

**Finding Aid for the
Ouachita Baptist University
Centennial Celebration records, 1984-1986
OBU.2023.195**



**OUACHITA
BAPTIST UNIVERSITY**

*Archives & Special Collections
Riley-Hickingbotham Library
Ouachita Baptist University
410 Ouachita Street
Arkadelphia, AR 71998*

Repository: Archives and Special Collections, Ouachita Baptist University

Title: Ouachita Baptist University (OBU) Centennial Celebration records

Dates: circa 1984-1986

Quantity: 2.76 c.f.

Abstract: Files originally kept by Dr. Bill Downs, Director of Public Relations and professor of Communications at Ouachita, during his service on the planning committee for OBU's 100th anniversary in 1986. Includes budget and planning materials from the Centennial Planning committee and Second Century Planning Task Force, and two guestbooks.

Identification: OBU.2023.195

Languages: English

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Preferred Citation: OBU Centennial Celebration records, Archives and Special Collections, Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, AR.

Acquisition Information: Transferred to Archives from Communications and Marketing, OBU, 2023.

Biographical Summary

William D. Downs Jr., was born January 30, 1932, in Calico Rock, Arkansas, to the late William David Downs and Ann Hudson Downs. He graduated from Batesville (AR) High School in 1949, and then served in the United States Air Force, first as a drill instructor, and then in the USAF Special Services writing, directing, and coordinating entertainment programs for military personnel. After having been honorably discharged from military service, Downs enrolled at Little Rock Junior College, and then the University of Arkansas for his undergraduate degree. He earned a Master of Arts and Ph.D. from the University of Missouri School of Journalism. He retired from Ouachita Baptist University as professor emeritus of communications in 2007, after serving 41 years at the university.

At Ouachita Baptist University, where Downs served as Director of Public Relations, professor and chair of the Department of Communications, as well as adviser to the *Signal* newspaper, *Ouachitonian* yearbook and American Advertising Federation's National Student Advertising Competition team. As adviser to the *Signal* and *Ouachitonian*, the publications won numerous state and national awards including Gold Crowns from the Columbia Scholastic Press Association and All-American Honors from the National Scholastic Press Association.

In addition to his service at Ouachita, he was active in other organizations. He served for 25 years as director of the Arkansas High School Press Association. In 1995, during his

last year with the organization, he was instrumental in the development and enactment of the Arkansas Student Press Law, which established a framework of freedom of expression for Arkansas high school newspapers.

Downs was the author of two books. “The Fighting Tigers,” published in 2004, tells the stories of the lives and deaths of the 36 Ouachita students whose names are engraved on Ouachita’s World War II memorial. “Stories of Survival: Arkansas Farmers During the Great Depression,” published in 2011, is based on interviews of farm families across the state, and recounts how these families, frequently living poverty, survived the hardships of natural disasters and economic collapse with extraordinary faith, resourcefulness, and a sense of humor. Down died in April 2019.

Scope and Contents

Files originally kept by Dr. Bill Downs, Director of Public Relations and professor of Communications at Ouachita, during his service on the planning committee for OBU’s 100th anniversary in 1986. Includes budget and planning materials from the Centennial Planning committee and Second Century Planning Task Force. Included are budgets, programs, invitations, promotional samples, public information, brochures, bumper stickers, song lyrics, film script notes and drafts, recorded PSAs and photographs.

Keywords

Anniversaries
Christian universities and colleges
Downs, William D. (1932-2019)
Universities and colleges

Processed by Dr. Lisa K. Speer, 2026.

Box/Folder Inventory

Box 3097	Description
3097/001	Minutes from Centennial Planning “Think Session,” Centennial Steering Committee minutes, correspondence, calendars of proposed activities, 1984
3097002	Second Century Planning Task Force mission statement, marketing plan, minutes, correspondence, 1986
3097/003	Second Century Planning retreat, May 1986
3097/004	“Centennial Materials.” Includes pre-and post-centennial information
3097/005	Budget materials
3097/006	Convocation/Founders Day planning materials
3097/007	Convocation, September 1986. Photographs, program, invitation, order information
3097/008	Centennial Showcase, September 1985. Planning materials
3097/009	Time Capsule planning materials and sample items
3097/010	Prism Award entry
Box 3098	Description
3098/001	Promotional materials. Information from vendors, orders
3098/002	Centennial billboard
3098/003	Publicity
3098/004	Arkansas Baptist State Convention, 1985
3098/005	Arkansas Baptist advertisements
3098/006	Brochure. Includes some photographs of Sturgis Physical Education Center
3098/007	Ouachita at 100 campaign
3098/008	Ouachita at 100 campaign
3098/009	<i>Once in 100 Years</i> publication

Box 3099	Description
3099/001	OBU film overview
3099/002	Lyrics for centennial film song
3099/003	Centennial film research notes
3099/004	Centennial script drafts
3099/005	Television spots
3099/006	Public service announcement
3099/007	<i>Thank you, Arkansas Baptists</i> publication
3099/008	Photographs, including Bill Downs, Mike Arrington, Daniel Grant, Bob Riley, William Trantham, a box of small photos of OBU faculty/staff, Old North Dorm, Terral-Moore, Bailey Hall, etc.
3099/009	Memorabilia, including bumper stickers, buttons, pen (with ink cartridge removed), keychain
Box 3062-3063	Two guest books used during centennial to record visitors to campus events; one book bears signature of former U.S. President Jimmy Carter who spoke at a convocation.