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OUACHITA
BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

NEWS



For immediate release

Jason Tolbert ('97) (Chief Financial Officer)

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 soon as Jason Tolbert started his college search as a high school student in Wynne, Ark., he knew if he could afford to go to Ouachita, he would. It's not hard to believe that, even then, making the numbers work was a top priority for Tolbert, who now serves as Ouachita's chief financial officer (CFO).

Tolbert grew up visiting Ouachita each summer for Arkansas Baptist camps like Super Summer and Music Arkansas (now Praise Works). He'd continue visiting campus more as his sister, Jennifer (Tolbert '97) Byrd became a student; soon, Ouachita felt like home.

Tolbert graduated from Ouachita in 1998 as a history major and initially planned to teach at the high school or college level. While student teaching, however, he discovered that teaching was not his calling or passion. Tolbert said his good experience in Eddie Ary's Macroeconomics course led him to pursue his MBA from the University of Arkansas Little Rock and become a CPA. After a career serving with the Arkansas Faith and Ethics Council, PricewaterhouseCoopers and the Arkansas Baptist Foundation, he returned to his alma mater as CFO in 2015.

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Jason Tolbert

Tolbert's positive effect on the university has been clear. He recently was recognized as a finalist for the 2021 *Arkansas Business* Higher Education CFO of the Year for his work at Ouachita, which includes overseeing business services, student financial services and human resources as well as working with

partners who provide food and retail services. During his tenure, he has made such strides as refinancing the university's long-term debt, saving a million dollars a year in interest, and the university endowment growing from \$78 million to \$145 million.

"It was an honor to be recognized for my work here. The thing I love the most in my work as CFO is pulling together data in a way that allows university leadership to make good decisions for Ouachita," Tolbert said. "It's been an honor to be a part of the process to make Ouachita more stable and more sustainable and grow enrollment."

"Because of recent enrollment growth, increased giving and budget stewardship—helped by Jason's leadership—Ouachita is stronger financially than any time in the past two decades," said Ouachita President Ben Sells.

Beyond his administrative role, Tolbert said one of his favorite parts of serving at Ouachita has been teaching a Personal Finance class each year.

"I love working with students, and the subject is something I really believe in," he noted. "The course really helps students become good stewards, and helping them grasp these concepts is very rewarding.

"Ouachita is a place I believe in and love," Tolbert added. "My sister and my wife both went to Ouachita, and hopefully my two boys will be there soon. I care a lot about Ouachita and love being a part of what God is doing here."

Tolbert has two sons, Luke (17) and John (12). He and his wife, Gina (Daulton '97) Tolbert, currently live in Benton, Ark., and are active in their local church. They are building a house in Arkadelphia and hope to move later this year.



By Jon Merryman, director of alumni relations