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NEWS



Photo 1 Kaelin Clay performs the aria "Glitter and Be Gay" during the 2022 Miss Ouachita Baptist University Scholarship Competition. Photos by Levi Dade

For immediate release

Miss OBU Kaelin Clay to represent Ouachita in the Miss Arkansas Pageant

By Felley Lawson

May 23, 2022

For more information, contact OBU's news bureau at newsbureau@obu.edu or (870) 245-5206

ARKADELPHIA, Ark.—Miss Ouachita Baptist University Kaelin Clay, 19, will compete for the title of Miss Arkansas 2022 from June 11-18 during the Miss Arkansas Scholarship Competition at Robinson Center in Little Rock.

Clay, a sophomore communications & media/strategic communications and music industry double major from Idabel, Okla., was crowned Miss OBU during the 54th Annual Miss Ouachita Baptist University Scholarship Competition on Saturday, Feb. 12. Reflecting on her win, she said that when she toured Ouachita as a prospective student two years ago, "I instantly knew that by choosing this university I would choose a world of opportunities. I had no idea that this choice would lead to me representing Ouachita on the Miss Arkansas stage."

"From the time I was a little girl," she added, "I knew I wanted to be Miss America. Representing the school that has given me treasured connections—and representing the beautiful Natural State—is, I

believe, the perfect path to reaching my dreams. I'm so grateful for Ouachita and the community for pouring into this journey. I wouldn't have it any other way!"

Sponsored in the Miss OBU competition by Ouachita Singers, Clay performed a vocal arrangement of the aria "Glitter and Be Gay" from the operetta *Candide*—a presentation she will repeat in the talent portion of the Miss Arkansas competition.

Participating at the statewide level will give Clay a larger platform to advocate for her social impact initiative, "The Confidence Blueprint." She developed the four-part approach to building self-esteem based on her own experience enduring bullying as a young teenager.

When asked during the Miss OBU pageant how she could best share encouragement around building self-confidence, Clay replied, "I experienced in eighth grade being the girl who sat alone at lunch, who wanted to go to the bathroom and cry during the day because of how the words of my classmates impacted me. By sharing my story, I can let everyone know we share common ground and that it is okay if you're lacking confidence, because there is a possibility to build up that confidence. That is the most impactful way I can encourage others."

Clay will be joined in the Miss Arkansas competition by six Ouachita students and alumni:

- Miss Northeast Arkansas Izzy Baughn, 21, a 2022 communications & media/strategic communications and political science graduate from Jonesboro, Ark.
- Miss University of Arkansas Taryn Bewley, 23, a 2021 political science and psychology graduate from Conway, Ark.
- Miss Central Arkansas Kensley Flynn, 19, a sophomore chemistry and pre-medicine double major from Cabot, Ark.
- Miss South Arkansas Haley Shourd, 19, a sophomore communications & media/strategic communications major from Conway, Ark.
- Miss Diamond Lakes Melody Stotts, 21, a 2021 middle school education graduate from Jonesboro, Ark.
- Miss Greater Hot Springs Emilee Webb, 20, a junior English and political science double major from Leola, Ark.

During the Miss OBU competition, in addition to the title, Clay earned the academic, eveningwear and talent awards, as well as the Alpha Eveningwear, Alpha On-Stage Question/SII and Alpha Talent awards. She tied for the photogenic award with third runner-up Kensley Flynn, who was sponsored by Chi Mu women's social club.

Other award-winning Miss OBU contestants include first runner-up Haley Shourd, sponsored by the Concert Choir; second runner-up Jillian Covington, 19, a sophomore communications & media major from Alexandria, La., sponsored by Student Senate; Miss Congeniality and non-finalist talent award winner Cloe Humphry, 21, a 2022 worship arts graduate from Benton, Ark., sponsored by Ouachita Worship; and Kylie Carpenter, 19, a sophomore biology and pre-medicine double major from Benton, Ark., winner of the Miss OBU Dreamer Award. Carpenter also was sponsored by Student Senate.



Photo 2 Contestants who took top honors during the 2022 Miss OBU Scholarship Competition are (from left) third runner-up Kensley Flynn, second runner-up Jillian Covington, Miss OBU Kaelin Clay and first runner-up Haley Shourd.

Non-finalist interview award winner Jill Parsons, 20, a junior communications & media/strategic communications and graphic design double major from Celina, Texas, was sponsored by the Art Club. She tied for the Spirit of Miss OBU Award with her sister Juli Parsons, 20, a junior business administration/entrepreneurship and business administration/marketing double major, also from Celina.

For more information about the 2022 Miss Arkansas Scholarship Competition, visit missarkansas.org.