ABAC Hall of Fame
2010 Inductees

Inductees of the Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College 2010
Athletics Hall of Fame were honored March 6. Inductees included: (Front) Patty Beasley; (2nd) Kelly Britsky, Ellen Vickers, Harley Klepfer; (3rd) Kelly Burch, Dawn Lingc Leanne Bennett, April Powell, Pam Crews, Edy Leverette; (Back) Jim Sparks, Joseph Gris. Not pictured: Thomas “Boo” Weekley.

The 1991 National Championship Softball Team led by Coach Ellen Vickers started the season on a rocky note. Injuries and illnesses kept the Fillies on shaky ground. In fact, the team had a record of only 8–7 after the Pete Austin and Gulf Coast tournaments. After shuffling the lineup and getting some players healthy, the Fillies won 23 of their last 24 games to finish the regular season 35–9. At the national tournament played at the E.B. Hamilton Complex in Tifton, the Fillies lost the first game 8–2 in the title round to Lake City Community College but rallied in the
**Jim Sparks** was the top player on the ABAC golf team from 1981-1983. A year after his eligibility ended, he was the student assistant coach for Coach Wayne Cooper. In 1982, he and the ABAC team finished 10th in their first trip ever to the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) tournament. In 1983, the team finished eighth in the national tournament, and Sparks was selected for NJCAA All-America honors. Sparks has been the owner of Highland Lake Golf Club in Hendersonville, N.C., since 1994. He also owns the Course Doctors Golf Course Construction Company in Flat Rock, N.C. On May 7, 2009, Sparks returned to ABAC to be the spring commencement speaker. He also received his associate’s degree in Turf Management from ABAC in the same ceremony.

**Joseph Grist** grew up in Rabun Gap and attended ABAC from 1947-1949. He played for the Stallions under Coach Bruce Gressette. In Grist’s sophomore year, the Stallions became state and regional basketball champs and made it to the national tournament. He was voted Best Male Athlete at ABAC. Grist attended the University of Miami on a basketball scholarship where he had a great career, once scoring 28 points against national power Western Kentucky. After serving in the Army, he also played basketball for Piedmont College. He also played basketball for the legendary House of David professional team in 1954 and 1955. Grist retired in 1999 as supervisor and director of the athletic department of Washington and Lee University.
**Thomas “Boo” Weekley**, a member of the ABAC golf team in 1992-93, plays on the PGA tour and was a member of the United States victorious Ryder Cup Team in 2008. A native of Milton, Fla., Weekley won the Verizon Heritage Classic in 2007 and 2008. Through the Play Golf America Foundation, Weekley designated $30,000 for ABAC in 2008 through his participation in the Ryder Cup matches. His nickname came from Yogi Bear’s sidekick, “Boo Boo.” Weekley studied turfgrass science at ABAC and later worked as a laborer at the Monsanto chemical plant in Pensacola, Fla. before joining the PGA tour. Weekley states if he makes enough money, he may walk away after five or ten years and just hunt and fish.

**Harley Klepfer**, an auto dealer originally from Buffalo, N.Y., came to Tifton in 1991 when he was 71 years old. He introduced himself to Coach Norman “Red” Hill and asked him if he knew of any 71-year-olds who would like to play tennis. Klepfer Saturday and Sunday at the ABAC courts became a faithful supporter of the sponsorship of Coach Hill and Coach Alan of ABAC ever since. Klepfer is more President’s Club in 1996 and reached the
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