Wayne Jones can’t wait for all the glitz and glamour of An Evening for ABAC when the highly anticipated event unfolds at 6 p.m. on March 4.

The ABAC Arts Connection Director, whose duties include the coordination of the event, said this year’s extravaganza will include a cocktail reception, silent auction, live auction, dinner, dancing, and entertainment provided by The Fabulous Equinox Orchestra. But for Jones, the real payoff to all his preparation is seeing the community turn out in record numbers to raise funds for ABAC student scholarships.

“Last year’s contribution was the second-highest amount of money raised in the history of the scholarship event,” Jones said. “We want to continue to grow those numbers.”

During the past five years, the student scholarship fundraiser has resulted in over $200,000 in scholarship funds for ABAC students including $62,000 in 2015 when performer Katie Deal sold out the Gressette Gymnasium venue. As a result, this year’s night to remember has been moved to the University of Georgia Tifton Campus Conference Center.

Jones said sponsors are always the key to making the event a financial success for the ABAC student scholarship program. Sponsors already on board include Sodexo and Georgia Crown Distributing Company at the Titanium level; Synovus Trust Company-First Community Bank of Tifton and Southeastern Credit Union at the Platinum level, and AT&T Georgia, Captain D’s/Checkers, Chick-Fil-A of Tifton, Dr. and Mrs. Joseph Day, a Foundation Trustee, Hilton Garden Inn of Tifton, Mauldin and Jenkins, Bob McLendon Farms, Needmore Properties, South Georgia Banking Company, WALB-TV, AgGeorgia, Georgia Farm Bureau, and Mobley Gin at the Gold level.

Jeremy Davis and Clay Johnson lead The Fabulous Equinox Orchestra, which includes 17 members in a big band setting. Modeled after the style of legendary entertainers led by Frank Sinatra, Davis and Johnson put their own stamp on the Great American Songbook that includes a bit of Motown, Ray Charles, Johnny Cash, Elvis, and others.

An Evening for ABAC tickets are $125 for singles, $225 for couples, and $1,250 for a reserved table which seats eight persons. A portion of the ticket price is tax deductible. For tickets, call (229) 391-4895 or visit the web site at www.abac.edu/aneveningforabac.

Save the Date
Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College
School of Nursing and Health Sciences
May 4, 2016

50th Anniversary Celebration of Nursing Excellence
Georgia Museum of Agriculture • Tifton, Ga.

To purchase your ticket visit: www.abac.edu/50yearsofnursing
Natural Resources Conservation Workshop at ABAC June 12-16

Over $18,000 in college scholarships, back-to-nature field trips, and a true taste of college life will be on the line for students who attend this year’s Natural Resources Conservation Workshop (NRCW) on June 12-16 at ABAC.

The NRCW targets students with a desire to learn more about Georgia’s natural resources and the opportunities and responsibilities these resources provide. Experts from universities and local, state, and federal natural resource agencies will provide students with lectures and hands-on activities to enhance their understanding of Georgia’s vital natural resources.

Workshop Director Luke Crosson said the workshop gives students a unique, one-of-a-kind opportunity to learn about Georgia’s natural resources from experts in each field utilizing classroom and field trip activities to help interested young people learn the basic principles and the responsible use of natural resources. Soil, water, air, plants, minerals, and animals will be spotlighted during the week.

Students attending the workshop will get a taste of college life while gaining valuable insight into careers through their counselors and instructors consisting of professional personnel from the Department of Natural Resources, the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, Georgia Forestry Commission, the University of Georgia (UGA) Cooperative Extension Service, the Warnell School of Forestry at UGA, Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission, and many private industries and organizations.

Tuition is $150 per student before the early bird deadline of May 2. After May 2, tuition is $175 per student to attend this workshop. The final deadline for all applications is June 1. Tuition is often provided to the students by local Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD), local businesses, and individuals.

The workshop application and information is now available online at www.abac.edu/nrcw.

Support the ABAC Cattlemen’s Association

Let the ABAC Cattlemen’s Association take care of the cooking for supper on Wednesday, February 24! Tickets for a beef BBQ are on-sale now. Plate includes: 1/2 pound beef BBQ, baked beans, potato salad, bread and a slice of cake. Tickets are $10 per plate and the plates can be picked up from 5 -7 p.m. on Feb. 24 in the Ag Science Building. Contact Dr. Mary Ellen Hicks at mhicks@abac.edu to purchase your tickets.

