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### Caroline Derby crowned Miss OBU 2020

Ashley Stracener

Ouachita News Bureau

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For immediate release

## **Caroline Derby crowned Miss OBU 2020**

*By Ashly Stracener*

February 5, 2020

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 hosted the 53<sup>rd</sup> annual Miss OBU Pageant on Saturday, Feb. 1, and crowned Arkadelphia, Ark., native Caroline Derby Miss OBU 2020.

“To be Miss Ouachita Baptist University is a dream come true,” Derby said. “I have been dreaming of representing my favorite place on earth since I was a little girl. I am grateful, honored and humbled to serve Ouachita in this capacity.

“Miss OBU is so much more than a crown and sash,” she added. “It is a job, an opportunity and a blessing. I only have one year as Miss OBU, and I have full intentions of making the absolute most of it.”

Derby is a communications & media/multimedia journalism major. She is the daughter of Jay and Susan Derby and represented Student Senate. Her platform, “Aspire to Achieve: Ready, Set, Go!,” encourages people of all ages to chase after their dreams and achieve their goals. In addition to winning the Miss OBU crown, Derby received the Kristen Glover Belew Overall Talent Award for her clogging dance to “Perm” and the Julie Williams Academic Award, which was a three-way tie.

“Being an Arkadelphia native, Ouachita has and always will be my home, and I grew up loving this incredible place,” said Derby. “I have always considered myself a product of the people I come from, and I come from the people here. They have shaped me and molded me into the Caroline that I am today. I will forever be thankful for them.”



Elizabeth Steely was the first runner-up. A junior communications & media/multimedia journalism major from Conway, Ark., Steely is the daughter of Dr. Don and Molly Steely and represented Beta Beta men's social club. Steely also received the Julie Williams Social Impact in Eveningwear Award, tied for the Julie Williams Academic Award and tied for the Children's Miracle Network Miracle Maker Award.



Danielle Hall was the second runner-up. A junior musical theatre major from Prairie Grove, Ark., Hall is the daughter of Lee and Susan Hall and represented Chi Mu women's social club. Hall also received the Spirit of Miss OBU Award, the Suzie Gresham Barham Alpha Award and tied with another candidate for the Mac Sisson Alpha Talent Award for her operatic piece "Non So Più" from *The Marriage of Figaro*.



Melody Stotts was the third runner-up. A junior middle school education major from Brookland, Ark., Stotts is the daughter of Jeff and Wendy Stotts and represented Tri Chi women's social club. Stotts tied with Steely for the Children's Miracle Network Miracle Maker Award.



Katie Kumpuris was the fourth runner-up. A senior social justice studies and psychology double major from Little Rock, Ark., Kumpuris is the daughter of Gordon and Lori Kumpuris and represented Eta Alpha Omega men's social club.



Other award-winners included:

- Bawo Asagba, a junior musical theatre major from Wylie, Texas, represented Tri Chi women's social club and received the Miss Congeniality Award.
- Samantha Pipkin, a junior communications & media/multimedia journalism major from Willisville, Ark., represented Chi Delta women's social club and received the People's Choice Award.

- Autumn Romines, a senior musical theatre major from Cabot, Ark., represented Alpha Psi Omega national theatre honor society and received the Photogenic Award, Sharon Bale Non-Finalist Talent Award and tied with Hall for the Mac Sisson Alpha Talent Award for her song and dance to “Show Off.”
- Catie Shirley, a senior biology major from Wylie, Texas, represented EEE women’s social club and received the Alpha Social Impact in Eveningwear Award and the Sharon Bale Non-Finalist Onstage Interview Award.
- Laura Beth Warner, a senior Christian studies/Christian ministry major from Benton, Ark., represented EEE women’s social club and tied for the Julie Williams Academic Award.

Patti Thorn Lusk, a 1988 Ouachita alumna, former Miss OBU 1985 and Miss Arkansas 1988, served as emcee for the pageant. Sarah Teed was the pageant’s new executive director and worked alongside Melissa Carozza, campus director of the pageant and 1998 Ouachita alumna. Miss Arkansas 2019, Darynne Dahlem, also made a special appearance.

Special entertainment for the evening was presented by Miss OBU 2019 Julie Williams, Miss Outstanding Teen 2019 Sarah Cate Lay, Miss Natural State 2020 Avery Jackson, Miss Greater Little Rock 2020 Taryn Bewley, DancePraize Dance Studio and the Miss OBU Court of Honor.

Performers from DancePraize Dance Studio included: Blaise Batson, Malea Borland, Kelsey Boyles, Cassie Carozza, Emorie Carozza, Avery Garner, Kate Manning and Cassidy Parker.

The Court of Honor included: Bethany Courtney, a junior music major from Little Rock, Ark.; Cameron Conner, a junior music industry major from North Little Rock, Ark.; Aaron George, a senior accounting and finance double major from Rogers, Ark.; Clay Mobley, a senior music industry major from Wylie, Texas; Emma Pitts, a senior music education major from Bentonville, Ark.; and Felicia Valdez, a senior psychology major. Alumni Stephen and Abby Curry served as court of honor directors.

Derby will go on to represent Ouachita at the 2020 Miss Arkansas Scholarship Pageant in Little Rock, Ark., June 13-21.

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