



# FOCUS

## ABRAHAM BALDWIN AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE

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### Registration Begins Today For Slim Down, Shape Up

Registration begins today for Slim Down, Shape Up the ABAC 2011 Team/Individual Weight Loss and Fitness Competition. You may register with a four person team or as an individual. Confidential weigh-ins will be held each Friday by Health Center personnel. The event begins with a lunch provided by Human Resources on Feb. 1 from 11:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. For those who can't make that date, another lunch will be held on Feb. 4 from 12:30 until 1:30 p.m. There is no charge for either lunch.

Sessions will consist of five lunch-and-learns where all participants bring a brown bag lunch. There will be an alternate session taught by nursing students each week. The top three teams and the top individual will be recognized at the grand finale on April 15. Prizes will be awarded to the teams and the individual with the highest percentage of weight loss. Registration forms can be found on the HR website at [www.abac.edu/hr](http://www.abac.edu/hr). Contact Staff Forum Chair Nancy Anthony for more information at 391-4886.

### ABAC Honoring Alumni March 5

Former students of ABAC will be honored at the annual ABAC Alumni Association awards ceremony as a part of the Celebrate ABAC weekend on March 5 at 10:30 a.m. at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village, now operated by ABAC.

Open to anyone who would like to attend at a cost of \$20, the brunch ceremony at the Museum conference area will recognize ABAC alumni who impacted the college and their communities in significant ways. For more information on the Celebrate ABAC weekend, contact the ABAC College Advancement office at (229) 391-4900 or visit the web site at [www.abac.edu/celebrate](http://www.abac.edu/celebrate).

ABAC Alumni Association award winners this year include Mack Crawford of Zebulon, Distinguished Alumnus; Jodi Rayl Snow from Belle Glade, Fla., Outstanding Young Alumnus; Terry Clark from Moultrie, Master Farmer; Dr. Jerry W. Johnson from Griffin, J. Lamar Branch Award; Suellen Coleman Perry from Moultrie, Outstanding Educator; Mark

Mobley from Moultrie, Outstanding Business Leader; Dr. Jay Williams from Albany, Outstanding Health Care Professional; and Alan Kramer from Tifton and former Georgia Commissioner of Agriculture Tommy Irvin of Habersham County, Honorary Alumnus awards. The Ollie E. McMillan family from Berrien County will also receive the Family Legacy Award.

Crawford graduated from ABAC in 1974 and then transferred to the University of Georgia (UGA) where he received his bachelor's degree and a juris doctorate from the Woodrow Wilson College of Law. He was a partner in the Crawford and Morton Law firm in Zebulon before winning a seat for the Georgia House of Representatives where he served as the Chairman of the Joint House-Senate Legislative Oversight Committee on Indigent Defense. Governor Sonny Perdue later appointed Crawford as the Director of the Georgia Public Defender Standards Council. In 2010, **Continued on page 3**

### Chason To Retire from ABAC After 32 Years

Director of Public Relations Mike Chason announced today that he plans to retire on May 27 after 32 years of service at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College.

"Every day at ABAC has been an adventure," Chason said. "I'm looking forward to many more adventures in the future."

Chason said he and his wife, Kris, plan to continue to live in Tifton, and he will run Chason Enterprises, a public relations consulting company, specializing in media placement. The company also has a sports broadcasting branch, where Chason serves as the play-by-play voice of Tift County High School basketball and football on radio and television and as the play-by-play voice for Valdosta State University basketball.

"Working at ABAC has allowed me to see how a college education really does

change a person's life," Chason said. "Watching these freshmen develop from shy 18-year-olds to productive citizens in their communities in our great state and nation is an absolutely fabulous thing to see."

Chason was recently honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Georgia Education Advancement Council, a statewide organization composed of professionals in advancement, public relations, and alumni relations. Chason served as president of GEAC in 1991 and received the GEAC award for Communications in 1994.

A native of Lakeland, Ga., and a former sports editor of the Valdosta Daily Times, Chason received the prestigious



E. Lanier Carson Award in 2002, which is presented to ABAC's top administrator, chaired the ABAC Master Plan Committee in 2005, helped establish the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2007, chaired the College's 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration Committee in 2008, and emceeds most college events. He also coordinates the ABAC news bureau, hosts the ABAC Update television show, and handles communications for the President's office.

