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Ouachita News Bureau

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Photo 1 Alex Moore (left), a junior English and philosophy double major, was named Ouachita's inaugural Johnny and Susan Wink Scholarship Award winner. The prize is named for faculty members Dr. Johnny Wink (right) and his wife, the late Dr. Susan Wink. Photo by Coleman Callan.

For immediate release

Ouachita awards first Johnny and Susan Wink Scholarship

By Julia Shands

July 22, 2022

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

ARKADELPHIA, Ark.—Alex Moore, a junior English and philosophy double major from Gulfport, Miss., was named Ouachita Baptist University's inaugural Johnny and Susan Wink Scholarship Award winner. He was recognized during an April ceremony in Ouachita's Young Auditorium.

"He's been a student of mine in several classes," said Dr. Johnny Wink, Betty Burton Peck Professor of English and namesake of the award along with his wife, the late Dr. Susan Wink, professor emerita of English. "He's a splendid fellow and a stellar student. I'm pleased as punch to have him be the first awardee of this scholarship."

Moore also is a member of the Carl Goodson Honors Program and has been named to Ouachita's President's List several times.

"I was incredibly happy to find out that I was the first recipient of the Wink scholarship, since Dr. Wink hails from Gulfport, Miss., as do I, and he and the whole Bugtruck mean a lot to me," Moore said, referring to the suite in Lile Hall that houses Language & Literature faculty offices. "I love to write and to critically analyze literature, and the Ouachita English program has helped me further my skills in these areas."

The ceremony also honored the careers of Johnny and Susan Wink; together, they have served at Ouachita for more than 80 years.

"The Winks represent the very best about Ouachita—kind, wise, brilliant teachers who challenge and nurture students," said Dr. Doug Sonheim, professor emeritus of English and former Clarence and Bennie Sue Anthony Chair of Bible and Humanities at Ouachita. "The purpose of the scholarship is to help and honor students of language and literature, students who pay attention to the words we use, who pay attention to how we order our words into meaningful sentences, telling the truth through stories about what it means to be a human being. More than ever, we need truthful and beautiful stories, right?"

Sonheim, who previously served as department chair, began working on plans for the scholarship in 2013 and initiated fundraising in 2017, so the event served as the culmination of many years' work. Current students, English alumni, family and friends attended to recognize the Winks and Moore.

English faculty members read original works to honor the Winks. Sarah Smith, assistant professor of English, read "Savoir et Connaitre," and Dr. Jay Curlin, Kathryn Maddox Professor of English, read "The University of Wink." Jennifer Pittman, chair of the Department of Language and Literature and director of Ouachita's Speer Writing Center, presented the scholarship to Moore.

"When it came down to selecting characteristics of the award winner, we found it easy: Simply, the winner should emulate Johnny and Susan and be engaged in life-long learning," said Pittman. "What wasn't so easy, though, was to select from the number of exceptional students we have in the department. Alex, however, stood out among the contenders. He's an English and philosophy double-major, having been on the President's List each semester he's been at Ouachita. A two-year veteran consultant of the Speer Writing Center, he knows, as a colleague once remarked, 'where to put the commas.' In short, he's a great reader, a superb thinker and an elegant writer."

Guests also were invited to return for a follow-up event later that evening featuring readings from Ouachita alumni Greg Brownderville and Eli Cranor.

Brownderville is associate professor of English, director of creative writing and editor-in-chief of the "Southwest Review" literary magazine at Southern Methodist University. He is the author of three collections of poetry: "Deep Down in the Delta," "Gust" and "A Horse with Holes In It."

A former football coach and high school English teacher, Cranor writes a nationally-syndicated sports column titled "Athletic Support." His fictional essays have been published in "Oxford American." Cranor is the author of the children's novel "Books Make Brainz Taste Bad" and released his first novel of adult fiction, "Don't Know Tough," in March.

For more information about the Wink Scholarship or Department of Language and Literature, contact Jennifer Pittman at pittmanj@obu.edu or 870-245-5553.