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NEWS



Photo 1 Haley Shourd (far right) was crowned Miss OBU 2023 on Feb. 4. She is pictured on the Miss OBU stage with (from left) first runner-up Abigail Wood, Miss OBU 2022 Kaelin Clay, and Miss Arkansas Teen Ka'Mya Tackett. Photos by Madison Melcher.

For immediate release

Haley Shourd crowned 2023 Miss Ouachita Baptist University

By Kaelin Clay

March 7, 2023

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

ARKADELPHIA, Ark. — The Miss Ouachita Baptist Scholarship Competition took place Saturday, Feb. 4, in Jones Performing Arts Center where sophomore communications & media major Haley Shourd was crowned Miss Ouachita Baptist University. Shourd, 20, is a Conway, Ark., native.

Shourd is no stranger to the pageant world and decided to compete because of the role models that served before her.

“Some of my favorite people have served so well in this role, and I prayed for the day I would be able to do the same in the job,” Shourd said. “I love Ouachita because of the community and the atmosphere, so I knew I had to try for the title.”

Shourd will represent Ouachita when she competes in the 2023 Miss Arkansas Scholarship Pageant June 3-10; this will be her second time competing for the title of Miss Arkansas.

“I am honestly over the moon about the opportunity I have been given to go back and compete,” Shourd said. “I was able to go last year and make so many connections with the sisterhood while also earning scholarship money along the way.”

On her journey to the Miss Arkansas stage and beyond, Shourd chose to partner with the Ronald McDonald House and promote a social impact initiative titled, “Champions for Childhood Cancer Awareness,” based on experiences close to home.

“I had a cousin and a close friend who both had leukemia as a child,” Shourd said. “Hearing about their experiences and the need for safer treatment, research, support and funding motivated me to choose childhood cancer awareness as my platform.”

Shourd will serve as Miss Ouachita Baptist University in more ways than one, though. She shares that being Miss OBU brings special support and an opportunity to carry on a legacy.

“I hope my personality and love for connection will help me lead here at Ouachita,” Shourd said. “I feel like so many things in my life have led me to this point, and I am excited to see where this journey takes me.”

She added, “I would love to grow as a person, in my connections with my peers, in my faith and in my ability to lead and mentor others. The job of Miss OBU is so unique because of the number of people that look up to her.”

In addition to winning the title, Shourd also received the People’s Choice Award, Kristen Glover Belew Talent Award and Kaelin Clay Evening Wear Award.

Abigail Wood, a freshman biology major from Harrell, Ark., was first runner-up. Sponsored by the Academic Success Center, Wood won the Suzie Gresham Barham Alpha Private Interview Award and the Caroline Derby Academic Award. Cali Rose Mendonca, a freshman kinesiology major from Troup, Texas, was sponsored by the intramural referees and won the Photogenic Award and the Mac Sisson Alpha Talent Award. Spirit of Miss OBU Award winner Savannah Carrigan, a freshman kinesiology major from Centerton, Ark., was sponsored by Student Senate. Wood and Carrigan also tied for the Miss Congeniality Award.

Dr. Beth Anne Rankin '94, who was crowned Miss Ouachita Baptist University 1993 and Miss Arkansas 1994, emceed the event, which featured performances by Miss OBU 2022 Kaelin Clay, a sophomore communications & media/multimedia journalism and political science double major from Idabel, Okla., along with her Diamond State Princesses Addison Glover, Harper Glover and Abigail Jones.



Photo 2 Haley Shourd performs "Don't Rain on My Parade" during the talent portion of the Miss OBU Scholarship Competition.

Other Ouachita students competing for the title of Miss Arkansas who provided entertainment included Miss Southwest Arkansas Bel Butler, a junior psychology major from Hot Springs Village, Ark.; Miss Arkansas Valley Katy Beth Dunn, a communications & media/multimedia major from Mountain Home, Ark.; Miss Grand Prairie Kensley Flynn, a sophomore chemistry and biology double major from Cabot, Ark.; and Miss South Central Bailey Gibson, a junior finance and business administration/marketing major from Hot Springs, Ark.

Miss Arkansas Ebony Mitchell and Miss Arkansas Teen Ka'Mya Tackett also were honored on stage.

Entertainment during the pageant was provided by the Miss OBU Court of Honor: Chaney Campbell, a senior music industry major from Rogers, Ark.; Brynn Clark, a junior music industry major from Arkadelphia, Ark.; Allie Graves, a junior community & family services major from Texarkana, Texas; Brennon Humphry, a junior music industry major from Benton, Ark.; Kady Johnson, a senior Christian studies/Christian ministries and Christian studies/Biblical studies & theology double major from Mountain View, Ark.; and Logan Talley, a junior music industry major from Sheridan, Ark.

For more information about the 2023 Miss Arkansas Scholarship Competition, visit missarkansas.org.