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Office of Communications & Marketing

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Photo 1 Communications & media students who represented Ouachita at the Arkansas College Media Association spring convention in April include (from left) Julia Shands, Sarah Dean, Josh Engle, Caroline Derby, Levi Dade, Valeria Gomez, Wyatt Ashlock, Anna Roussel and Madi Darr. Photo by Dr. Deborah Root.

For immediate release

Ouachita student media honored among the best locally, nationally

By Felley Lawson

May 8, 2023

For more information, contact Ouachita's Office of Communications & Marketing at comm-mark@obu.edu or (870) 245-5206.

ARKADELPHIA, Ark. — Ouachita Baptist University student media have earned 82 awards for excellence, including seven national and 38 state awards for the *Ouachitonian* yearbook and 37 state awards for the *Signal* newspaper, Ouachita Sports Digital Network, online media and television coverage.

The 2022 *Ouachitonian* was honored with a Pacemaker Award from the Associated Collegiate Press. Announced in March during the ACP National College Media Conference in San Francisco, the Pacemaker is one of the oldest nationwide awards for college journalism. Additionally, the *Ouachitonian* was awarded All-American distinction in the ACP's annual critique service of student publications. Marks of Distinction were earned in the categories of Writing and Editing, Essentials, Coverage and Design.

Anna Roussel, a 2022 communications & media/strategic communications and political science graduate from Searcy, Ark., and Gracen Zucha, a 2022 communications & media/communications studies graduate from Bryant, Ark., served together as editors-in-chief of the *Ouachitonian*.

"It was a wonderful moment when I heard the *Ouachitonian* announced as a Pacemaker winner at the conference," said Dr. Deborah Root, professor of communications and director of assessment and institutional research at Ouachita. "Only three colleges received this award, and it shows the caliber program we have in our communications department and on our publication staffs. Anna and Gracen did a marvelous job leading the team on the 2022 *Ouachitonian*. I am so proud for them and for our university."

Roussel and Zucha were also honored with five national Gold Circle Awards for Yearbook by the Columbia Scholastic Press Association; Roussel was singled out for a sixth award for writing.

At its April 14 annual convention at Harding University, the Arkansas College Media Association honored Ouachita student media with 75 awards in five divisions. The *Ouachitonian* and the Ouachita Sports Digital Network were presented with General Excellence awards for Yearbook and Television, respectively; these are the top awards presented at the competition.

For their work on the *Ouachitonian*, Roussel and Zucha were named Co-Designers of the Year and Caroline Johnson, a senior communications & media/communications studies and political science double major from Springdale, Ark., was named Yearbook Editor of the Year.

"It's such an honor to be awarded nationally and within the state of Arkansas for all the hard work the staff put into the book," Zucha said. "We had the best team of people who helped create the best book. I'm thankful to be a part of Ouachita's winning legacy."

"The recognition our book has received has been an incredible celebration of the work that went into the 2022 *Ouachitonian*," Roussel said. "The talent in our newsroom is unmatched, and I feel so grateful to have been a part of that. It was an honor getting to capture a year of Ouachita's story."

Valeria Gomez, a senior communications & media/multimedia major from Alajuela, Costa Rica, was named Website Editor of the Year and Caroline Derby, a senior communications & media/multimedia, communications & media/strategic communications and political science triple major from Arkadelphia, Ark., was named TV Anchor of the Year and TV Producer of the Year.

"I was honored to receive these awards," Derby remarked. "Ouachita News is a newer platform within our department that was started just three years ago. It's been a joy to see how much work the team has put in and how the show has grown. I couldn't be more proud."

Though several veterans of Ouachita student media were recognized, the honorees also included students who were new to the Department of Communications and to Ouachita. Isaac Bourne, a freshman communications & media/sports media major from Murray, Ky., won first place awards in the Sports Column and Campus Sports Story categories of the newspaper division and a second place award in the Sports Reporting category of the television division.

"It's such a blessing from the Lord to be recognized for my work," said Bourne, who serves as sports editor of *The Signal*. "I'm surrounded by so many people at Ouachita who make me better in every aspect of my life, such as putting me in a situation where awards like this are possible."

Root said, "I am extremely proud of our students for being recognized on both the national and state levels for their work in our student media. Their hard work and dedication are evident on a daily basis, and it's nice to see their commitment and talent honored in this way."

For more information about Ouachita student media or the [Rogers Department of Communications](#) at Ouachita, contact Dr. Deborah Root at rootd@obu.edu or at (870) 245-5510.

