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5-14-2019

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#### Recommended Citation

Moreno, Rachel and Ouachita News Bureau, "Ouachita honors 345 graduates during 132nd spring commencement" (2019). *Press Releases*. 646.

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# OUACHITA BAPTIST UNIVERSITY



# NEWS

For immediate release

**Ouachita honors 345 graduates during 132<sup>nd</sup> spring commencement**

By Rachel Moreno

May 14, 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 celebrated 345 graduates during its 132<sup>nd</sup> spring commencement on Saturday, May 11, with university officials conferring Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Music, Bachelor of Music Education, Bachelor of Fine Arts and Associate of Arts degrees. Dr. Ben Sells, Ouachita president, presided over the annual commencement exercises.

“Class of 2019, you’re surrounded by people who helped make this day possible for you,” Dr. Sells said as he opened the ceremony, “people who believe in you, people who are going to continue to be for you, people who are eager to see all that God will do in and through you. This ceremony is about you and celebrating your college degree. It’s about welcoming you to the Ouachita alumni family and commencing this next and exciting season in your life.”



This year’s graduating class featured 167 honor graduates, including 41 who graduated *summa cum laude* with a grade point average of 3.95 or higher, and 28 of those said students graduating with a 4.0 GPA; 59 who graduated *magna cum laude* (3.75 GPA); and 67 who graduated *cum laude* (3.5 GPA).

University officials also recognized 31 graduates who completed Ouachita's Carl Goodson Honors Program.



Four students were recognized as commissioned officers from the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC): Aaron Clayton, a computer science major from Spring, Texas; Ben Elliott, a biology major from Mount Clemens, Mich.; Jon Lock, a business administration/management major from Hughes, Ark.; and Kyle Sickel, a speech communication major from Clarksville, Tenn. Each earned the rank of Second Lieutenant in the U.S. Army.

In his commencement address, Dr. Sells reflected on the university's 2018-2019 campus-wide discussion around the theme "Lives of Meaningful Work," a phrase taken from Ouachita's mission statement.

"It speaks to one of Ouachita's desired outcomes for our graduates: that you will be prepared for lives of meaningful work," Sells said.



Citing a study by Gallup, Inc. entitled "The Future of Work," which surveyed 2 million employees in America over 10 years, Dr. Sells said the study found that only one-third of those employees felt their work was meaningful. Gallup also determined that those who felt this satisfaction held two shared college experiences: the student had a professor who influenced the student's desire to learn or showed care for them, and the student had opportunities for hands-on learning.

"That's what your Ouachita education and experience have given you, and what you've achieved through your diligence: a foundation from which you can begin your quest to find meaning in your work in all the God-honoring roles and careers that await you," Sells said.

Dr. Sells also offered a charge to the graduates following his year-long study of Psalms, the "longest book in the Bible with 40,000 words, and it reflects on every possible human experience," he said.

"From the passages I underlined and the notes I made, I want to share three insights that I hope will help you experience a life of meaningful work. They are: know God, be humble and do good.

“My prayer for you,” Dr. Sells continued, “is taken from a passage thinking about you and this day, Psalm 20:4: ‘May God give you the desire of your heart – and make all your plans succeed.’ Class of 2019, I’m excited about all that God will do in and through you in the coming years.”



Senior Class President Evan Nelson, a business administration/sport management major from Little Rock, Ark., led the commencement invocation. The university’s vision, mission and values statement was read by Rickey Rogers, dean of students; Rachel Roberts, director of career and calling; and Bill Elliff, member of Ouachita’s Board of Trustees. Scripture reading was led by the top graduate from the Pruet School of Christian Studies, Danielle Osborne. Osborne is a Christian studies/Christian ministries and Biblical studies major from Jonesboro, Ark. Dr. Jim Taylor, professor of biology, and Dr. Ray Granade, director of library services and professor of history, served as commencement marshals.

Ouachita Baptist University, a leading liberal arts university, is ranked nationally among “America’s Best Colleges” by *U.S. News & World Report* and *Forbes* magazines. Founded in Arkadelphia in 1886, Ouachita seeks to foster a love of God and a love of learning in a Christ-centered learning community.

See more ceremony details at <https://obu.edu/news/2019/04/30/ouachita-hold-132nd-spring-commencement-ceremony-may-11/>. Watch the full commencement video at <https://livestream.com/obu/commencement2019>.

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PHOTOS AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD <https://obu.edu/news/2019/05/14/ouachita-honors-345-graduates-132nd-spring-commencement/>