HISTORY OF ABRAHAM BALDWIN AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE

The Georgia General Assembly planted the first seed that grew into Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College on August 18, 1906 when it enacted Public Law 448. This bill established a state-run agricultural and mechanical school in each of Georgia’s 12 congressional districts.

Called A&M schools, they were constructed on properties donated by their host counties, administered by the Georgia State College of Agriculture at the University of Georgia (UGA), funded by Department of Agriculture fees, and operated by a local Board of Trustees.

These schools filled a void at the time due to the lack of accredited statewide high schools. The schools were designed by a single architect so that the main campus buildings were almost identical statewide.

Construction on most of them began in 1907, and some opened for classes during the fall term of 1908. They were actually college preparatory boarding schools and included students from 14-21 years of age. The schools offered two and four-year programs with a study of agriculture for boys and a study of home economics for girls.

Some of the A&M schools operated until 1931 when the newly formed Board of Regents closed them as one of its first official acts. Because high school agricultural education programs had become so prevalent around the state by that time and because the number of accredited high schools had increased tremendously, the Regents believed the A&M schools had outlived their usefulness. The final classes graduated from the schools in 1933. Over the next two years, the state deeded the campus properties back to the host counties with the stipulation that they be used for educational purposes.

The First District A&M School in Statesboro became the South Georgia Teachers College. The Second District A&M School in Tifton became South Georgia A&M College. The Third District A&M School in Americus became the State Agricultural and Normal College. The Fourth District A&M School in Carrollton was converted for local use. The Fifth District A&M School in Monroe became the Georgia Vocational & Trades School. The Sixth District A&M School in Barnesville became the Georgia Industrial College. The Seventh District A&M School in Powder Springs, the Eighth District A&M School in Madison, the Ninth District A&M School in Clarkesville, and the Tenth District A&M School in Granite Hill were all converted to local use. The Eleventh District A&M School in Douglas became South Georgia State College. The Twelfth District A&M School in Cochran became Middle Georgia College.

1906-1923

Communities interested in serving as the site for an A&M School had to undergo a bidding process. On November 23, 1906, delegations from Albany, Camilla, Pelham, Tifton, and Ashburn met in Albany to submit bids for the Second District A&M School.
Thirty men made up Tift County's delegation to Albany. This small party included Henry Harding Tift, the founder of Tifton. The group went with $32,000, raised by individual subscriptions from the people of Tift County. The *Tifton Gazette* reported the meeting as follows:

"Soon after the opening of the afternoon session, at 3 o'clock, the bids were submitted, the counties being called in alphabetical order.

"Dougherty came first with an offer of $20,000, 200 acres of land, an artesian well and free lights and water for 10 years.

"Camilla offered to raise $51,000 in cash, donate 300 acres of land, buildings and timber estimated at $4,000 and free lights and water for five years.

"Pelham offered a choice of several fine tracts of land, free lights and water and a certified check for $19,000. The clerk that read Pelham's first offer erroneously read its cash contribution as $100,000. This brought both wide eyes and gasps from both the general congregation and Pelham's own delegation.

"Tift County's offer was 315 acres of land lying along the Georgia Southern and Florida right-of-way which was one mile north of town, and $30,000 in cash. This offer was signed by 28 names of the Tift County delegation, citizens worth an aggregate of $10 million.

"Ashburn's offer was 250 acres of land, lights and water for five years and $45,000 in cash.

"When he rose to fill five minutes of the time allotted Tift County, Mr. Tift presented an amended bid of $55,000 in cash, free lights and water and telephone service for 10 years, a sewage system and 315 acres of land worth $50 per acre. Later, learning that the timber on the land was desired for forestry study, he contributed this also, it being valued at $4,500. The raise of $25,000 at a jump caused the audience to catch its breath.

"After the committee went into executive session, Pelham's bid was raised to $32,500 in cash, Camilla's bid to $58,000 in cash, and Ashburn's bid to $60,000 in cash.

“Mr. Tift gave out of his own pocket, having subscribed $6,500 before going to Albany, a total of $36,400 in cash, the land, $4,500 worth of timber, and a portion of the light and water offer. It was estimated in the committee room that Tifton's offer now netted $95,700. Mr. J.L. Phillips gave the phone service.

"Mr. Tift was willing, out of his own means, to again raise Tifton's bid, but the committee did not think it just for him to do so.

"After the financial question was settled, it was a tug of war between the personal influence of Mr. Tift and Mr. Hand (from Pelham), and in the end, when Tifton's progressiveness, excellent
record and prohibition were thrown into the balance, they (the Tifton delegation) won the fight, the high moral integrity of Tift County and her citizenship being the deciding straw.

"Inside the committee room, Tifton led every ballot, and in the fifth balloting had eight votes, while Pelham reached seven votes, its high-water mark. Finally, in the eighth balloting, Tifton received eleven, one more than necessary."

The *Tifton Gazette* proclaimed “The Hallelujah Day Has Come, Tifton Lands the A&M School.” At a commencement ceremony years later, Tift said “of all the investments I have ever made, this school has brought me the biggest dividends.” Ironically, Tift was born in Mystic, Conn., a town located only 15 miles from Guilford, Conn., the birthplace of Abraham Baldwin, namesake for Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College. Tift Hall at ABAC is named in Tift’s honor.

Gresham Manufacturing Company from Griffin sent a letter to Georgia Governor J.M. Terrell on February 1, 1907 with a bid of $48,400 to construct “the academic building and two dormitories.” In the bid letter, J.W. Gresham said, “If your honorable board desires to beautify their buildings by using selected red front brick with stone sills and lentals over all the windows, we will furnish same and build the three buildings for the sum of $51,927. Unit brick work for the sum of thirty cents per cubic foot.”

According to the November 21, 1907 *Daily Bulletin of the Manufacturing Record*, Gresham did receive the bid soon after the bid letter was received by Governor Terrell. The architect for each of the 12 A&M schools was Haralson Bleckley from Empire Building in Atlanta.

Construction of the facility on the 315 acres given by Captain Tift continued for the next year, while the board went about appointing a faculty for the school and determining a method of selecting students to attend the first session.

On February 20, 1908, the Second District A & M School opened for its first classes which were filled with 27 students. Only boys were allowed to board during the first term, but girls in the surrounding area attended classes. Opening day was declared a holiday by Tifton. Stores and the public school were closed. A special train ran from Tifton to the school, and some 1,200 people attended.

Built on the campus were two fine dormitories (later named Herring Hall and Lewis Hall) and an academic building (later named Tift Hall). During the construction of these buildings, the contractors built a long, narrow building to store tools. This building was used as a dining hall until 1910, when it was replaced with a large wooden dining hall.

Professor W.W. Driskell was chosen as the first principal of the Second District A&M School and served until June, 1909. He was succeeded by Professor W.G. Acree, who served for one
year. Professor Samuel L. Lewis then served two years as principal and was succeeded by Professor Jack Hart, who served as principal until June, 1914.

In September, 1914, Lewis returned to the principal’s position until 1925. He then served as president when the area high school changed to college level work in 1925 under its new name of South Georgia Agricultural & Mechanical College. Lewis received his bachelor’s and master’s degrees from the University of Georgia. He also took special courses in agriculture at Cornell University. In honor of his accomplishments, UGA awarded him an honorary Doctorate of Education degree. Lewis was the principal of Madison (GA) High School and later served as superintendent of schools there before moving to his position in Tifton. After he retired as the South Georgia A&M College president, he served as principal of Campbell High School. Lewis was the featured speaker at A&M Day at ABAC on February 19, 1958. Lewis Hall on the ABAC campus is named in his honor.

Among the first students at the Second District A&M School were many illustrious Georgians who milked cows, cooked, tended farms and worked in various ways to finance their education.

Those were the days when an education at the high school level in rural America provided the beginning of the realization of many dreams. Great numbers of A&M alumni succeeded in fields of medicine, public office, business and commerce, as well as in farming. One of those successful alumni was Dr. George D. Conger, who founded the Conger Life Insurance Company in Miami, Fla. He was one of ABAC’s largest benefactors, and Conger Hall on campus is named in his honor.

The first class to graduate from the new school did so on June 14, 1910. Members of the graduating class were Joel Davis and Maude Pauk of Tift County and Charles Hinson of Grady County.

1924-1932

With the improvement of high school education in the rural areas, the need for maintaining district high schools decreased. For years it had been felt that a senior state college for men was needed in the southern part of Georgia.

Through the influence of R.C. Ellis in the House and John Adams in the Senate, a bill creating the South Georgia A&M College was passed in 1924. The Second District A&M School was renamed the South Georgia A&M College and began the gradual transition from high school to college work. By the beginning of the 1928-29 fall term, all high school classes had been eliminated. The first college class graduated in June, 1929. After serving as principal of the Second District A&M School, Lewis continued his service to the institution as the first and only president of the South Georgia A&M College.
Ironically, just as the first South Georgia A&M College class graduated, state legislators were working on another name change. In an effort to grow and broaden the institution, the college’s name was changed to the Georgia State College for Men (GSCM) in the summer of 1929. At the time, there was not a senior college for men south of Macon. The new school’s expanded curriculum was intended to serve communities in the southern region of the state.

Dr. Frank G. Branch was the first and only president of the Georgia State College for Men, serving from 1929-1933. Enrollment climbed steadily during Branch’s tenure from 101 students with a graduating class of six to 345 students with 33 seniors in 1932. Prior to moving to Tifton, Branch served as president of South Georgia College in McRae for five years and Andrew College in Cuthbert for 11 years. Branch was also the superintendent at Rockwell Academy in Putnam County, the first recognized and accredited consolidated school in Georgia.

Under Branch’s leadership, GSCM was admitted to the Georgia Association of Colleges in 1932, paving the way for the college to join the new University System of Georgia in 1933. Branch favored a broad spectrum of academic and extracurricular activities so students interested in literary pursuits attached themselves to The Rambler, the college yearbook or the Ram’s Horn, the semi-monthly college newspaper. When GSCM became Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College in 1933, Branch was named president of North Georgia College, where he served for one year. Branch Hall, a former dormitory on campus, was named in his honor.

GSCM had two divisions: Liberal Arts and Sciences, leading to the A.B. and B.S. degrees and the Division of Agriculture, leading to a B.S. in Agriculture. Candidates for either degree could major in commerce or in education as well as in the liberal arts or sciences.

There were three fraternities and two sororities on the GSCM campus. The fraternities included Omega Epsilon Pi, Phi Kappa Rho, and Sigma Omega. The seeds of Sigma Omega were planted in the 1920s with the Sigma Club, a non-Greek honor society whose members were chosen with great care. The Sigma Club stressed leadership and academics. In the early 1930s, several members from the Sigma Club wanted something more than a strictly academic organization and decided it was time to form a social organization. These members formed Sigma Omega.

When GSCM became a two-year college called Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College in 1933, all fraternities and sororities were disbanded. Some of the Sigma Omega members transferred to North Georgia College, and in 1933 they formed a local fraternity called Sigma Theta. Later, Sigma Theta decided to go national and in doing so became Sigma Phi Epsilon.

Sororities at the Georgia State College for Men included Eta Tau Epsilon and Kappa Mu. In sports, Coach Orion Mitchell's football team won for themselves the title of "Fighting Rams" as they accumulated a score of 205 points to opponents' 45 in 1932. The basketball team came out with a respectable 75 percent win average.
On October 16, 1931, the Georgia State College for Men football team defeated the University of Miami 13-12. An Associated Press story about the game ran in the October 17th edition of the Tifton Gazette. According to that account, Miami went in front on a touchdown run in the second quarter. Down 6-0, the Rams of GSCM took the lead when Mike Donehon intercepted a pass and ran 70 yards for a touchdown.

Still in the second quarter, the Rams expanded the lead when Sherman England blocked a punt on the Hurricanes' two-yard line and recovered it in the end zone for another touchdown. Miami had a 13-yard TD run in the third period but GSCM was able to hold on for the victory. Coach Orion Mitchell was the head coach for the GSCM team. Other teams on the schedule that season included Oglethorpe College and Fort Benning.

Mitchell coached football, basketball, and baseball at GSCM and at ABAC from 1931-45. His 1937 and 1943 ABAC basketball teams were the Georgia junior college champions. Mitchell was an inaugural member of the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2008. Mitchell Hall, a former residence hall on the campus, was named in his honor.

1933

The depression years brought financial troubles to many of the old "district" schools and, in 1933 Governor Eugene Talmadge granted the newly formed Board of Regents of the University System "power to consolidate, suspend, or discontinue institutions, and merge departments."

Dr. Phillip Weltner, Chancellor of the University System, said that in deciding what to do about the college at Tifton that several things were apparent: here was a community vitally interested in having a college, here was a section of the state with agricultural problems particular to its own geography, and here in the guise of the Coastal Plain Experiment Station was a ready-made laboratory for agricultural classes.

Consequently, Georgia State College for Men was changed to a two-year college stressing agriculture and home economics, and the name was changed to Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College to pay honor to Abraham Baldwin, the first president of the University of Georgia and a Georgia signer of the U.S. Constitution.