"Mike Chason has served the college with distinction for more than 32 years, he is truly the 'Voice of ABAC'," ABAC President David Bridges said. "He is a true public relations professional, constantly working to create positive public relations for the college, and we look forward to him continuing to work with us part-time after retirement."

# New Student Portal Launches Tuesday at ABAC

A new website portal designed to make web access easier for students titled "myABAC", will launch on Tuesday. The portal has been in the works for nearly a year and will serve as a means of communication for the students of the college.

"The portal will serve as a single sign-on tool using the student's Stallion e-mail username and password as a log-in to access common applications including GeorgiaVIEW/WebCT, Banner, and student e-mail," said Dr. Chrystle Ross, Chief Information Officer. "This portal will be vital in getting information to the students as well as giving students the opportunity to help themselves."

The new portal is hosted by Campus EAI, making it much less costly.

"I want to thank Amy Willis and Rob-

bie Hawsey who really played key roles

of week, students will no longer have to

call us to re-set their passwords with the new password management option," said Ross. "If they forget their log-in credentials, they will now have a re-set feature. Students need to create a strong password that is secure and make sure they change passwords regularly."

Ross would like to take the portal even further by creating the myABAC Communities link that will focus on campus activities and programs such as Greek life and athletics. Students can then re-

search and choose what communities they would like to join.

"This will be a neat addition to the portal's growth," said Ross.

In the near future, Ross said a myABAC portal will also be established for employees.

Once the new portal is active on Tuesday, any students having log-in problems can contact the Office of Information and Technology Services at (229) 391-4850.



in this implementation effort," Ross said. "They have put a lot of time into this."

There are a number of new features that are offered with the development of the portal. Aside from the three most common online applications, there are also some additional links to social network sites such as Twitter and Facebook, local weather forecasts, and a password management attribute.

"With a password management feature to be added within the next couple

## First Tuesday Concert Coming Up On February 1

The Maharlika Trio from Valdosta will be the featured performers on Feb. 1 in the First Tuesday Concert at ABAC. Founded in 2005, the trio is comprised of Joren Cain, saxophone; David Springfield, trombone and piano; and Maila Gutierrez Springfield, piano. All three musicians are professors at Valdosta State University (VSU).

The performance will take place in the ABAC Chapel of All Faiths at 7 p.m. on Feb. 1. There is no fee for this event.

The First Tuesday Concert Series takes place on five selected first Tuesdays during the year. Dr. Susan Roe, associate professor of voice at ABAC, directs the series. She said there will be no fee for any of the First Tuesday Concerts this year as the ABAC School of Liberal



(L-R) David Springfield, Maila Gutierrez Springfield and Joren Cain of the Maharlika Trio will perform at 7 p.m. on Feb. 1 at the Chapel of All Faiths at ABAC.

Arts presents "a gift to the community." Roe said that persons who want to support the First Tuesday concerts can make contributions to the ABAC Foundation and designate them for the First Tuesday Concert Series. For more information, interested person can contact Roe at (229) 391-4943. Selections by the Maharlika Trio will include "La Muerte del Angel" by Astor Piazzolla, "Gnomology" by Carl Schimmel, "Resonances" by Mikel Kuehn, and "Insomnia" by William Schmid.

Cain is an assistant professor of saxophone and director of the New Jazz Ensemble at VSU. He has taught at Northern Illinois University and was a graduate saxophone teaching fellow at the University of North Texas. He played

with the United States Army Field Band for four years, performing as a featured soloist and as the leader of the band's Saxophone Quartet.

Springfield is an assistant professor and director of jazz studies at VSU, teaching jazz piano, improvisation, arranging, combos and jazz history. He is also a member of the Faculty Jazz Combo and directs the VSU Jazz Ensemble. Since 2004, he has been the jazz instructor for the Georgia Governor's Honors Program. As a performer he has appeared with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Savannah, Charleston and Jacksonville Symphony Orchestras.

Gutierrez Springfield is an instructor of music at VSU. Prior to receiving her college education, she studied at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and the Colburn School of Performing Arts in Los Angeles, CA. She has served as an accompanist for the Georgia Governor's Honors Program, Georgia Southern University and the Interlochen Arts Camp, where she worked with renowned cellist Yo-Yo Ma.

## Cofer To Speak Today

Rebecca Cofer will be the next speaker in the Center for Teaching and Learning Colloquium Series today from 4-5 p.m. in Carlton 202. She will present "10 Must Have Tips for the New (And Not-so-New) Advisor."

