ABAC Graduates Most Students in History

More students than at any point in the 107-year history of ABAC completed their requirements for graduation in the annual spring commencement ceremony last Thursday in Gressette Gymnasium.

ABAC President David Bridges said a record-breaking 409 students completed the requirements for graduation at the end of the spring term. Over 300 of them participated in the ceremony.

A total of 117 graduates received bachelor's degrees, shattering the previous high of 67. The Stafford School of Business also set a record by awarding 24 bachelor's degrees in business and economic development.

"We’re rolling now," said Dill Driscoll, who is Dean of the Stafford School of Business along with his wife, Susan. "I believe that number will go up significantly in years to come."

Dr. Beverly Sparks, an ABAC alumnus from the Class of ’76, was the guest speaker. She offered a message of encouragement and hope for the newly minted ABAC degree recipients.

“Your ABAC education will open doors and provide countless opportunities for your careers,” Sparks, the winner of the Distinguished Alumnus Award at the 2015 Homecoming awards ceremony, said. “You have a lot of people to thank for all the success you have enjoyed so far. Be sure to thank them.”

Two of the graduates, Allison Faye Gordy from Sharpsburg, and Samuel Elberto Peraza from Loganville, were spotlighted for the top awards presented by the ABAC Alumni Association during the ceremony.

Gordy, a natural resource management major specializing in wildlife, was named the winner of the ABAC Alumni Association Award for the top bachelor's degree graduate participating in the ceremony, and Peraza, a journalism major, received the George P. Donaldson Award for the top associate degree graduate participating in the ceremony.

Active in campus life, Gordy served as president of the student chapter of The Wildlife Society this year. During her time at ABAC, she also served as treasurer and historian for the Forestry Club, secretary and treasurer for the Forestry and Wildlife Club, and secretary of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society.

Elected as the 2013 ABAC Homecoming Queen, Gordy has also been a member of the Campus Activities Board, the Residence

Continued on page 2

NJCAA Men's National Tournament Update

Josh Page (r) of the ABAC tennis team was named the Sophomore National Player of the Year at the 2015 NJCAA Men’s National Championship banquet on Sunday night. Page is the defending national champion at number one singles and will try this week to become the first ABAC player since Jean Francoise Lagloire in 1990 to repeat as national champion. Page has signed to play tennis for the University of San Diego next year. ABAC’s Corey Smith (l) was named Region IV Most Improved Player. Smith will play for Kennesaw State next season.
Hall Association, and the Baptist Collegiate Ministries. She has also been a Community Assistant in the residence halls.

With an overall grade point average of 3.50, Gordy has now completed three ABAC degrees which include associate degrees in forest technology and wildlife technology as well as her bachelor’s degree in natural resource management.

Gordy described her time at ABAC as “a top-notch college experience full of lessons and memories I will cherish from now on.”

In his two years at ABAC, Peraza was selected as a member of the ABAC Ambassadors leadership team and as a soloist with the ABAC Concert Choir and ABAC Chamber Singers. He has also been a member of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, Baptist Collegiate Ministries, and the Cultura Latina Club.

Peraza is a staff member for the college’s award-winning campus newspaper, “The Stallion,” and won the Outstanding Senator Award in 2014 for his work with the Student Government Association. He was also a member of the Constitutional Congress this year which rewrote the entire SGA Constitution.

While maintaining a 3.82 grade point average, Peraza has been selected for the Dean’s List and has been recognized as an Honor Student and a Superior Honor Student. He has been accepted to Columbia University to continue his studies.

Describing his ABAC career, Peraza said, “it has taught me so many lessons that I will use throughout my lifetime. I have made lifelong friendships that I will never forget, and ABAC has helped me find myself during the process.”

Summer term classes begin at ABAC on June 1, and fall semester classes begin Aug. 12.

The Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village at ABAC will host a “Bottles and Brushes” art class from 6-8 p.m. on May 22. Participants will paint “Burst of Summer” by Brenda Rose, a local artist and the “Bottles and Brushes” instructor.

“This piece epitomizes the summer season with its vibrant colors,” Polly Huff, assistant director and curator at the Museum, said. “The work is sure to brighten any room.”

Rose will guide participants through the process of recreating her original work, while students create their own interpretation before their eyes. Participants can bring their favorite beverage while enjoying an evening of creativity and fun. The Gallery at the Museum will provide the paint, canvas and brushes. Registration for the class is on a first come, first served basis upon payment of the fee. Space is limited so early registration is important. Participants must register ahead of time by contacting Huff by e-mail at phuff@abac.edu. The class fee is $25 per person or $40 for couples.

It is non-refundable and non-transferable. The fee includes all supplies and instruction. Companies who are looking for a unique team-building experience or a way to reward exceptional employees can participate in the corporate edition of “Bottles and Brushes.” The corporate painting will be custom-tailored to fit each company’s mascot, theme, or idea.

Gift certificates are available for future classes.

Incoming Students Can Take Institutional SAT May 27 at ABAC

Students who plan to enroll in baccalaureate or pre-baccalaureate degree programs at ABAC can take the Institutional Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) on May 27 at 9 a.m. on the campus instead of waiting for the national testing dates.

