Nicholls Student Wins Top Award at Commencement

Justin Gilliard, a Nicholls resident who earned his bachelor's degree in diversified agriculture, received the prestigious George P. Donaldson award at the fall commencement ceremony on Friday at ABAC.

Niki Knox, a 2000 ABAC alumnus who was the featured speaker at the event, challenged the 163 graduates participating in the ceremony to make good choices in life because those choices will have an impact on how they climb in their lives and their careers. Knox is a senior community economic development consultant for the Georgia Electric Membership Corporations.

Gilliard, a charter member of ABAC's Ag Business Club, was selected for the Donaldson award based on a combination of academics and extracurricular activities. The award included a plaque and a check for $500 from the ABAC Alumni Association. Donaldson served as president of ABAC from 1947-61.

Gilliard has twice received Honors Day academic discipline awards, one in animal science and another in diversified agriculture. He has also been named to the Dean's List at ABAC four times during his career. He was the recipient of the Jesse Goodman Scholarship in 2008, the Georgia Cattlemen’s Association Foundation Scholarship in 2010, and the WAX Company Scholarship in 2011.

The son of Tony and Helen Gilliard of Nicholls, he has been an active member in a variety of clubs and organizations on campus, including the Baptist Collegiate Ministries, an intramural softball team, and the ABAC Collegiate FFA.

Gilliard became a member of the ABAC Cattlemen’s Club in 2008. Since then, he has served as the Student Government Association representative, vice president, and as president of the organization. Outside of ABAC, Gilliard served as a member of the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association in 2012, the South Georgia Cattlemen’s Association in the fall of 2012, and the Coffee FFA Alumni since 2008. He has also interned with the Georgia Cattlemen’s Association. After graduation, Gilliard plans to return to his family farm, Circle G Farms, Inc.

“My degree fits perfectly with my opportunity to help manage our diverse farming operations,” said Gilliard. “If not for the educational experiences and contacts I have gained over my time here at ABAC I do not believe I would be able to effectively go into this career field.”


North Pole Express at Museum Friday & Saturday Evening

Children of all ages can ride the North Pole Express to see Santa Claus from 5-8 p.m. on Friday and Saturday at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village at ABAC. The Museum’s 1917 Vulcan steam locomotive will depart for the North Pole every 20 minutes. Guests riding the North Pole Express will be able to visit with Santa Claus and listen to Mrs. Claus read the “Polar Express.” Visitors will also be able to enjoy refreshments and watch “The Polar Express” as they await the North Pole Express to depart from the station.

Tickets for the event are $6 per person and must be purchased in advance at the Country Store. Tickets will not be sold at the event. The North Pole Express will run rain or shine.

The Museum will be closed from Dec. 17 – Jan. 2, 2013, and the Country Store will be closed Dec. 22 – Jan. 2, 2013. The Country Store will be open for holiday shoppers through Dec. 21 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For more information on any of these events, contact the Museum at (229) 391-5205 or visit the web at www.abac.edu/museum.
ABAC Holiday Employee Luncheon Thursday at Noon in Lakeside

All employees including faculty, staff, and Sodexo personnel are cordially invited to the third annual ABAC Christmas and Holiday employee luncheon to be held at noon this Thursday in the Lakeside Lobby.

Each employee is asked to bring their favorite covered dish for this festive event. ABAC will be providing all the meats for the occasion. To RSVP visit www.abac.edu/staffforum/luncheon/. Please sign up no later than today!

Victorian Village by Candlelight at Museum Sat.

Experience holiday life in the 1880s with Victorian Village by Candlelight from 5:30-8 p.m. Saturday at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture at ABAC.

Tickets for Victorian Village by Candlelight are $15 per person or $25 per couple and must be purchased in advance at the Country Store. Tickets will not be sold on the day of the event. The event will take place rain or shine.

Groups will leave on the Museum train every 30 minutes beginning at 5:30 pm, with the last group leaving the train station at 8 p.m.

During this lamp-lit event, guests will learn about two of the Victorian traditions that have become a part of the legend of Santa Claus. Visitors will get a taste of the community’s celebratory spirit as they stop in for a Christmas Eve visit in a Victorian-era village in South Georgia back when electricity was a luxury, humble gifts were made by hand, and Christmas Eve was spent cooking delicious treats on the open hearth of the fireplace.

Guests will ride on train cars pulled by the 1917 Vulcan steam engine into the glowing Historic Village lit with lanterns and kerosene lamps. The first stop on the hour-long village tour will be the Clyatt Cabin, where Father Christmas and Old Befana will greet guests with a folk tale and a keepsake ornament hand-forged by the Village blacksmith.

Guests will then journey down a lamp-lit path to get a glimpse of how two Wiregrass Georgia families - one “rich” and one “poor” - welcomed the season. The last stop on the village tour will give guests an opportunity to purchase locally-made items from the Victorian Village Bazaar, warm up by the blazing bonfire with a cup of hot cider, and enjoy carols by the Shape Note singers.

For more information on this event, interested persons can contact Polly Huff, GMA Gallery Coordinator at (229) 391-5223.

Georgia Power Scholarship Presented to ABAC

A Georgia Power Scholarship of $3,000 was presented to Jodie Snow, chief operating officer of the ABAC Foundation on Oct. 17.

Lynn Lovett, area manager of the Georgia Power Company, gave the scholarship to Snow on behalf of the Georgia Power Foundation, Inc. The scholarship benefits the ABAC General Scholarship Fund.

Museum Holiday Hours Begin Dec. 17

The Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village will be closed from Dec. 17 – Jan. 2, and the Country Store will be closed from Dec. 22 – Jan. 2, for the holidays. The Country Store will be open for holiday shoppers through Dec. 21 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Administrative offices will be closed from Dec. 24 – Jan. 1.

ABAC Closed

Dec. 22—Jan. 1

The College will close for the holidays at 3 p.m. on Dec. 21 and will resume its normal hours of operation on Jan. 2.

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.

ABAC Birthdays

12 Lawrence Shepard
12 Jason Scott
14 Vicki Holloway

Save the Date for Lots of Exciting Events

Front Campus Rededication
Rodeo Awards
Reunions
Evening for ABAC
Athletics Hall of Fame
Registration & Formal Schedule to Follow in January