Born in 1754 as the son of a Connecticut blacksmith, Abraham Baldwin enrolled at Yale University at the age of 14 and completed his degree four years later. He then studied theology at Yale and became a minister. He served on George Washington’s staff as a chaplain during the Revolutionary War before beginning a study of law. After being admitted to the bar, he moved to Georgia in 1783 to set up a law practice near Augusta.

One year later, Baldwin was elected to the Georgia House of Assembly and in 1787 he represented Georgia as a member of the Constitutional Convention where he was one of the signers of the United States Constitution. In fact, he and William Few are the only Georgians
who signed the Constitution. Baldwin served as the first chief executive of the University of Georgia from 1785 until 1801. He later served Georgia as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate. On July 1, 1933, the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia closed the Georgia State College for Men and opened the institution as Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College, naming the college in Baldwin’s honor.

The change in college status was somewhat of a shock to the people of Tifton who were justly proud of the four-year college. However, as they had always done, as soon as the objectives of the college became known, the citizens rallied to its support and have been to a large measure responsible for its success.

Helen Sasser from Sylvester was the first female student to enroll at ABAC in 1933. On the first day of classes after the name change to Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College, faculty member George P. Donaldson, later to become president of ABAC in 1947, came up with the idea of each student receiving a number. He then drew two numbers to determine who would be the first female and the first male student to register at ABAC. Sasser had the number 13, and she was the first female to register. Marvin Loyd was the first male to register.

Sasser’s younger brother, Charles, had attended the school when it was Georgia State College for Men. He helped prepare the college for the switch to two-year status. Since he had graduated, ABAC offered to pay the tuition for someone he knew to attend the college as his payment.

“My brother came home and wanted to know if I wanted to go,” Sasser said. “I told him no, but later decided to go.”

Sasser said there were only 18 female students enrolled at ABAC at the time, and they cooked all the meals.

“Two of us did it for a week at a time for ten cents an hour,” Sasser said. She said the male students kept up the grounds and chopped and carried the wood for the wood stove where the females cooked. The females also cleaned the dormitories and the classrooms.

“Our first night there we talked about the colors and the mascot,” Sasser said. “We chose the stallion as the mascot. The colors we picked were green and yellow. The yellow was to be the shade of the jonquil flower that was on the campus.”

Sasser later became the first female president of the ABAC Alumni Association. During her time as president, she initiated the Master Homemaker Award as a companion to the Master Farmer Award. Her sister, Sara, was the first recipient of the award in 1959. Sasser won the award in 1987 and now the award is named in her honor.

The first president of ABAC was Dr. J.G. Woodroof, who served as president from 1933-34. The enrollment at the time was 99. Woodroof said “the principal objective will be to educate the boys and girls back to the farm.” Answering a question as to whether the new college would be
co-ed, Woodroof said “farm life without women would offer no attraction, and therefore ABAC will enroll both boys and girls.”

At the age of 32, Woodroof was the youngest state college president in Georgia when he was selected for the position on May 10, 1933. A native of Mountville, Ga., in Meriwether County, he turned 33 on May 23, 1933. He received his doctorate degree from Michigan State University. Woodroof moved to Tifton from his research duties at the Griffin Experiment Station.

1934-1939

After only one year, Woodroof announced on April 14, 1934 that he was stepping down to return to scientific research. He went on to have a brilliant research career, particularly in the area of blueberries. The 200-acre J.G. Woodroof Farm at ABAC is named in his honor, and the top academic student during the annual Honors Day ceremony receives an award in his memory.

Woodroof’s wife, the former Naomi Chapman, was also quite renowned. As a youngster, she crossed the Snake River daily by rowboat to attend school. She was the first female student and the first female graduate of the University of Idaho College of Agriculture and one of the first two females in the United States to hold a degree in Agriculture. She was also the first woman scientist at the Georgia Experiment Station, the first state-employed plant pathologist at the Coastal Plain Experiment Station, and the first female named to the Georgia Agricultural Hall of Fame. She married Dr. Woodroof in 1926.

Woodroof was succeeded by Dr. George H. King, who served as president from 1934 until 1947. King was serving as a Professor of Farm Management and Dean of Instruction at the college when he was selected as the second president in the history of ABAC. King received undergraduate and graduate degrees from UGA and did graduate work at Cornell. Student enrollment increased from 188 to 468 students during his tenure.

One of those students went on to become a World War II hero. Henry Will Jones, a Marine Captain from Lakeland, received the Silver Star posthumously for his bravery against the Japanese forces at Peleliu in the Palau Islands in the south Pacific in World War II.

At ABAC, he played the guard position for the basketball team on Coach Orion Mitchell’s 1937 state junior college champions. He also played on the 1937 ABAC baseball team and was a member of the 1936 football team, which was the last football team ABAC ever fielded after all the uniforms and equipment were destroyed in a fire after the season. He received the prestigious “B” for football and basketball. Captain Jones was selected posthumously to the 2013 ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame.

In 1937, Coach Orion Mitchell led the ABAC basketball team to a 25-24 victory over Gordon for the state championship.
In 1939, Doris McGill from Tifton graduated from Tifton High School. She then became perhaps the only person in history to turn down a scholarship to The Juilliard School to attend ABAC and major in home economics. She was an ABAC cheerleader and met her future husband, Garrett J. Jones, on the ABAC campus. They were married for 50 years before he passed away in 1995. Doris McGill Jones passed away at the age of 92 on March 20, 2015.

1940-46

In 1940, President King hired Tom Cordell, the principal at Morven High School, to direct a new adult and continuing education program at ABAC. The program was established from a grant from the Sears and Roebuck Foundation. It was the first program of its kind at a two-year college in the country. Classes were offered free to farmers who came to campus and stayed in the dormitories. In the first year, a total of 1,049 farmers attended some or all of the 20 classes available. With the advent of World War II, the classes took a brief hiatus. The classes resumed in 1946 when they became a part of the college’s budget. The number of courses increased until 1953 when they leveled off at 50 per year.

Through the vision of King and Cordell, the program had a tremendous impact on generations to come, including the agricultural interests of a future president of the United States, Jimmy Carter. He attended some of the short courses at ABAC when he was a peanut farmer in Plains. Cordell was named “Man of the Year” by the Progressive Farmer magazine in 1971. He received the Georgia Adult Education Council Citation in 1972.

Cordell was the only person to serve as acting president of ABAC on five different occasions. He served as Dean and Coordinator of the continuing education program until his retirement in 1979.

During the height of World War II, ABAC enrolled 147 students in 1943 and 173 students in 1944. Both years stand out because for the first time in the college’s history, the enrollment showed more females than males. There were 77 females and 70 males in 1943 and 88 females and 85 males in 1944. The females would not outnumber the males again at ABAC until the 1981 summer term.

During the last year of King’s presidency, 150 male students, including many veterans from World War II, took classes at Spence Field near Moultrie. Paul Gaines, who later became the ABAC registrar, was an instructor there. In 1942, King’s duties expanded when he was named the director of the Coastal Plain Experiment Station, located adjacent to the ABAC campus. King became the fulltime director of the agricultural research facility when he stepped down as the ABAC President in 1947. King Hall, an academic building in the center of campus, is named in his honor.
Coach Bruce Gressette joined the ABAC faculty in 1945. For the next 18 years, he achieved greatness not only in the classroom, where he was an excellent mathematics instructor, but on the basketball court and the track as well. His teams won Georgia junior college basketball titles in 1946, 1947, and 1949. The 1949 and 1952 teams won National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) region championships. Gressette’s track and field teams won state championships in 1961 and 1962. His cross country team won the state title in 1961. Gressette was an inaugural member of the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2008. Gressette Gym is named in his honor.

1947-1959

In 1947, the Regents named George P. Donaldson president of ABAC. One of the most popular presidents in ABAC history, Donaldson joined ABAC in 1933 as a faculty member after serving two years as a Georgia legislator. He received his B.S. degree in Education from UGA and his M.S. degree from Ohio State University. Donaldson directed the first play in the history of the Baldwin Players on December 15, 1933 titled *Stop Thief*. He became Dean of Students and Director of Dramatics in 1935 and served in that capacity before beginning his presidency.

A big fan of the ABAC Glee Club, Donaldson led the singing at the Georgia State FFA Convention in 1954. He held honorary life memberships in FHA, FFA, and 4-H. *Progressive Farmer* magazine named him the 1955 Man of the Year in Service to Georgia Agriculture. Upon his retirement, Donaldson became the Executive Secretary for the Georgia Agricultural Commodity Commission for Peanuts. He was named an Honorary Alumnus of ABAC on April 5, 1980 at Homecoming. The Donaldson Dining Hall at ABAC is named in his honor, and the top award at every ABAC commencement ceremony is bestowed on a worthy graduate in his memory.

During Donaldson’s tenure, ABAC grew rapidly in student enrollment, faculty personnel and physical plant. Through the help of the state administration and the Board of Regents, the physical plant was enlarged to accommodate these students. The additions from 1948-53 included a dormitory for girls (later named Creswell Hall), a modern shop building (later named the Chambliss Building), a new science building (later named Gray Hall), an adequate water system, and a new central heating system to replace the old potbelly stoves located in each room. The college also received a special allotment for the purchase of 109.6 acres of farm land during this period.

The original design on Gray Hall provided for a much larger building. Because of a lack of available funds, the size of the building was cut, and that’s why it’s the only classroom building on campus where the doors open to an outside corridor instead of to an inside corridor. The building was named for Claude Gray, the ABAC Registrar from 1933-46. Gray Hall was
connected to Britt Hall, the science and mathematics building named for Mary Lou Britt, professor of chemistry from 1946-58.

In 1952, Tom Cheney, a right hander from Morgan, Ga., pitched the ABAC baseball team to the state championship. Cheney later pitched in the major leagues for the Cardinals, Pirates, and Senators. He pitched in two games in the 1960 World Series which the Pirates won on Bill Mazeroski’s walk-off home run. Cheney’s greatest day as a major leaguer took place on September 12, 1962 when he set the major league record for striking out the most batters in a single game. He struck out 21 members of the Baltimore Orioles in a 16-inning 2-1 win for the Senators. Cheney pitched all 16 innings. Cheney was an inaugural member of the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2008.

Coach Bruce Gressette’s ABAC men’s basketball team won the regional championship in 1952. The Stallions didn’t play in the regional tournament again until Coach Benny Dees’ team lost in the first round of regional play in 1964.

In December, 1953, the college was admitted to the Southern Association of College and Secondary Schools. This recognition permitted Baldwin graduates to transfer to other colleges in the nation and in foreign countries without losing credits. The Board of Regents again granted permission for broadening the courses of instruction. Added this time was a Secretarial Science Department and a course in Farm Equipment Sales and Service. The Farm Equipment course was offered at only seven colleges in the United States.

During the next three years a modern Home Management House (later named the Moore Building) was built on campus, and the auditorium and gymnasium (Howard, Thrash) were remodeled. Construction began on an annex to the Weltner Hall dormitory and a Rural Life Building, which was located on the site now occupied by the Carlton Center. Funding for the Rural Life Building was provided through the Governor's Emergency Fund.

Donaldson also formed the first fundraising arm of the college in 1954, the Greater Baldwin Foundation. He wanted a way for businessmen to donate money to ABAC to provide typewriters for the college’s secretarial science program.

In 1955, the Tifton Gazette reported that Ann McMillan scored 66 points while playing for the ABAC women’s basketball team in a game against Norman College. The team was called the Deers at that time. ABAC won the game 87-56 under the direction of Coach Charles A. Milford.

In 1956, the girls’ dormitory was named for Edith Vaughn Creswell. She was one of the first four females who enrolled for classes at the University of Georgia in September, 1918. Creswell received her bachelor’s degree from UGA in 1920. She later became the first Dean of Women and a Professor of Home Economics at ABAC. The building was called the “Girls’ Dormitory” from 1954-56.
At the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Second District A&M School in 1958, all these evidences of growth were observed. The enrollment that year was 492, the largest in 50 years.

A favorite gathering place for students was the Log Cabin. Students could dance and listen to music. Built in 1932, probably from trees cut on the campus, The Log served at various times as the campus post office, a recreation area, and a snack bar. It was dismantled in 1962 because of a termite infestation.

The Short Course Program, begun in 1940 under the direction of Cordell, continued to grow in pace with the college. By 1958 over 55,000 people had attended the more than 50 short courses offered each year.

1960-63

In the fall of 1960, Baldwin College, as Donaldson often called it, was approved to be the first junior college in the state to offer Distributive Education courses through the Business Administration Division. The addition of this program was one more accomplishment by "Mr. Pete" before he retired in 1961. During his tenure, enrollment increased from 468 in 1947 to 616 in 1961.

Dr. J. Wilson Comer became president of the college in July, 1961. Born on a farm near Gray, Ga., Comer received his undergraduate degree from UGA in agriculture and his master’s degree in horticulture, education, and home economics from the University of Tennessee. He received his Ph.D. from Ohio State University in 1953. He taught high school agriculture classes for five years before beginning a 19-year stay as a faculty member at the Georgia State College for Women in 1940. Comer was serving as the Dean of Columbus College when he was selected for the ABAC presidency.

During his administration, Comer reorganized ABAC into formal academic and administrative divisions to provide for growth and efficiency to handle the impact of the exploding population in the United States. New buildings which opened during Comer’s presidency included the dining hall, the Baldwin Memorial Library, and a men’s dormitory, which later was named in his honor as Comer Hall. A horticulturist, Comer initiated plans for a college nursery and greenhouses. He believed in a beautiful environment for faculty, staff, and students.

