Black Speaking at Commencement Friday

Georgia Commissioner of Agriculture, Gary Black, will be the guest speaker at the spring commencement ceremony at ABAC on Friday at 6 p.m. in Gressette Gym on the ABAC campus.

Black began his career with the Georgia Farm Bureau where he headed the young farmer leadership development program. He served 21 years as president of the Georgia Agribusiness Council, a chamber-type organization representing all aspects of Georgia’s food and fiber industry.

Black is an active supporter of agricultural programs that increase opportunities for young people. He serves in advisory capacities for 4-H and FFA. As a student, Black served as Georgia State FFA President in 1975-76.

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 ABAC Alumni Association Vice President Keith Rucker.

Approximately 260 students are expected to receive diplomas.

ABAC Joins Fight Against Cancer

Students, faculty and staff participated in the Tift County Relay for Life last Friday night. ABAC has raised almost $7,000 dollars for the American Cancer Society. The ABAC team had a walker on the track from 7 p.m. until 7 a.m.

ABAC NAMA Team Places 7th in Nation

The ABAC National Agri – Marketing Association (NAMA) team placed seventh in the student marketing competition at the national conference April 18-20 in Kansas City. Team members included: (L to R) 1st row: Kimberly Wilmot, Stacy Ladson, Randi Walden, Brittany Smith, 2nd row: Sara Beth Pelham, Lizzie Horton 3rd row: Jessica Fife, Kevin Vantrees, Grafton Rabun 4th row: Josh Boydston, Jeffrey Parker, Zach Wooldridge 5th row: Zebb Luster, Bradley Harris, Pete Dola

SGA Pancake Breakfast

Servers and cooks are needed for SGA’s Pancake Breakfast tonight! Contact Bernice Hughes at bhughes@abac.edu if you want to participate. Cooks are needed at 7 p.m. and servers should arrive at 8:45 p.m.

Pierce Joins ABAC Police

Chad Pierce, originally from Thompson, Conn., recently joined the ABAC Police force. Pierce served overseas in the United States Navy for three and a half years as a Military Police Officer. He, his wife, and their two children currently live in Worth County. Pierce is happy to be a part of the ABAC family and looks forward to meeting everyone.
Dr. Jeff Gibbs Retires After 21 Years at ABAC

America’s national parks are calling. Dr. Jeff Gibbs is ready to hit the road and answer the call.

Gibbs, the Dean of the School of Business at ABAC, will retire today after 21 years at ABAC and 36 years in the business of education.

“I have enjoyed my time at ABAC, and the college has been good to me,” said Gibbs. “I have been fortunate to be in a really good place with a lot of fine people who are dedicated to education.”

Gibbs has many plans for his retirement days but the national parks are at the top of his list.

“I would really like to visit every national park in the United States,” said Gibbs.

Before coming to ABAC in 1991, Gibbs was an instructor at Macon College from 1976-80; served as director of the Central Georgia Small Business Development Center through the University System of Georgia (USG) from 1980-83; was the associate director of the Business Information Center at the Small Business Development Center through the USG from 1984-86; and served as state director for the Alabama Small Business Development Consortium at the University of Alabama from 1986-91.

Gibbs received his B.B.A. in economics in 1975, his M.B.A. in economics in 1976, and his Ed. D. in business education in 1985, all from the University of Georgia.

While at ABAC, Gibbs has received the 2009 E. Lanier Carson Leadership Award for administrators, a “Pacesetter” award from the student newspaper, The Stallion, and prepared the annual economic impact study of the college. He has also served as advisor for various campus organizations and was extensively involved in the development of the ABAC Rural Studies program.

Gibbs reflected on some of his experiences and memories as an integral part of the campus. He can recall at least two people that he taught in the classroom and then hired as employees when they completed their educations. He has also taught quite a few of the current ABAC staff.

“It is really gratifying to see students leave here and come back to work or simply ask for advice,” said Gibbs. “I still have past students that I talk to all of the time. It is very humbling to see that what began as a professional relationship turns into one of friendship.”

Gibbs also experienced some interesting and off-the-wall situations.

