



CALLIE STEPHENS/TheSignal

FRIENDS, FAMILY and faculty wait for the graduation ceremony to take place last May. It was Ouachita's third outdoor commencement, and there were 291 graduates.

Outdoor graduation function confers 261 academic degrees

By TANNER WARD
News/Features Co-Editor

More than 250 Ouachitonians will reach a milestone in their lives May 14 as they earn their college degrees.

According to Registrar Judy Jones, 261 degrees will be conferred during commencement on the lawn in front of Cone-Bottoms Hall.

Jones said the ceremony will begin 9:30 a.m. and will follow a program order similar to last year.

The graduates will have their class picture taken on the steps of the Commons and line up in Walker Confer-

ence Center before they march down the senior sidewalk at the beginning of the ceremony. Commencement Marshal Dr. Byron Eubanks, professor of philosophy and director of the center for integrity, along with Honorary Marshals Dr. George Keck, retiring professor of music, and Mary Worthen, retiring assistant professor of music, will lead the graduates to their seats in front of Cone-Bottoms.

The ceremony will begin with an invocation delivered by senior class president Beau Landers, a Christian studies and speech communications major. Senior Christian studies majors Caitlin Chapman and Leasha May,

who is also a Spanish major, will read scripture, followed by Richard Lusby, chairman of the Board of Trustees, delivering the prayer of dedication.

The singing of the university hymn will be followed by remarks from President Rex Horne and the distribution of degrees.

Horne said he will speak about "how small the world has become and how we are impacted by the wars in other places, economy of the nation and the perceptions of our times."

Horne said he enjoys seeing the entire graduating class seated together



CALLIE STEPHENS/TheSignal

DR. REX Horne addresses graduates at commencement last year at Ouachita's campus in front of Cone-Bottoms Hall.

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Publications achieve 2011 ACMA recognition

By ALLISON CORNELL
Signal Writer

Ouachita's mass communications department had a heavy load of accolades to carry home after attending the Arkansas College Media Association (ACMA) conference in Conway last Monday.

ACMA has a long history, and this year *The Ouachitonian*, *The Signal* and Photo Editor Callie Stephens added to that history, taking home more than 30 awards for Ouachita.

"As faculty members, it's great to see students win awards because it drives home the lessons we teach in class," said Dr. Jeff Root, dean of the School of Humanities and faculty advisor for *The Signal*. "When students develop their skills and then they are honored by an outside organization, that's something we celebrate."

The Ouachitonian yearbook alone took home around 20 awards including second place in general excellence, behind only the University of Arkansas.

"To place second behind the University of Arkansas is a point of pride, and it really shows how competitive our yearbook is with other yearbooks in the state," said Dr. Deborah Root, professor of mass communications and faculty advisor for *The Ouachitonian*. "I am very proud of [the yearbook

staff]. As faculty advisors, we try to keep a hands-off approach so that students can learn the process as best as they can, and so I'm very proud to see them be successful."

Ouachitonian co-editors Becca Watts and Cassie Harrell received awards for last year's book, while in the process of producing the 2011 yearbook.

"These awards came at a great time," Harrell said. "With our yearbook in the middle of production, things are very crazy. It's easy to feel as though I'm going to be a failure and disappoint all of the students at Ouachita, but these awards help me remember I'm on this staff for a reason. When it comes to seeking a career in communications, these awards give me a boost of confidence in my ability to perform as a communicator. Our yearbook competes with books across the state and nation, and people have chosen us as award-worthy. That speaks volumes."

Photo Editor Callie Stephens won third place photographer of the year, first place academics photo, first place feature photo and second place news photo.

"I was very honored to win these awards at the ACMA conference," Stephens said. "There is a lot of talent in Arkansas, so it was encouraging to go

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SARAH HENLEY/TheSignal

(LEFT TO RIGHT) Cassie Harrell, Becca Watts and Callie Stephens pose with their ACMA award certificates.