Comer geared ABAC up for the Self Study, which set the stage for re-accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools that would allow ABAC to expand with higher quality instruction. Committees were appointed and began work during his lifetime. He also brought ABAC up to date in the technology world with the installation of data processing equipment which served as the foundation for a Center for Automation.

Innovations to improve communications included a weekly administrative bulletin (now known as the FOCUS), publication of a student handbook, a faculty-staff social committee, a unit of
Georgia Educators Association, and a women's group---the "Dames Club." For the first time academic regalia was worn at commencement.

During Comer’s tenure, ABAC student Cook Holliday from Rochelle made a name for himself and for ABAC. During his freshman year in 1963, he set the state junior college pole vault record. Holliday also became the first ABAC track athlete to qualify for the National Junior College track meet in Big Springs, Tex. En route, his steel pole was misplaced, and he used a borrowed pole to finish fifth in the nation. Holliday also played on the ABAC basketball team, earning the nickname, “The Baldwin Blaster,” for his shooting skills. He helped to lead the Stallions to the state basketball championship during his sophomore year in 1964. The University of Wyoming awarded Holliday a track scholarship. Holliday was selected for the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2009.

Comer passed away in December, 1963. During his presidency, he envisioned the larger role that ABAC should play as the unique college of all the units within the University System.

1964

Dean Tom Cordell was appointed Acting President by the Board of Regents when Comer passed away. During his interim until August, 1964, Cordell continued to hold fast to the growth and development ABAC was experiencing.

By the time Dr. J. Clyde Driggers reported for duty as the new president in 1964, the Self-Study was well underway and the addition to the Science and Classroom Building (later named Britt Hall), the Infirmary (later named the E.L. Evans Health Center), and the new gym (later named Gressette Gym) were approved. Britt Hall was named for Mary Lou Britt, a former ABAC chemistry professor. The Evans Health Center was named for Dr. E.L. Evans, and Gressette Gym was named for Coach Bruce Gressette.

A University of Florida graduate, Driggers was a Professor of Poultry Science at the University of Florida and head of the Poultry Science Department at the University of Georgia prior to taking over at ABAC. Through his travels, ABAC became better known on the national and international scene. All six of the academic divisions of study expanded their curriculums. The value of the ABAC physical plant increased to more than $13 million during his tenure.

Driggers encouraged the Adult Education and Public Service program to stretch out to include night classes for both credit and non-credit courses. He promoted on-campus living with the opening of four dormitories (later named Fulwood, Branch, Mitchell, and Chandler halls) for students who traveled from all over the state and the world. He also presided over the opening of two new classroom buildings (later named Bowen Hall and Conger Hall) as well as a new student center (later named the J. Lamar Branch Student Center).
Soon after taking office, Driggers refined the organizational structure of the college to fulfill many emerging needs. Four mid-level administrators began reporting directly to the President. An Advisory Council to the President gave opportunity monthly to all faculty and staff for representative views.

The Golden Stallions of Coach Benny Dees won the state basketball championship in 1964. The Stallions entered the 14-team tournament at Georgia Southern in Statesboro as the number three seed after going 14-3 in the league and 15-5 overall during the regular season. ABAC beat Armstrong 64-43 in the first round behind 13 points by Gwendell McSwain, 12 points by Cook Holliday, and 10 points by Jimmy Scearce.

In the second round game, the Stallions knocked off Augusta 80-72. McSwain scored 25 to lead an ABAC scoring parade which included 14 points apiece by Tommy Dial, Jake Popham and Holliday. Scearce added 13 points. In the semifinal game, ABAC slipped by second-seeded Young Harris 71-65 as Dial scorched the cords for 28 points. McSwain had 16, and Scearce added 12.

The Stallions thumped top-seeded Columbus 76-58 in the title game on February 29 when Dial hit 11 of 16 shots and added five free throws for 27 points. Scearce chipped in 14 points. Dial was named the tournament’s Most Valuable Player, and McSwain and Scearce made the all-tournament team. The victory marked the first men’s basketball state title for ABAC since Coach Bruce Gressette’s team won the 1949 crown.

“Tifton just fell in love with us,” Dial said in a 2015 interview. “Benny Dees was Bobby Knight before there was a Bobby Knight. We were just a bunch of old country boys with a crazy coach.”

Dial played at Waycross High School where he was selected for All-State and All-America honors where he lettered three years in baseball. He played in the North vs. South All-Star game and got scholarship offers from Florida State and North Carolina State. But he had a girlfriend in Waycross. Plus, who could resist the country boy charm of Benny Dees?

“Benny had a persuasive way about him,” Dial said with a laugh. “He promised me a full ride scholarship to ABAC. Well, my full ride was that I had to get up every morning at 5 o’clock and go to the lunchroom to work. That was my scholarship.

“Seven of us stayed in a garage apartment. It was so cold in the winter we had to use electric blankets. ABAC built a new dorm before my sophomore year, and I was glad to live in it.”

Nicknamed “Rail” because he stretched 150 pounds over his 6-foot-3 frame, Dial carried over his stellar high school play into the college realm. He was named All-State in his freshman and sophomore seasons at ABAC as well as claiming All-District and All-America honors during his sophomore year.
“It was quite a run,” Dial said. “The ABAC students went to the Army Surplus Store and bought a bunch of old helmets. Then they lined up like a platoon and marched in that old gym. It was crazy. They had metal trash cans with Coke bottles inside. You can’t imagine the noise in that place. We just won the town over. Benny was a coach that made you better than you were.”

The Stallions lost to Gulf Coast 85-82 in Tallahassee, Fla., in the first round of the 1964 regional tournament. Dial said Gulf Coast hit 41 of 52 free throws while the Stallions connected on 21 of 31 free throws. Dial had 12 points in that game. Dees was selected for the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2011, and Dial was a member of the Hall of Fame Class of 2015.

1965-69

Accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools in 1965 brought great satisfaction; yet it pointed out the need for continued study in order to keep abreast of new developments in the various fields of study. Consequently the majority of the faculty and some of the staff took advantage of leaves-of-absence or in-service training. By then many faculty members held doctorate degrees or had several months of formal study in their respective fields at various universities in Georgia and abroad.

All six of the academic divisions expanded curriculums but of special interest was the growth of the Law Enforcement, Social Work, Horticulture, Wildlife, Music, Art, Secretarial, Home Economics, and Data Processing. ABAC began offering Nursing Education classes in 1966, and the first class graduated in 1968. At that time, nursing graduates were guaranteed an automatic commission in the U.S. Air Force or Army. In Adult Education and Public Service, the short course program was adapted to include night study for non-credit and credit.

ABAC began awarding the Carlton Award for Faculty Excellence in 1965. The first recipient was Dr. Ernest Edwards, Jr. The award was named in honor of longtime ABAC benefactor, O.D. Carlton, II, from Albany.

Faculty and staff members in the agriculture division, particularly in the Agricultural Equipment Technology area, began a farm equipment show in the mid-1960s on the banks of Lake Baldwin called “Dealer Days.” This program eventually became the Sunbelt Agricultural Exposition, which opened at Spence Field near Moultrie in 1978. ABAC was one of the original sponsors for the show, and ABAC personnel including Jesse Chambliss, Wright Crosby, and Jimmy Grubbs helped to develop the Spence Field site for the Sunbelt Expo. This is the same former air base on which ABAC taught classes after World War II.

Coach Benny Dees’ Stallions rolled up a record of 29-5 record and a ranking of 13th in the nation in the 1966-67 basketball season. ABAC was undefeated in league play during the regular season.
Faculty and staff committees became more active in making plans for the various functions of the college. An Academic Assembly was formed to provide a formal voice for recommending ideas for growth and development. The Student Government Association and the Student Judiciary became realities as well. The administrative and academic structure for students, faculty, and staff solidified into an active, workable organization.

Wasdon Graydon, Jr., from Tifton enrolled as a freshman at ABAC in the fall quarter of 1968. He was one of the first African-American students at the college. He said ABAC didn’t have any African-American instructors at that time.

“I think there were eight of us,” Graydon said in a 2015 interview. “We had good days and bad days. You have to consider the culture of ABAC at the time.”

Helen Strickland joined the ABAC faculty in 1968 as an instructor in the Humanities Division and as the Director of Student Publications. During her 31-year career, the ABAC student newspaper, *The Stallion*, gained tremendous attention for the college. It was named the top junior college paper in the state by the Georgia College Press Association 26 times from 1968 to 1999. Strickland, wife of ABAC alumnus John Strickland, drove to the campus every day from her home in Lakeland, Ga. She was also the advisor to the quarterly magazine, *The Agriculturist*, and to the campus yearbook, *TABAC*, which continued publication through 1986. The college discontinued publication of the yearbook because the students decided it was not a good use of the student activities funds.

*The Agriculturist* published its first issue in 1969 under the leadership of Director of Public Relations Tyron Spearman (Class of ’65) and student editor James L. Bramblett. The magazine focused on achievements in agriculture nationwide, but particularly at ABAC. It ceased publication in the early 1980s but resumed publication in 2013. Spearman was a former student body president and Mr. Baldwin. He also taught Poultry Science classes in addition to his public relations duties.

According to the student newspaper, *The Stallion*, the first rodeo in the history of ABAC was held on May 24, 1969. It was sponsored by the Baldwin Rodeo Club, the Student Cabinet, and several ABAC alumni. Events included bronco bustin’, bull riding, bulldogging, and roping. Gerald Floyd was president of the Rodeo Club. The cost was $1.75 for adults and $1 for children.

**1970-74**

ABAC began its service as the host site for the Regional Police Academy in 1970. The Academy served as a source of intensive training and certification for area law enforcement personnel.
Under President Driggers’ direction, the ABAC Foundation began an annual fundraising event called “Dollars for Scholars” with Anita Bryant as the first performer on June 2, 1972. Driggers helped to secure private funding for the Chapel of All Faiths and chronicled the tremendous effort in his book, *It Took A Miracle*. The Chapel is named the Driggers Lecture Hall in his honor. Funds from the first few years of the “Dollars for Scholars” events were used to pay off the debt on the Chapel.

A dynamic leader, Driggers focused on enrollment growth during his presidency, which led to a record of 2,143 students in the fall quarter of 1972. ABAC became Georgia’s largest residential two-year college.

In 1973, ABAC began its presentation of the Carlton Award for Staff Excellence and the Carlton Award for Administrative Excellence. Cecile K. Bailey was the first recipient of the staff award, and J. Dale Sherman was the first recipient of the administrative award.

Wasdon Graydon, Jr., (Class of ’70) was hired as the director of student support services on September 1, 1973. He went on to have a 37-year career at the institution and served as the commencement speaker in the final event of ABAC’s 100th birthday celebration in 2008.

The first annual ABAC Tractor Pull was held at ABAC in 1974. Tractor pulls were very popular on the campus during the 1970s and 1980s. ABAC staff member Jimmy Grubbs drove the ABAC pulling tractor called “Cracker Jack,” sponsored by the AET Club, to two national championships. The pulls attracted thousands of spectators. Jesse Chambliss, Nolan Gibbons, Wright Crosby, Marshall Guill and other instructors in the AET program assisted the club.

**1975-1977**

President Clyde Driggers died of a massive coronary on April 29, 1975. According to the college yearbook, *TABAC*, Driggers’ casket was brought to the Chapel of All Faiths until the time for the funeral at the First Methodist Church. A memorial service for students, faculty, staff, administrators and alumni was held in the Chapel simultaneously with the interment in Wauchula, Fla. Dean Tom Cordell was again called on to serve as acting president.

Dr. Stanley Anderson was selected as the ABAC president in 1975. The pursuit of academic excellence and an emphasis on a quality education were Anderson’s goals during his tenure. A Michigan native, he and his wife, Dottie, moved to Tifton from his position as Dean of the College of Agriculture at Texas A&I University. A very popular and outgoing “First Lady” of ABAC, Dottie once taught a belly dancing class for the continuing education program.

Anderson added his personal touch to the beautification of the campus so that it became one of the most picturesque in the University System of Georgia. He led the effort to establish the Baldwin Memorial Gardens, including the Gazebo and reflecting pool in front of the Chapel, and actually planted many of the original flowers in the Gardens himself.
Through his leadership, the college again greatly expanded its facilities and programs. During Anderson's first quarter at ABAC in the fall quarter of 1975, the college experienced its largest enrollment to that date with 2,658 students.

Cleve Dean, the arm-wrestling champion of the world from 1978 until 1986, was a member of the Class of 1975 at ABAC. The 6-foot-7, 465-pound Pavo native appeared in the movie, *Over the Top*, with Sylvester Stallone. After an eight-year self-imposed retirement, Dean won the 1994 national championship and two federation world titles in San Francisco and Sweden.

Tyron Spearman (Class of ’65) left his position as Director of Public Relations in 1976 to become Executive Director of the Georgia Peanut Commission. He was replaced by Jim McDonald.

**1978**

Joy Cleveland, a sophomore from Blakely, was selected as Miss Homecoming at the TABAC Beauty Revue on February 14. Forty-four contestants competed in the event, sponsored by the campus yearbook, TABAC, which is an acronym for The Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College.