The Colloquium Series provides faculty and staff opportunities to share their expertise with others on campus. This is an excellent chance for free professional development. For future dates, please visit: [www.abac.edu/ctl/ColloquiumSeries.cfm](http://www.abac.edu/ctl/ColloquiumSeries.cfm)

### **ALUMNI: continued from p-1**

Crawford was appointed to the Superior Court of the Griffin Judicial Circuit.

Snow attended ABAC from 1998 – 2000, majoring in business and playing on the women's tennis team. She received her bachelor's degree in management information systems from UGA; a master's degree in business from Stetson University; and a juris doctorate from Stetson's College of Law. She worked for Lithonia Lighting as a systems analyst before becoming an associate attorney with McGahee and Perez, PL in Clewiston, Fla., in April of 2007. She also is a certified legal intern and serves as vice president of the Hendry-Glades Bar Association and on the ABAC ACTIONS Team to assist with student recruiting. She was the featured speaker at ABAC's 2009 Fall Convocation.

Clark has been an active producer of traditional row crops but concentrates on cotton and peanuts. He attended ABAC from 1969 – 1972. Clark operates a large-scale vegetable farm with cabbage, greens, and sweet corn as his primary crops and continues to be an active cattleman with 200 commercial brood cows. He has served on the Tift Quality Peanut Board of Directors, the Lower Flint/Ochlocknee Water Council, UGA Extension Advisory Boards and nine years on the local Colquitt County USDA Farm Services Agency. Outside of agriculture, he serves on the Colquitt County Library Board, Colquitt County Health Board, and is in his second term as a Colquitt County Commissioner.

Johnson graduated from ABAC in 1968 and transferred to UGA, where he received his bachelor's degree in agronomy in 1970. He furthered his education at Purdue University, completing his master's degree in 1972 and his Ph. D. in 1974 in plant breeding. He started his career at the University of Maryland in 1974 before moving to UGA in 1978. During the past 30 years, John-

son has compiled an outstanding record of research productivity and has developed/co-developed 27 cultivars and five germplasm lines of wheat, oats, barley, rye, and triticale. His research has led to the creation of the Georgia-based company, Ag-South Genetics. He has also served as a scout leader in the Flint River Boy Scouts and has been a member of the Iris City American Business Club for the past seven years.

Perry received her associate's degree in early childhood education from ABAC in 1984; her bachelor's degree from UGA and her master's degree from Valdosta State University. She taught at Stringfellow Elementary School from 1987-2000 and is currently a kindergarten teacher at R.B. Wright Elementary in Moultrie. She has been recognized professionally as the school's Teacher of the Year and was one of three finalists for the Colquitt County Schools Teacher of the Year in 2010. Perry served as president of Delta Kappa Gamma from 2004 – 2006. She is also a member of the Professional Association of Georgia Educators (PAGE).

Mobley attended ABAC from 1978-1980, majoring in agricultural economics. He continued his education at UGA, attaining a bachelor's degree. He began his career with Mobley Plant Company and Mobley Farms, both family-owned companies. He currently is president of Mobley Gin, J.M. Mobley Investments, and Doerun Transport. Mobley is also co-owner of Georgia Ice House, LLC. He was recently re-appointed by Governor Sonny Perdue to a second term on the Georgia Development Authority Board of Directors as a representative for agriculture. His community involvement includes the Ameris Bank Board of Directors, ABAC Foundation Board of Trustees, Colquitt County Medical Center Hospital Authority Board of Directors, and the Packer Foundation Touchdown Club. He and his wife, Judy, have four children, two of whom attended ABAC.

Williams attended ABAC in 1987-88, majoring in pre-dentistry. He went on to attend UGA from 1988-90 and the Medical College of Georgia from 1990-1994. In 1994, he began his career in dentistry as an associate before opening his own practice in 1995. In 2002, he was a founding partner for Dental Partners of Southwest Georgia, where he currently practices. He is a member of the Georgia Dental Association, Georgia

Academy of General Dentistry, the American Dental Association, and the Southwest Georgia Dental Society. His community involvement includes serving as a former director with the Lee County Chamber of Commerce, a former trustee of Palmyra Medical Center, founding member of the Lee County Sertoma Club, an active participant in Boy Scouts of America, and as a deacon at First Baptist Church.