Teacher, mentor, 'classy fashionista' leaves impression

By JORDAN CAMPBELL
Signal Writer

Mary Worthen, assistant professor of music, past Ouachita Sounds director, past Women's Chorus director and voice teacher, is retiring after 19 years of teaching at Ouachita.

Worthen has degrees from Oklahoma Baptist University and Ouachita Baptist University in Music Education. She started teaching in the early 1980s as a graduate assistant and part-time instructor and in 2001 became an assistant professor of music.

"[Worthen] is an outstanding vocal teacher and music educator and a role model for every young woman," said Cortnie DeVore, a senior musical theater major. "Anyone who knows 'Mary Ida' knows her depth of knowledge in her field is ridiculously extensive. She's one of the most genuinely kind people I know, and also an inspiration to classy fashionistas everywhere."

Worthen described her teaching approach as doing whatever is best for the students and helping them reach their goals. Her teaching style has helped her grow stronger professionally and spiritually.

"It is my goal to assist my students to achieve more than they thought or believed they could and to model for them a caring, positive and demanding relationship," Worthen said.

Many students say they appreciate Worthen's unique approach to teaching and value it as priceless. They see her hands-on techniques as very helpful for them in the music field.

"I was lucky enough to have her as a voice teacher, and because she is also an incredible pianist, she was also my accompanist," DeVore said. "Whenever we chose a song, she not only played and coached me, but when it was over, I felt like I was equivalent to any Broadway star. She just has a way of encouraging you and teaching you that took my ability further than I thought it could go."

Worthen's involvement in the music program has enriched the lives of many students, especially during her one-on-one sessions during piano practice and with her classic quotes such as "wear your lipstick and pearls."

"She sees potential in absolutely everyone, and she has an ability to make you realize that potential in the most creative and thoughtful ways," DeVore said. "Her attitude is always positive, and her work ethic and desire to see her students succeed goes above and beyond."

When questioned on what she will do after retiring, Worthen said

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In the Bubble:

•SCOPE, Ouachita's Creative Journal, will be on sale during peak hours at the Commons. The cost is \$1 each.

•The women of Tri Chi are sponsoring a Finals Relief Show Monday, May 2, at 8 p.m. The concert will feature Noah James, The Odd Couple and Mock Ivey. The cost is \$2 at the door.

•Campus Activities Board is showing "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1" Sunday, May 1, at 8:30 p.m. in Walker Conference Center.

•Students are invited to use the new study room, The White Rabbit Study Nook, located in Lile 242.

•PRISM, a showcase of Wind Ensemble, Combined Bands and Chamber Ensembles, will be performed tonight at 7:30 p.m. in Jones Performing Arts Center. The concert will also be webcast at www.obu.edu/band.

•Ouachita String Ensemble is performing tomorrow at 7:30 p.m. in McBeth Recital Hall in Mabee Fine Arts Center.

•Students can receive a 10 percent discount on their books when they reserve or pre-pay for their entire schedule for the fall at the OBU Campus Bookstore.

•The Group Living Fashion Show will be held Tuesday, May 3, from 6-10 p.m. in Verser Theater. For more information, contact Nancy Hardman at hardmann@obu.edu.

•Concert Choir will perform Tuesday, May 3, at 7:30 p.m. in McBeth Recital Hall. For more information, contact Scott Holsclaw at holsclaws@obu.edu.

•The English Literature Symposium will take place Thursday, May 12, and Friday, May 13, from 11:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. in McClellan room 100. For more information, contact Doug Sonheim at sonheimd@obu.edu.

•The women of Tri Chi are hosting a dessert auction Wednesday, May 4, at 8 p.m. in the Tiger Den.

•The Academic Awards Banquet will take place Thursday, May 5, at 6 p.m. in Walker Conference Center. The event is by invitation only.