On February 25, ABAC dedicated the Torbett-Dobrosky Memorial Golf Practice Center in memory of former ABAC golfers Jack “Skipper” Torbett from Brunswick and William M. Dobrosky from Fernandina Beach, Florida. The two students died a tragic death in their off-campus apartment when a gas heater malfunctioned. Charles Oxford, chairman of the Board of Regents, spoke at the ceremony as well as ABAC President Stanley Anderson and golf coach Wayne Cooper.

On May 26, Dr. George Conger contributed $15,000 toward the Baldwin Memorial Gardens campus beautification project initiated by President Stanley Anderson. Conger is a 1916 alumnus of the Second District A&M School and president of the Conger Life Insurance Company.

A total of 29 students received their pins at the annual ABAC nurses’ pinning ceremony on June 8 in the Chapel of All Faiths.

The Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia met for one of their monthly meetings at ABAC in 1978. Melvin Merrill became the Director of Development at ABAC on July 1, replacing Bob Ragsdale, who took a position at the Rural Development Center. A North Carolina native, Merrill had been serving in the development office at Berry College.

**1979**
Bob Sise, a marketing management major from Thomasville, won the national championship in the category of General Merchandising in the 1979 Distributive Education Clubs of America competition in Houston, Texas. Lester Simpson and John Overman are the advisors to DECA.

ABAC yearbook editor Lynn Medford presented student Pacesetter awards to Randall Morris, Tim Chason, Pat Barron, Mark von Waldner and Karen Wainwright at the annual student activities banquet on May 15. Other Pacesetter winners were former ABAC President George P. Donaldson, Andrea Pate, and C.B. Mathis.

Mike Chason began his job as the Director of Public Relations on May 15, replacing Jim McDonald who resigned from the position in 1978. Chason was the sports editor of *The Valdosta Daily Times*.

ABAC President Stanley Anderson said on May 22 that the Donaldson Dining Hall will be available for use the Dollars for Scholars Benefit Banquet and Show on May 25. The dining hall has undergone a $1.3 million renovation which increased the seating capacity from 500 to 950.

“This gives us the largest dining facility south of Atlanta in the state except for the one at Jekyll Island,” Anderson said. “The students used to have to line up outside. Now, there’ll be no need for that.”

Country music star Barbara Mandrell was the featured performer at the eighth annual Dollars for Scholars Benefit Banquet and Show on May 25. She was voted as the top female vocalist the recent Country Music Association awards show for her song *If Loving You is Wrong, I don’t Want to be Right*. Mandrell and her entourage stayed at the Howard Johnson’s Motel on Highway 41. Dining Hall Directors George and Aliene Graul put together a fabulous buffet for the event.

Ray Barber, an ABAC biology instructor, wrote a song about ABAC during the fall quarter titled, *ABAC, The Place for You and Me*. One of the lines from the song: “Our campus is real pretty, come and see it you’ll agree; another asset of good ol’ ABAC is the friendly faculty.” Barber and his brothers recorded the song with their company, Gabriel Recording.

1980

Waylon Jennings performed in Gressette Gym on March 18. He was scheduled to perform a month prior but cancelled the show at the last moment. In an interview, Albany Herald reporter Charles Postell asked Jennings if the rumors were true that he cancelled the show because the stage was too low and the students refused to furnish him with whiskey. Jennings said, “I don’t remember. That sounds pretty good.” Postell asked him which one of the reported reasons was true. “Either one,” Jennings said.
The Forestry-Wildlife Building opened in 1980. The building was later named for Vernon Yow, a longtime Professor of Forestry and a former Dean of Men at ABAC.

1981

The statue of the Golden Stallion mascot was stolen from its perch in front of the Student Center on January 17. The statue has been on campus since the early 1960s. This is the fifth time it has been taken since being moved to this Student Center location in 1976. Public Relations Director Mike Chason received an anonymous phone call at his home on January 22 from a quail hunter who said he had seen the statue at the edge of a field near Brighton Road. Chason and Director of Development Melvin Merrill traveled to that location that night and found the statue. Physical Plant personnel returned the statue to the campus on January 23. No suspects or leads in connection with the theft ever developed.

Denise Brewer from Tifton was crowned Miss Homecoming 1981 at the TABAC Beauty Revue on April 2. Director of Public Relations Mike Chason was the emcee for the first time ever. Former ABAC President George King was honored with a portrait dedication at King Hall on April 4 during Homecoming. Alumni Association award winners were John Strickland, Distinguished Alumnus; Andy H. Miller, Master Farmer; Martha Spell Lee, Master Homemaker; and Julian Morgan, Master Young Farmer. Tyron Spearman won the first ever Outstanding Young Alumnus Award.

World renowned drummer Buddy Rich performed at ABAC on April 7. The annual Tractor Pull was held on April 10-12. The annual Golddusters Show was held April 23-25 in Howard Auditorium. At the annual Honors Day ceremony on May 6, Betty Henning received the Carlton Award for Staff Excellence, and Dr. Ron Jones received the Carlton Award for Faculty Excellence. Dollars for Scholars was held on May 8.

A dinner honoring the service of Jesse Chambliss was held in the dining hall on May 22. Chambliss will retire at the end of the spring quarter with 34 years of service. He will be honored with the title of Professor Emeritus of Agricultural Engineering. Osborne Day was held at Possum Poke in Poulan on May 24 to honor Stellanova Osborne, widow of former Michigan Governor Chase Osborne. Possum Poke is owned by the ABAC Foundation.

Admissions Director Garth Webb reported that the females outnumbered the males at ABAC for the first time since 1944 during the 1981 summer term with 425 female students and 424 male students.

ABAC baseball player Ralph Bryant was drafted by the Los Angeles Dodgers in the first round of the 1981 amateur draft. The power-hitter from Fort Gaines made his professional debut with the Dodgers on September 8, 1985. He spent the next three years traveling between the major and minor leagues. Bryant then found a home with the Chunichi Dragons and the Kintetsu
Buffaloes in Nippon Professional Baseball in Japan. He was the 1989 Pacific League Most Valuable Player when he hit 49 home runs and tied Sadaharu Oh’s career record by blasting three homers in a game on five different occasions. He retired in 1995 with 259 home runs for his career. Bryant was named to the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2015.

ABAC student Cindy Mott from Hahira was named Miss Rodeo Georgia 1981.

For perhaps the first time in history, four members of the same family were enrolled at ABAC during the 1981 fall quarter. The Vano family from Walden, N.Y., sent Lynn, Judy, Barbara, and Rich to the college. ABAC alumnus and former faculty member Baldwin Davis died on September 16. He served the college for 15 years as a faculty member and was named Associate Professor Emeritus of Agriculture upon his retirement on August 5.

Keith Barr (Class of ’72) was named the new head women’s basketball coach in 1981, replacing Jeff Kincaid (Class of ’74), who resigned after three years to attend dental school. ABAC alumnus William Thomas Greer, Jr., (Class of ’62) was named the 17th president of Andrew College on October 22.

In the November 17 edition of The Stallion, President Anderson said the fiber glass statue of the Golden Stallion mascot “would remain in storage indefinitely until the students can devise a plan to make sure the Stallion will not be damaged.” The Stallion statue was taken from its perch in front of the Student Center several times in 1981 with the last two thefts coming only 10 days apart. Stallion Editor Russell Camp suggested that the college get a bronze statue of the Stallion. Thirty-two years later, the college did just that.

President Anderson selected Dr. Lew Akin as the chair for the ABAC Golden Anniversary Celebration committee in November, 1981. Anderson said the celebration would last from September, 1983 until June, 1984 when ABAC would celebrate 50 years as ABAC and 75 years as an institution. Other steering committee members were Lamar Branch, James Burran, Mike Chason, Ronald Faircloth, Marolyn Howell, Rosemary Johnson, Ron Jones, Tyron Spearman, and Joann Thornhill.

Development Director Melvin Merrill said the ABAC Foundation had its best year ever in 1981 with total income for the year exceeding $390,800. The largest single gift ever received by the Foundation was $153,180 from the Rankin family to endow the Weetie and Homer Rankin Scholarships.

1982

Internationally known theatrical performers Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee performed before a sellout crowd in Howard Auditorium on February 8. Davis is originally from Cogdell. He and Dee have been married for 33 years. Kris Kristofferson performed in Gressette Gym at ABAC on February 17 in a concert sponsored by the Student Union.
On March 6, Coach Donnie Veal’s basketball Stallions defeated Gainesville 67-66 in Gressette Gym for the NJCAA Region XVII title. Marshall Taylor, a 5-foot-9 sophomore from Enigma, was named the Most Valuable Player of the tournament. He scored 25 points in the championship game. The Stallions then lost to Miami-Dade North Community College 56-54 in a national playoff game in Lake City, Fla. Miami-Dade was 29-0 and ranked number one in the nation. The Fabulous Golddusters dance team under the direction of advisor Andrea Pate Willis performed at halftime of that game. It proved to be the last state basketball championship for the Stallions before the program was dropped in 2008. ABAC rode a 17-game winning streak during the season to a final record of 25-5. Taylor and Willis were both selected for the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2014.

ABAC student Sherry Morris from Blue Ridge became the first student ever selected for the Georgia Phi Theta Kappa Hall of Honor in 1982. Jenni Collins from Cotton was crowned Miss Homecoming at the 14th annual TABAC Beauty Revue on April 2. She was also the Most Valuable Player for the ABAC women’s basketball team in 1981 and 1982. Collins had a career high of 44 points against Brewton-Parker.

Comptroller J. Talmadge Webb told alumni at the 1982 Homecoming that the value of the physical plant at ABAC was $2 million in 1959 and $18 million in 1981. Homecoming award winners in 1982 included William T. Greer, Distinguished Alumnus; Glenn Parkman, Outstanding Young Alumnus; Mary Grimsley, Master Homemaker; Larry McMillan, Master Young Farmer; Marshall Bennett, Master Farmer; and John Henry Davis, Outstanding Alumnus in Business. O.D. Carlton II and Jesse Chambliss were named Honorary Alumni.

A retirement party for Professor Vernon Yow was held in the Donaldson Dining Hall on May 6, recognizing him for 32 years of service. He was “roasted” by Harvey Johnson, Ray Jensen, Bobby Rowan, and Jesse Chambliss. At the conclusion of the dinner, Yow presented a check for $10,000 to the ABAC Foundation. The ninth annual ABAC Tractor Pull was held May 8-9.

Louise Mandrell was the featured performer at the 11th annual Dollars for Scholars event on May 28. Dining Hall Director George Graul said he added quail to the Dollars menu for the first time to complement roast beef, chicken, turkey, Cornish game hens, shrimp, oysters, scallops, stuffed pork chops, and crab meat. New members of The President’s Club of the ABAC Foundation were introduced at the banquet including Dr. and Mrs. Tom Brightwell, Ruth Patterson Britt, Dr. and Mrs. John H. Dorminy, III, Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Eastman, Mr. and Mrs. Homer Rankin, Dr. and Mrs. Joseph Turner, and Dr. and Mrs. Vernon Yow.

Registrar Paul Gaines retired from his position in 1982 after 38 years at ABAC. Faculty member Gerald Fletcher retired from the Science-Math Division after 23 years of service. ABAC awarded 436 degrees and certificates during the 1981-82 academic year, more than any other two-year college in Georgia.
Chuck DeVane from Lowndes High School hit .409 for the ABAC baseball team and was selected for the All-Region XVII team. The men’s tennis team finished seventh in the national tournament.

Sonia Hancock from Sale City was selected as the editor of The Stallion, and Jody Metcalf from Fitzgerald was named as the editor of Pegasus for the coming year. David Gamble was elected president of the SGA, and David Denning was elected as the vice-president.

ABAC Foundation President Ray Jensen announced on December 15 that the Foundation had exceeded its goal by raising $1,096,428 during the ABAC in the 80s campaign. Bill Bowen was the campaign chairman.

**1983**

The Arts Experiment Station staged the Arts Circus near Gressette Gym on April 23. The event was the forerunner for the Love Affair Fine Arts Festival.

The ABAC Alumni Association coordinated the first ever Stallion Stampede 5K race at the Homecoming 1983 celebration. Singing sensation Sylvia and comedians Skiles and Henderson were the guest performers at Dollars for Scholars on May 6. Charlie Marshall resigned after 14 years as a faculty member in the wildlife program on June 11.

Coach Norman “Red” Hill was the proudest man on campus in July when the tennis courts got lights for the first time. “This has been a dream of mine since I came to ABAC 18 years ago,” Hill said.

A memorial service for the wife of former President Clyde Driggers was held in the Chapel on August 10. She passed away on August 7.

On September 14, Dr. J. Gordon Brackett, an Atlanta physician, donated his African collection of exotic animal mounts, including heads, hooves, and skins, to the ABAC Foundation for display in Britt Hall. Valued at over $250,000 at the time, the collection included two elephant tusks which weighed 110 pounds each. The collection also included the head of a black rhino, which the Smithsonian Institute reportedly wanted for display, but Brackett did not want to break up the collection. Dr. George Powell, chair of the Division of Science and Mathematics, said the collection would be utilized in ABAC classes and would be available for tours by school groups. Powell made the original contact with Brackett through a mutual acquaintance.

