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### **Ouachita's Batson honored by Arkadelphia Chamber of Commerce**

Addie Woods

Office of Communications & Marketing

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Photo 1 Lead photo by Meghann Bledsoe

For immediate release

**Ouachita's Batson honored by Arkadelphia Chamber of Commerce**

*By Addie Woods*

May 13, 2024

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

ARKADELPHIA, Ark. — Arkadelphia native Blaise Batson, a freshman communications & media and political science double major, received the President's Accomplished Youth Award from the Arkadelphia Regional Economic Development Alliance and Area Chamber of Commerce. Batson was presented her award during the 2024 Arkadelphia Alliance and Chamber Annual Banquet, held Thursday, April 11, in the Garrison Center Grand Ballroom at Henderson State University.

The President's Accomplished Youth Award recognizes a young person in Arkadelphia who has been involved in helping the community through leadership and service. As a student at Arkadelphia High School, Batson was the women's soccer captain and cheer captain. She was a member of the Arkadelphia High School Quiz Bowl team and served as chapter president of Future Business Leaders of America, where she placed first in two state competitions and went on to compete at the national level.

Outside her educational achievements, Batson founded Coats & Cozies, a nonprofit that collects winter gear and distributes it to high-walking traffic areas where the clothing is free for anyone in need.

Catherine Plyler, president of the Arkadelphia Alliance and Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, presented Batson with the award.

"I chose Blaise for this award due to her selflessness and commitment to making a difference in hopes that her accomplishments will inspire future generations to reach greater heights," said Plyler. "Blaise's accomplishments extend far beyond the classroom, emerging as a beacon of leadership."

Reflecting on the award, Batson said her fondest memories are from times of service.

"I love Arkadelphia and I love to help this community in any way I can," she said. "One of my favorite memories was working with Coats & Cozies and watching as people drove up to our clothing drive and how they were astounded at the sign that said 'free.'"