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NEWS

For immediate release

Ouachita senior Shelby Burchfield honored at summer undergrad research symposium

By Trennis Henderson, OBU Vice President for Communications

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ARKADELPHIA, Ark.—Ouachita Baptist University senior Shelby Burchfield, a biology major from Benton, Ark., was among students from central Arkansas who were recognized for their summer research projects at the recent Central Arkansas Undergraduate Research Symposium at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences in Little Rock.



Shelby Burchfield

Burchfield, who was honored for her poster presentation about antibiotics, worked under the supervision of Dr. Ruth Plymale, associate professor of biology. Burchfield's work was part of Ouachita's Patterson Summer Research Program which provides an opportunity for undergraduate students to work one-on-one with faculty members on research projects at a level typically available only in graduate school.

"The Patterson Summer Research Program gives our students the time to study a research problem in depth and develop a unique expertise outside of classroom learning," Dr. Plymale explained. "Our summer research students do excellent work and I am thrilled that Shelby was recognized for her efforts this summer."

Over the past 17 years, more than 230 students have participated in the Patterson Summer Research Program. The program provides a stipend for students and the university provides campus housing at a reduced cost. After graduating from Ouachita, the majority of summer research participants go on to medical, dental or other health-related professional programs.

Noting that the scope and impact of Ouachita's summer program "is unique in the region," Dr. Tim Knight, dean of the Patterson School of Natural Sciences, said Ouachita "usually has more undergrads than any other school in the state" who attend the UAMS symposium, including more than 20 Ouachita students who participated this year.

Describing involvement in the annual symposium as "the culmination of our summer research program," Dr. Knight said it is a key example of high-impact learning opportunities at Ouachita.

Burchfield, who was among more than 100 participants at the symposium, said she was grateful for the opportunity to present her research and be recognized for her efforts.

"This summer I extracted antibiotics," she explained. "The ultimate goal was to find a new antibiotic because bacteria are becoming resistant to antibiotics faster than we are making new ones. We did successfully extract antibiotics from a bacterium that we call B48.

"Presenting my research at UAMS was an awesome experience," she said. "I got to share with students and faculty from other colleges about the work that I've done this summer. It was cool to see the people I presented to get excited about my research. With so many great projects presented and knowing that lots of hard work went into those projects, it was an honor to be recognized for my poster presentation."

In addition to Burchfield, other Ouachita students who participated in the symposium included Alex Abbott, Rachel Bacon, Hannah Brandon, Kesley Brown, Kori Bullard, Logan Clay, Callie Clement, Madison Crosby, Elizabeth Fast, Chris Godwin, Savanna Harris, Cyntanna Hawkins, Keeley Johnson, Mary Beth Jones, Tori Lackey, Sally Owens, Casey Roark, Matt Savage, Sydney Van Scyoc, Nathan Terry and Dillon Wester.

In addition to Dr. Plymale, other Ouachita faculty members involved in the symposium were Dr. Joe Bradshaw, W.D. and Alice Burch Professor of Chemistry and Pre-Medical Studies; Dr. Detri Brech, Charles S. and Elma Grey Goodwin Holt Professor of Dietetics and Pre-Medical Studies; Dr. Angela Douglass, assistant professor of physics; Dr. Tim Hayes, E.A. Provine Professor of Chemistry; Dr. Lori Hensley, J.D. Patterson Professor of Biology; Dr. Jess Kelly, assistant professor of biology; Dr. Nathan Reyna, associate professor of biology; and Dr. Jim Taylor, professor of biology.

Ouachita's Patterson Summer Research Program is named in honor of Dr. J.D. Patterson, a 1947 Ouachita alumnus who passed away earlier this year at age 90. Dr. Patterson, a longtime trustee and benefactor of Ouachita, funded a number of academic initiatives, including the Patterson Summer Research Program. The Patterson School of Natural Sciences also is named in his honor.

PHOTOS AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD AT <https://www.obu.edu/news/2017/08/03/ouachita-senior-shelby-burchfield-honored-summer-undergrad-research-symposium/>