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## Three Ouachita women place in Top Five at Miss Arkansas Pageant

By Rachel Moreno

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ARKADELPHIA, Ark.—Three Ouachita Baptist University women were named Top Five finalists in the 2019 Miss Arkansas Scholarship Pageant, which was held at the Robinson Center in Little Rock June 11-15. Of the 44 contestants from around the state, nine were from Ouachita, and four placed in the Top 10 overall.

Among the top five finalists were Miss Ouachita Baptist University Julie Williams, who was named second runner-up; Miss Ouachita River Tiffany Lee of Benton, who was named third runner-up; and Miss Greater Hot Springs Gracie Stover of Little Rock, who was named fourth runner-up.

Miss Metro Taryn Bewley, a junior chemistry major from Conway, Ark., was a Top 10 semifinalist and is the daughter of Terry and Allyson Bewley. Miss South Central Arkansas Emma Pitts, a senior choral music education major from Clarksville, Ark., received a preliminary Artistic Expression Award. She previously held the title of Miss OBU in 2018 and is the daughter of Jeremy and Misty Rebeca Scroggs Pitts. Miss White River Mady Rottinghaus, a junior biology and Spanish double major from Hot Springs, Ark., received a CMN Miracle Maker Award and is the daughter of Mike and Amber Rottinghaus.

“Of the 44 contestants in the week, nine of them were OBU girls,” said Williams, a 2019 political science and mass communications graduate



from Arkadelphia, Ark. "Ouachita truly is the queen of the college world! It was an honor just to be named among them. Our shared faith and passion for the job before us was truly a bonding experience."

Williams, who received a \$9,000 scholarship for her second runner-up finish as well as a preliminary Social Impact in Evening Wear Award, is the current reigning Miss OBU and the daughter of Rev. Charlie and Amy Williams.

"I've never felt so loved by Ouachita and by Arkadelphia," she said. "We could all feel the coverage of prayer! I was even more proud that three of the top five were Ouachita students, and communications majors at that!

"This experience makes you realize that, even without a title, you belong to the people who raised you," Williams continued, "and the only thing I can do with my life and my time is to serve them back. There is no greater honor than that, and at the end of the week, I still have some of the greatest words in the world across my sash: Miss Ouachita Baptist University."



Lee, a 2019 communications and media graduate from Benton, Ark., received a \$7,500 scholarship for her third runner-up finish. She previously held the title of Miss OBU in 2017 and is the daughter of Tony and Kelly Lee.

"I was shocked when they announced my name for top five," Lee said. "I remember looking at the girls around me and I couldn't believe one of us was about to be Miss Arkansas! Being up there with Gracie and Julie was probably one of the best parts. Backstage, before the awards, we all grabbed hands and told each other how proud we were and how much we loved each other. It was a really special moment."



Stover, a senior communications & media/multimedia journalism major, from Little Rock, Ark., received a \$5,000 scholarship for her fourth runner-up finish as well as a preliminary Artistic Expression Award and CMN Miracle Maker Award. She is the daughter of Mike and Laura Stover.

“I have been involved in the Miss Arkansas and Miss America Organization since I was 4 years old,” Stover said. “It has molded me into the woman I am today.

“I am so proud and honored to be part of an organization and university that raises women to be passionate, servant-hearted and powerful,” she added.



Other contestants from Ouachita who competed in Miss Arkansas 2019 include: Miss Southwest Arkansas Avery Jackson, a sophomore pre-nursing major from Little Rock; Miss Central Arkansas Kyla Soden, a senior biology major from Cabot; and Miss Conway Elizabeth Steely, a senior communications & media/multimedia journalism major from Conway.

Additionally, Miss Spirit of Arkansas Laura Leigh Turner, who received first runner-up in the pageant, also has Ouachita ties; she is the daughter of alumni Tab Turner ('81) and Jenny (Gosser '82) Turner. Laura Leigh also won a preliminary Social Impact in Evening Wear Award.

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