“Dr. Brackett wanted the collection to be used for educational purposes, and he wanted it to be kept together,” Powell said. “We assured him we could do both at ABAC. There were several museums that wanted a part of the collection but he was kind enough to donate it all to us.”
Powell said the collection is quite valuable because many of the animals are now on the endangered species list. The collection also includes a black bear and a grizzly bear from one of Brackett’s hunting trips to Alaska.

The Golden Anniversary Kickoff party was held in the Donaldson Dining Hall on September 15. Dr. Lew Akin served as chair of the committee. The crowds were the largest ever for the ABAC exhibit at the Sunbelt Expo in October when the ABAC Cloggers, the ABAC Travelin’ Stallion square dancers, and the Fabulous Golddusters dance team took the stage.

President Stanley Anderson served as the host for the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia when they met in the ABAC Student Center for their monthly meeting on November 7-8 in honor of ABAC’s Golden Anniversary.

1984

ABAC won its first national championship in any sport in 1984 when Coach Norman “Red” Hill and his team captured the National Junior College Athletic Association men’s tennis title in Ocala, Fla. The top six players received All-America recognition in singles and doubles. Team members included Carlos Perez, John Luc Dumont, Michael Rice, Pat Breen, Chris Demarta, and Tony Giorgetti. Other members of the team who did not compete in the national tournament were Richard Carr, York Carter, and Reg Holden. The team was inducted into the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2009. The Stallions also won the state title. Hill received the 1984 Max Grubbs trophy for winning National Coach of the Year honors.

“Winning the championship has to be the greatest moment of my life,” Hill told a reporter for The Stallion after the victory. “These ABAC players have given everything a human being could possible give. It was so great for these players to be rewarded for the work they have done.”

The national title by the Stallions capped off an amazing year in 1984 for the ABAC intercollegiate athletic teams.

ABAC won its first women’s basketball state championship in 1984 when Coach Keith Barr and the Fillies claimed the title with a 62-60 victory over Emanuel College in Gressette Gym. Terri Lee scored 14 points and hit two free throws with 11 seconds to play to seal the win. Rose Wilcher had 14 points, Jernese Thomas had 13, and Peggy McConnell had 10 to contribute to the victory. ABAC defeated Gainesville 68-52 and Truett McConnell 62-57 to earn its berth in the title game. Cynthia Hargrove, a 5-foot-9 sophomore from Eatonton, was named the Most Valuable Player for the tournament. The Fillies finished seventh in the double elimination national tournament in Senatobia, Miss., where they beat Lakeland 63-60, lost to Northwest Mississippi 60-51, lost to Moberly 88-80, and defeated Gadsden 62-55. In Barr’s third year as head coach, the Fillies wound up with a 20-8 overall record.
Coach Ellen Vickers’ Fillies tennis team also won the state title and finished seventh in the national tournament in 1984. The Fillies became the first ABAC team in any sport not to lose a single match during the regular season. Coach Wayne Cooper’s ABAC golf team also won the state championship and finished fourth in the national tournament. Joey Dixon from Blackshear was named first team All-America by finishing 10th in the national golf tournament. Billy Bulmer from Tifton finished 19th in the national tournament. Hill, Barr, Vickers, and Cooper all won Georgia Coach of the Year honors.

With four teams finishing in the Top 10 in the nation, Representatives Henry Bostick and Hanson Carter sponsored a resolution in the Georgia House of Representatives honoring the ABAC teams on their accomplishments.

After the golf season, Chad Willis became the first and perhaps the only ABAC golfer to sign a scholarship with Ohio State University. He was the first junior college golfer ever signed by the Buckeyes.

Faculty member Wright Crosby helped to coordinate the Golden Anniversary Truck and Tractor Pull at ABAC on April 28-29. Movie star Debbie Reynolds was the featured performer at Dollars for Scholars on May 4. Over 2,000 people saw the ABAC Golden Anniversary Slide Show and over 50,000 others saw ABAC performing groups in action during the Golden Anniversary Year.

Tracy Fulp from Cecil was crowned Miss Homecoming 1984 on April 6. Laura Lynn Davis, a freshman home economics major from Blakely, was crowned Miss Tifton 1984 on May 19. Kenneth Ivory, a sophomore home economics major from Buena Vista, was selected to serve on the search committee for the Chancellor of the University System of Georgia.

After the 1984 spring quarter ended, James “Sonny” Burt submitted his resignation as the ABAC theatre director and associate professor of speech and drama. He directed and produced over 40 plays with the Baldwin Players from the time he joined the faculty in 1969.

“My work at ABAC has been a tremendous, interesting, and hair-raising 15 years,” Burt said. His final production, *The Night of January 16th*, featured George T. Smith (Class of ’40), Tyron Spearman (Class of ’65), and Georgia Attorney General Michael Bowers in the role of the judge. Bowers was Burt’s high school classmate. The play was originally staged at ABAC in 1939 by George P. Donaldson, when he was an ABAC faculty member before he became president in 1947.

Associate Professor of Agricultural Engineering Marshall Guill passed away on July 10. He was a faculty member at ABAC for 19 years. Dr. Earl Knebel was named the Chair of the Division of Agriculture, Home Economics and Forestry, effective September 1. He replaced Dr. Frank McCain, who retired after 18 years at ABAC. Other retirees in the summer of 1984 included Ann Hammons, Val Blanchard, Homer M. Moore, Jr., Alister Gilbert, Florence Huff, Dan
Conoly, and Dr. William T. Brightwell. Pattie Garrett (Class of ’76) was selected to direct the ABAC nursing program.

President Stanley Anderson broke ground on the Baldwin Memorial Gardens in August. Located in front of the Chapel, the Gardens will feature a reflecting pool, perennial flowers, shrubs, and trees. Anderson planted many of the flowers himself.

United States Senator Sam Nunn toured the campus on October 15. His tour guides were SGA President Les Simpson, Jr., Sophomore Class President Leesa Sirmans, and SGA Secretary Vonda Doss.

Food Services Director George Graul retired on December 31. His wife, Aliene, will continue to work with the new food services contractor for one year, and the Grauls’ daughter, Mary, will continue to work as the snack bar supervisor.

1985

ARA Services, the largest food contractor in the world, took over management of the Donaldson Dining Hall on January 1. David Gilman is the new Food Services Director.

In a news conference on January 14, President Stanley Anderson announced his retirement effective January 1, 1986. The Rudyard, Michigan native became the sixth president in the history of ABAC in 1975. During Anderson’s years as president, the scholarship endowment in the ABAC Foundation grew from $25,000 to $450,000. Registrar and Assistant Academic Dean Jim Burran was appointed as the chair of the presidential search committee.

Valerie Nettles from Tifton was crowned Miss Homecoming 1985 in the TABAC Beauty Revue on April 12. It was the only pageant she ever entered. Award winners at the 1985 Homecoming celebration on April 13 were Dr. Wanda Grogan, Distinguished Alumnus; Don Laing, Master Young Farmer; James H. Moore, Jr. (posthumous), Master Farmer; Carolyn McKenzie, Outstanding Young Alumnus, Carolyn Hill Branch, Master Homemaker, and Dr. Stanley Anderson, Honorary Alumnus. The 1935 ABAC football team held a reunion at Homecoming. Attendees included Wilbur Blount, Clayt Hurst, Billy Pullen, Harrison Rainwater, Grayson Jones, and M.T. Riner. A win over the University of Tampa’s freshman squad was the highlight of the year in 1935. Jim Threatte spoke on his memories of Coach Orion Mitchell during the reunion.

Farm Manager Robert Lindsey (Class of ’84) received the Carlton Staff Award for Excellence, and Dr. J.P. Rowe (Class of ’58) received the Carlton Faculty award for Excellence at the 1985 Honors Day ceremony.
TV star Gloria Loring sang to a sellout crowd of 750 persons who paid $75 each at Dollars for Scholars on May 17. At a press conference in Howard Auditorium prior to the event, fans of the daytime drama, Days of Our Lives, packed the building. The ABAC men’s tennis team, women’s tennis team, and golf team all won state championships in 1985. Coach Norman Hill’s Stallions finished fifth in the national tournament. John Jonsson from Sweden won the national championship at number two singles. Hill was named the International Tennis Association Coach of the Year. Coach Ellen Vickers’ Fillies finished 11th in the nation, and Coach Wayne Cooper’s golfers finished eighth in the nation. Joey Dixon was an All-America selection for the second year in a row. He is headed to Georgia Tech on a golf scholarship.

Doris Sears retired on June 30. She started her ABAC career in 1952 and served as the secretary for four ABAC presidents, a record which will probably never be broken.

Nancy Clark (Class of ’75) was hired as the first fulltime Director of Alumni Relations in the history of ABAC on September 23. An alumni fundraising campaign called the “Magic 300” helped to raise funds for Clark’s salary. As an ABAC student, Clark served as the editor of The Agriculturist and the ABAC Puller.

ABAC initiated the Tom M. Cordell Distinguished Lecture Series in Cordell’s honor on October 1. Cordell served 39 years as the head of the continuing education program at ABAC. The first speaker in Howard Auditorium was internationally known geneticist Dr. Glenn Burton from the Coastal Plain Experiment Station who spoke on Feeding a Hungry World. Other speakers in the series included former U.S. Attorney General Griffin Bell in 1987, Atlanta Mayor Andrew Young in 1988, Chick-Fil-A founder Truett Cathy in 1989, author Ferrol Sams in 1990, author Clyde Edgerton in 1993, Atlanta Opera Artistic Director William Fred Scott in 1995, author Janice Daugharty in 1996, Human Development Consultant William Parker in 1997, BellSouth Senior Vice President Carl Swearingen in 1999 and many others.

On October 30-November 1, Dr. Hal Henderson (Class of ’62) and Dr. Gary Roberts (Class of ’62), two professors in the Division of Social Science, organized an historic symposium titled Georgia Governors in an Age of Change: From Ellis Arnall to George Busbee. Former Georgia governors on stage in the Donaldson Dining Hall on one night of the symposium were Carl Sanders, Lester Maddox, Ernest Vandiver, and Herman Talmadge. Former governors Ellis Arnall, George Busbee, and Jimmy Carter send video-taped speeches. Governor Joe Frank Harris delivered the opening speech live on WTIF Radio through an amplifier on the Howard Auditorium stage when his plane could not land in Tifton due to inclimate weather. A video chronicling the life of the late Marvin Griffin was also presented. Georgia Secretary of State Max Cleland also addressed the audience. Ric Allen, political editor from the Atlanta Constitution, was the moderator. The event was taped by Georgia Public Television. Henderson
and Roberts used their research to write a book on the symposium which was published by the University of Georgia Press.

Under the direction of Haller Laughlin, the Baldwin Players staged *The Drunkard* during the fall term. A farewell reception was held for President and Mrs. Stanley Anderson on Dec. 1 in the Donaldson Dining Hall. They moved to their home in Sun City Center, Florida when he retired on December 31.

1986

Academic Dean Frank Thomas served as interim president from January 1-March 31. The Baldwin Players performed *Gigi* in Howard Auditorium during the winter quarter. ABAC students formed a Skateboard Club by converting the old tennis courts near the south parking lot into a skateboard complex with three street ramps and a large half-pipe ramp.

Dr. Wayne Curtis became president of Abraham Baldwin on April 1. An Alabama native, Curtis earned a bachelor’s and a master’s degree at Auburn University and a doctoral degree from Mississippi State University. He and his wife, Seretha, and their three children were the last occupants of the President’s home on Lake Baldwin during his presidency. Driggers, Anderson, and their families had also lived in the house during their presidencies. The ABAC president’s home later became the office for the College Advancement operation including the ABAC Foundation and the ABAC Alumni Association. When Dr. Harold J. Loyd was selected as president in 1989, he already had a home in the community.

Building on his background as Dean of the College of Business at Troy State University, Curtis commissioned an Image Study to determine how ABAC was perceived by faculty, staff, students, employers, high school counselors and area citizens. From this study, Curtis launched an aggressive marketing and promotional campaign which included new brochures, a direct mail campaign based upon interest surveys purchased from a list of SAT and ACT test-takers, and ABAC’s first toll-free telephone number for admissions. Through this new marketing approach, the college was referred to as Abraham Baldwin in much of the literature. Advertisements emphasized that the college had agriculture and many more majors.

After the Image Study was completed, Curtis appointed a campus-wide committee to develop a Strategic Plan for ABAC to determine the goals and objectives of the College. These goals and objectives were written down, prioritized, and a means for achieving them developed.

Curtis originated the idea of a new Enrichment Program to attract young people to the campus during the summer. He also emphasized evening and off-campus programs. The ABAC Incentive Program was also developed during the Curtis presidency. When the program was initiated, it received widespread publicity with stories in *USA Today* and the *Chronicle of Higher*
Education. Over 600 students received help from this program. The program provided free tuition donated by the ABAC Foundation for one course for individuals who had not attended college within the past five years and had no more than 40 college quarter hours. Participants in the program must also have been out of high school for at least five years. Curtis initiated much change at ABAC, laying the groundwork for future enrollment growth.

