Congressman Austin Scott to Speak at Commencement Friday

United States Congressman Austin Scott will be the guest speaker at the spring commencement ceremony at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College on May 3 at 6 p.m. in Gressette Gym on the ABAC campus.

In his second term as the U.S. Representative for Georgia’s Eighth Congressional District, Scott owned and operated an insurance brokerage firm for nearly 20 years before his election to the U.S. Congress in 2010. He served 14 years in the Georgia House of Representatives beginning with his first election at the age of 26.

In the 113th Congress, Scott was appointed Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee’s Subcommittee on Horticulture, Research, Biotechnology, and Foreign Agriculture. He is also on the House Armed Services Committee, where he serves on the Oversight and Investigation, Military Personnel, and Readiness Subcommittees. Scott is known as a conservative on both economic and social issues and as a fierce defender of limited government, a strong proponent of national defense, and the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Scott earned his bachelor of business administration degree in Risk Management and Insurance from the University of Georgia. He received a Master of Business Administration at the University of Georgia’s School of Business. Scott earned his bachelor of science degree in Animal Science from the University of Georgia in 1979. He received a master’s degree in business administration from the University of Florida in 1982.

For the first time in the history of ABAC, the college will award bachelor’s degrees in Natural Resource Management (Forestry), Agricultural Technology, and Natural Resource Management (Wildlife), and Agriculture. Approximately 280 students are expected to receive diplomas.

ABAC Honors Top Faculty, Staff, Administrator and Advisor

The top faculty member, staff member, administrator, and academic advisor for the 2012-2013 academic year were recognized during Wednesday’s Honors Day ceremony at ABAC.

Dr. Mary Ellen Hicks, Professor of Animal Science, received the W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence. Ernest Kelly, Senior Systems Administrator in the Office of Information Technology, was honored with the Roy R. Jackson, Sr., Award for Staff Excellence. Dr. Tim Marshall, Dean of the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources, received the E. Lanier Carson Leadership Award for College Administrators, and Lorie Felton, Associate Professor of Environmental Horticulture, received the W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Excellence in Advising Award.

Hicks earned her associate of science degree from ABAC and then attended the University of Georgia for her bachelor of science degree and her doctorate degree in veterinary medicine. She started her teaching career at ABAC in 1889.

A recipient of the Outstanding Educator award from the ABAC Alumni Association, Hicks serves as advisor for the ABAC Cattlemen’s Club. She received the W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Excellence in Advising Award in 2011. She is the youngest of five sisters, all of whom attended ABAC. Her husband, Doug Hicks, is employed at ABAC’s J.C. Woodroof Farm. She received a plaque and a check for $2,500 from the ABAC Foundation.

Kelly has served as the Senior Systems Administrator in the Office of Information Technology for over 25 years. He earned an A. S. degree in Computer Science from ABAC and a degree in Computer Electronics from Ben Hill-Irwin Technical College before being employed with ABAC in 1987.

Within the community, Kelly is involved with his church where he serves as a deacon and teaches Sunday School. He lives in Tifton with his wife, Diane. He is the proud father of Andrea, Stephen, and Heather, who have all attended or graduated from ABAC. Kelly received a plaque and a check for $1,250 from the ABAC Foundation.

Marshall earned his associate degree in agriculture from ABAC in 1977 and his bachelor’s degree in animal science from the University of Georgia in 1979. He received a master’s degree in beef cattle management in 1981 and his doctorate in beef cattle breeding and management in 1986, both from the University of Florida.

Marshall began his ABAC career in 2006 as Chair of the Division of Agriculture, Research, and Biotechnology, and Foreign Agriculture. He is also on the House Armed Services Committee, where he serves on the Oversight and Investigation, Military Personnel, and Readiness Subcommittees.

The ABAC commencement ceremony will include the presentation of the prestigious George P. Donaldson award to the top graduate who participates in the event by the ABAC Alumni Association.

Reminder: ABAC staff members not working commencement will need to come to the Public Relations Office to pick up a ticket for the ceremony. Call 229.391.5055 with questions.

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Ashburn Student Wins Top Academic Award

Sarah A. Rooks, a junior biology major from Ashburn, was named the top academic student at ABAC at last Wednesday’s Honors Day ceremony.

Rooks received the J. G. Woodroof Scholar Award, given annually to a student at Honors Day in recognition of top academic standing at the institution. Rooks also received the Award of Distinction from the School of Science and Mathematics.

