



# FOCUS

## ABRAHAM BALDWIN AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE

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### Baker Named Dean of School of Agriculture and Natural Resources

Dr. Jerome F. Baker will serve as the Dean of the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources at ABAC beginning July 1, according to an announcement today by ABAC President David Bridges.

"Jerry not only brings many academic credentials to his new position of Dean, but he also brings a wealth of executive leadership experience," said Bridges. "We anticipate continued growth and enhanced reputation of the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources under his leadership."

Baker has been serving as the Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director of Sigma Xi: the Scientific Research Society, a very prestigious international honor society for scientists and engineers. Founded in 1886, Sigma Xi has more than 538,000 members in 524



Baker

chapters worldwide. Baker has also served as publisher of the Sigma Xi American Scientist Magazine, which is recognized by scientists and engineers worldwide as a premier publication of its type.

Baker said he looks forward to returning to Tifton. His previous academic experience included 13 years as a faculty member in the College of Agricultural

and Environmental Sciences at the University of Georgia. From 1990-2003, he served as an Assistant Professor, Associate Professor and Research and Extension Location Leader for Animal and Dairy Science at the UGA Tifton Campus.

"The visionary leadership of ABAC has laid the foundation for significant

growth," Baker said. "I am excited about the opportunity to join the exceptional faculty and staff of ABAC which gives me the chance to serve the students, community and diverse stakeholders of ABAC programs."

Prior to his position at Sigma Xi, Baker served as the Chief Executive Officer of the Federation of Animal Science Societies, which is an association management company for 13 professional societies and publishes nine scientific journals. His tenure at the Federation followed a period of time when he served as the Executive Director for the American Society of Animal Science.

Baker earned M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in Animal Breeding from Texas A&M University, and a B.S. in Biology and Chemistry from Morningside College. He is married to the former Kathy Walker of Ty Ty. Baker replaces Dr. Tim Marshall, who served as Dean for eight years.

### Conger to Represent ABAC in 2014 Bassmaster Competition

Charles Conger, a mechanical engineering major from Chula, will represent ABAC from July 31-Aug. 2 at the 2014 Bassmaster College National Championship. The competition will be held at Lake Chatuge near Hiawassee.

"I am excited about the National Championship as it will be on Lake Chatuge and weigh-ins will be hosted at Young Harris College," said Conger. "While it is a Georgia lake, we will be competing against the best college bass teams in the United States."

Anglers will be representing approximately 73 college and universities from across the country. Only the top five teams will compete on the third day of the tournament.

Conger earned the right to compete in the national competition during the Carhartt Bassmaster College Series in January at Lake Okeechobee in Okeechobee, Fla. He and his partner for the event, D.J. Thomas, a biology major from Willacoochee, were one of 130 teams to take part in the event to make it to nationals.

"We had to finish 17th or better to make it to the championship," said Conger. "Since we were in second place after day one we were one of the last teams to weigh-in on day two. As soon as we weighed our fish we knew we were going to the championship. We were ecstatic."

Conger has been a part of the Bass Fishing Club at ABAC for three years and was president of the club from 2012-2013. He is also a member of the Tif-



Charles Conger will compete at the 2014 Bassmaster College National Championship July 31-Aug. 2.

ton Bass Busters so he is no novice to fishing. "I have been fishing pretty much my whole life," said Conger. "I started fishing tournaments when I joined the club here at ABAC. The best part of fishing is that every time you get out on the water you learn something new."

Conger will be transferring to Southern Polytechnic in the fall, but has enjoyed his time at ABAC. He said he chose ABAC because it is close to home. After completing his college education, Conger hopes to work in a manufacturing plant as a mechanical engineer.

# ABAC Students 'Carry The Load' from New York to Dallas

Rain came down in sheets. Wind gusts tried to lift him up and hurl him into the Hudson River. But Rodney Troupe from ABAC would not be deterred. The lights of Manhattan beckoned as he walked in darkness across the George Washington Bridge to "Carry The Load" into New York City.

Troupe, a 20-year-old junior business major from Moultrie, was one of seven ABAC students selected to participate in the nationwide "Carry The Load" relay which is an effort designed to restore the true meaning to Memorial Day by connecting Americans to the sacrifices of the military, law enforcement, firefighters, and rescue personnel.

