain, a sophomore musical theatre student of Dr. Margaret Garrett, was a semifinalist in the lower college music theatre women division. Elizabeth Dawson, a sophomore musical theatre student of Dr. Glenda Secrest, was a semifinalist in the lower college music theatre women division.

Malvern, Ark. – Abby Holland, a junior music education student of Dr. Margaret Garrett, was a semifinalist in the junior women division.

Minden, La. – Melodie DuBose, a sophomore musical theatre student of Dr. Glenda Secrest, was a semifinalist in the sophomore women division and in the lower college music theatre women division.

Plano, Texas – Paige Price, a sophomore musical theatre student of Dr. Jon Secrest, was a semifinalist in the lower college music theatre women division.

Porter, Texas – Jacob Cates, a freshman worship arts student of John Alec Briggs, was a semifinalist in the freshman men division.

Prairie Grove, Ark. – Danielle Hall, a sophomore musical theatre student of Dr. Margaret Garrett, was a semifinalist in the sophomore women division.

Rogers, Ark. – Emma Pitts, a senior music education student of Dr. Jon Secrest, was a semifinalist in the upper college music theatre women division.

Rose Hill, Kan. – Carlin Campbell, a junior musical theatre student of Dr. Margaret Garrett, was a semifinalist in the lower college music theatre men division.

Sheridan, Ark. – Madeline Martin, a junior musical theatre and mass communications student of Dr. Jon Secrest, was a semifinalist in the lower college music theatre women division.

Siloam Springs, Ark. – Payton Hickman, a freshman musical theatre student of Dr. Jon Secrest, was a semifinalist in the freshman men division and in the lower college music theatre men division.

Texarkana, Ark. – Makenna Schaeffer, a freshman musical theatre student of Dr. Margaret Garrett, was a semifinalist in the lower college music theatre women division.

Walnut Ridge, Ark. – Dylan Blackwood, a senior musical theatre student of Dr. Jon Secrest, was a semifinalist in the upper college music theatre men division.

Waxahachie, Texas – Sammy Campione, a freshman musical theatre student of Dr. Jon Secrest, was a semifinalist in the lower college music theatre men division.

White Hall, Ark. – Clara Taylor, a freshman music education student of Dr. Margaret Garrett, was a semifinalist in the freshman women division.

White Oak, Texas – Paige Bagley, a junior music student of Dr. Margaret Garrett, was a semifinalist in the junior women division.

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

For more information, contact Dr. Jon Secrest at secrestj@obu.edu or (870) 245-5134.

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