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OUACHITA BAPTIST UNIVERSITY



NEWS

For immediate release

Ouachita crowns Abby Root as 2016 Homecoming Queen



By Sarah Davis

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

ARKADELPHIA, Ark. — Abby Root, a senior speech/theatre arts and education major from Arkadelphia, Ark., was crowned Ouachita Baptist University's 2016 Homecoming Queen during a pregame ceremony before the Tigers' Homecoming football game on Oct. 15.

Root, whose parents are alumni and longtime faculty members at Ouachita, has grown up around the Ouachita campus her entire life. Her father, Dr. Jeff Root, is dean of the School of Humanities, and her mother, Dr. Deborah Root, is chair of the Rogers Department of Communications.

Root represented the Eta Alpha Omega men's social club. She is involved in the Ouachita Student Foundation, Alpha Psi Omega, Alpha Chi and Kappa Delta Pi. She also is on the WOW (Welcome to Ouachita's World) Steering Committee, which welcomes freshmen to Ouachita. She was escorted by her father during the Homecoming coronation.



"I'm kind of in shock but I'm super excited," Root said. "I love Ouachita and I'm happy to represent it. All of the girls were equally deserving of this and it was just an honor to be nominated with them."

Root was crowned by 2015 Homecoming Queen Bonnie Magee and was presented a bouquet by Ouachita President Ben Sells during the ceremony at Cliff Harris Stadium.



Ouachita Baptist University's 2016 Homecoming Queen Abby Root (center) and Court include (from left) Estefanie Perez, fourth runner-up (tie); Gail Lange-Smith, third runner-up; Mari Bednar, first runner-up; Damaris Garcia, second runner-up; Hannah Bunch and Staci Gore, fourth runners-up (tie). Photo by John Bunch.



First runner-up was **Mari Bednar**, a senior dietetics and nutrition major from Little Rock, Ark. She represented the Ouachita Student Foundation. She is involved in OSF, the Tri Chi women's social club, and the Dietetics Club. She was escorted by her father, Rick Bednar.



Second runner-up was **Damaris Garcia**, a senior Christian studies major from Richland Hills, Texas. She represented Campus Ministries. She is on the Tiger Serve Day Leadership Team and is a Refuge speaker. She was escorted by her father, Lupe Garcia.



Third runner-up was **Gail Lange-Smith**, a junior dietetics and nutrition major from Harare, Zimbabwe. She represented the Rowing Club. She is involved in the Rowing Club and Dietetics Club. She was escorted by her brother, Ben Lange-Smith.

Fourth runner-up was a tie among **Hannah Bunch, Staci Gore** and **Estefanie Perez**.

Bunch is a junior history and political science major from Paragould, Ark. She represented the junior class. She is involved in Student Senate, Veritas Women's Discipleship, ElderServe, College Republicans, OBU Res Life and a member of Pi Sigma Alpha and Phi Alpha Theta. She also is a tutor for Ouachita's Academic Success Center. She was escorted by her father, Chris Bunch.



Gore is a senior finance and business administration major from Springdale, Ark., She represented the EEE women's social club. She is on the Tiger Serve Day Leadership Team and is a Campus Ministry leader. She is the president of EEE and is an Eta Alpha Omega Sweetheart. She was escorted by her father, Stacy Gore.

Perez is a senior business administration and mass communications major from Maracaibo, Venezuela. She represented the Kappa Chi men's social club. She is involved in Ouachita Student Foundation, Women in Business, Enactus, TranServe and a Kappa Chi Little Sis. She was escorted by Jon Merryman, director of Ouachita Alumni.



Other top 20 Homecoming nominees included:



Esther Atkinson, a junior musical theater major from Rogers, Ark., represented the Alpha Psi Omega pledge class of 2015. She is involved in the Ouachita Singers, Concert Choir and Wind Ensemble. She was escorted by her mother, Wendy Atkinson.

Molly Boone, a sophomore communication sciences and disorders major from Maumelle, Ark., represented the Tri Chi pledge class of 2016. She is involved with the Tiger Serve Day Leadership Team and is a WOW leader. She was escorted by her father, Tim Boone.



Haley Brown, a senior elementary education major from Stuttgart, Ark., represented Student Senate. She is involved in the Tri Chi women's social club and is a Tri Chi Tiger Tunes director. She is a member of the Education Praxis Advisory Board and is Student Senate president. Brown was escorted by her father, Darren Brown.

Alyson Cole, a junior biology major from El Dorado, Ark., represented the Beta Beta men's social club. She is involved in OSF, Tri-Beta, American Chemical Society and the EEE women's social club. Cole was escorted by her father, Rodney Cole.



Arden Hall, a senior mathematics and physics major from Springdale, Ark., represented Tri Chi women's social club. She is involved in Tri Chi, Student Senate and ElderServe. Hall was escorted by her father, Jim Hall.



Katie Jo Henley, a sophomore mass communications and business major from Conway, Ark., represented the EEE pledge class of 2016. She is involved in Veritas, Women in Business and was a WOW family leader. Henley was escorted by her father, Richard Henley.

Kelsey Hogue, a senior communication sciences and disorders and Spanish major from Little Rock, Ark., represented the National Student Speech Language Hearing Association. She is in OSF and serves as special event chair. She is involved in the EEE women's social club and Diamond Dolls. Hogue was escorted by her father, Scott Hogue.



Haley Martin, a senior mass communications major from Little Rock, Ark., represented the Elrod Center for Tiger Serve Day. She is involved in the Tiger Serve Day Leadership Team, Christian Focus Week Leadership Team, Women in Business and is an Eta Alpha Omega Sweetheart. Martin was escorted by her father, Michael Martin.

Baylee McBride, a sophomore biology major from Hooks, Texas, represented the women's Tiger Tennis team. She is involved in Tri Chi women's social club, women's tennis and cheer. McBride was escorted by her father, Johnny McBride.



Kinzie Schmidt, a sophomore graphic design major from Little Rock, Ark., represented the sophomore class. She is a Veritas leader, Campus Ministries Tiger Tunes co-director, Art Club vice president and an Eta Alpha Omega Sweetheart. Schmidt was escorted by her father, Eric Schmidt.



Kayla Walker, a senior musical theatre major from North Little Rock, Ark., represented Eta Alpha Omega men's social club. She is involved in Alpha Psi Omega, Ouachita Singers, Ouachita Sounds and is an Eta Alpha Omega Sweetheart. Walker was escorted by her grandfather, Charles Gibbs.

Jodie Webb, a senior elementary education major from Memphis, Tenn., represented Eta Alpha Omega men's social club. She is involved in Tri Chi women's social club and was the co-director for Tri Chi Tiger Tunes. She is a member of Kappa Delta Pi, Student Senate, Carl Goodson Honors Program, Praxis Advisory Board and is an Eta Alpha Omega Sweetheart. Webb was escorted by her father, Daniel Webb.



Emily Weeden, a senior worship arts major from Rogers, Ark., represented Eta Alpha Omega men's social club. She is involved in the Refuge Leadership Team, Campus Ministries Tiger Tunes Leadership and is an Eta Alpha Omega Sweetheart. Weeden was escorted by her father, Dan Weeden.