The admissions policy at ABAC requires that all students who plan to enter programs which result in a baccalaureate degree either at ABAC or another institution must take the SAT or ACT exam prior to being admitted.

Testing for the institutional SAT is coordinated through the ABAC Office of Student Development. ABAC’s Moultrie location, ABAC on the Square, also offers a session of the institutional SAT on June 1 at 9 a.m. Upcoming testing dates for the institutional SAT at ABAC are June 3, June 24, July 8, July 15, and Aug. 5, all at 9 a.m.

There is a fee of $60 to take the test. A photo ID is required on the day of the examination. For more information or to register for the institutional SAT, prospective students can contact the ABAC Office of Student Development at (229) 391-5135.

Fall term classes begin Aug. 12 at ABAC.

Gilman Speaks at Nurse Pinning Ceremony

Kim Gilman, Chief Executive Officer and Chief Nursing Officer of Phoebe Worth Medical Center and Southwest Georgia Regional Medical Center, was the keynote speaker for the nurses pinning ceremony on May 7. 60 nurses were pinned that day. Pictured: Gilman (l) with Troy Spicer, the Dean of the School of Nursing and Health Sciences.

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Gift certificates are available for future classes.
**Kinsley Named Senior Mail Clerk at ABAC**

Nancy Kinsley has been named the new senior mail clerk at ABAC. Kinsley steps into the role for Randy Carter, who will officially retire from the position on May 29 after 30 years of service to the college.

Kinsley first became a part of the ABAC staff by working as a part-time cashier at the bookstore. She then began working as a part-time mail clerk at the post office with Carter. In August she will celebrate her fourth anniversary in the mailroom.

Some changes are going to be made in the mailroom before the fall semester arrives.

“We will be utilizing all of the mailboxes that are available,” Kinsley said. “We also plan to do some reorganizing before fall so that packages can be accepted a bit easier to make things more convenient for everyone.”

Kinsley received her associate degree in business from Waycross College and her bachelor’s degree in business from Valdosta State. In fact, she and her daughter, Christi, received their VSU diplomas on the same day. Kinsley has another daughter, Jamie, who is an ABAC staff member in the Office of Financial Aid. Kinsley’s son, Scott, lives in Missouri. She enjoys gardening in her spare time.

**J.P. Gleaton Scholarship Awarded to Incoming Freshman**

Beverly Sterling (l) of Plant Telecommunications and Lynn Lovett (r) Chair of the ABAC Foundation Board of Trustees recently congratulated Katelyn Seymour, an incoming ABAC Freshman, as the recipient of the J.P. Gleaton Scholarship funded by Plant Telecommunications.

**Creative Writing Workshop for High School Students May 30**

High school students who want to improve their creative writing skills can attend a summer writing workshop on May 30 sponsored by the Department of Literature and Languages in the School of Liberal Arts at ABAC.

Pulitzer Prize nominated novelist Janice Daugharty, who is ABAC’s Writer-in-Residence, headlines the workshop which will also feature Dr. Jeff Newberry and Dr. Sandra Giles from the ABAC faculty. Newberry serves as the ABAC Poet-in-Residence, and Giles is an accomplished essayist.

The workshop runs from 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. in the Academic Achievement Center located on the first floor of the Carlton Center on the ABAC campus. It will feature several guest speakers and various creative exercises.

All types of writing including poetry, fiction, and non-fiction will be showcased in the workshop, which is available at a cost of $20 per person. Breakfast, lunch, and a t-shirt are included in the cost of the event. Students are encouraged to bring their own writings as well as a notebook or laptop.

To register for this workshop, students can go to [www.abac.edu/academics/schools/liberal-arts](http://www.abac.edu/academics/schools/liberal-arts). Payment can be made online or via check made payable to ABAC Department of Literature and Languages. Checks can be sent to Dr. Jordan Cofer, c/o Summer Writing Workshop, ABAC, 2802 Moore Hwy., Tifton, GA 31793.

For more information, interested persons can contact Cofer at 229-391-4971 or Newberry at 229-391-4972. They can also be reached via e-mail at jcofer@abac.edu or jnewberry@abac.edu.

**Correction from April 27:** Helen Strickland retired in 1999. Eric Cash was hired for the position in journalism where he served for 11 years as such and Director of Student Media, until he lost his battle with cancer in 2010. His Memorial Scholarship has since supported Journalism majors. The FOCUS erroneously stated that Strickland retired in 2010.

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The FOCUS will be published bi-weekly through the summer.

**Summer Orientation Dates:**
- May 29
- June 5
- June 26
- July 10
- July 17
- August 7

**ABAC Birthdays**
- 11 Kitty Davis
- 12 Teressa Allegood
- 13 Jena Willis
- 13 Joseph Weatherford
- 17 Betty McCorvey
- 18 Jeannie Paulk
- 21 Keisha Spears
- 23 Gloria Sulkowski
- 23 Nicholas Urquhart