2023 ACMA awards include:

GENERAL EXCELLENCE

- Co-Designers of the Year – Anna Roussel and Gracen Zucha
- TV Anchor of the Year – Caroline Derby
- TV Producer of the Year – Caroline Derby
- Website Editor of the Year – Valeria Gomez
- Yearbook Editor of the Year – Caroline Johnson
- 2nd Place Reporter of the Year – Chase Hartsell
- 2nd Place Newspaper Editor of the Year – Julia Shands
- 3rd Place TV Producer of the Year – Wyatt Ashlock
- 3rd Place Website General Excellence
- Honorable Mention Photographer of the Year – Levi Dade
- Honorable Mention Newspaper General Excellence

OUACHITONIAN

1st Place

- Student Life Photo – Abby Blankenship
- Sports Photo – Sarah Dean
- Feature Photo – Abby Blankenship
- Typographic – Anna Roussel and Gracen Zucha
- Special Features – Mitchell Waite
- Sports Writing – Gracen Zucha
- Sports Layout – Anna Roussel and Gracen Zucha
- Student Life Layout – Anna Roussel and Gracen Zucha
- Divider – Anna Roussel and Gracen Zucha
- Closing Theme Page – Anna Roussel and Gracen Zucha
- Introduction Theme Page – Anna Roussel and Gracen Zucha
- Feature Layout – Anna Roussel and Gracen Zucha
- Academics Layout – Anna Roussel and Gracen Zucha
- Student Life Layout – Anna Roussel and Gracen Zucha
- Portrait Layout – Anna Roussel and Gracen Zucha

2nd Place

- Academic Writing – Valeria Gomez
- Cover – Anna Roussel and Gracen Zucha
- Feature Layout – Anna Roussel and Gracen Zucha

- Organizations/Greek Layout – Anna Roussel and Gracen Zucha
- Portrait Layout – Anna Roussel and Gracen Zucha
- Organizations Writing – Valeria Gomez
- Sports Photo – Levi Dade
- Student Life Layout – Anna Roussel and Gracen Zucha
- Feature Layout – Anna Roussel and Gracen Zucha

3rd Place

- Academics Layout – Anna Roussel and Gracen Zucha
- Feature Layout – Anna Roussel and Gracen Zucha
- Organizations/Greek Layout – Anna Roussel and Gracen Zucha
- Organizations Writing – Caroline Johnson
- Portrait Layout – Anna Roussel and Gracen Zucha
- Sports Layout – Anna Roussel and Gracen Zucha
- Student Life Photo – Abby Blankenship

Honorable Mention

- Sports Writing – Caroline Johnson
- Student Life Layout – Anna Roussel and Gracen Zucha
- Student Life Writing – Anna Roussel
- Typographic Presentation – Anna Roussel and Gracen Zucha

ONLINE

1st Place

- Multimedia Package – Chase Hartsell
- Sports Writing – Chase Hartsell
- Arts & Entertainment Review – Wyatt Ashlock
- Editorials, Commentary, Blogs – Sydney Whitfield

3rd Place

- Social Media – Promotion – Valeria Gomez
- Newswriting – Madison Basco

Honorable Mention

- Audio Podcast – Malea Borland
- Arts & Entertainment Article – Rachel Dunnam

TELEVISION

1st Place

- Regularly Occurring Newscast – “Ouachita News Show”
- Sports Feature – Chase Hartsell
- Sports Reporting – Wyatt Ashlock, Jill Parsons, Haley Shourd, Chase Hartsell, Chris Gay and Jay Brumsey, “OSDN Captain Henderson House Pregame Show: Homecoming”
- Weather – Josh Engle
- News Reporting – Josh Engle, Josh Ryan, Caroline Derby

2nd Place

- Sports Reporting – Wyatt Ashlock, Chase Hartsell, Chris Gay, Isaac Bourne

- Sports Feature – Chase Hartsell
- Computer Graphics – Matthew Branch, Bailey Redden, Chris McCuistion, Chase Hartsell

3rd Place

- Computer Graphics – Wyatt Ashlock, Chase Hartsell, Chris Gay, Jill Parsons, Priscilla Leverett, Hannah Hickman

Honorable Mention

- Social Media Promotion – Jill Parsons

THE SIGNAL

1st Place

- Sports Column – Isaac Bourne
- Campus Sports Story – Isaac Bourne

2nd Place

- Editorial Page Layout – Julia Shands

3rd Place

- News Photo – Sarah Dean
- Editorial Page Layout – Julia Shands

Honorable Mention

- Feature Page Layout – Julia Shands and Mariah Halbert
- Sports Page Layout – Julia Shands
- Review Writing – Wyatt Ashlock
- Art/Illustration – Chau Tran, “Tunes Film Strip”