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**Ouachita trustees elect new board members and staff, hear report on Berry Bible Building campaign**



*By Trennis Henderson, OBU Vice President for Communications*

December 19, 2014

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's Board of Trustees elected five new trustees and approved two administrative staff recommendations during the board's Dec. 11 meeting on Ouachita's Arkadelphia campus.

In other business, Ouachita President Rex Horne announced that efforts are under way to raise funds for the renovation of Berry Bible Building. The facility, built in 1962, is the academic hub of Ouachita's Pruet School of Christian Studies. Plans call for updating classrooms, offices and other resources.

There currently are more than 175 Ouachita students pursuing majors in Christian studies and more than 400 students who cite an interest in preparing for vocational ministry. The renovation project will allow students to study in an enhanced learning environment as they prepare for ministry in Arkansas and around the world.

Alumni and friends of Ouachita are invited to consider honoring their pastor or other ministry leader by providing a gift to name a classroom or office suite in their honor or memory. Interested donors may contact the OBU Office of Development at 870-245-5169 or visit [www.obu.edu/give](http://www.obu.edu/give).

Dr. Horne also announced that the university has reached the milestone of \$100 million in endowment funds for the first time in school history, including an increase of about \$8 million over the past fiscal year.

A portion of the annual endowment earnings is used to supplement the university budget with the remainder reinvested for ongoing endowment growth.

Trustee Clay Hallmark, pastor of First Baptist Church of Marion, Ark., presented a report about the Delta Pastors Project. The project involves a partnership between Ouachita and the Arkansas Baptist State Convention that includes offering Survey of the Bible courses for bivocational pastors in the Mississippi Delta region of eastern Arkansas.

"We're trying to create a large network of existing churches and new churches, new pastors and new leaders," Hallmark said. "Currently we have almost 40 bivocational pastors who have enrolled in this opportunity" scheduled to begin in January.

Affirming "the impact not only in the lives of these men, but in the lives of their churches," he said project participants also eventually may enroll in Ouachita Online courses to gain additional ministry training and education.

New trustees elected to the Ouachita Board of Trustees include:

Millard Aud of Arkadelphia is the chairman and general manager of the Olds Foundation of Amity. He and his wife, Theda, are members of First Baptist Church of Arkadelphia. They have two sons, Greg and Mike, and two grandchildren.

Julie Dodge of Conway was re-elected as a trustee. She previously served two terms from 2007 through 2013. Dodge, a homemaker and former adjunct instructor, and her husband, Dr. Ben Dodge, are members of Woodland Heights Baptist Church of Conway. Their daughter, Kate Perry, is a 2013 Ouachita graduate and their son, Drew, is a current Ouachita student.

Beth Neeley of Camden is a 1985 Ouachita graduate with a major in communication sciences and disorders. She is a homemaker and former speech pathologist at Bearden Schools and serves on the board of Christian Health Center of Ouachita County. She and her husband, J.D., are members of First Baptist Church of Camden where she teaches a college and career class. They have two children, Daniel and Taylor, a 2014 Ouachita graduate.

Thomas Thrash of Little Rock is a 1977 Ouachita graduate with a major in business administration. He is an attorney in Little Rock. Thrash and his wife, Toni, are members of Immanuel Baptist Church in Little Rock. They have two sons, Thomas, Jr., a former Ouachita student, and Adam.

James S. Young of Springdale is a 1988 Ouachita graduate. He is group vice president of Tyson Foods. He and his wife, Tammy, also a 1988 OBU graduate, are members of Cross Church of Springdale. Their son, Justin, is a 2014 Ouachita graduate and their daughter, Katelyn, is a current student at Ouachita.

Trustees who have completed their terms of service on the board include Taylor King of Arkadelphia; Larry Kircher of Bald Knob; William H. "Buddy" Sutton of Little Rock, who was named to the position Of Counsel; and Gene Whisenhunt of Little Rock, outgoing board chairman.

Jay Heflin of Little Rock was elected as the new board chairman. Ken Shaddox of North Little Rock was elected vice chairman and Terri Mardis of Springdale was re-elected board secretary.

Among university personnel actions, Debbie Caddell, a staff accountant in the Business Services Office since 2013, was named director of Business Services. She succeeds Kim Hunter who retired in November.

Prior to moving to Arkansas, Caddell was a budget analyst in the office of the vice president of finance and administration at Mount Vernon Nazarene University in Mount Vernon, Ohio. She is originally from California and graduated from California Baptist University with a degree in accounting. Her husband,

David is associate professor of sociology at Ouachita and their daughters, Kendra and Karis, are current Ouachita students.

Carli Sasser, who completed her Ouachita degree this month with a major in music education/choral, was named an admissions counselor in the Office of Admissions Counseling effective in January. She will be responsible for student recruitment in the Little Rock/Central Arkansas area.

Sasser served as a telecounselor for the Office of Admissions Counseling during her senior year at Ouachita. She also was a member of Concert Choir, the Ouachita Singers and Chi Rho Phi women's social club and was a 2012 Tiger Tunes hostess.