On April 10, the Fabulous Golddusters’ dance team took its recruitment show on the road for performances at Pineland Academy and Colquitt County High School in Moultrie and Pelham High School in Pelham. On April 17, the Golddusters performed for three different high schools in three different towns. Under the direction of Andrea Willis, the dance troupe performed at Lanier County High School in Lakeland, Irwin County High School in Ocilla and Berrien High School in Nashville.

Kendra Brock, a freshman fashion merchandising major from Marietta, was crowned as the Homecoming Queen at the 18th annual TABAC Beauty Revue on April 18. Award winners at the Homecoming luncheon were J.D. Patton, Distinguished Alumnus; Kathy E. Gill, Outstanding Young Alumnus; Armond Morris, Master Farmer; Yvonne Harrison Crawford, Master Homemaker; Al Curry, Jr., Master Young Farmer, and John Hunt, Outstanding Business Leader. Dr. Vernon Yow and Mike Chason were named Honorary Alumni of ABAC.

At the Honors Day ceremony on May 7, Dr. Gary Roberts received the Carlton Award for Faculty Excellence, and Jimmy Grubbs received the Carlton Award for Staff Excellence. Pacesetter winners selected by the TABAC staff at the student activities banquet on May 20 were David Cline, Ann Gibson, Chet Szymanski, Tracy Skinner, Andy Martin, Kris Perkins, Dr. Wayne Curtis, Lee Lacey, Leroy Bynum, and Pam Wiley. Eddie Seagle received the SGA Impact Award, and Delta Epsilon Chi was named Club of the Year. Lee Lacey was named Mr. Baldwin, and Linda Nichols was named Miss Baldwin.

Coach Tom Moody’s Stallions won the state baseball championship in 1986 on one of the most incredible plays in ABAC baseball history. ABAC piled up six runs in the top of the ninth inning in the championship game to take a 9-8 lead only to see number one-ranked Middle Georgia hit a pinch hit home run with one man on base in the bottom of the ninth. In his excitement, the pinch hitter passed his teammate on the base paths and touched home plate before him. That move constituted the final out of the game and negated the two runs. Stallions win! ABAC finished second behind Florida champion Brevard in the Southeast Regional. The Stallions had a final record of 31-16.

Coach Wayne Cooper’s ABAC golf team won the state championship and finished third in the national tournament. Jon Worrell was the medalist for the state tournament. Billy Edwards and Mike Elliot were selected for the All-America team, and Worrell was named as an Honorable Mention selection.
Coach Norman “Red” Hill led the Stallions’ tennis team to its 15th state title. Led by Jon Ola Johnson, the Stallions advanced to their 21st consecutive national tournament where they finished ninth. Coach Ellen Vickers and the ABAC women’s tennis team won the state title and wound up 15th in the national tournament. Angie Poppell won the state title at number one singles.

ABAC discontinued its women’s basketball program after the 1986 season and its women’s tennis program in 1987, citing low participation and problems recruiting quality athletes who were being recruited by senior colleges and universities trying to meet Title IX requirements.

Ray Stevens performed at the annual Dollars for Scholars Benefit Banquet and Show on May 23. Stevens also performed at the event in 1977.

Trudi Feldman was the editor of the 50th and final edition of the TABAC in 1986. Students were not interested in funding the publication the next year, and it never returned. Editor Kris Perkins led The Stallion to three first place general category wins in the Georgia College Press Association competition. He also became the first ABAC student to serve as president of the GCPA. Three other Stallion editors served as GCPA president while attending the University of Georgia: David Wansley in 1971, Melita Easters Hayes in 1974, and Jeannie Griffin in 1977.

Allison Mae Miller from Tifton was presented the Donaldson Award at the commencement ceremony on June 7. She is the daughter of Henry “Bo” Miller, assistant dean of student affairs. Kaycee Brown from Tifton was selected as the 1986-87 editor of The Stallion.

Former Academic Dean Loyal Norman and his wife, Dorothy, were killed in an automobile accident on September 23. Norman was the ABAC Academic Dean from September 1, 1965 until he retired in December, 1975.

On the same night of September 23, one or more persons cut their way into the ABAC Deer Pen and killed one of the deer using a bow and arrow and crippled two others. Assistant Professor of Wildlife Dick Payne said a reward of $4,000 was offered for information leading to the arrest and conviction of those responsible. The perpetrators were never found.

1987

Sandra Crawford from Chula was selected as the Academic Recognition Day student in the Georgia General Assembly for ABAC in 1987. The 1985 valedictorian at Tift County High School, Crawford compiled a perfect 4.0 grade point average at ABAC. Her parents, Johnny and Yvonne, are both ABAC alumni (Class of ’61).

Four horses owned by students were stabled at the Veterinary Technology building in 1987, marking a return of horses to the campus for the first time in seven years. From the early 1970s to the early 1980s, ABAC had about 50 horses on campus. Most were owned by the college and were used in PED 140, Horseback Riding. It was one of the most popular physical education
classes. The program ended because of the cost to ABAC, and students stabled their horses with area landowners. Future plans call for the construction of additional stables on the campus.

Dr. Vernon Yow, at one time the Dean of Men and a longtime professor in the forestry program, passed away on December 19. Yow received his forestry degree from Yale University. He joined the ABAC faculty in 1950 and started the forestry program in 1954. He was inducted into the Georgia Foresters Hall of Fame in 1981. Yow received the Carlton Award as ABAC’s top faculty member in 1973.

**1988**

At the ABAC Alumni Association board meeting on January 8, President Wayne Curtis announced that Peach State Radio, the public radio network in Georgia, was coming to ABAC. He said that the radio tower was supposed to be placed on University of Georgia property but due to a surveyor’s error, the site was placed in an ABAC pasture. The error was not discovered until the site had been approved by the Federal Communications Commission and the Federal Aviation Administration. He said that because the site had already been printed on navigation maps, the FAA decided the tower must be constructed on that site.

In return for the tower being placed on the ABAC property, ABAC gained a 2500-watt public radio station on campus. The frequency is 91.1 FM, and it will be called WABR. The 10-watt student radio station will continue to operate under the new call letters of WPLH. Tom Call will scale back his teaching duties in the Division of Agriculture to become the director of the public radio station, which is to begin broadcasting on March 1.

Bill Wilkinson assumed his duties as the ABAC comptroller on February 1. He replaced J. Talmadge Webb, who retired with over 30 years of service to the college in the comptroller’s position.

Missy Ball from Tifton was crowned Miss Abraham Baldwin on February 18 at the annual TABAC Beauty Revue sponsored by the campus yearbook. TABAC is the acronym for The Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College.

On February 27, *The Stallion* was named the top two-year college newspaper in Georgia by the Georgia College Press Association. The paper has now been named Georgia’s best in 14 of the past 18 years. Toi Hatchell from Tifton is serving as the 1987-88 editor of the publication. Helen Strickland has been the advisor to the publication since 1968.

With assistance from Director of Admissions Garth Webb and Director of Public Relations Mike Chason, Curtis established the ABAC Ambassadors’ leadership program during the winter quarter of 1988. The first six Ambassadors were Mildred Alexander from Blakely, Scott Chandler from Niceville, Fla., Toby Carmichael from Tifton, James Nash from Blakely, Laura Beth Tucker from Ocilla, and Pam Wood from Thomson. Admissions counselor Bruce
Applewhite was the primary advisor to the group. Tucker later became president of the ABAC Alumni Association.

Women’s slow pitch softball joined the ABAC intercollegiate sports lineup during the 1988 winter quarter. Ellen Vickers was the first coach. The team began its season with a 1-15 record but wound up winning the NJCAA Region XVII title and finished eighth in the national tournament.

Governor Joe Frank Harris honored Dr. Vincent Keesee, professor of art, as one of the recipients of the 1988 Governor’s Awards in the Arts. ABAC opened a new Olympic-size swimming pool on the west side of Gressette Gym on April 11. The old pool was filled in and covered by dirt and fresh sod. It was located on the north side of Thrash Gym.

The Yow Forestry-Wildlife Building was named in honor of former Dean of Men and Professor of Forestry Vernon Yow at Homecoming on April 23. Yow established the ABAC forestry program in 1954. ABAC celebrated its 80th birthday with an open house for the community in the dining hall on April 24. Former ABAC presidents J.G. Woodroof and Stanley Anderson joined President Curtis for a ceremonial cake-cutting. Alumni Director Nancy Clark organized the event.

Rowell Daniels from Tifton and Missy Ball from Eldorado were named Mr. and Miss Baldwin at the student activities banquet. Daniels served as the SGA president during the year, and Ball won the TABAC Beauty Revue. Gary Branch from Chula won the election for SGA president for the 1988-89 year, and Melody Miller from Tifton was elected SGA vice-president.

The ABAC Foundation received the largest bequest from any faculty or staff member in the history of the institution on May 16 when executrix Mary Lee Payne and attorney Hugh Gordon announced that $75,000 from the estate of former faculty member Katherine Rountree Christian will be set aside to establish the Katherine Rountree Christian Science Scholarships. Christian was an assistant professor of biology at ABAC from 1950-68. Development Director Melvin Merrill said the gift was the second largest single gift in the history of the Foundation, topped only by the $153,180 contribution from Homer and Weetie Rankin in 1981.

Laura Beth Tucker, a business major from Ocilla, received the Donaldson Award at the spring commencement ceremony on June 11. Juanita Willis from Tifton received her associate degree in business at the age of 73. She graduated from Henry Clay High School in Lexington, Ky., in 1933. She is perhaps the oldest graduate in the history of ABAC. Also at the ceremony, faculty member Andrea Pate Willis received the Abraham Baldwin Award for Teaching Excellence.

ABAC will operate on a four-day week from June 13 through August 31. The entire college will be closed on Fridays. ABAC will be open on a Monday through Thursday basis from 7:30 a.m. until 6 p.m. Employees will be allowed 30 minutes for lunch. ABAC can save as much as $15,000 in utility costs by closing on Fridays.
Floyd Wright has been selected as the assistant comptroller for ABAC, according to an announcement by Comptroller William Wilkinson on June 28.

Dr. Wayne Curtis resigned as the ABAC president, effective June 30, to become president of the First National Bank in Brundidge, Alabama. Although enrollment didn’t increase during his presidency, it went up significantly after he left the president’s office because of the strategies he put into place.

Dr. James A. Burran, Vice President and Dean of Academic Affairs, served the college as Acting President from July 1, 1988 through September 30, 1989. Under his leadership, the momentum began during Curtis' tenure continued. Enrollment went up, and two new programs, Turfgrass Equipment Management and Golf Course Management, were introduced. During his tenure as Acting President, Burran also continued to strengthen the link between the college and the community. Burran was later selected as President of Dalton State College.

Dr. Earl Knebel retired on July 1 as the chair of the ABAC Division of Agriculture and Forest Resources, a position he had held since 1984. Dr. Ron Jones, professor of agricultural economics, replaced Knebel as the chair of the division. Jones joined the ABAC faculty in 1967.

Chet Kimmell was appointed as the director of the physical plant on July 1. He began his ABAC career in 1973 and had served as acting director of the physical plant for the past six months since the retirement of Jim Livezey. Dr. Mary Emma Henderson retired as the Baldwin Library head librarian on August 1. Her employment at ABAC began in 1967 when Academic Dean Loyal Norman hired her as a cataloging librarian. She commuted from Ocilla for 21 years.

ABAC Coach Tom Moody signed Jay Roberts from Ocilla to a baseball scholarship with the Stallions. Roberts hit .388 with four home runs for the Irwin County High School Indians. He later achieved fame as a longtime state legislator.

Enrichment Program Director Susan Oliver said 23 different conference groups involving 1,800 persons were on the ABAC campus during the summer. She scheduled 42 youth classes for 400 students. High school football camps included teams from Tift County, Colquitt County, Ware County, Central of Macon, Cairo, Aquinus, Tiftarea Academy, and Flint River Academy.

Dr. Gary Roberts was appointed as the chair of the Division of Social Science on September 1. He replaced Dr. Ronald Faircloth, who returned to a full time faculty member’s position within the division.

During the 1988 fall quarter, ABAC enrolled 1,895 students. There were 968 females and 927 males. It marked only the third time in the history of the college that females outnumbered the males during a fall quarter. Both other instances were in the height of World War II when there were 77 females and 70 males in 1943 and 88 females and 85 males in 1944. During the 1981 summer term, there were 425 females and 424 males.
Nancy Scott, an assistant professor of business, will serve as the coordinator of a new initiative called the South Georgia Research and Development Center. Funded by a special initiative grant from the University System of Georgia, the Center includes representatives from ABAC, Albany State, Bainbridge, Darton, Georgia Southwestern, South Georgia, Waycross, and Valdosta State. Scott said the major goal of the program is to provide applied research and service programs to small businesses, minority businesses, agribusinesses, local governments, and other public agencies.

University System of Georgia Chancellor H. Dean Propst gave his charge to the ABAC presidential search committee on November 4. Dr. Lew Akin is serving as chair of the committee which will seek a replacement for Dr. Wayne Curtis, who resigned June 30.

