



ESP EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, LAURA WHITAKER, JOINS OCONEE STATE BANK BOARD OF DIRECTORS

WATKINSVILLE, January 16, 2020- Oconee State Bank (OTCQX: OSBK) today announced the addition of Extra Special People, Inc. Executive Director, Laura Whitaker, to its board of directors.

“We are thrilled to have Laura join our Oconee State Bank Board of Directors,” said President and CEO Neil Stevens. “Her influence, experience, skills and passion will be a great addition.”

Laura Whitaker, M. Ed., began her relationship with Extra Special People, Inc. by working as a counselor and, subsequently, a leadership team member in 2003. With her passion for enhancing the lives of children with developmental disabilities and her specialized education in this field, Laura was selected as the director after the founder, Martha Wyllie’s sudden passing in 2004. She has found her dream job with ESP (or as she says, her dream job found her!). As Executive Director, Laura uses her faith, along with her leadership and management strengths to manage staff, oversee multiple year-round programs and raise funds to run programs. Her favorite part of the job is getting to hug the many children who walk through the ESP doors.



Laura obtained both her Bachelor’s degree in Collaborative Special Education and her Master’s degree in Adapted Curriculum Classic Autism at the University of Georgia. Laura has been awarded the 40 under 40 by the Atlanta Business Chronicle, the UGA Alumni Association, the Athens Banner Herald and the Georgia Trend. She has also been given the Super Citizen Award by the Athens Banner Herald, The Community Four-Way Test Award by the Rotary Club of Oconee County & Volunteer of the Year Award by the Oconee County Chamber of Commerce. Laura was recognized as one of UGA’s top growing business leaders as #12 out of the Bulldog 100. Laura and her work with ESP was featured in The UGA Graduate Magazine 2012 edition.

She participated as a member of L.E.A.D. Athens Class of 2012 and has served in the past as a United Way of NEGA Board Member, North Oconee Rotary, Oconee Civitan and the Junior League of Athens. She is currently involved with the LEAD Athens Steering Committee, Leadership Georgia and Classic City Church.

Laura was most recently chosen to participate in the prestigious Leadership Georgia program and then chosen to serve on the Leadership Georgia Program Committee in 2018. Laura has served on the Oconee State Bank Community Advisory Committee since her appointment in 2018. Laura's most important roles include wife to husband Joseph and mother to Owen Patrick (11), Finley Gray (7) and newest addition Tate Alan (2).

"What a joy it is to have the opportunity to work with leadership I respect and an organization I admire," said Whitaker. "Neil and his team continue to think creatively and inspire others to leave a mark in their professions. I look forward to reciprocating that inspiration with my experience and perspectives while serving on the board."

About Oconee State Bank

Oconee State Bank is a leading financial institution with a vision to be essential to the lives, businesses and communities we serve. With more than 59 years of service in the banking industry, we continuously strive to create remarkable experiences that significantly mark the lives of others. We are proud to provide an unparalleled commitment to personalized service, innovative products and solutions, and to bringing exceptional value to our customers through local ownership, involvement and decision-making.