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NEWS STORIES

- Ouachita's Concert Choir to present works
- Ouachita Jazz Band to perform spring concert
- Bye Bye Birdie: OBU musical production
- 2010 Ouachitonian earns national recognition
- Jessica Hardy to present senior recital

Sources: obu.edu, Compiled by Tanner Ward, Ananda Boardman and Leah Garavelli

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up against so many other schools in the state and place so well. These conferences also go to show that just because we are a smaller school doesn't mean we have less talent than the larger state schools. Ouachita is the best of the best."

The Signal took home five awards, two in writing, one in design and two in comics. Tarah Elliott, a junior mass communications major, won third place in the review writing category.

"When they told me I won third place in the category, I was floored," Elliott said.

"The award will be an impressive addition to my resume, but the real-world experience I'm getting as I write for *The Signal* will be the most valuable asset in my arsenal of experience."

Next year, the ACMA awards will be hosted on Ouachita's campus.

"We're very excited about hosting the ACMA convention at Ouachita next year," Jeff Root said. "We look forward to putting together a great workshop and luncheon, playing host to the best student journalists in the state." ■

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she plans on slowing down. She wants to sleep later, enjoy a second cup of coffee and explore a new chapter in her life. She said her involvement will continue in other ways.

"The daily relationship with the students [is what I will miss the most] — seeing them grow and become more accomplished in their musical skills and as productive human beings," she said. "I am grateful and will miss the friendship and the kindness of my colleagues. It has been such a joy to serve on the faculty of Ouachita Baptist University and to invest my life in the lives of these special young adults. These wonderful experiences and memories have been a vital part of my life." ■

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while making his annual commencement address.

"From my perspective from the platform, that is an awesome sight," he said.

Horne said he also enjoys shaking each graduate's hand and congratulating all on earning their degree.

Jones said this year will be the fourth outdoor commencement. She said before the change to have commencement in front of Cone-Bottoms, graduation was held in Sturgis Physical Education Center.

"Though it may not look like it, we have more seating available in front of Cone-Bottoms," she said. "It's also a lot prettier out there."

Jones said the first two years outside were cloudy, but last year was "absolutely gorgeous."

In case of rain, commencement will be

held in Jones Performing Arts Center, with one ceremony beginning at 9:30 a.m. and another at 11:30 a.m.

Jones said a decision will be made on Friday morning, May 13, about whether the ceremony will be inside or outside.

Commencement rehearsal will take place Friday, May 13, from 3-5 p.m. on the lawn in front of Cone-Bottoms Hall. Seniors are required to attend the rehearsal. For more information about commencement or the rehearsal, contact Judy Jones at jonesj@obu.edu.

A video of commencement will be uploaded to www.obu.edu/broadcast during the afternoon of Saturday, May 14.

Seniors also have the opportunity to visit with Horne at the Senior Picnic on Thursday, May 12, at 6 p.m. at the president's home. ■

