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Rachel Moreno Moreno

Ouachita News Bureau
Ouachita Baptist University

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NEWS

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Stepping Up for Ouachita 10th anniversary luncheon to honor three Ouachita mothers: Livia Dunklin, Betty Tollett and Kathy Whisenhunt

By Rachel Moreno

May 10, 2019

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ARKADELPHIA, Ark. – Ouachita Baptist University's annual Stepping Up for Ouachita luncheon is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year in its efforts to raise scholarships for female Ouachita students. This year's benefit will honor three Ouachita mothers: Livia Dunklin, Betty Tollett and Kathy Whisenhunt. It will be held on Friday, Nov. 15, at the Chenal Country Club in Little Rock, Ark.

Every year, the university honors an outstanding Ouachita woman who has shown grace, leadership, integrity and faith over the years. In honor of the 10th anniversary, Stepping Up for Ouachita is recognizing, for the first time, three women.

"All of these ladies are committed wives, mothers and servants for the Kingdom," said Terry Peoples, vice president for development at Ouachita. "They are all Ouachita 'supermoms' as they all had children who attended Ouachita and were very supportive of that decision.

"Our current female students can look to these ladies as great examples for them," she added.

Livia Dunklin is the mother of three daughters: Megan, Hillary and Lauren (Dunklin) Heird, a 2014 Ouachita graduate. Dunklin and her husband, George, were always present at Ouachita football games and Homecoming celebrations like Tiger Tunes in support of their daughter, Lauren. The new press box at Cliff Harris Stadium was provided by the Dunklin family in honor of Dunklin's father-in-law, George Sr., a former member of Ouachita's Board of Trustees.

Dunklin has served alongside her husband in his business endeavors with Ducks Unlimited, Inc., and Five Oaks Duck Lodge, as well as personally in her efforts to care for children through organizations such as Easterseals Arkansas, Arkansas Children's Hospital and her local church in Stuttgart, Ark.

Betty Tollett also was introduced to Ouachita through her children. Her daughter, Terri, is a 1984 graduate and currently serves as a member of the Ouachita Board of Trustees; her son, Gary, is a 1989 graduate and serves on Ouachita's President's Advisory Council.

In addition to teaching elementary school, Tollett taught third grade Sunday School for more than 25 years at Cross Church in Fayetteville, Ark. During her husband, Leland's, more than 50-year career at Tyson Foods, Tollett had a way of remembering names, hosting and serving others that left an impression. A breast cancer survivor, Tollett also served as the honorary co-chairman of the 2008 Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure.

Kathy Whisenhunt married Gene Whisenhunt, a 1983 Ouachita graduate, who has served on Ouachita's Board of Trustees and Hickingbotham School of Business Executive Advisory Council and currently is chair of the President's Advisory Committee. Their children Haley, Mary and Jared all are Ouachita graduates; Haley graduated in 2012, Mary in 2013 and Jared in 2015.

After a successful career with Allstate Insurance, Whisenhunt stayed home and served her family as a mother and wife. She has served many years as a volunteer at Arkansas Children's Hospital and Baptist

Health Hospital. Whisenhunt has also dedicated much of her time to Geyer Springs First Baptist Church in Little Rock, serving through music ministry to children, youth ministry, search committees and singing in the choir.

“It is my privilege to be a part of this luncheon, which honors deserving women who have done so much to impact others,” said Christine Street, chair of the 2019 Stepping Up for Ouachita steering committee. “Over the past decade, Stepping Up for Ouachita has raised over \$500,000 to support Ouachita students. It is an honor to recognize Livia, Betty and Kathy who have worked diligently to support their families, churches and Ouachita.”

Stepping Up for Ouachita benefits outstanding Ouachita women as it provides luncheon participants the opportunity to invest in scholarship funds that directly impact students’ lives and their collegiate experience.

For more information about Stepping Up for Ouachita, including sponsorship or ticket information, visit www.obu.edu/steppingup, call 870-245-4278 or email development@obu.edu.