

Ouachita Baptist University

Scholarly Commons @ Ouachita

Press Releases

Office of Communication

11-20-2016

Ouachita hosts Southern Region NATS Conference; 13 OBU students named finalists

Stephanie Bell

Ouachita News Bureau

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/press_releases



Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#), [Organizational Communication Commons](#), and the [Public Relations and Advertising Commons](#)

OUACHITA
BAPTIST UNIVERSITY



NEWS

For immediate release

Ouachita hosts Southern Region NATS Conference; 13 OBU students named finalists



By Stephanie Bell
November 22, 2016

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

ARKADELPHIA, Ark. — Ouachita Baptist University recently hosted the 41st annual Southern Region NATS (National Association of Teachers of Singing) Conference and Student Auditions on the university's Arkadelphia campus. Approximately 25 schools were represented from Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi.

Thirteen Ouachita students were named finalists in the event, the largest number of finalists for any school in the competition. The finalists included two Ouachita students who were honored in two separate categories each for a total of 15 finalist recognitions.

"In fact, this is the largest number of OBU semi-finalists and finalists ever at a Southern Region event," said Dr. Jon Secrest, coordinator of OBU's vocal studies program and Addie Mae Maddox Professor of Music.

Dr. Secrest is completing his final year as governor for Southern Region NATS, and part of his responsibilities include coordinating the conference.

"This being my final conference to organize, I felt there was no better place to have the 41st iteration of Southern Region NATS than Ouachita," he noted. "My colleagues from throughout the Ouachita community have proven just that."

In addition to the student auditions, the three-day conference featured lectures and master classes as well as a guest artist recital by Metropolitan Opera tenor Arnold Rawls. A closing banquet included entertainment by the Ouachita Jazz Combo.

Concerning the conference's three-tiered round of student auditions, Secrest said, "The NATS audition experience approximates the 'real life' audition better than anything else we do in our program. Students receive written feedback from a panel of judges. Every audition experience impacts the development of a young performer's artistry in some way. It can build confidence, foster maturity and add to their already developing skillset for music performance."

Kenzie Osborn, a sophomore musical theatre major from Rockwall, Texas, earned first place in the lower college music theatre women's division. She was one of four Ouachita students to earn first place honors.

"I really enjoy competing in NATS because it gives you experience performing in front of people, and you get critiques on how to improve your performance and do better in future performances," Osborn said.

"My voice teacher, Dr. Glenda Secrest, works so hard all semester to help prepare us for the competition," Osborn added. "She helps us put the best performance on that we can and I definitely could not have done it without her coaching."

Dr. Glenda Secrest, professor of music at OBU, has coached several students who have been NATS finalists and semi-finalists in classical and musical theatre categories.

The following Ouachita students were named NATS finalists, in order of hometown:

Arlington, Texas—Bonnie Gentry, a student of Jon Secrest, second place in Lower College Music Theatre Women

Bella Vista, Ark.—Beth Crisler, a student of John Alec Briggs, fifth place in Senior Women

Benton, Ark.—Ben Mills, a student of Glenda Secrest, second place in Lower College Music Theatre Men

Central City, Ark.—Hunter Brown, a student of Glenda Secrest, third place in Upper College Music Theatre Men

Conway, Ark.—Drew Dodge, a student of David Stanley, fourth place in Lower College Music Theatre Men

Frisco, Texas—Alexis Morgan, a student of Glenda Secrest, fourth place in Upper College Music Theatre Women

Jonesboro, Ark.—Will Stotts, a student of Jon Secrest, fourth place in Upper College Music Theatre Men

Little Rock, Ark.—Bethany Courtney, a student of Jon Secrest, fourth place in Freshman Women

North Little Rock, Ark.—Kayla Walker, a student of Glenda Secrest, first place in Upper College Music Theatre Women

Rockwall, Texas—Jessie Brunson, a student of Jon Secrest, fourth place in Sophomore Women; Kenzie Osborn, a student of Glenda Secrest, first place in Lower College Music Theatre Women