ABAC Students Participate in All College Choir

Eight ABAC voice majors participated in the 2016 Georgia Music Educators Association In-Service Conference in Athens January 27-30. The event was comprised of over 4,100 teachers in the areas of band, orchestra, chorus, general music, and piano from elementary to college level. They performed under the direction of Dr. Betsy Cook Weber, Professor of Music and Director of Choral Studies at the University of Houston Moores School of Music. Pictured (front row: l-r) Terrence Gibson, Dr. Weber, Lauren Lever, Krystina Braswell, Taylor Walker (back row: l-r) Jay Branch, Kyle Robinson, Matt Fuller, and Stephanie Sheffield.

‘Sweetie Pie’ Baking Contest on Tuesday

The Agricultural Business Club at ABAC will hold its third annual “Sweetie Pie” Baking Contest on Tuesday at 6 p.m. in the foyer of the Ag Sciences Building. All students, clubs and organizations, faculty and staff are invited to come by and purchase a plate for $5 and sample all the delicious entries. For more information, Contact Audrey Luke-Morgan at alukemorgan@abac.edu
As ABAC celebrates the 50th anniversary of its nursing program and with Valentine’s Day just past, it’s easy to believe romance was sometimes in the air among the thousands of nursing students who received their associate degrees from ABAC over the past half century.

Tifton native Preston Thornhill and Kayla Gregory Thornhill from Turner County fit the criteria perfectly. Both were ABAC nursing students who met on Jan. 6, 2011, Kayla’s 19th birthday.

“I thought Preston was cute but we really didn’t speak to each other the night we met,” Kayla said. “I thought Kayla was pretty,” Preston said. “We are both shy so we really didn’t have an immediate connection.”

But that didn’t stop Preston from asking Kayla out shortly afterward. The next month the couple was officially dating.

“During this time Preston was moving back home from UGA, where he was previously pursuing a pharmacy degree, and I was taking classes at ABAC,” Kayla said. “We dated throughout ABAC nursing school.”

Kayla’s path to a career in nursing was set at a very young age.

“I always knew growing up that I wanted to become a nurse,” Kayla said. “My paternal grandfather had ALS and with his condition he needed assistance with his daily activities. Home Health nurses would come in and assist him and my grandmother with medications and grooming. I was always interested in helping in any way that I could. I saw how important nurses were to my grandfather and knew I wanted to be able to help other people like him when I grew up.”

Preston’s road to the field of nursing took a different path.

“I changed my major several times during my college career,” he said. “I originally planned on pursuing a pharmacy degree at the University of Georgia. After interviewing for the pharmacy program I realized that I wanted to be able to provide direct hands-on patient care. I then moved back home and started working toward my nursing degree. I chose to become a nurse because I wanted to have a direct impact on patients’ lives.”

The two students chose ABAC’s nursing program because both had heard the program was highly respected throughout the community as well as the state. They knew the NCLEX pass rate was above average for the area.

They agree that being in the same major at ABAC made it easier for them.

“Kayla was a semester ahead of me so that definitely worked out to my advantage,” Preston said with a smile. “We studied together a lot even though we were not in the same classes, and we learned a lot from each other and made great study partners.”

“Preston already had a bachelor’s degree in biology and was able to help me study when I needed a different perspective or further explanation,” Kayla added. “We believe it was much easier to make time for each other simply because we understood what the other person was going through.”

On many occasions, their schedules conflicted while at ABAC, and they didn’t get to see each other much. During those times they had to remind themselves often of their ultimate goal, the attainment of a nursing degree.

During the summer before Kayla’s last semester, Preston proposed. Kayla graduated from ABAC’s nursing program on Dec. 13, 2013 and passed her state boards in January of 2014. Preston graduated from ABAC on May 8, 2014 and passed his state boards a few weeks later.

With ABAC nursing degrees and Registered Nurse (R.N.) certification completed, they got married on June 7, 2014. Another ABAC romance had blossomed.

The Thornhills began their nursing careers at Tift Regional Medical Center working the night shift. Kayla worked as an emergency department nurse, and Preston was an intensive care nurse. In October of 2015, Kayla moved to Affinity Clinic, where she is currently employed as a triage nurse on the day shift. Preston continues to work in ICU on the night shift, where he recently started working as a charge nurse.

And it all started in the nursing program classrooms at ABAC.

**Tifton Couple’s Romance Began in ABAC Nursing Program**

**ABAC Birthdays**

15 Chrissy Dent

16 Vanessa Lane