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Ouachita News Bureau

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Lead photo: Ouachita students recognized by the Arkansas College Media Association for their work during the 2021-22 academic year include (from left) Abby Blankenship, first place, Student Life Photo; Gracen Goudy and Anna Rousssel, first place, Yearbook Editors of the Year; Amy Jackson, a senior communications & media/film major from Cypress, Texas, representing the Signal staff, Sara Patterson, first place, Website Editor of the Year; and Valeria Gomez, first place, Social Media Promotion. Photo by Chris Babb

For immediate release

Ouachita student media earn top national, state awards

By Felley Lawson

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

ARKADELPHIA, Ark.—Ouachita Baptist University student media have earned three national awards and a Gold Medalist rating from the Columbia Scholastic Press Association (CSPA) for the *Ouachitonian* yearbook and 64 state awards for the *Ouachitonian*, *Signal* newspaper and Ouachita Digital Sports Network, as well as online and television coverage, from the Arkansas College Media Association (ACMA).

"I'm so proud of our students for the awards they received for our student publications," said Dr. Deborah Root, professor of communications and director of assessment and institutional research at Ouachita. Root also serves as chair of the Rogers Department of Communications and faculty advisor for the *Ouachitonian*. "We know they are talented and are dedicated to their work in our department, but it's nice to see them honored on a state and national level. They are excellent representatives of the quality education Ouachita provides."

The CSPA awards were announced in Fall 2021. Levi Dade, a junior Christian studies/biblical studies major from Senatobia, Miss., earned first place for yearbook sports action photo.

"This award—or any award—was not something I thought I had the skills to win," Dade said. "I'm very honored to accept it, and I attribute it to Nathan Dixon, my mentor since high school. Without his teaching and training in photography for the past six years, this wouldn't have been possible. It's all in his honor, as well as for the glory of God."

Third place was awarded to Abby Blankenship, a senior communications & media/strategic communications major from Little Rock, Ark., for yearbook feature photo and to Ben Swanger, a 2021 communications & media/sports communications graduate from Forney, Texas, for design portfolio.

ACMA honors were announced during the organization's annual convention April 8 at Arkansas State University in Jonesboro. Ouachita students entered six of the top seven award divisions; each won or placed in their category, including *Ouachitonian* editors Gracen Goudy and Anna Roussel who were named Yearbook Editors of the Year.

"It was exciting getting this award after a year of working so hard," said Goudy, a senior communications & media/communications studies major from Bryant, Ark., "and it made it even more special that I got to win it with Anna. We are both so thankful that we are able to create this book for Ouachita and its students."

Roussel, a senior communications & media/strategic communications and political science double major from Searcy, Ark., added, "This award was an affirmation of both the hard work we have put into the *Ouachitonian* this year and the excellent training we've received from all of our professors. It felt like the perfect way to close out mine and Gracen's four years working together on the yearbook."

Other first-place winners among the competition's top divisions were Swanger, who was named Designer of the Year; Sara Patterson, a senior English literature and Christian studies/biblical studies double major from Wylie, Texas, named Website Editor of the Year; Matthew Branch, a senior communications & media/sports communications major from White Hall, Ark., named TV Producer of the Year; and Caroline Derby, a junior communications & media/multimedia and political science double major from Arkadelphia, Ark., named TV Anchor of the Year.

Eleven students won first place in individual categories, including Chase Hartsell, a sophomore business administration and Spanish double major from Hot Springs, Ark. Hartsell earned first-place honors in the TV Sports Feature category for his segment for the Ouachita Sports Digital Network on Ouachita's Battle of the Ravine football rivalry game.

"This award from ACMA is a true honor. It's the first broadcasting award I've ever won at the collegiate level, and to win it with 'A November Morn' is just icing on the cake," Hartsell

said. “Getting to tell the story of the Battle of the Ravine rivalry in that way was amazing; it’s unlike any other project that I’ve worked on before. It’s really special to me, and I’m glad others are enjoying it as well.”

Ryan York, a senior communications & media/sports communications major from Plano, Texas, is one of 11 students who placed in more than one ACMA awards category. York earned a first-place award for online sports writing and a second-place award for sports page layout.

“At first I was a little surprised to receive the award for sports writing,” he said. “When I first started writing for the newspaper, I did it for fun and for some good work experience. To receive this award helps me see just how far I’ve come in writing and shows how Ouachita has pushed me to become who I am.”

For more information about Ouachita student media, contact Dr. Deborah Root at rootd@obu.edu or at (870) 245-5510.

