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OUACHITA
BAPTIST UNIVERSITY



NEWS

From the "Ouachitonian": Dr. Wesley Kluck



By Madison Cresswell

December 22, 2021

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

ARKADELPHIA, Ark. – *Previously published in the 2021 Ouachitonian yearbook*

After moving back to Arkadelphia, his hometown and town of his alma mater, following his time in medical school and residency, Dr. Wesley Kluck was asked what his dream job was while playing a newlywed game at church.

"My answer was always to work at Ouachita Baptist University," said Kluck.

In 2004, Kluck was on Ouachita's Board of Trustees and had the opportunity to help crown Ouachita's homecoming queen. While on the football field, former Ouachita President Dr. Andrew Westmoreland leaned over to Kluck and surprisingly asked if he wanted to work on campus. Since that day, Kluck has taken on the roles of vice president for institutional advancement, vice president for student development, team doctor, photography teacher and most well-known, the campus physician at Ouachita.

The ongoing trend in health care in 2020 on small college campuses was to shut down health services and have students go to clinics in their corresponding towns; however, Ouachita went against that grain.

“The fact that I am able to be here, along with Nurse Molly, it allows us to serve more students right here,” Kluck said. “The follow-up is so much easier because I know a lot of the students already and I can establish that necessary trust with every patient.”

With the COVID-19 pandemic, Ouachita had never needed Kluck more than the 2020-21 school year. “The moment everyone had to go home in the spring of 2020, I probably put in 20-25 hours a week just figuring out a way to have school safely and how to stay in school,” Kluck said. “I think about COVID and our students all day long. It is the first thing I think about in the morning, and the last thing I think about before I go to bed.”

As the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines continued to evolve for COVID-19, Kluck and his team remained proactive to implement every recommendation and testing procedure that would keep Ouachita students safe. “Since the very first day, we have been following the procedure: rapidly diagnose, isolate, determine close contacts and quarantine,” said Kluck.

Students with positive tests were required to go home, along with those who were considered close contacts with COVID carriers. “Those with negative tests did not have to go home, so we brought them meals to their rooms, did their errands and whatever else we could do to make their lives easier,” Kluck said.

Kluck never could have imagined being a campus physician in the middle of a pandemic, but throughout the whole experience, Kluck said, “I have remained hopeful and pray that we will continue to stay healthy.”

“If one goes down, we all go down together,” said Kluck. “Though, I believed in this year and the journey we created together, it definitely was a year we won’t forget.”

Photo by Abby Blankenship