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For immediate release

Terry DeWitt ('88) (Chair, Department of Kinesiology, and professor of kinesiology)

By Jon Merryman

May 24, 2022

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

As a high school senior in Gravette, Ark., Dr. Terry DeWitt didn't have college on his radar until just before graduation. A first-generation college student, DeWitt enrolled as a freshman at the University of Central Arkansas. But he transferred after just one semester when his aunt, Nancy Hardman, encouraged him to consider Ouachita and Coach Buddy Benson offered him a work- study job as an athletic trainer.

"I knew I needed to make a change, and Ouachita was the place for me," DeWitt said. "I also knew I needed to grow in my Christian faith and my walk, which at the time was a crawl. I began to see I was in the right place, with the right people, doing the right things at the right time."

DeWitt graduated from Ouachita in 1988 with a degree in health/physical education. He went on to gain two years of experience as an NCAA Division I athletic trainer and graduate assistant while earning a master's degree at Nicholls State University. With their infant twins in tow, DeWitt and his wife Charlotte then moved to Arkadelphia.

After a seven-year stint teaching across the ravine, and during the first semester of his Ph.D. coursework, DeWitt returned to his alma mater to start an athletic training program. He finished his doctorate at the University of Arkansas in 2003 while working at Ouachita and has been here ever since.

" I WAS IN THE RIGHT PLACE, WITH THE RIGHT PEOPLE, DOING THE RIGHT THINGS AT THE RIGHT TIME. "

Dr. Terry DeWitt

DeWitt serves as chair of the Department of Kinesiology, where there's been a shift in emphasis over the years from recreation, leisure and outdoor activities to biomechanics and exercise science. Ouachita now offers pre-professional programs to prepare students for graduate studies in physical and occupational therapy, physician assistant, chiropractic and athletic training.

And now, DeWitt is developing a master's degree program at Ouachita in exercise science with the goal of having the program fully accredited to meet changing requirements for students taking the exercise physiology certification exam.

"Terry DeWitt is a forward-thinker," said Dr. Jeff Root, dean of the Huckabee School of Education. "He devotes time every day to imagining what tomorrow might look like for the various fields and sub- fields of kinesiology and how Ouachita can be ready for the opportunities and challenges to come. His belief in always moving forward is a great trait for a leader."

In addition to DeWitt's service in the classroom, he has had an extensive and decorated military career. DeWitt joined ROTC as a student at Ouachita and graduated having been commissioned a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army. During his 32 years in the Army Reserve, he served two deployments to Iraq, received two Bronze Stars and was awarded the Legion of Merit. He retired in 2017 with the rank of colonel and volunteers as Arkansas Ambassador for the Army Reserve.

"My service all led back to Ouachita," DeWitt said. "My late twin brother was in the Navy, and I knew he had so many opportunities from serving with the military. I have been able to travel the world, meet all kinds of interesting people, work in the Pentagon. It was phenomenal—and an exciting way to serve my country."

The DeWitts are members of Second Baptist Church in Arkadelphia. Their children, Clinton and Lauren, are 2012 Ouachita graduates; the DeWitts have six grandchildren.



By Jon Merryman, director of alumni relations