A dedication ceremony was held on November 6 to officially name the student center building in honor of J. Lamar Branch, an ABAC alumnus (Class of ’37) who was at one time the State Director of Vocational Education programs in Georgia. Branch was the student body president before his ABAC graduation in 1937. In 1949, he became the executive secretary of the Baldwin Alumni Association, a volunteer position he held until ABAC filled the post with a staff member in 1969. Branch served as president of the Baldwin Alumni Association in 1938-39 and 1954-55. He and former president George P. Donaldson conceived the idea for the Greater Baldwin Foundation in 1954. Branch served as president of the ABAC Foundation in 1983-85. He passed away on March 5, 1988. The naming of the student center in his honor was approved by the ABAC Alumni Association on February 10, 1983 and by the faculty and staff of ABAC on March 1, 1984.

**1989**

The student newspaper received the top award for excellence among two-year colleges from the Georgia College Press Association on February 21. *The Stallion* claimed the prize for the 15th time in the past 19 years. Tanya Booth from Homerville is the 1998-99 editor of the paper.

On April 28, a building dedication ceremony was held to name the Business-Humanities Building in honor of Second District A&M School alumnus George D. Conger, who was a longtime benefactor of ABAC. Conger was the founder of the Conger Life Insurance Company in Miami. Born in Tifton in 1898, Conger entered the Second District A&M School on September 15, 1912. He continued his education at the University of Georgia and Emory University before receiving his Doctor of Medicine degree from the University of Tennessee Medical School in Memphis in 1925. For over 46 years, he practiced medicine and owned his own insurance company. Honored as the first recipient of the ABAC Alumni Association’s Distinguished Business Leader Award in 1979, Conger was one of the first members of the ABAC Foundation President’s Club. He also received a Golden Achievement Award, presented to those persons who have pledged or contributed more than $100,000 to the ABAC Foundation.
Development Director Melvin Merrill said Conger contributed over $117,000 to the Foundation from 1965 until a time prior to his death in 1981.

Melody Miller, a pre-engineering major from Tifton, was selected as the Donaldson Award recipient at the 1989 spring commencement ceremony. She is the daughter of Assistant Dean of Student Affairs Bo Miller, and his wife, Bobbi. Wesley Jones was selected as the ABAC Vice President for Fiscal Affairs in 1989.

Dr. Harold J. Loyd was named President of ABAC, effective October 1. This was the first time since George P. Donaldson’s selection in 1947 that someone from within the ranks of the faculty was selected to serve as president. The faculty and staff were quite enthusiastic with the selection. Employees in the news room at the Tifton Gazette actually broke out in applause upon hearing the announcement.

A Missouri native, Loyd received his undergraduate degree from Southwest Missouri State and his graduate and doctorate degrees from the University of Missouri. His wife, Rowena, worked in the ABAC Computer Center.

ABAC won four national intercollegiate sports championships during Loyd’s tenure, three in women’s slow pitch softball and another in men’s tennis. The college also added two new programs of study and even offered turfgrass classes at Sea Island on the Georgia coast.

Loyd joined the ABAC faculty in 1971 and was named Chairman of the Division of Business Administration in 1975. He also served as the Coordinator of Evening and Off-Campus Courses from 1986 until he took over as president. Loyd brought an enthusiasm and a "love for ABAC" that few presidents could match.

Under his leadership the marketing strategy for the college continued and broadened. Enrollment continued to increase for 22 consecutive quarters until the summer of '93. Loyd believed that ABAC’s customers--the students--were the V.I.P.'s on campus, and he believed in the special spirit that exists at Abraham Baldwin. He continued to promote that special spirit and the friendliness that exists between the faculty, staff, and students.

During his time as president, Loyd established a much needed Job Placement Center within the office of Counseling and Testing. Two external degree programs were approved for the ABAC location in Moultrie, and four-year degrees and graduate degrees were offered for the first time on the ABAC campus by nearby universities. Under his direction, the Strategic Vision for the college was updated, and Loyd accepted the challenge to communicate the vision of the college as embodied in the plan to all aspects of the college and to all of those to whom it serves. Many new faculty, staff, and administrative positions were established.

Loyd also gave new life to the ABAC Foundation as he spent many hours talking to friends and alumni of the college about opportunities to set up scholarships. Membership in the Foundation's
President’s Club climbed at a rapid rate. During his tenure, Loyd authorized two additional staff members in the admissions office to serve as recruiters in north Georgia and additional funds for a part time recruiter in South Georgia. Under his leadership, ABAC gained two new majors, hospitality management and poultry technology. The college also offered courses in golf and grounds management at Sea Island on the Georgia coast. It was called ABAC on the Island.

ABAC students Mark Pressley from Thomaston and Dost Mohammad from Panjgur, Pakistan finished third in the National Collegiate Fence Building Contest at the Sunbelt Expo in October. Dr. Jerry Davis was their advisor. On November 9, the faculty approved the naming of the conference room in Conger Hall after Dr. Mary M. LeMar. She was named first Chair of the newly created Division of Business Administration in September, 1962 when she joined the ABAC faculty as a professor. Under her leadership, the division grew from three faculty members to 12 faculty members and developed the framework for the divisional curriculum. She served as chair until June 30, 1975 when her health forced her to retire. LeMar achieved a level of notoriety early in her life when she became the first woman in the United States ever to buy her own motor company in 1937, the LeMar Motor Company. She passed away on July 24, 1989 at the age of 81.

Beth Tyson, a biology major from Tifton, was crowned Miss Abraham Baldwin 1990 at the ABAC Beauty Revue on November 9. In 1990, she also won the Miss Tifton Pageant.

1990

On March 1, Coach Norman Hill’s ABAC men’s tennis team defeated the University of Georgia in Athens. UGA was playing without its ace, Al Parker, on that day. The Bulldogs went on to win the NCAA national championship.

Lynn Youngblood, an agriculture major from Ashburn, was crowned the 1990 North American Limousin Queen at the National Western Stock Show in Denver.

Renowned author Ferrol Sams spoke at the Tom M. Cordell Distinguished Lecture Series on April 5. Alumni Association award winners at Homecoming on April 7 included Rufus Adams, Distinguished Alumnus; Roger Byrd, Outstanding Young Alumnus; Stanley Coley, Outstanding Agricultural Leader; Dice Roberts, Master Farmer; J. Richard Wansley, Master Young Farmer; Jimmy Allen, Outstanding Business Leader; Angela Noble Gordy, Helen Brown Sasser Award; and Emory McMillan and Robert Stone, Honorary Alumni. McMillan was the assistant comptroller at ABAC for 36 years, and Stone worked at the physical plant for 35 years. ABAC’s 1990 retirees honored at the luncheon included Dr. Ernest Edwards, George Evans, Dot Kendrick, Marie Worley, Esteen Castagna, Addie Lee Wilcox, Ruby Atkinson, Autrie Johnson, and Gladys Johnson. Betty Cox and Dr. J.P. Rowe were honored for 30 years of service.
Coach Ellen Vickers’ women’s intercollegiate slow-pitch softball team finished second in the 1990 national tournament after winning the Fillies’ third straight state tournament.

ABAC opened a new 10-stall stable behind the rodeo arena in the spring term for students who want to bring their horses to campus. A small fee of $50 per quarter will be charged for each horse. Admissions Counselor Bruce Applewhite worked with the ABAC 4-H Club to make this project a reality.

Wesley Langdale, a forestry management major from Lake Park, took office as president of the Student Government Association at the student activities banquet on May 22. President Harold Loyd said all use of tobacco products in the Donaldson Dining Hall will be prohibited as of June 1.

Carla Willis, an accounting major from Tifton, was crowned Miss ABAC 1991 on October 25.

1991

ABAC alumni award winners at Homecoming 1991 included Jimmy Allen, Distinguished Alumnus; Sandra Kemp, Master Homemaker; Jimmy Hill, Outstanding Agricultural Leader; Thomas Coleman, Master Young Farmer; and David Carlson, Master Farmer. Dr. Ernest Edwards directed an alumni Glee Club reunion concert at Homecoming.

Dr. Leona Mott won the 1991 Abraham Baldwin Award for Teaching Excellence at Honors Day. Verlin Scott received the 1991 Roy Jackson Award for Staff Excellence. Donnie Fowler, a computer science major from Tifton, was named the Academic Recognition Day Student at ABAC on Honors Day.

Marie Osmond was the featured performer at the 1991 Dollars for Scholars in May. She coaxed ABAC President Harold Loyd onto the Donaldson Dining Hall stage where she sang a song to him. Debbie Isaza received the Donaldson Award at the spring commencement ceremony.

Farm Manager Robert Lindsey received the 1991 SGA Impact Award from SGA President James Burroughs at the student activities banquet. A business major from Tifton, Burroughs moved into the president’s post when Wesley Langdale resigned from the position during the spring quarter. Burroughs was also named the Distinguished Ambassador of the year and won the 1991 Mr. ABAC contest. Dr. Jeff Gibbs was named the chair of the business division in 1991. During the year, Dr. Hal Henderson penned a biography of former Georgia Governor Ellis Arnall titled The Politics of Change in Georgia: A Political Biography of Ellis Arnall.

The Fillies’ 1991 softball team won its fourth straight state tournament and first ever national championship over Lake City (Fla.), the two-time defending national champions. Members of the team included Patty Beasley, Kelly Britsky, Kelly Burch, Dawn Lingo, Pam Purcell, Edy Leverette, Daphne Covington, April Crane, Wendi Ward, Lacy Whatley, Leeanne Yeager, and
Amy White, Lingo, White, and Whatley were named to the NJCAA 1991 All-America team. The championship was the second national title in the history of ABAC, preceded only by the 1984 men’s tennis team. The team compiled a record of 43-7 and was selected for the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2010.

Vickers was named the National Junior College Athletic Association National Coach of the Year in 1991. She was also Coach of the Year in Region XVII after her teams won state softball titles in 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, and 1994. Vickers was also Region XVII Coach of the Year in women’s tennis when the Fillies won state titles in 1984, 1985, and 1986. She retired in 1994 and was selected for the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2009.

Tom Moody (Class of ’58) stepped down as the ABAC baseball coach in June of 1991 after 24 years at the helm. He will remain on the staff as the ABAC golf coach. Craig Young replaced him as the Stallions’ diamond boss. Wayne Cooper (Class of ’62) resigned his duties as the ABAC golf coach in 1991 and became chair of the Department of Health, Physical Education and Recreation. Under Cooper’s leadership, the Stallions won the state golf title in 1991 for the 21st time in 22 seasons. The Stallions wound up 12th in the national tournament. The men’s tennis team under the leadership of Coach Norman Hill finished fifth in the 1991 national tournament, marking the 26th consecutive appearance for the Stallions in the tournament.

Angela DeBruhl became the first elected female president of the ABAC Student Government Association in May, 1991. The 27-year-old mother of four is a nursing major from Chula. Deborah Isaza, a human relations major from Tifton, received the Donaldson Award at the spring commencement ceremony. ABAC President Harold Loyd read the Robert Frost poem, *The Road Not Taken*, as a part of his remarks at the ceremony. Loyd keeps a ladder-back chair that once belonged to Frost in his office.

Alumnus Roy Strange from Moultrie was selected as the chair of the first Ag Alumni Council in 1991. Wayne Jones and Dr. J.L. Campbell developed the words and lyrics to a new ABAC alma mater. Arts Experiment Station Director Syd Blackmarr received the first ever Selina Roberts Ottum Award at the annual convention of the National Assembly for Local Arts Agencies. The Arts Station is celebrating its 15th anniversary.

**1992**

Beth Lee, a freshman business major from Tifton, was crowned Ms. Abraham Baldwin 1992 on January 9. In February, *The Stallion* was named the top two-year college newspaper in the state by the Georgia College Press Association. Amy Sanders from Jesup was the 1991-92 editor of the newspaper.
Lena Brandenburg, an animal science major from Stone Mountain, was crowned Miss Rodeo Georgia in May. In December, she traveled to Las Vegas to compete in the Miss Rodeo America event.

Ann Adkins received the Student Government Association Impact Award at the Student Leadership Banquet in 1992. Chip Prosser from Mansfield and Susan Kent from Fitzgerald were selected by the student body as Mr. and Ms. ABAC. Wendell Robinson, a nursing major from Adel, was elected as the first African-American president of the Student Government Association.

Lacy Whatley, a mechanical engineering major from Chula, was selected as the Donaldson Award recipient at the spring commencement ceremony. Whatley was a National Junior College Athletic Association first team All-America selection in softball in both 1991 and 1992. She led the Fillies to the national championship in 1991 and to a second place finish in the national tournament in 1992. Whatley compiled a .486 batting average to lead the Fillies to a school record of 53-9 in 1992. She is the career leader for ABAC in runs scored with 161, in hits with 201, in triples with 15, and in at-bats with 392. During her sophomore, junior, and senior seasons at Tift County High School, she led the Lady Devils to three consecutive state softball titles. She compiled a 3.84 grade point average at ABAC.

Juanita Willis completed the requirements for the joint bachelor’s degree in business between ABAC and Georgia Southwestern at the age of 77.

Registrar Benita Faircloth said the college reached an all-time enrollment high of 2,851 students in the 1992 fall quarter, marking the 20th consecutive quarter of an enrollment increase over the previous year. President Harold Loyd received the Honorary American FFA Degree at the 65th annual FFA Convention in Kansas City in November.

