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Ashly Stracener

Ouachita Baptist University

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OUACHITA
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NEWS

For immediate release

Ouachita to host 53rd Miss OBU Scholarship Pageant Feb. 1

By Ashly Stracener

January 22, 2020

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



ARKADELPHIA, Ark.—Ouachita Baptist University will host the 53rd Miss Ouachita Baptist University Scholarship Pageant on Saturday, Feb. 1, at 7:30 p.m. in Jones Performing Arts Center. Sixteen contestants will compete for the crown. Tickets are \$12 and can be purchased at the door or at www.obu.edu/boxoffice.

The winner of the pageant will compete this summer in the Miss Arkansas Scholarship Pageant, part of the Miss America Organization. Along with the honor of representing Ouachita at Miss Arkansas, the winner will receive a \$1,000 scholarship and an additional prize package. Throughout the year, Miss OBU's responsibilities include volunteering for various organizations in the community of Arkadelphia and the state of Arkansas.

"The most confident, service-oriented, well-spoken, talented and intelligent young woman that best represents the morals and values of Ouachita will be a strong competitor at the Miss Arkansas Scholarship Competition in June," said Melissa Carozza, campus director of this year's pageant and a 1998 Ouachita alumna.

The Miss OBU Pageant, which began in 1967, has yielded five Miss Arkansas winners, beginning with the first Miss OBU, Sharon Bale. More recently, 10 Ouachita women competed at Miss Arkansas 2019 with three placing in the Top Five, including the reigning Miss OBU, Julie Williams.

“Sarah Teed, the pageant’s new executive director, and I are excited to work with such an outstanding group of young women and be a part of a pageant that has such a long tradition of doing well in the Miss Arkansas competition,” Carozza said.

The 16 students competing for the crown in this year’s pageant include: Bawo Asagba, a junior musical theatre major from Murphy, Texas; Caroline Derby, a freshman communications & media/multimedia journalism major from Arkadelphia, Ark.; Danielle Hall a senior musical theatre major from Prairie Grove, Ark.; Dani Imrie, a junior history and secondary education double major from Jonesboro, Ark.; Katie Kumpuris, a senior music major from Little Rock, Ark.; Raleigh Peterson, a senior musical theatre major from Branson, Mo.; Samantha Pipkin, a junior communications & media/multimedia journalism major from Waldo, Ark.; Autumn Romines, a senior musical theatre major from Cabot, Ark.; Catie Shirley, a senior biology major from Wylie, Texas; Elizabeth Steely, a senior communications & media/multimedia journalism major from Conway, Ark.; Melody Stotts, a junior middle school education major from Jonesboro, Ark.; Maddi Terry, a sophomore kinesiology & leisure studies major from Boyd, Texas; Sarah Tuller, a sophomore kinesiology & leisure studies major from Plano, Texas; Laura Beth Warner, a senior Christian studies/Christian ministries major from Benton, Ark.; Erin Webster, a senior elementary education major from Alvin, Texas; and Rebekah Wendt, a freshman chemistry major from Haworth, Okla.



The contestants will be judged in different categories including talent, social impact in evening wear, onstage question and private interview. As a result of changes in the Miss Arkansas and Miss America Scholarship Competition, Miss OBU candidates will not compete in a swimsuit category but rather a social impact category.

“The swimsuit category has been replaced with the Social Impact in Evening Wear category where the candidates will share their social impact initiative while displaying their sense of style, personality and presence in evening wear of their choice,” Carozza said. “In addition, the judges will ask the on-stage question directly to the contestants this year.”

The competition also will pay tribute to Miss OBU 2019 Julie Williams, a 2019 Ouachita graduate from Arkadelphia, Ark.

“My time as Miss OBU was really a crowning moment of my Ouachita experience,” Williams said. “I viewed this title as a way to really love these wonderful people back, that is, the people who had invested so much into me.

“This is, first and foremost, a service outlet and a way to minister to those around you,” she continued. “I’m eternally grateful that I was given the opportunity to be Miss OBU.”

In 2019, the Miss Arkansas Scholarship Pageant awarded \$182,300 in scholarships, providing women the opportunity to further their education and professional goals debt-free. Along with their personal platforms, each Miss Arkansas contestant works with the Miss Arkansas Scholarship Foundation to raise money for the Children’s Miracle Network.

Williams was named second runner-up in Miss Arkansas 2019. She also received the Overall Social Impact in Evening Wear Award and preliminary Evening Gown Award.

"I was allowed to represent Ouachita at Miss Arkansas this summer, and it was so much more successful than my family and I could have dreamed possible," Williams said. "It was overwhelming to feel the support and prayer, surrounded by my Ouachita women and Ouachita families.

"Aside from this, it allowed me the chance to share my faith, values, convictions and some laughs and good times with those around me. I wouldn't have traded a single bit of the experience for the whole world," she said.

To begin the evening program, Miss Arkansas 2019 Darynne Dahlem first will perform the National Anthem. Additional entertainment during the pageant will be provided by Julie Williams, Miss OBU 2019; Sara Cate Lay, Miss Arkansas Outstanding Teen 2019; Izzy Baughn, Miss Texarkana Twin Rivers 2020; Avery Jackson, Miss Natural State 2020; Taryn Bewley, Miss Greater Little Rock 2020; and members of DancePraize Dance Studio.

Tickets for the pageant are \$12 each for the general public and \$7 each for current Ouachita students with a valid student ID. Tickets are available for purchase at the door or online at www.obu.edu/boxoffice.

For more information, contact Melissa Carozza at carozzam@obu.edu or (870) 245-5558.

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