

Ouachita Baptist University

## Scholarly Commons @ Ouachita

---

Press Releases

Office of Communication and Marketing

---

12-10-2023

### Georgia Hickingbotham remembered for generous investment in Ouachita students

Felley Lawson

Office of Communications & Marketing

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/press\\_releases](https://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/press_releases)



Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#), [Organizational Communication Commons](#), and the [Public Relations and Advertising Commons](#)

---



Lead photo: Georgia Hall residents Avery Cornish, a senior community & family services major from Texarkana, Texas; Raegan Swindle, a sophomore biomedical sciences major from Benton, Ark.; Kelcie Watson, a sophomore biology major from Conway, Ark.; Layla Henthorne, a sophomore pre-dentistry major from Benton, Ark.; and Kennedy McGuire, a sophomore nursing major from Alexander, Ark.; celebrate the season Dec. 9 during the 2023 Georgia Hall Christmas dinner. Held annually, the dinner is an example of the many special events provided for Georgia Hall residents by "Mrs. Georgia" Hickingbotham. Photo by Carrie Roberson

For immediate release

**Georgia Hickingbotham remembered for generous investment in Ouachita students**

*By Felley Lawson*

December 11, 2023

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

Having a residential campus helps give Ouachita Baptist University its uniqueness. And Georgia Hickingbotham was a friend of Ouachita who helped give residence living its heart.

Hickingbotham, who died Dec. 7 at 89, is well known for her successful business career. She was one of the first women in Arkansas elected to serve as an officer in a bank and was a cofounder of TCBY, which became the largest frozen yogurt chain in the world.

At Ouachita, "Mrs. Georgia" is also remembered for her generous personal investment in women students that began in 2013 when her husband of nearly 50 years, Frank, surprised her on their anniversary by naming a Ouachita residence hall in her honor. On a campus that values community, Georgia Hickingbotham Hall has an especially welcoming sense of place due to her kindness, creativity and care. Ouachita alum Hannah Pilcher served for five years on Ouachita's Residence Life team as area coordinator for Georgia Hickingbotham Hall.

“Mrs. Georgia has left an unbelievable legacy of love through the girls in Georgia Hickingbotham Hall who she cared for so diligently. No words will ever express the impact she has made,” Pilcher said. “So many sweet memories have been made in the rooms of Georgia Hall. It has been a place of growth, fun and learning, one where countless friendships have been formed and nurtured.”

She added, “Each year, it was consistently and kindly communicated to the Georgia ResLife team that Mrs. Georgia wanted each girl to feel loved and cared for in Georgia Hall. We knew our goal for the year was to love on Mrs. Georgia’s ‘girls’ and to make sure we invested in them the way Mrs. Georgia was continually investing in them.”

At the beginning of every fall semester, Pilcher remembered, the Georgia ResLife staff would explain to residents that “they were going to be blessed to receive an abundance of love, kindness and thoughtfulness from Mrs. Georgia Hickingbotham and her husband, Frank. The girls would send a video to Mrs. Georgia, telling her how much we loved her and how thankful we were for all that she gave.”



Georgia Hickingbotham

Emma Donley, a senior Christian Studies/Biblical studies & theology major from Frisco, Texas, has been a resident assistant in Georgia Hall for three years.

“Mrs. Georgia has helped greatly in making this dorm feel like home. As an RA, my goal is to make my residents feel comfortable and safe in their space, and the resources Mrs. Georgia provided made that goal possible,” she said. “She took time to welcome each girl to the dorm and saw that we were given what we needed to host great events to foster a sense of community.”

Georgia Hall has become famous on campus for its special events, including “Welcome to Georgia” back-to-school pizza parties, s’mores nights, block parties, Galentine’s Day movie events, spa days, Easter brunches and taco nights. The hands-down favorite: Georgia Hall Christmas Dinner, a 3-course holiday meal with beautiful table settings, Christmas décor, games and fun memory-making for every Georgia resident.

“We loved taking pictures at the different events because we knew Mrs. Georgia would see the girls making memories,” Pilcher recalled. “All the pictures were used to create a photo book for Mrs. Georgia, to honor her generosity and to commemorate the year.”

Apart from the events, there are gifts – treat bags for students participating in Tiger Tunes; treat bags for every resident, with a card signed by Hickingbotham; a Georgia Hall sweatshirt in the fall and t-shirt in the spring, always bearing the words “Georgia Girl” and a design created by a dorm resident; an Amazon gift card to congratulate students on finishing the school year.

This fall, all 60 residents received a present together from Hickingbotham.

“She would try her best to make our dorm as close to a home as possible,” said Avery Cornish, a senior community & family services major from Texarkana, Texas. “We didn’t have an ice machine like other dorms on campus. When Mrs. Georgia found out, she quickly got us one at the beginning of the year. She really would go above and beyond with gifts. It was always encouraging to have someone caring for us.”

Cornish helped organize a group of Georgia Hall residents who will attend Hickingbotham’s memorial service Tuesday, Dec. 12, at 10 a.m. at Immanuel Baptist Church in Little Rock. She added, “I’ll always remember the generosity of Mrs. Georgia and Mr. H., and how they provided for the girls who live in Georgia Hall. The impact they’ve had on so many residents is truly incredible.”

“It’s clear that even though Mrs. Georgia didn’t get to meet most of the girls who live in Georgia Hall, she cared that they have a great home at Ouachita,” Donley said. “I appreciate her generosity and kindness, and I feel so privileged to have stewarded the resources she provided to accomplish the vision she had for her dorm.”

“Few people have given as selflessly and enthusiastically as Georgia and Frank Hickingbotham,” Pilcher said. “Mrs. Georgia is an example to all of us of how to love others from an overflow of Christ’s love and what it means to be the hands and feet of Jesus.”

Ouachita Director of Development Carrie Roberson served as the liaison between Georgia Hall leadership and the Hickingbothams.

“It was a privilege to help facilitate the events Mrs. Georgia hosted for residents in the dorm named in her honor,” Roberson said. “Mrs. Georgia poured her heart into creating a nurturing community within the walls of that dorm, and she wanted every resident to feel like Georgia Hall was their ‘Ouachita home.’ Hundreds of Ouachita women were fortunate to know Mrs. Georgia’s kindness and her many selfless acts of love. She loved her ‘Georgia Girls’ so well, and we will miss her.”