“I’ve seen faculty riding motorcycles down the halls of buildings, students in various stages of dress, and a few health scares,” said Gibbs. “There was also the time when I thought Conger Hall had caught fire, but we couldn’t find the source of the smoke.

“There was another time when Conger was under renovation, and all classes were moved to a trailer park on campus. Dr. (Bobbie) Robinson and I even took sledge hammers to one of the walls in Conger Hall once.”

When asked about his fondest memories, Gibbs said, “That’s like someone asking me about my favorite song. It’s impossible to answer because there is so much great music out there. It is the same with my experiences at ABAC – there are so many I can’t choose just one. What I am most proud of is that the School of Business has an exemplary statewide reputation, in regard to both the program and the students.

“When you teach, it’s hard to see immediately any tangible examples of your efforts, but when students succeed elsewhere you get a glimpse of that success.”

Gibbs would like to be remembered as part of ABAC’s history as someone who made sure everyone’s voice was heard both internally and externally, and one who tried to do what was best for the institution as a whole.

As Monday draws nigh, the avid dog enthusiast is ready to see the national parks, spend more time on his farm with his Brittany spaniels, do some hunting and fishing, research a few business interests, and possibly teach part-time.

Wiregrass Farmers Market Open Saturdays at Georgia Museum of Agriculture

Visit the Wiregrass Farmers market from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. every Saturday until October 31 at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village. The market has 15 vendors offering home grown fresh produce, handmade items for the home, heirloom plants, artisanal breads and canned goods. In addition to the goods for sale, the market offers demonstrations on garden and community composting and live animal exhibits once a month. The Market canning club will begin meeting weekly starting this Saturday, sign up at Market. Children can also enjoy activities every Saturday and adult classes on canning, sustainability, and other related topics held on the first and third Saturday of every month. For more information contact Polly Huff, liaison for the Wiregrass Farmers Market, at 391-5222 or wiregrassfarmersmarket@gmail.com

ABAC Fillies Place Third in GCAA Tournament

The ABAC fillies softball team placed third in the GCAA state tournament in Locust Grove this weekend. The Fillies entered the tournament as the #6 seed and made a run for the title by eliminating the #5 seed, East Georgia (6-1) and the #2 seed Georgia Perimeter (5-2). The Fillies’ season ended with loss to the #3 seed Gordon College and #1 seed Darton. Gordon won the tournament Sunday afternoon after beating Darton in the finals. The fillies finished 19-27 overall and Coach Donna Campbell captured her 500th college win during the 2011-2012 season.
Upcoming Campus Events

Late Night Pancake Breakfast  Tonight from 9-10 p.m.  
Donaldson Dining Hall

Graduation  Friday at 6 p.m. in Gressette Gymnasium

2012 ABAC Pacesetters
Since 1970, the Pacesetter awards have been given annually to provide recognition to those who make more than a difference at ABAC. 2012 recipients include: Front row (l-r): Bernice Hughes, Laquincia Brown, Penny Chesnut, Savannah Carter, Dr. Erin Campbell, Woody Leonard. Back row: Stephen Aaron, Austin Flanders, Chase Hagood. Pacesetters not pictured: Rebecca Cofer and Superior Pacesetter: Huong Pham.

Dining Hall Closes Thursday at 2 p.m. for Renovations, Reopens in August
Students, faculty and staff at ABAC will enjoy a new dining experience this fall semester with the completion of a summer-long renovation project in the Donaldson Dining Hall. The dining hall will be closed for the summer starting Thursday at 2 p.m. and will re-open for the fall semester, which begins on Aug. 13. Summer term students and students attending various camps during the summer will eat their meals in another part of campus. To schedule an event with campus dining, contact Dan Miller at 391-5170.

ABAC Birthdays
2  April Abbott
2  Amanda Urquhart
4  Nancy Brannen
6  Stephanie Coney
6  Arlie Hayes

ABAC Family
Mike Chason served as the emcee for the Tift County Special Olympics on April 13 and for the Tift County Relay for Life torch ceremony on April 27.

The FOCUS is a weekly 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.