Rogers, Ark.—Esther Atkinson, a student of David Stanley, first place in Junior Women and second place in Upper College Music Theatre Women

Wylie, Texas—Clay Mobley, a student of Jon Secrest, first place in Freshman Men and first place in Lower College Music Theatre Men

Other Ouachita students named NATS semifinalists, in order of hometown, include:

Alexander, Ark.—Hannah Hill, a student of Glenda Secrest, Lower College Music Theatre Women

Arkadelphia, Ark.—Jhonika Wright, a student of Glenda Secrest, Lower College Music Theatre Women

Arlington, Texas—Bonnie Gentry, a student of Jon Secrest, Freshman Women

Bentonville, Ark.—Emily Siemens, a student of Glenda Secrest, Lower College Music Theatre Women

Camden, Ark.—Evan Wheatley, a student of Glenda Secrest, Upper College Music Theatre Men

Clarksville, Ark.—Emma Pitts, a student of Jon Secrest, Lower College Music Theatre Women

Colorado Springs, Colo.—Bailey Brown, a student of Glenda Secrest, Lower College Music Theatre Women

Evansville, Ind.—Lauren Terry, a student of Glenda Secrest, Sophomore Women, Lower College Music Theatre Women

Forney, Texas—Carter Hall, a student of Jon Secrest, Lower College Music Theatre Men

Frisco, Texas—Alexis Morgan, a student of Glenda Secrest, Senior Women

Garland, Texas—Elizabeth Schutter, a student of John Alec Briggs, Senior Women

Grapevine, Texas—Joy Biebighauser, a student of David Stanley, Sophomore Women

Jonesboro, Ark.—Bret Sanders, a student of David Stanley, Upper College Music Theatre Women

Lewisville, Texas—Philip Robinson, a student of Patricia Vigil and Maggie Garrett, Lower College Music Theatre Men

Little Rock, Ark.—Bethany Courtney, a student of Jon Secrest, Lower College Music Theatre Women; Aaden Jones, a student of John Alec Briggs, Upper College Music Theatre Men; Katie Kumpuris, a student of John Alec Briggs, Freshman Women

Longview, Texas—Rachel Webber, a student of Becky Morrison, Freshman Women

North Little Rock, Ark.—Dean Carmona, a student of Jon Secrest, Freshman Men;

Evan Dowers, a student of Jon Secrest, Lower College Music Theatre Men

Pittsburg, Texas—Lizzy Griffin, a student of Glenda Secrest, Freshman Women and Lower College Music Theatre Women

Rockwall, Texas—Micah Brooks, a student of Jon Secrest, Lower College Music Theatre Men; Jessie Brunson, a student of Jon Secrest, Lower College Music Theatre Women

Rogers, Ark.—Cedar Valdez, a student of Patricia Vigil, Lower College Music Theatre Men

Roland, Ark.—Michael Pere, a student of Jon Secrest, Upper College Music Theatre Men

Russellville, Ark.—Scotty Scott, a student of Jon Secrest, Lower College Music Theatre Men

St. Paul, Ark.—Hannah Saunders, a student of Patricia Vigil and Maggie Garrett, Sophomore Women

Terrell, Texas—Anna Joie Valdez, a student of John Alec Briggs, Upper College Music Theatre

Women; Felicia Valdez, a student of Patricia Vigil, Freshman Women

Walnut Ridge, Ark.—Dylan Blackwood, a student of Jon Secrest, Lower College Music Theatre Men

Weatherford, Texas—Elizabeth Ramsey, a student of Jon Secrest, Lower College Music Theatre Women

White Oak, Texas—Paige Bagley, a student of Patricia Vigil, Freshman Women

Woodway, Texas—Carissa Walker, a student of Patricia Vigil, Lower College Music Theatre Women

Wylie, Texas—Jacob Hemsath, a student of David Stanley, Junior Men; Libby Villegas, a student of David Stanley, Sophomore Women