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Ouachita News Bureau

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NEWS



For immediate release

Susan Wink's *Ben Kimpel* biography published posthumously

By Mandy Halbert

May 19, 2021

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

ARKADELPHIA, Ark. – The late Dr. Susan Wink, professor emerita of English at Ouachita Baptist University, authored *Ben Kimpel*, a biography of the longtime chairman of the English Department at the University of Arkansas. The book was posthumously published earlier this year and is available at on Amazon.com.

Commissioned by the Porter Fund to write Kimpel's biography in the 1980s, Wink finished only a few years later, but her book was not published until February 2021. The Porter Fund is a nonprofit organization established in 1984 in memory of Ben Kimpel, at Fayetteville, where he taught from 1952-1983.

Both Drs. Susan Wink and Johnny Wink, Ouachita's Betty Burton Peck Professor of English, studied under Kimpel during their time at the University of Arkansas.



"I am one of God knows how many people in whose lives and thought Ben Kimpel remains perhaps the single greatest influence," Susan Wink wrote in the introduction of *Ben Kimpel*. "All of us cherish the

attitudes, the knowledge, and the memories he gave us. So rich and various were his gifts that as many biographies could exist as there are people who knew him.

“I wish they could all be written,” she wrote. “I hope they will be. Here is mine.”

“For both of us, we wanted to be like Ben Kimpel,” Dr. Johnny Wink said. “I wanted to learn things, I wanted to be kind and generous. I just wanted to be like him. I wanted to be a teacher following his footsteps. I think Susan felt very much the same way.

“When you find a teacher that’s like magic to you, you sometimes find that you really want to be just like them,” he added. “That was the way Ben’s magic worked on us.”

“After she died, I was going through her papers and came across the manuscript of the biography,” Wink continued. “I reread it and was reminded of what a fine tribute it is. A dear friend of mine named James Plath agreed to turn the manuscript into a book available at Amazon, and that’s how the biography finally saw the light of publication.”

The book became available on Amazon on Feb. 7, 2021, the two-year anniversary of Wink’s death.

Dr. Jay Curlin, Kathryn Maddox Professor of English, was a student of the Winks while studying at Ouachita in the early 1980s. Later, Curlin became a colleague and friend of the couple.

“In my junior and senior years, I had Susan for two or three classes, and I had become extremely close to the Winks by the time I graduated in 1983,” Curlin said. “I returned to Ouachita 15 years later as a professor, with my office right next to hers, and remained very close to her for the rest of her life.

“I consider her and Johnny my most important mentors, and she has the distinction of having made me into a passionate grammarian,” he added.

Dr. Susan Wink served at Ouachita for more than 30 years before her death in 2019. Wink continued teaching select courses more than 10 years beyond her retirement in 2003. Her career featured award-winning essays, additional study of French language and culture and being the first in Ouachita’s teacher exchange with Peking University in China. She held degrees from the University of Arkansas and Texas Western College. She is survived by her husband, Dr. Johnny Wink, and son, Gene Wink ('93).

For more information about the biography *Ben Kimpel*, contact Dr. Johnny Wink at winkj@obu.edu.

PHOTO AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD <https://obu.edu/stories/news/2021/05/susan-winks-ben-kimpel-biography-published-posthumously.php>