Top 5 Things we realize as the semester comes to an end

By The Signal Staff
SIGNAL WRITERS

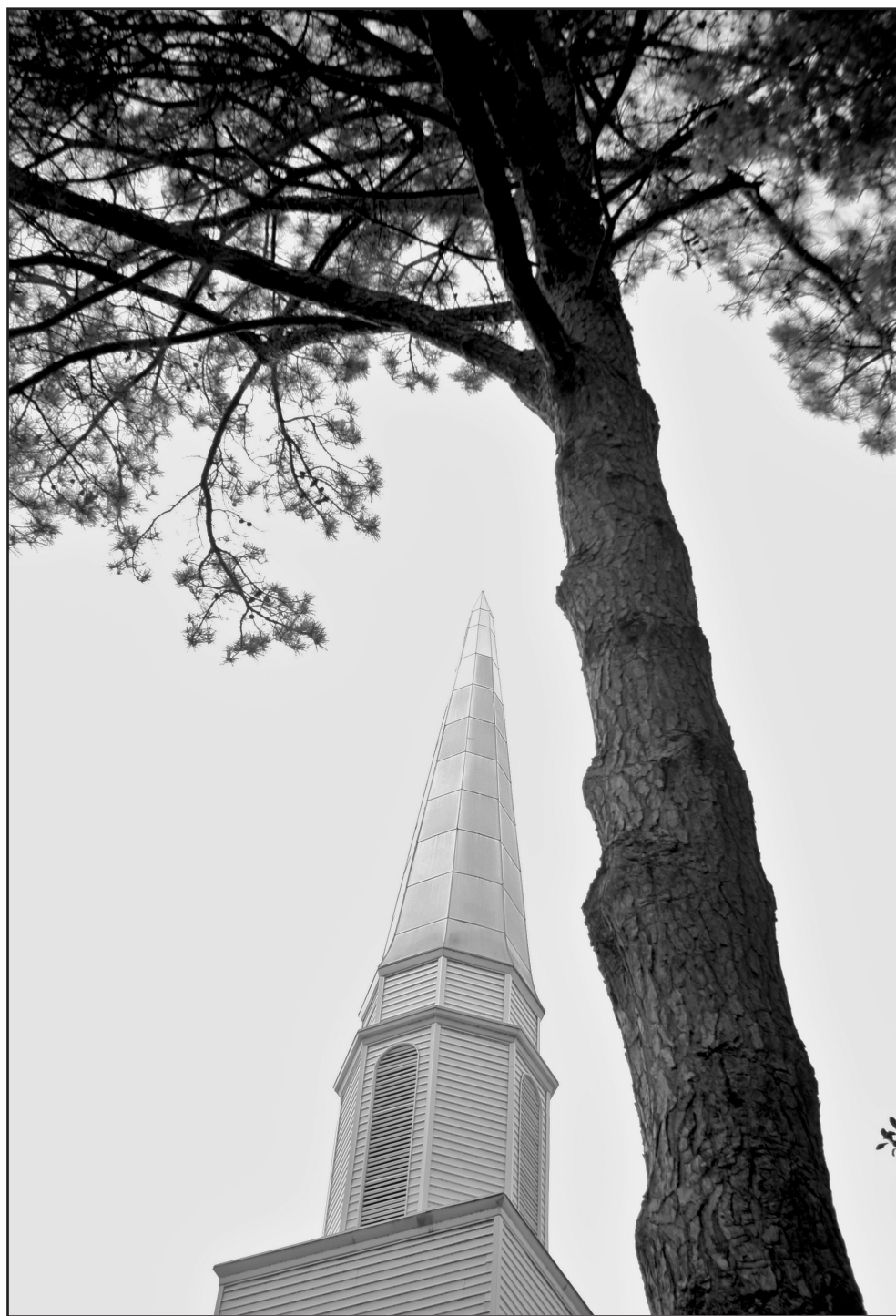
1 Maybe I shouldn't have used all of my chapel skips in the first two months of school.

2 "Comprehensive" is a horrible, despicable word.

3 Printers are evil. They all conspire to break down the night before a big paper is due.

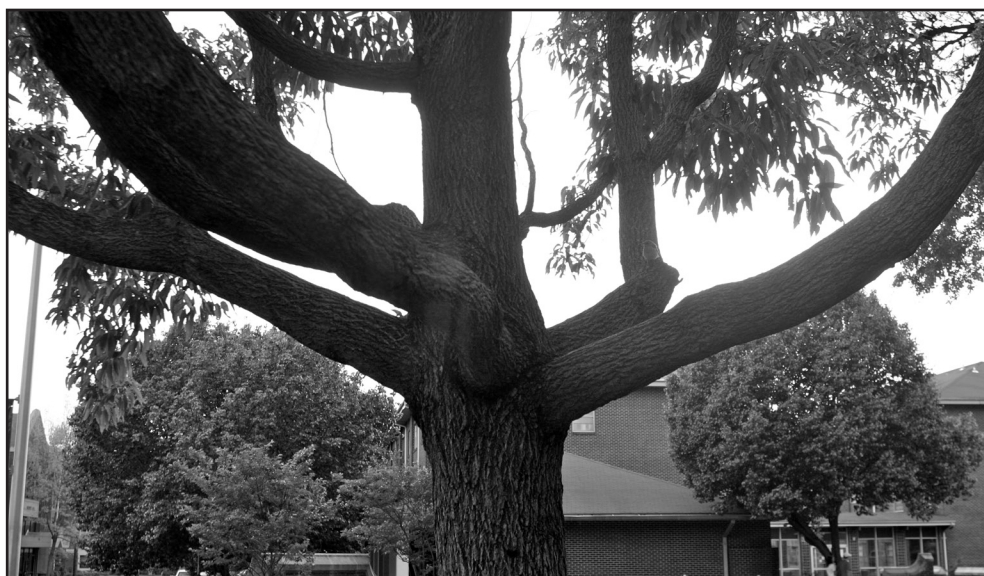
4 Sleep is so underrated. Who needs eight hours anyway?

