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Ouachita News Bureau
Ouachita Baptist University

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OUACHITA
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NEWS

For immediate release

Ouachita to host Melba Pattillo Beals of the Little Rock Nine on April 2 for Birkett Williams Lecture

By Abby Turner

March 13, 2019

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



ARKADELPHIA, Ark. – Ouachita Baptist University will host Melba Pattillo Beals, who is widely known as a member of the Little Rock Nine, for a lecture on Tuesday, April 2, at 7 p.m. in Jones Performing Arts Center. The lecture is free and open to the public and is part of Ouachita's Birkett Williams Endowed Lecture Series. Following the lecture, Dr. Beals also will have a book signing from 8 to 10 p.m. in Walker Conference Center on Ouachita's campus.

Beals is an American journalist, college educator and member of the Little Rock Nine, a group of African-American students who integrated Little Rock Central High School in 1957. Beals is also a recipient of the Congressional Gold Medal, one of the country's highest honors, is an award-winning author and has published two books: "Warriors Don't Cry" and "I Will Not Fear."

"We are extraordinarily pleased to have Dr. Beals come to campus and meet our students and let them hear what she has to say," said Dr. Jeff Root, dean of Ouachita's Huckabee School of Education and School of Humanities. "She has lived through some important experiences in American history, and we're thrilled that she is coming to speak." The Huckabee School serves as host for this Birkett Williams lecture.

Beals attended San Francisco State University, where she earned her bachelor's degree; she went on to earn her master's degree in journalism from Columbia University. She is a retired university professor and holds a doctorate in international multicultural education from the University of San Francisco.

"Her bravery, faith and commitment to education have made a tremendous impact on our students, especially those who are majoring in the field of education," said Dr. Rachel Pool, assistant professor of education at Ouachita.

“Our university’s theme this year is ‘Lives of Meaningful Work,’” Pool continued. “Dr. Beals’ life is a testimony for all of us to learn from, and we will have an opportunity to express our appreciation and humble gratitude for what she had to persevere in order for every student to have a chance to receive a free and appropriate education.”

Ouachita’s Birkett Williams Endowed Lecture Series was established in 1977 through a gift from the late Birkett L. Williams, a 1910 Ouachita graduate. His generous endowment established the lectures as an opportunity to extend the concepts of a liberal arts education beyond the classroom by bringing renowned scholars and public figures to Ouachita’s campus.

For more information, contact Ouachita’s Huckabee School of Education at (870) 245-5154.

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