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Felley Lawson

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For immediate release

Dr. Kathy Collins remembered for investing in students

By Felley Lawson

November 7, 2023

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

ARKADELPHIA, Ark. — Dr. Kathy Collins, associate professor and chair of the Department of Education at Ouachita Baptist University, died Sunday, Nov. 5. She was 69. Known as an educator who regarded teaching as a calling, Collins prioritized experiential learning and invested personally in her students to offer them the best preparation for careers in the classroom.

“Dr. Collins was an excellent teacher and department chair who upheld Ouachita’s commitment to preparing students for lives of meaningful work,” said Dr. Ben Sells, Ouachita president. “In the roles she undertook – from professor, to University Committee member, to Tiger Serve Day volunteer – she carried out the mission that sets Ouachita apart as a distinctively Christian university.”

Collins earned a Bachelor of Science in Education degree from Baylor University, a Master of Education degree from Tarleton State University and a Doctor of Education degree from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. She came to Ouachita as a visiting instructor of education in 2009 and was named department chair and director of teacher education in 2016.



"Kathy was an exemplary educator, from her days as an elementary teacher and principal to her 15 years in the Ouachita education department," said Dr. Jeff Root, professor of communications and dean of the Schools of Education and Humanities. "She was a valued leader of the department and treasured as a colleague and friend. You could not ask for a better mentor for our students, and her devotion to them extended from her classroom to her home."

For more than 10 years, Collins and her husband Ace have hosted a weekly Sunday evening home group called the Varsity Diner for 50-60 college students through First Baptist Church, Arkadelphia.

"Something that made Dr. Collins so special as a professor was how intentional she always was," said Anna Marie Plastiras, a senior elementary education major from Little Rock, Ark. "She would constantly ask about our lives and check in whenever something was going on. She was an avid Ouachita sports fan and never missed a game. She loved supporting her student-athletes anytime she could. She was always a listening ear and gave the best advice whenever you needed it, no matter the time of day."

These are a few of the ways Collins demonstrated an important principle she instilled in her students.

"One of the most important things I learned from her was how important it is to have relationships with the students in your classroom," Plastiras said. "I will forever take this piece of advice with me into the education field."

She added, "No matter what, Dr. Collins would always have a smile on her face. She never failed to show the joy of Jesus. She has influenced so many people in and out of Ouachita's campus, and her legacy will forever be remembered in this special community."

Visitation will be held Wednesday, Nov. 8, from 6-8 p.m. in Walker Conference Center on the Ouachita campus. A celebration of life is planned for 10 a.m. Thursday, Nov. 9, in Jones Performing Arts Center; the service will be livestreamed at livestream.com/obu. Memorial gifts to Ouachita Baptist University may be made to the School of Education at obu.edu/give.