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OUACHITA
BAPTIST UNIVERSITY



NEWS

For immediate release

Ouachita seniors earn national recognition from Columbia Scholastic Press Association

By *Cimber Winfrey*

October 2, 2015

For more information, contact OBU's news bureau at newsbureau@obu.edu or (870) 245-5208

ARKADELPHIA, Ark.—Ouachita Baptist University seniors Zach Parker and Dixon Land recently earned national recognition for their sports columns in the Columbia Scholastic Press Association's (CSPA) 32nd annual Gold Circle Awards.

First given in 1984, the Gold Circle Awards recognize the superior work of student journalists in both print and online media. CSPA currently offers a variety of categories for students to submit entries in newspaper, magazine, yearbook or digital media. Experienced journalists and educators judged these submissions and announced winners for either first, second or third place or certificates of merit for those entries worthy of honorable mention in a specific category.

Parker, a senior political science and mass communications major from Shreveport, La., placed second in the nation with his sports column "Why the Giants are the Most Underrated Dynasty in Sports."

"It was such an honor to receive the CSPA Gold Circle Award," Parker said. "To be recognized as one of the best sports writers in the country is probably the greatest achievement I've received in my academic career."

Land, a senior mass communications major from Little Rock, Ark., received a certificate of merit for his sports column "Cubbies Will Fall Curse to the Billy Goat Again."

"Any time you can be recognized for something you worked hard on, it is a big honor," Land said. "Knowing that Ouachita produced two of the top four columns in the country makes me really proud to be a part of our department."

The awards came from work they did as juniors, while Parker was sports editor for the *Ouachitonian* yearbook and a columnist for *The Signal* student newspaper and Land was sports editor for *The Signal*.

During their time at OBU, both Parker and Land have taken advantage of the many opportunities available through the mass communications department. Through their work on the department's publications, they have been able to develop and grow their knowledge and skills in sports and opinion writing.

“Many students love sports as fans, but Zach and Dixon have been willing to invest the time to see the sports industry from a professional standpoint,” said Dr. Jeff Root, dean of Ouachita’s School of Humanities and professor of communications. “They do the research and look at every angle, not just the viewpoint of a fan.”

“Ouachita has provided me every possible opportunity to get better at what I love to do,” Land noted. “The mass communications department is such a great place to grow into becoming a young professional, and it gives students the opportunity to really try different things and find out what they are good at.”

“I would not be the writer that I am today without the professors in the communications department at Ouachita,” Parker noted. “Whether it's in class or for *The Signal* and *Ouachitonian*, they are always pushing me to write more and develop my skill.”

Parker is currently working on the yearbook for one last semester before completing his degree in December, and Land has taken on the role of editor-in-chief of *The Signal*.

“Their work has made our publications stronger and each has played a role in developing our younger talent,” Root said.

For more information, contact Dr. Jeff Root at rootj@obu.edu or (870) 245-4186.

PHOTOS OF PARKER AND LAND AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD

AT <http://www.obu.edu/news/2015/10/02/ouachita-seniors-earn-national-recognition-from-columbia-scholastic-press-association>.