After completion of his studies at Baylor University, Kramer began his teaching career at ABAC in 1993 as an instructor in the physical education program and as the women's tennis coach. Currently he serves as athletic director, coach of the women's and men's tennis teams, and as an assistant professor in the School of Human Sciences. He has led tennis teams to the national tournament for the past 17 seasons and has been named the Region XVII Coach of the Year 11 times. He has also held the position of vice president of the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) Tennis Coaches Association and most recently was named the 2010 Southeast Region Athletic Director of the Year by the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics. As Athletic Director, he has added men's golf and women's soccer to ABAC's sports teams and led the development of the Athletic Complex, the Red Hill Athletic Center, and the ABAC softball and soccer fields. He also assisted with the creation of the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2008.

Irvin served as Georgia's Commissioner of Agriculture for 42 years before he retired, making him the longest-serving agriculture commissioner and among the longest-serving statewide officials in the nation. Irvin was first appointed to the position by Governor Lester Maddox in 1969. He won the next election in 1970 and repeated that feat nine more times. He is credited with advocating for more agriculture research, opening up new markets overseas and controlling the pests that severely curtailed the state's cotton industry. Irvin is the only Georgian to serve as president of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA). He has also served as president of the Southern Association of State Departments of Agriculture (SASDA) and the Southern United States Trade Association (SUSTA), an organization which he helped found to promote the export of Southern food and agricultural products. He and his wife, Bernice, live on a farm in Habersham County.

Fourteen members of the Ollie E. McMillan Family have attended ABAC.

## ABAC Receives \$7,100 Grant From Highway Safety Office

The Governor's Office of Highway Safety (GOHS) and Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College (ABAC) are joining forces to combat alcohol abuse, including underage drinking and impaired driving.

Through GOHS, ABAC has received a \$7,100 grant to participate in the Georgia Young Adult Program. Designed for colleges and universities in the state, the Georgia Young Adult Program focuses on peer education in order to promote and bring awareness to highway



safety issues including alcohol education, alcohol abuse prevention, impaired driving, underage drinking, safety belts, speeding, risk reductions and other destructive decisions.

The long-term goal of the program is to create safer, more-healthy campus environments. ABAC will use this Peer Education grant to help educate the students on the detriments of drinking and driving and other components of alcohol misuse. The grant runs from Oct. 1, 2010 thru Sept. 30, 2011.

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Please submit any information to Ashley Williamson at [awilliamson@abac.edu](mailto:awilliamson@abac.edu) by **Thursday at noon** for inclusion in the next FOCUS.

# Don't Forget Stallion Day February 12

### Coffee Cart Now Open in Student Center

The coffee cart is now open for business from 8 a.m. until noon on the second floor of the Student Center.



### Staff Forum Meets Wednesday at 3:30

The ABAC Staff Forum will meet on Wednesday at 3:30 p.m. in Health Sciences room 237. Topics of interest will be presented, and refreshments will be served.

## ABAC Birthdays

- 24 Debbie Cromer**
- 25 Mike Chason**
- 25 Debbie Cross**
- 26 Sarah Gibbs**
- 26 Olga Contreras-Martinez**
- 26 Leyman Jernigan**
- 26 Ken Newkirk**
- 27 Clarissa Butler**
- 27 Jeremy Dye**
- 27 Kristina Robinson**
- 28 Stefane Whiddon**
- 30 Patricia Purvis**

## ABAC Alumnus Named Top Employee of Herald

ABAC Journalism graduate J.D. Sumner was honored on Jan. 18 as the Albany Herald "Employee of the Year" for 2010.

In an article in the Herald, Publisher Mike Gebhart said "J.D. was selected in part because of his innovation in helping move the paper into the digital age."

After receiving his journalism degree from ABAC, Sumner completed his bachelor's degree in English from Valdosta State University. According to the Herald article, Sumner has been honored by the Associated Press for his news coverage, including awards for best photo portfolio and best news story.

The Herald story also said Sumner has been a guest on the Fox News' show "The O'Reilly Factor" and has been published throughout the state and the Southeastern United States and globally through the Internet.

Sumner came to The Herald in December 2005 as the police and public safety reporter. In January 2009 he began covering the Albany-Dougherty County government beat.



## And They're Off!

Over 100 runners braved a 29 degree temperature on Saturday morning at the annual Fitness 5K sponsored by the ABAC Physical Education Majors Club. All proceeds benefit community and service projects of the club. Coach Jimmy Ballenger and Joe Wilson were the coordinators of the event.