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U.S. Senate confirms Ouachita alumna Jane Chu as National Endowment for the Arts chairman



By Trennis Henderson, OBU Vice President for Communications

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ARKADELPHIA, Ark. -- Dr. Jane Chu, a 1979 graduate of Ouachita Baptist University, was confirmed today by the U.S. Senate as chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts. Chu was nominated for the post in February by President Obama.

The White House is expected to make the official appointment in the coming days and Chu will begin her new role shortly thereafter, according to the National Endowment for the Arts.

"Jane's lifelong passion for the arts and her background in philanthropy have made her a powerful advocate for artists and arts education in Kansas City," President Obama said at the time of her

nomination. "She knows firsthand how art can open minds, transform lives and revitalize communities, and believes deeply in the importance of the arts to our national culture."

"I'm honored to receive the Senate's vote of confirmation, and I look forward to serving our nation as chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts," Dr. Chu said. "Together, we have the opportunity to show the value of connecting the arts to all Americans, and the importance of the arts in bringing communities together."

"Jane's passion for the arts has been evident across her adult life," noted Ouachita President Rex Horne. "Her legacy here at Ouachita extends across all of her life. We pray God's guidance for her in this significant leadership position."

Dr. Scott Holsclaw, dean of the School of Fine Arts at Ouachita, said the School of Fine Arts "is proud to hear that Dr. Jane Chu was confirmed by the U.S. Senate today as the next chairperson for the National Endowment for the Arts. Dr. Chu and her family have been a major part of the Ouachita legacy and we celebrate with her in her accomplishments and wish her the very best as she steps into this prestigious position. The future of the NEA is in very good hands."

Dr. Chu has served since 2006 as president and CEO of the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts in Kansas City. Under her leadership, the Kauffman Center opened a \$326 million facility dedicated in 2011, positioning it among the leading regional arts centers in the nation. The center is the performance home of the Kansas City Ballet, Kansas City Symphony and Lyric Opera of Kansas City.

In addition to earning a Bachelor of Music in piano performance and Bachelor of Music Education from Ouachita, Dr. Chu holds a master's degree in piano pedagogy from Southern Methodist University, an MBA from Rockhurst University and a PhD in philanthropic studies from Indiana University. She also was awarded an honorary doctorate in music from the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory of Music and Dance.

Dr. Chu is the daughter of Dr. Finley Chu and his wife, Rosemary. Her father served as chairman of OBU's economics and business department until his death in 1967. Rosemary "Mom" Chu, a campus legend at Ouachita, served more than 42 years as residence hall director of Frances Crawford Hall West before retiring in 2009. The Mom Chu House in Gosser Hall is named in her honor.

Dr. Jane Chu, who grew up on the Ouachita campus, is a former OBU Homecoming Queen. During her years as a Ouachita student, she also was a member of the Ouachi-Tones, Concert Band and Ouachita Student Foundation.

The recipient of a Ouachitonian Leadership Award, Chu wrote in the 1979 *Ouachitonian* yearbook, "Where would I be without Ouachita? It has always been my home. I love the environment of fellowship." Citing Ouachita's academic excellence and dedicated professors, she added, "All of this stems from God's love. I just have to praise and thank Him for blessing me with my involvement with Ouachita."