2022 ACMA awards include:

GENERAL EXCELLENCE

- 1st place, Yearbook Editor of the Year—Gracen Goudy and Anna Roussel
- 1st place, Designer of the Year—Ben Swanger
- 1st place, Website Editor of the Year—Sara Patterson
- 1st place, TV Producer of the Year—Matthew Branch
- 1st place, TV Anchor of the Year—Caroline Derby
- 2nd place, Newspaper Editor of the Year—Sara Patterson
- 2nd place, Yearbook General Excellence—*Ouachitonian*
- 3rd place, Newspaper Website—*The Signal*
- Honorable Mention, Photographer of the Year—Abby Blankenship

THE SIGNAL

- 1st place, Social Media Promotion—Valeria Gomez, a junior communications & media/multimedia major from Alajuela, Costa Rica
- 1st place, Advertising—Caroline Derby
- 2nd place, Review Writing—Wyatt Ashlock, a junior theatre arts and communications & media/film double major from Royse City, Texas
- 2nd place, Front Page Layout—Sara Patterson
- 2nd place, Sports Page Layout—Ryan York
- 3rd place, Feature Page Layout—Sara Patterson

ONLINE/TELEVISION

- 1st place, Online Sports Writing—Ryan York
- 1st place, TV Weather—Caroline Derby and Caity Hatchett, a 2021 communications & media/sports communications and history graduate from Keithville, La.
- 1st place, Niche Specialty Website—staff
- 1st place, Online Multimedia Package—staff (Tiger Tunes)
- 3rd place, TV Feature—staff (Tiger Tunes)
- Honorable Mention, Online Sports Photo—Abby Blankenship

OUACHITA SPORTS DIGITAL NETWORK

- 1st place, TV Computer Graphics—Matthew Branch
- 1st place, TV Sports Feature—Chase Hartsell
- 2nd place, TV Computer Graphics—Matthew Branch, Caity Hatchett and Luke Roberson, a 2021 communications & media/sports media and integrated communications graduate from Plano, Texas

OUACHITONIAN

- 1st place, Yearbook Cover—Ben Swanger
- 1st place, Introduction/Theme—Ben Swanger
- 1st place, Closing Theme Page—Ben Swanger
- 1st place, Feature Layout—Ben Swanger
- 1st place, Academic Layout—Ben Swanger
- 1st place, Portrait Layout—Ben Swanger
- 1st place, Organization/Greek Layout—Ben Swanger
- 1st place, Special Features Writing—Anna Roussel
- 1st place, Typography Presentation—Ben Swanger
- 1st place, Student Life Photo—Abby Blankenship
- 1st place, Divider—Ben Swanger
- 2nd place, Divider—Ben Swanger
- 2nd place, Feature Photo—Abby Blankenship
- 2nd place, Special Features Writing—Caroline Johnson, a junior communications & media/communications studies and political science double major from Springdale, Ark.
- 2nd place, Academics Writing—Michaelyn Ferrell, a senior business administration/marketing and communications & media/strategic communications studies double major from White Hall, Ark.
- 2nd place, Portrait Layout—Ben Swanger
- 2nd place, Student Life Layout—Ben Swanger
- 2nd place, Feature Layout—Ben Swanger
- 2nd place, Endsheets—Ben Swanger
- 2nd place, Sports Writing—Caity Hatchett
- 2nd place, Organization/Greek Writing—Mallory Morris, a 2021 graphic design and communications & media/integrated communications graduate from Nacogdoches, Texas
- 2nd place, Academic Photo—Madison Melcher, a sophomore business administration/entrepreneurship major from Rockwall, Texas
- 3rd place, Student Life Photo—Abby Blankenship
- 3rd place, Sports Photo—Levi Dade
- 3rd place, Portrait Layout—Ben Swanger
- 3rd place, Divider—Ben Swanger
- 3rd place, Organization/Greek Layout—Ben Swanger
- 3rd place, Sports Writing—Caroline Johnson
- 3rd place, Student Life Layout—Ben Swanger
- 3rd place, Feature Layout—Ben Swanger
- 3rd place, Feature Photo—Hannah Adamson, a junior choral music education major from Newton, Kan.
- 3rd place, Student Life Writing—Emily Barton, a senior psychology and social justice studies major from Marshall, Texas
- 3rd place, Academics Writing—Anna Roussel
- 3rd place, Sports Layout—Ben Swanger
- 3rd place, Organization/Greek Writing—Anna Roussel
- 3rd place, Academics Layout—Ben Swanger

- 3rd place, Special Features Writing—Gracen Goudy
- Honorable Mention, Student Life Photo—Hannah Smith
- Honorable Mention, Feature Photo—Meagan North, a 2021 communications & media/strategic communications graduate from Fort Worth, Texas
- Honorable Mention, Organization/Greek Writing—Valeria Gomez