5 That professor wasn't joking around when he said I should be working on the project throughout the semester.



LINDSEY UPSHAW/TheSignal

A TALL tree sits against the background of J.E. Berry Chapel's steeple. Students have the opportunity to plant trees on campus as part of Ouachita's Arbor Day celebration.



LINDSEY UPSHAW/TheSignal

STUDENTS SOMETIMES hang hammocks on this tree outside Flippin-Perrin.

Tree celebration features prizes, tree planting, ice cream treats

By MEG GOSSER
News Information Bureau

Ouachita will host an Arbor Day celebration tomorrow, beginning at 2 p.m. in the amphitheater. This service-learning event demonstrates Ouachita's commitment to trees as part of the university's environment as part of its environmental stewardship plan.

Arbor Day is an annual observance that celebrates the role of trees in our lives and promotes tree planting and care in an effort to improve our environment. It was first observed as a formal holiday in 1872.

"Our Environmental Stewardship Committee has met several times this year to talk about projects we can take on to continue improving the environmental awareness of our faculty, staff and students," said Brett Powell, vice president for administrative services. "One of the ideas we came up with was trying to meet the requirements to be named a 'Tree Campus USA' university."

"Tree Campus USA" is a program of the Arbor Day Foundation that promotes awareness of how important trees are to all of us," Powell explained. "One of the requirements of the program is hosting an Arbor Day celebration."

Ouachita's Arbor Day celebration is sponsored in part by the Arkansas Game & Fish Commission and is open to both the Ouachita community and the larger Arkadelphia community. As part of the celebration, participants will have the opportunity to plant trees on campus, work in the Ravine and compete in a tree scavenger hunt for prizes. Ice cream will be served concluding the event at Heflin Plaza at around 4 p.m.

"It is important to work on the Ravine in order to prevent further erosion of the stream bed in the Ravine and keep the Ravine looking beautiful," said Dr. Tim Knight, J.D. Patterson Professor of Biology and a member of Environmental Stewardship Committee. "Think of it as the 'on-campus' version of Tiger Serve Day."

"It will be a great opportunity to get outside, get away from the books for a few hours and do something to help Ouachita and the environment," Powell noted. "I'm sure some students have never planted a tree before so this would be a good opportunity to learn something about tree planting. Also, through the scavenger hunt, they will learn a few things about the trees we already have on campus, not to mention prizes and free ice cream."

For more information about Ouachita's green initiatives, visit www.obu.edu/green. ■

The great divide: church and state

By WHITNEY CREWS
Opinions Editor

As talk of England's royal wedding and Easter have been hot topics in the media in recent weeks, an interesting debate has once again made its way to the forefront of attention, the separation of church and state.

In America, as with every year, Easter promotes dialogue between church leaders and the media about the current involvement of the church in America.

Last Sunday, April 24, ABC's Christiane Amanpour sat down with prominent religious leaders, the Reverend Franklin Graham, Pastor Tim Keller, Reverend Al Sharpton and other to discuss God and the government.