Woodroof was president of ABAC from 1933-34. Each of the 31 units of the University System of Georgia selects a top student as the Academic Recognition Day Student of the Year who is also honored in a proclamation by the Georgia General Assembly.

This year, Rooks was named a Distinguished Honor student with a perfect 4.0 grade point average. Her other accolades include being named to the President’s List and being selected as an Achievement Through Student Support and Experiential Training in Science (ASSETS) Scholar. She is a member of ABAC’s Honors Program and the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society.

Also during the ceremony, Awards of Distinction were presented to the students with the greatest overall positive impact in each school of study, both academically and through college service.

Awards of Distinction winners for each school were as follows: School of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Troy S. Highsmith, a diversified agriculture major from Wray; Stafford School of Business, Elisabeth P. O’Quinn, a rural studies major from Fitzgerald; School of Human Sciences, Gabi Diaz-Hernandez, a psychology major from Tifton; School of Nursing and Health Sciences, Megan E. Guest, a nursing major from Tifton; and School of Liberal Arts, Devin K. Gibbs, a rural studies major from Doerun.

A total of 43 discipline awards were also presented to students who excelled in their individual disciplines. Discipline award winners from the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources included Kollin R. Pyle from Blakely, Agribusiness and Agricultural Economics; Marshall R. Bennett from Valdosta, Agricultural Education; Guy H. Higdon of Central, S.C., Biological and Agricultural Engineering; Katie M. Bennett from Lilburn, Animal Science; Chynna M. Cutt from Macon, Plant Science; Riley G. Davis from Dawson, Diversified Agriculture Technology; Matthew T. Griffis from Danville, Forest Technology; Jesse Woods from Clayton, Forest Resources; Savannah K. Brown from Roopville, Wildlife Technology; Troy S. Highsmith, Diversified Agriculture; Jonathon A. Marchant from Tifton, Natural Resources Management - Forestry; Scott K. Dismuke from Tifton, Natural Resources Management – Wildlife; and Brad G. Thompson of Augusta, S.C., Turfgrass and Golf Course Management.

In the Stafford School of Business, the Business Administration discipline award was presented to Timothy A. Hauber from Fitzgerald. Kimberly K. Cawley of Ashburn received the Economics award. The Information Technology award went to Nestor Nunez from Omega. Raquel Beltran of Hartselle, Ala., received the Rural Studies – Business and Economic Development award.

Discipline award winners in the School of Liberal Arts included Ashley C. Dunn from Miami Gardens, Fla., Art; Ashley L. Smith from Tifton, English; Douglas S. Burnett from Cordele, History; Dixon J. Fletcher from Tifton, Journalism; Leola R. White of Arlington, Political Science; Daniel F. Gibson from Ty Ty, Music; Crystal E. Goin from Ty Ty, Spanish; and Devinn K. Gibbs from Doerun, Rural Studies – Writing and Communication.

The School of Science and Mathematics presented John J. Williams from Tifton with the Allied Health award. The discipline award in Biology went to Danielle B. Simmons from Vienna. Caleb J. Studstill from Abbeville received the discipline award in Chemistry. The discipline award in Engineering went to Jose Y. Santana from Norcross. Robert E. McBride from Fayetteville received the discipline award in Mathematics. Henry D. Mallard of Moultrie received the Biology - Pre-Professional award. The Pre-Professional award was presented to Ethan S. McBrayer of Tifton.

Discipline award winners from the School of Human Sciences included Corri A. Poppish of Tifton, Early Childhood Education; Daniel A. Harrell from Arlington, Middle Grades Education; and Emily R. Wheeler from Ranger, P-12 Education. Elizabeth L. Kitchens from Washington received the Criminal Justice award, and the award in Criminal Justice (Law Enforcement) went to Pooja Patel of Americus. The Psychology award went to Gabi Diaz-Hernandez from Tifton. Lorenzo Gomez from Omega received the award in Family and Consumer Sciences. The discipline award for Physical Education went to Tyler S. Hobby from Ashburn. Arfannie D. Brown of Tifton received the Human Services award.

The award for Sociology went to Amanda N. Willis of Moultrie, and Kristen N. Ray from Waycross received the Rural Studies – Social and Community Affairs award.

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Agriculture and Forest Resources at ABAC. He was instrumental in bringing the first bachelor’s degrees in the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources to ABAC’s curriculum. He has developed partnerships with corporations including Bayer Crop Science, John Deere, and Bobcat, Inc., that benefit students in many agricultural-related fields at ABAC. Marshall received a plaque and a check for $1,250 from the ABAC Foundation.