Through the help of national sponsors, Driscoll and the other organizers developed a relay from West Point, N.Y., to Dallas, Texas. This year's event kicked off on April 29 and reached Dallas on May 25. For 2,000 miles, participants carried the American flag and the "Carry The Load" flag 24 hours a day.

"This was far and away our best year," Driscoll said. "These kids have given me renewed faith in America.

"It's growing every year," Driscoll said. "All of these ABAC students who were a part of the relay were in real life situations. This was the real world. We picked these kids and trained them. They were ready."

Besides Troupe, the ABAC contingent included Demarcus Bateman, from Ashburn; Kristoff Cohran, from Thomasville; John Driscoll, Osierfield; Jo Leigh Warren, from Fitzgerald; Matthew Reid, from Eatonton; and Matt Fryman, a from Kennesaw.

Dill Driscoll and Lyndsey Walters, the internship and placement coordinator from the Stafford School of Business at ABAC, also made the trek which really started for the ABAC group with a special six-hour walk-off ceremony on the ABAC campus on April 24. It ended when 5,000 people welcomed the "Carry the Load" team to Reverchon Park in Dallas.

"That last day when we were walking into Dallas was huge," John Driscoll, Dill's son, said. "We knew what we were walking for but when we got to Dallas, it really hit home."

"Dallas was awesome," Fryman said. "We walked alone so many times during the trip but in Dallas, we had 200

people walking through the night with us."

For Cohran, the day he will never forget is when he walked into Yardley Borough, Penn.

"We were met by the whole town," Cohran said. "They had American flags, and people were coming out of their houses. It was completely unexpected. It made me really understand what Memorial Day is all about."

Walters was the operations manager for the trip. She did everything from finding fire stations where the students could take a shower to making daily trips to grocery stores.

"From feeding to cleansing, anything that needed to be done for those 14 people on the bus, I took care of it," Walters said. "We always stayed

**"These kids have given me renewed faith in America."**

was really cool to see how a big television station like WFAA in Dallas developed its stories. They shot a prime time special."

Warren was looking forward to visiting places she had never set foot in before. As it turned out, those places were secondary to the people she met.

"Before the relay, I was looking forward to seeing all the different places but once the trip got started, it was really the people and their stories that stuck with me," Warren said. "For those people who lost family members, it wasn't about just walking with us. It was a healing process."

Every ABAC student on the journey spent a lot of time listening to men, women, and children who lost loved ones who served in the military or as firemen, policemen, or first responders. In detail, they shared how they were "carrying the load" for them.

"This mom and her daughter talked to me in Tennessee," Cohran said. "I'll never forget what the daughter said. 'Spend good times with your daddy when he's home, because you don't know when he might not come home.'"

"It was a life-changing experience to have the opportunity to be a part of something much bigger than me," Bateman said. "Hearing

the stories of the people and how they lost their loved ones was inspiring. It allowed me to appreciate the gift of life. We all should be a lot more thankful."

For Troupe, it came down to that moment on the George Washington Bridge.

"I had a soldier walking with me," Troupe said. "It was pouring down rain. It was dark. The wind was blowing. I was carrying the 'Carry The Load' flag, and he was carrying the American flag. I had to jump back into my body. Coming from a small town, things like this don't happen to me."

Then Troupe saw the lights of New York City. Perhaps he thought of that terrible day on Sept. 11, 2001 when first responders were running into burning buildings while so many others were running away.

For seven ABAC students and two ABAC administrators, Memorial Day will never be the same.



(l-r) Fyman, Bateman, Troupe, J. Driscoll, Cohran, Reid, Warren

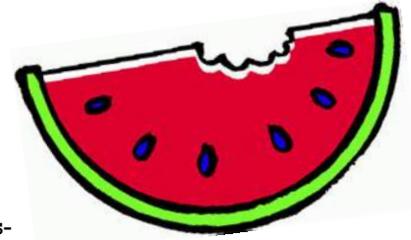
ahead of the bus because we had to get ready for the next day. We bought a lot of bananas, cold cuts and peanut butter and jelly. When they saw me coming, they knew the 'banana boat' had arrived."