The discussion topics of highest interest were government stewardship of America's money, tax breaks for the wealthy, money borrowed as the gap between the rich and poor grows worldwide and dire financial times wreaking havoc on many Americans. Dr. Richard Land of the Southern Baptist Convention approached the subject in terms of "stealing our children and our grandchildren's future."

Other religious leaders characterized the problem as one of setting priorities when allocating money in the budget. From a religious perspective, most of them agree that charity is an important investment that is lacking support or at least direction, according to the discussion.

Cokie Roberts, an ABC journalist who is Catholic, noted the importance of sharing and passing on values to future generations. Christians have notably strong convictions concerning giving to the poor and charities. Rev. Al Sharpton stated it should be the Church's responsibility to "first set a moral tone" which should be reflected in the policies Americans support.

"One hundred years ago, the social safety net in the country was provided by the church," Rev. Franklin Graham said in an interview with Amanpour. "If you were hungry, you went to the local church and they would help you, but that's not being done [today]. The government took that ... they have more programs to give and pretty soon the Church has just backed off."

England has also been in conflict over the increasing secularization of its society. The Church of England has worked in conjunction with the monarchy for about 400 years. However, talk of disestablishment has been on the rise in recent years. According to the Religion News Service article "Church-state ties on full display at royal wedding" by Trevor Grundy, Prince William and Kate have expressed little commitment to the Church of England or Christianity, keeping with the trend among their peers.

The Queen, now 85, anoints bishops and archbishops as part of her duties. Only time will tell if her successor will continue the tradition.

In America, as secularization increases, Church leaders will be hard-pressed to step forward and push conviction alongside policy. ■

Weather causes 11 deaths statewide

Thunderstorms, tornadoes, flooding plague South

By LEAH GARAVELLI
Editor-in-Chief

Ouachita's campus might have been plagued with fallen tree limbs and short power outages, but some other areas in the South suffered much worse during the thunderstorms and tornadoes that ripped through the region on Monday and Tuesday.

The death toll after the tornadoes on Tuesday was 11 people, according to Baltimore Weather Examiner Tony Pann at www.examiner.com.

"On Tuesday, another 40 tornadoes were reported by the Storm Prediction Center," Pann said in the article. "The hardest hit region was once again from East Texas through Arkansas."

The Magnolia Reporter said the eleventh Arkansas victim died at her home in Sharp County.

"I can tell you it was a wind-related fatality," said Tommy Jackson with the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management in a www.cnn.com article. "The home where the victim was found was destroyed."

It was reported that her body was found 50 yards away from her house.

"So far, there have been 10 other confirmed deaths in the state: four in Vilonia, five in northwest Arkansas and one in Benton County," said an article from www.kait8.com.

The article also said the National Weather Service is still evaluating damage in many Arkansas counties, including Garland, Perry, Pulaski, Lonoke and Sharp.

Students on campus were given weather updates and safety information via e-mail from Dr. Keldon Henley and Dr. Brett Powell, but Tuesday's storm did not bring the expected tornadoes to the area. ■

Powell's Weather Safety Tips

- Be aware of the warnings that have been issued and understand what those mean. Obviously, our primary concern is a tornado hitting the campus but severe thunderstorms and high winds can be just as dangerous. We have seen over the last several days that high winds can topple a tree or cause weak branches to break off. So, you should always be alert if you must be out during severe weather.
- Know where you will go if a tornado does threaten the campus. Dr. Henley frequently distributes the instructions for where students, faculty and staff should go if there is a tornado. You should know where those locations are for the buildings you are in most often.
- Pay attention to the OENS notifications. If a notification is sent out during severe weather, it will most likely be because there is a significant chance of a tornado in our area. Take those alerts seriously.
- Most importantly, I think, is students should not get out in severe weather if they can avoid it.

Watson wins performance showcase

By LESLIE REYNOLDS
Signal Writer

For four years, he has been actively involved in musicals, plays, operas and vocal competitions.

Jacob Watson, a senior musical theater major from Wynne, Ark., recently added one more award to his list of accomplishments.

