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Ouachita honors David Mitchell as 2015 Associational Missionary of the Year



By Tim Yarbrough, editor of the Arkansas Baptist News

March 19, 2015

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ARKADELPHIA, Ark. -- David Mitchell, associational missionary for Bartholomew Baptist Association in Warren, Ark., was named Arkansas Associational Missionary of the Year at a banquet held at Ouachita Baptist University March 3.

Mitchell, 64, was recognized for his leadership and achievements in his 10 years of service with the association. The award has been presented by Ouachita for 43 years as a way to recognize the "outstanding work" accomplished by associational missionaries in Arkansas. The award is the highlight of the annual Associational Missionaries Retreat sponsored by the Arkansas Baptist State Convention and held at DeGray Lake State Park.

"We understand and appreciate the important role that is played in the work of God's kingdom by you who wear this title, and we are thankful for the service you provide to local churches, pastors and the Arkansas Baptist State Convention," Ouachita President Rex Horne said prior to announcing Mitchell as the recipient.

"By recognizing one, we are speaking of all (associational missionaries)," Horne added, inviting Mitchell and his wife, Fran, to join him at the podium.

"The man we honor tonight possesses the qualities that are typical of all those who have been called to the important task of associational leadership," Horne said.

In accepting the award, Mitchell noted Bartholomew Association's historic connection with Ouachita Baptist University.

"Looking back at the early history of Bartholomew, a call went out in 1885, I believe it was, and our little association sent \$400 over here to get this project (Ouachita Baptist College) started. I think we did a pretty good job with that \$400," he said.

"I'm thanking our forbearers in Bartholomew had a vision for missions at the home front," he added.

Mitchell said Bartholomew Association has been serving Bradley and Drew counties since 1850.

"Dr. Horne has expressed it very well," Mitchell noted. "There is a battlefield in our nation right in neighborhoods called campuses, universities and colleges. I'm thankful that the state of Arkansas has two very fine institutions that love the Lord and uphold the great honor and glory to His holy name. I'm thankful that Ouachita has stood strong and fought the adversities, and delivered to the churches – not just in Arkansas, but around the nation and around the world – quality men and women who love the Lord and who have been called to, in turn, give their life back to God.

"Thank you for this honor. It touches me very deeply. Thank you."

Horne noted in the presentation a number of Mitchell's accomplishments since joining the association.

"Over the past 10 years, David has given outstanding leadership to the association, which ministers in Bradley and Drew counties. Highlights of recent years include local, U.S. and international mission efforts," Horne said.

Accomplishments cited included:

- Coordination of volunteers in the association's disaster relief ministry, which utilize a chain saw trailer, construction trailer and shower trailer.
- Work with crisis pregnancy centers. "David and Fran have been involved in this for years, helping establish a center in Central Association and, since coming to Bartholomew Association, helping establish centers in Monticello and Warren. Fran is actively involved in the work of Hope Place Warren."
- The start of Grace Cowboy Mission, which was established in 2011 and constituted as a church in 2014.
- The association has conducted regular mission projects in both Bradley and Drew counties, has led churches to open food pantry ministries and has participated in Acts 1:8 mission projects.
- Since 2009, the association has worked with the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board at Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kan., which includes ongoing student ministry work. Multiple teams from the Baptist Collegiate Ministry at the University of Arkansas at Monticello have worked there in the summer and during spring break mission trips.
- The association and its churches have conducted or participated in mission projects in Brazil, Guatemala, Haiti, Hungary, Peru and Poland, with a new project planned in Croatia this year.

Mitchell came to Bartholomew in 2005 from Congo Road Baptist Church in Little Rock, where he served as pastor. He previously was interim pastor of Lakeshore Heights Baptist Church and administrator of Second Baptist Church Christian School, both in Hot Springs.

Mitchell is a graduate of Central Baptist College in Conway; Baptist Missionary Association Theological Seminary in Jacksonville, Texas; and in recent years, has been working toward completion of a Doctor of Ministry degree from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

The Mitchells have been married for 43 years and have a son and two daughters. Matthew Mitchell is pastor of South McGehee Baptist Church in McGehee; Kelly Cox is the wife of Randy Cox, pastor of Beech Street First Baptist Church in Gurdon; and Christy Mitchell is a graduate student in audiology who ministers on weekends to children with severe behavioral problems.