The group traveled 60 to 150 miles a day. All the leg captains walked a couple of two-hour shifts every day. At night, some of the leg captains and Dill Driscoll rode bicycles to cover more ground. All the males slept on the bus. Walters and Warren stayed mostly at La Quinta hotels, one of the national sponsors for "Carry the Load."

Reid, assisted by Warren, was the trip's media coordinator. Both of them spent huge chunks of time on Twitter and Facebook every day besides connecting with local media in the cities and towns they entered.

"We produced over 30 videos and hundreds of photos," Reid said. "We had over 2,300 followers on Twitter, and about 10,000 likes on Facebook. It

# Watermelon Crawl July 12 at ABAC



- The first-ever Watermelon Crawl 5k, Fun Run, and Festival will take place on July 12 on the campus of ABAC.

This event is a fundraiser to establish the Jerry Moore Memorial ABAC scholarship, which will be awarded each year to a student majoring in Diversified Agriculture. Moore was an ABAC alumnus who passed away in December of 2013 at the age of 46.

The Watermelon Crawl is open to the community. To participate in the 5k, there is a registration fee of \$23 that includes a t-shirt and a runner's bag. Registration will begin at 7:15 a.m. the day of the race, and the 5k will start at 8 a.m. Those who aren't participating in the 5k can walk the 5k path or take part

in a 1-mile fun run, which begins at 9 a.m.

Registration is required for anyone who would like to receive a t-shirt and a runner's bag as part of the race. Runners who prefer not to register for the race online can bring a form of payment to Dr. Ray Smith, assistant race director, and he will register participants for the race directly.

Tax deductible donations can be made to the scholarship fund even if people are not participating in the event. Checks should be made to the ABAC Foundation.

The festival is open to everyone beginning at 8:30 a.m. It will feature lots of watermelon-themed activities for

kids and adults alike.

The festival will

be located in the grassy area just north of Conger Hall on the ABAC campus.

For more information on these events, interested persons can visit [www.thewatermeloncrawl.weebly.com](http://www.thewatermeloncrawl.weebly.com) for more details or to register for the race. Contact Smith at [rsmith@abac.edu](mailto:rsmith@abac.edu) or his daughter, Josie, at [thewatermeloncrawl5k@gmail.com](mailto:thewatermeloncrawl5k@gmail.com) with any questions concerning the event.

# Independence Day Celebration July 3 at the GMA

A spectacular fireworks display, free watermelon, and sensational sounds from the top 4-H vocalists in Georgia will highlight the annual Independence Day Celebration on July 3 at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village at ABAC.

Gates will open for fireworks and evening activities at 6 p.m. Guests are encouraged to bring blankets and chairs to set up on the Opry Shelter Lawn to hear live music from the very talented 4-H Clovers & Company beginning at 7:30 p.m.

Clovers & Company includes talented singers, dancers, and instrumentalists from across the state. Established in 1981, the performance group celebrates its 33rd anniversary this year. Performing arts is one of the most popu-

lar projects in the Georgia 4-H program, and the group was created to provide 4-H members with an opportunity to share their talents with others. Over 160 members from Georgia 4-H clubs audition during the annual statewide tryouts for positions in the show cast.

Tasty concessions including pizza, sausage and peppers, funnel cakes, snow cones, and cotton candy will be available for purchase. Visitors will also enjoy free watermelon slices while they last. Guests can also test their rock climbing skills on Rock-



in' Roland's Rock Climbing Wall, and children can participate in traditional games led by Museum staff members. The cost for the Independence Day celebration is \$10 per car. Guests with military ID cards will be admitted at no charge. Participants are encouraged to

bring blankets, chairs, and coolers. Alcohol and pets are not permitted. The Museum will also be open from 11 a.m. until 4 p.m. on July 3 at the regular admission cost.

## Remaining Orientation Dates:

July 11 July 18 August 8

## ABAC Birthdays

26	Sandra Giles	July	5	Wendy Harrison	
27	Debbie McComas	1	Todd Daunhauer	6	Carrie Ross
29	Lynn McDonald	1	Chris Kinsey	7	Barry Miburo
29	Renata Elad	1	Russ Larger		

## Save The Date — More Information to Come

Freshman Move-in  
Aug. 9

Welcome Week  
Aug. 10-14

Convocation  
Aug. 14—3:30 p.m.