Watson's dedication to the pursuit of vocal excellence has earned him numerous awards, the most recent of which was winning the first place title at the Trinity Collegiate Performance Showcase.

He said he has an amusing reason for the source of his musical talent.

"My dad always says that he gave me all the musical ability that he had, which is the reason he doesn't have any," Watson said.

Though it was not necessarily his genes that produced his musical skills, his family's support of his performing career has greatly contributed to his achievement.

"My family was never really into music or musicals," Watson said. "But my parents have always been extremely supportive of everything I've done: football, acting, singing, even dancing. The latter has taken a while for my [football coach] father to get used to, but he's never missed a show."

His support group extends beyond his family; senior vocal performance student Elisabeth Hipp expresses her respect for Watson.

"I think what makes Jacob so successful in his field is that he is extremely dedicated to his art and the whole process of its creation," Hipp said. "He has taken the gifts and talents that God has given him and has stewarded them so diligently."

Watson is also thankful for the growth his time at Ouachita has encouraged. Having many professors aide his development in such a supportive environment has been an immense blessing, he said.

"All of my teachers in the fine arts department have been unbelievably supportive," Watson said. "Two that stand out are Dr. Jon Secrest, who is my voice teacher, and Daniel Inouye, who is one of my theatre professors."

Both professors have inspired and challenged Watson to venture outside of his comfort zone. From opening his voice to styles of music never ventured or his acting skills to new levels, their work has impacted him.

"The support that they have given me has been and will be so important to my continued growth as an artist and performer," Watson said.

Junior musical theatre major Bethany Swiontek said she already sees his dedication to his craft through the professional behavior he emits when preparing and rehearsing for a role.

"He takes his job very seriously and pushes you to be the best you can be," she said. "He has a way of bringing out the talent in others that they may not have otherwise realized they even had."

Because he is known for his musical abilities, it is easy to assume that performing has been a staple throughout Watson's entire life. But Watson wasn't always so driven in the art of musical theatre. In fact, aside from a few church solos, he said his entrance into the performing arts did not take shape until high school.

"I was cast in the musical my freshman year of high school and fell in love with acting and singing," Watson said. "During my sophomore year, I performed in 'Fiddler on the Roof' and saw the 'Les Miserables' musical. From that point on, I knew not only what I wanted to be doing but what I had to be doing: performing."

Since that time, Wat-

son has been performing, singing, acting, rehearsing and practicing on a regular basis. Though the time commitment for a musical theatre major is legendary on this campus, it is with good reason. While performing in "Seussical the Musical" last year, Watson was reminded of the rewards of being invested in the performing arts.

"There was something about that experience that really reminded me of why I ever began performing in the first place," Watson said. "As performers, it's our job to perform, so it can become very monotonous at times. But with 'Seussical' there was so much creation and joy in the performances as well as the rehearsal process."

And when he is not experiencing the joy of performing or intensity of practicing, Watson has hobbies like any other college student.

"I love watching movies, reading plays/books, cooking, hanging out with friends, long walks on the beach, candle lit dinners ... you know, guy stuff," Watson said.

His answers to ques-

tions show that he was born to entertain. Though choosing to pursue a life of performing may seem unconventional for most, for Watson it is simply logical, and his classmates agree.

"He has found his niche and has absolutely flourished," Hipp said. "He is going to make a huge impact on this world not only because of his incredible talents, hard work and passion, but because he has dedicated all of these things to his creator. I am so excited to see Jacob succeed greatly in the world of music and theater, but I know most of all that his desire to serve Christ in all that he does will be his greatest success."

Watson said he did not know what post-Ouachita holds, but his outlook is optimistic.

"I really don't have a clue where I'll be in five years," Watson said. "And that is one of the most exciting things about performing ... Who knows where I'll have been or will be within just five years. I can't wait to find out though." ■



JACOB WATSON, as Horton, and Rachel Street perform during "Seussical the Musical" last year. Watson has been in numerous plays, musicals and singing competitions during his Ouachita career

CALLIE STEPHENS/TheSignal