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Chelsea Byers and Ouachita publications honored at ACMA state convention



By Taylor Tomlinson

April 17, 2014

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

ARKADELPHIA, Ark. -- Chelsea Byers, a senior Ouachita Baptist University mass communications major from Campbell, Texas, recently was awarded Television Producer/Director of the Year at the 2014 Arkansas College Media Association (ACMA) annual convention at Central Baptist College in Conway, Ark. Ouachita student publications received a total of 51 awards at the convention.

"It's a significant honor for not just myself, but for the school that I attend," said Byers. "I would never have dreamed of getting this opportunity if it hadn't been for the professors at [OBU] and the incredible communications department that I'm a part of. Being able to say that a student at Ouachita is the top producer in the state of Arkansas speaks volumes about the department as well as the university."

Byers received this recognition for her role in Ouachita's student-led sports program, *The Rundown*. The show covers news of Ouachita's collegiate and intramural sports as well as discussions of current events in professional sports.

"I'm so proud of Chelsea," said Dr. Deborah Root, chair of OBU's Rogers Department of Communications and faculty adviser to the *Ouachitonian* yearbook. "She developed the idea of *The Rundown*, organized a

staff and saw it become a reality. It was totally a student-led initiative, and it's great to see her rewarded for her vision and her work.”



“It’s a great day when a student comes to a faculty member and wants to pursue a major project that isn’t a class assignment,” said Dr. Jeff Root, dean of OBU’s School of Humanities and faculty adviser to *The Signal* newspaper. “*The Rundown* has been a strong addition to the department, and Chelsea made it happen.”

Byers is also the Sports Editor for *The Signal*. She was awarded third place for her sports column “Mad for March.”

The Rundown also was awarded second place in the regularly occurring newscast category. Other OBU television entries that received awards include: first place for the feature “Arkadelphia Smiles”; first place in sports reporting for the Feb. 28, 2014, episode of the *Ouachita Show*; first place for the sports feature “Josh Myers” by Ben Cline, a mass communications and speech communication major from Little Rock, Ark.; and third place for the feature “Tiger Steel Drum Ensemble.”

The Signal received 13 awards overall, including second place for its feature page layout “The Creepy Tour” and third place for its sports page layout.

“Winning these awards, for us as a staff, is a great encouragement,” said *The Signal* Editor-In-Chief Emily Terry, a junior mass communications major from Bryant, Ark. “When we enter our best stories and designs from the past year, knowing other schools are doing the same thing, and we win awards for our work, it’s really encouraging to know that we have skilled people working for us and that we are putting out something to the student body that is good work.”

Terry received third place for her feature article “Horse rescue not just for animals.” Other staff members recognized for their individual work include:

- Assistant Sports Editor Dixon Land received first place for his sports feature story “Davis Ward: Pitcher Perfect,” and second place in both sports story writing and sports column writing for his articles “Tigers win extra innings” and “Finding faith in southern tradition.”

- Opinions Editor Noah Hutchinson, a senior mass communications major from Texarkana, Texas, received second place in the review writing category for “Omnipotent summer 2013 movie review,” as well as third place for “Wielding ‘The Eurich’ perfect handshake” and honorable mention for “How to survive a group project” in general column writing.
- Associate Editor Sam Cushman, a junior mass communications and political science major from Springdale, Ark., placed third in the newswriting category for his article “Survey to measure OBU student drug, alcohol use.”
- Tanner Ward, a 2012 Ouachita graduate and former *Signal* editor-in-chief, received honorable mention in the newswriting category for his article “New brew.”
- News Editor Anna Kumpuris, a sophomore mass communications major from Little Rock, Ark., received honorable mention in general column writing for her article “No Shave November: not just for men.”

Staff members from Ouachita’s 2012-2013 yearbook, the *Ouachitonian*, also were recognized for their individual work. The publication received 32 awards overall.

“The awards we received ranged from a variety of different categories, from photos to layouts to stories,” said *Ouachitonian* Editor-In-Chief Mauri Sparks, a senior Christian studies/Christian ministries and mass communications major from Queen City, Texas. “The many different students who received the awards in these categories show just how much manpower it takes to produce this publication.”

Sparks received five first place awards for her individual entries in introduction theme page/opening, divider, closing, portrait layout and typographic presentations; three second place awards for her individual entries in endsheets, feature layout and typographic presentations; and third place for her individual entry in the cover category.

Other *Ouachitonian* staff members and contributors who were recognized for their work include:

- Student Life Editor Aly Smith, a junior mass communications and graphic design major from Sherwood, Ark., and Sparks placed first in the student life layout category.
- Nicole McPhate, a 2013 Ouachita graduate from Conway, Ark., received first place for her student life photo “Mud Tug-of-War,” second place for her feature photo “Highlights the Trainer’s Role” and third place academics photo “Running Through the Primary Purpose of Her Tutoring Session.”
- Heather Ellis, a senior early childhood education from Texarkana, Texas, received first place for her feature photo “Great Original Motion, Tone and Feeling” and second place in the academics photo category.
- Emily Terry placed first in the special features writing category for her piece on LJ Brooks.
- Sports Editor Ben Cline, and Sparks received second and third place for their spreads on football and “Unsung Heroes” in the sports layout category. Cline also received third place for his individual entry in yearbook sports writing and honorable mention in special features writing.
- Academics Editor Jake Coffman, a senior music major from Tyronza, Ark., and Sparks placed second and third in the academic layout category for their articles “America Reads Counts” and “A New Challenge.”

- Heather Francis, a senior mass communications from Grand Prairie, received second place in the student life writing category and honorable mention in the academics writing category for her article "Faith in Action."
- People Editor Faith Ledbetter, a sophomore pre-nursing major from Arkadelphia, Ark., and Sparks placed second for their portrait layout.
- Jason Pullano, a senior biology and secondary education major from Bedford, Texas, received second place in the sports photo category.
- Kaitie Scott, a Christian studies/Christian ministries and mass communications major, was placed second in both the organizations/Greek writing category and the special features writing category.
- Grace Finley, a junior business administration/management major from Alexander, Ark., received third place for her sports photo "Two Tiger Defenders."
- Organizations Editor Hannah Shull, a junior psychology major from Little Rock, Ark., and Sparks received honorable mention for two of their spreads in the organization/Greek layout category.
- Jessica Stewart, a senior Christian media/Christian communications and mass communications major from Mansfield, Texas, received honorable mention in the academics photo category.

The ACMA is an organization of collegiate newspaper, yearbook, online, magazine and television staffs from across Arkansas. The annual convention rotates among schools each year and is organized by the publication advisers at the participating colleges and universities.

For more information, contact Dr. Jeff Root at rootj@obu.edu or (870) 245-4186.