Felton obtained her bachelor’s degree and her master’s degree in horticulture from Auburn University. She joined the ABAC faculty in 1993. Felton received the W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence in 2009.

Felton advises agriculture education majors and has served in a teaching capacity for 24 years. Currently, she serves as the advisor to the Collegiate FFA and the Horticulture Club. She is married to Jimmy Felton, who is a staff member in the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Felton received a plaque and a check for $1,250 from the ABAC Foundation.
Young Marketers Compete in National Competition in Kansas City

Members of the ABAC chapter of the National Agri-Marketing Association (NAMA) participated in a national marketing competition held April 17-18 in Kansas City, Mo.

“Every team participating in the marketing competition does an excellent job in developing a thorough marketing plan, a process that takes most teams the majority of the academic year to complete,” said Kristen Marshall, NAMA Careers Committee Chair. “This competition is a great opportunity for marketing students to put their education into practice. Each year I am amazed by the talent of these teams. They’re truly an awesome group that we hope will continue in Ag marketing as they begin their professional careers.”

The ABAC team had 14 students involved with this year’s project to market Bovi-HydrowPLUS with 10 traveling to Kansas City. The team spent several months conducting market research, writing the marketing plan, and developing a presentation. Students decide on a project and develop a plan to successfully bring the product or service to the marketplace. In developing their marketing plan, students follow the same practices and principles used by today’s marketing professionals. Teams submit a written plan summary prior to the competition and then make a formal presentation of their marketing plan to a panel of judges at the competition. The judges’ panel consists of marketing and agribusiness professionals.

Overall, 29 student NAMA chapters participated. The competition is part of the National Agri-Marketing Association’s annual conference and trade show. Over 350 student members attended.

“The marketing competition is a great learning experience for these students and provides them with some really good practical experience,” said Marshall.


“Beast Feast” Success

The ABAC Wildlife Society’s first ever “Beast Feast” fundraiser on April 20 was a hit. Thank you to all that helped, donated items for the raffle and the over 100 guests that attended.

ABAC Goes To Tifton Relay for Life Friday Under the Big Top

ABAC students, faculty, staff, and administrators went “BIG” at Friday night’s annual American Cancer Society Relay for Life in Tifton. Dream Big, Hope Big, Relay Big under the Big Top was the theme of the ABAC tent.
ASSETS Scholars Attend ASB Meeting in Charleston
Three ABAC students in the Achievement through Student Support and Experiential Training in Science (ASSETS) Scholars program attended the 74th annual Association for Southeastern Biologists (ASB) meeting from April 10-12 in Charleston, W. Va. Andrew Morris, a biology major from Hazlehurst and Danielle Simmons, a biology major from Vienna attended the conference. Jamal Hunter, a former ABAC ASSETS Scholar from Patterson and Dr. Susan Farmer, associate professor of biology in the School of Science and Mathematics at ABAC also participated in the meeting. Farmer was elected to the position of Secretary for the Southern Appalachian Botanical Society. Farmer, in conjunction with Dr. Sarah Noble of the University of Mobile, also took the students on an excursion into the Kanawha State Forest during the meeting.

Arbor Day Tree Planting
ABAC celebrated Arbor Day on Friday by planting two weeping willow trees on the shore of Lake Baldwin. The willows were donated by Sodexo and members of the Sodexo grounds management prepared the trees and site prior to planting. These annual tree plantings are a way to involve the students and the community in the beautification of the ABAC campus. Representatives from the Georgia Forestry Commission, the community, Sodexo, the ABAC Forestry Society and ABAC faculty, staff and administration are pictured to the right with one of the trees.

Williams Retires After 30 Years at ABAC
Teresa Williams was joined by ABAC colleagues and family members during reception last week honoring her for 30 years of service to the college. Her sister, Nancy Brannen (left), and husband, Mike Williams (right), were among the many that came to wish her well. You will be missed Teresa, enjoy retirement.

ABAC Birthdays
2 Amanda Urquhart
4 Nancy Brannen

Late Night Breakfast Tonight
It’s that time again! SGA’s late night breakfast is tonight from 9 p.m.—10 p.m. The menu has changed to include waffles, so encourage your students to take a break from studying and enjoy some breakfast. Contact Bernice Hughes at 229.391.5130 if you are interested in cooking or serving.

Don’t forget, the deadline for final grade entry is noon on Friday.

The FOCUS is an electronic publication produced by the ABAC Public Relations Office. Please submit information by Thursday at noon to Ashley Mock at amock@abac.edu for inclusion in the next FOCUS.