Home to a Rodeo Club since 1968, ABAC formed an intercollegiate rodeo team during the fall term of 1992. Admissions Counselor Bruce Applewhite served as the advisor to the team, which competed against 17 other colleges and universities in the Ozark Region, which covers Louisiana to Michigan. Members of the first rodeo team at ABAC included Brande Faircloth, John Frank, Jimmy Wood, Jim Ward, Tiffany Barrow, Angel Eason, Ryan Farris, Rodney Rucker, and Jody Fletcher.

On November 10, Amy Swanson, an education major from Fitzgerald, was crowned Ms. Abraham Baldwin 1993. Over 550 people attended the event in the Donaldson Dining Hall.

1993

In January of 1993, Moultrie National Bank President John Clark presented the keys to the J.C. Penney building in Moultrie to Ray Jensen, chair of the finance and investment committee of the
ABAC Foundation. Valued at over $100,000, the building at 31 East Central Avenue on the square in downtown Moultrie is to be renovated and used for ABAC classes in Moultrie.

Ryan Beard from Royston was named Mr. ABAC 1993 in the fourth annual contest. Dr. George Powell received the Teaching Excellence Award at the 1993 Honors Day, and Donnie Stone received the Roy Jackson Award for Staff Excellence. Amy Swanson, a freshman education major from Fitzgerald, was crowned Miss ABAC 1993. Floyd Wright, assistant comptroller since 1988, was selected as Vice President for Fiscal Affairs in 1993.

The Georgia College Press Association recognized Helen Strickland at its 1993 awards luncheon for her 25th year of advising the ABAC student newspaper. The Stallion was named Georgia’s best two-year college newspaper 20 times during that 25-year period.

ABAC Alumni Association award winners at the 1993 Homecoming celebration were Dr. Johnny Crawford, Distinguished Alumnus; Gail Darby Thompson, Master Homemaker; Ronnie Rollins, Outstanding Business Leader; Randall and Howard Morris, Master Young Farmer; Gary Farmer, J. Lamar Branch Award; Kim Allen Boling, Outstanding Young Alumnus. Betty Claxton, Florence Baxter, and J. Talmadge Webb received Honorary Alumnus status. The theme for Homecoming was “Proud of ABAC…Proud of America.”

ARA Dining Services Manager Kevin Humphreys was charged with the fatal shooting of Lee Strickland in an incident which occurred at approximately 2:15 a.m. on May 2 behind the Donaldson Dining Hall. A Tifton jury later determined that Humphreys acted in self-defense. Dr. George Powell became the only two-time winner of the ABAC Teaching Excellence Award at Honors Day on May 5. He also won in 1970. Donnie Stone received the Roy Jackson Award for Staff Excellence.

Renowned author Clyde Edgerton spoke at the Cordell Lecture on May 6, culminating a “Humor in Literature” series funded by a $3,000 Georgia Humanities Council grant.

Dr. Gary Roberts and George Scott directed a symposium titled “Many Spirits Dancing: A Celebration of Native American Art and Culture” at ABAC on May 17-19. The symposium on Native American art, culture, and literature was made possible by a $6,607 grant from the Georgia Humanities Council. Pianist Roger Williams made his second appearance as the Dollars for Scholars performer on May 21. His first appearance was in 1980 at the annual ABAC Foundation show to raise money for student scholarships. The 10th annual Love Affair fine arts festival in 1993 was named a Cultural Olympiad event, the only event outside of Atlanta with this designation by the Atlanta Olympic Games Committee.

Pacesetters selected by the campus newspaper at the student activities banquet on May 25 included Dr. Earl Bennett, Dan Bryant, Dave Christenson, Nancy Coleman, Geneva Day, Marolyn Mixon, Angie Murray, Stan Parker, and Lisa Simmons. Dianne Cowart received a Pacesetter II award, and Helen Strickland received a Superior Pacesetter award. Janet Weaver
received the 1993 SGA Impact Award. Dan Bryant, an environmental horticulture major from Climax, also received the Distinguished Ambassador award in 1993 after serving as president of the Ambassadors in 1992-93. ABAC students voted Chip Prosser and Samantha Alexander as Mr. and Ms. Baldwin. Prosser became the first person in the history of ABAC to receive the award two years in a row. Ernie Hair, a secondary education major from Tifton, was elected president of the SGA for the 1993-94 academic year. Rusty Cravey, a physical education major from Tifton, was selected as SGA vice-president.

The ABAC baseball team won the 1993 state championship, and Coach Craig Young was named the Coach of the Year. Perry Shiver of the Stallions was named the Most Valuable Player of the tournament. The ABAC golf team under the direction of Coach Tom Moody also won the state title for the 23rd time in the last 24 years. Moody was named Coach of the Year. Chris Newsham from ABAC was the medalist of the state tourney. Mark James and Boo Weekley of ABAC tied for fourth place. Weekley went on to have a very successful career on the PGA Tour. He was named to the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2010. The Stallion golfers finished 11th in the 1993 national tournament.

Coach Norman “Red” Hill and the ABAC men’s tennis team also won the state championship for the 11th consecutive year. The Stallions have now won the title 22 times in 27 years under Hill’s direction. The Fillies’ softball team finished second in the state in 1993 after winning the state title five consecutive times. Quan Thomas and Lee Davis from ABAC were named to the All-America team.

For the first time in the 16-year history of the Georgia Collegiate Softball Championship, a two-year college claimed the title in 1993 when “Sarge’s Crew” from ABAC beat West Georgia in the championship. Brian Barrett from Dacula was named the tournament’s Most Valuable Player. Newell “Sarge” Dorsey coached the team and received a National Intramural Recreational Sports Association Regional Award of Merit. ABAC faculty and staff voted in the spring of 1993 to name the intramural fields on campus after Dorsey when he passes away. “Sarge’s Crew” was selected for the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2014.

ABAC Athletics Director Wayne Cooper announced that ABAC will again have a women’s tennis team beginning in the fall of 1993. Samantha Alexander from Georgetown received the Donaldson Award at the 1993 spring commencement ceremony.

On June 2, the Golden Stallion statue had its legs sawed off, and it was tossed into the reflection pool at the Baldwin Memorial Gardens. Former Agriculture Division Chair Frank McCain passed away on June 18 at the age of 71.

Development Director Melvin Merrill said the 1992-93 year was the best ever for the ABAC Foundation. In the third year of the three-year ABAC 2000 capital campaign, gifts totaled $394,829, an increase of 27.24 percent from the previous year.
Dr. Donna Miller (Class of ’66) joined the ABAC administrative ranks on July 1 as Director of Institutional Research. Alan Kramer was named head coach of the women’s tennis team, which is now being added back to the intercollegiate sports lineup after being dropped in 1987. Alton Hudgins (Class of ’75) was named Intramural Director, replacing Newell “Sarge” Dorsey, who retired.

The 1993 fall quarter enrollment declined slightly to 2,773 from the alltime high of 2,851 in the fall term of 1992. Ann McDuffie, an art history major from Irwinville, was crowned Ms. Abraham Baldwin 1994 on November 9.

1994

*The Stallion* was named the top two-year college newspaper in Georgia for the 21st time in 24 years on February 19. Renee Garrett from Ashburn serves as editor, and Helen Strickland is the advisor.

President Harold Loyd's 1994 endeavor was a fundraising campaign to renovate the former J.C. Penney’s building in Moultrie to house ABAC classes. The campaign was a great success, raising over $220,000. The renovated building in Moultrie opened for classes during the 1997 spring term. The college actually began offering classes in Moultrie in 1987 at Moultrie Tech and the Moultrie Library. Longtime history professor and Moultrie Coordinator Merle Baker was instrumental in helping to secure funding for the new building as well as Director of Development Melvin Merrill. The new building increased enrollment in Moultrie significantly. It is called ABAC on the Square.

The 200-acre teaching facility known as the ABAC Farm was dedicated in honor of Dr. J.G. Woodroof at a Homecoming ceremony on April 9. Woodroof was the first president of ABAC in 1933. According to Board of Regents policy, the farm cannot actually be named for Woodroof until after his death. He is 94. Alumni Association award winners at Homecoming were Gaylord Coan, Distinguished Alumnus; George N. Turk, J. Lamar Branch Award; John R. Bassett, Outstanding Business Leader; Robert E. McLendon, Master Farmer; Louise Calhoun Woodham, Helen Brown Sasser Award; John J. Ellington, Outstanding Young Alumnus; D. Glenn Heard, Master Young Farmer; and Vera Smith Bailey and DeNean Stafford, Jr., Honorary Alumni.

Audrey Luke, a business major from Fitzgerald, was selected as the J.G. Woodroof Scholar at the Honors Day ceremony on May 4. The 1992 valedictorian for Fitzgerald High School compiled a perfect 4.0 grade point average at ABAC. Vivian Pearman, administrative assistant in the president’s office, was selected for the Roy Jackson Award for Staff Excellence at the ceremony. She began her ABAC career in 1966. Marolyn Mixon was named as the winner of the Carlton Award for Faculty Excellence. She also won the award in 1979. Georgia Governor Zell Miller was the guest speaker at the ceremony.
ABAC Humanities Division faculty member George Scott passed away in 1994. He was the husband of business division faculty member Nancy Scott. He taught journalism classes and was the student newspaper advisor when he arrived on campus in 1965. He later focused on teaching English. The George Scott Day Celebration of the Arts was named in his honor in 1996.

The ABAC student body voted Rusty Cravey, a drama/physical education major from Tifton, and Nancy Wheeler, an agriculture major from Alma, as Mr. and Miss Baldwin 1994. Math instructor Kyle Martin received the SGA Impact Award from SGA President Ernie Hair at the student activities banquet on May 24. The Student Georgia Association of Educators was named the top student organization on campus. Sheila Webb, a nursing major from Tifton, won the SGA presidential election, and Marsha Clayton, a nursing major from Nashville, won the election for SGA vice-president.

Renee Garrett, a journalism major from Ashburn, received the Donaldson Award at the spring commencement ceremony on June 11.

Dr. Larry Allen was named chair of the Division of Agriculture and Forest Resources on July 1. ABAC student Ernie Hair from Fitzgerald was named state president of the Student Georgia Association of Educators. Glover Womack, a pre-veterinary medicine major from Americus, was crowned Miss ABAC 1995 on November 15.

1995

For the 22nd time in 25 years, the ABAC student newspaper was selected as the best among two-year colleges in Georgia by the Georgia College Press Association in January. Elizabeth Rankin from Tifton was the 1994-95 editor of The Stallion. Steven Meeks, a biological and agricultural engineering major from Ty Ty, was selected as Mr. ABAC on March 9. He is a former Georgia State FFA President.

Alumni Association award winners at Homecoming on April 8 were Jimmy Grubbs, Distinguished Alumnus; Robert L. Miles, J. Lamar Branch Award; Robert M. Dutton, Outstanding Business Leader; A. Burnell Gaskins, Master Farmer; Sherrie Bloodworth Sumner, Outstanding Young Alumnus; and Helen Strickland, Honorary Alumnus. The first ever Outstanding Educator award was presented to Jane Grogan Gibbs, and the first ever Outstanding Health Care Professional Award went to Dr. Phillip L. Roberts. ABAC President Harold Loyd presented Allen Hasty (Class of ’16) with a coffee mug for being the oldest alumnus at Homecoming. Hasty is 99 years old.

At the Honors Day ceremony on May 3, Lynn Thornhill received the W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence and Betty Cox received the Roy Jackson Award for Staff Excellence.

The ABAC Fillies’ softball team captured the national championship on May 6 under the leadership of Coach Greg Tanner. Members of the team included Heather Beck, Sonia Bell, Lana
Conner, Teresa Cromer, Amanda Gibbs, Mia Gomez, Tonya Greene, Allison Hooks, Amy Johnson, Amy Norton, Tiffany Perry, Christa Timms, and Buffi Whitley. The team compiled a record of 52-9 and was selected for the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2011. Tanner left ABAC after one year to take a job with the Coffee County School System. He was elected to the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2012.

Coach Norman “Red” Hill and the ABAC men’s tennis team won the 1995 state championship to earn the Stallions their 30th consecutive trip to the national tournament where they finished third in the nation. Coach Alan Kramer’s women’s tennis team won the state title for the second year in a row en route to a sixth place finish in the national tournament. Kramer broke his leg on a visit to the Grand Canyon during the trip. Coach Tom Moody’s golf team won the state title and wound up 11th in the national tournament. Tanner, Hill, Kramer, and Moody were all named Coach of the Year in the state, and Tanner was named National Coach of the Year. ABAC dropped its golf program at the end of the 1995 season and added women’s volleyball, which will begin play in the fall.

Dr. Homer Day was appointed as the interim academic dean on May 15 with the departure of Dr. James Burran, who has been named president of Dalton College. The Capitol Steps comedy group provided the entertainment at the annual Dollars for Scholars Benefit Banquet and Show on May 19.

Developmental Studies Division faculty member Tamara Rellis received the SGA Impact award at the student activities banquet on May 24. Stuart Hasty from Rebecca and Ramona Hall from Tifton were selected as Mr. and Ms. Baldwin 1995 in a campus wide vote. Ramona Hall also won the Student Government Association election for president for 1995-96. Adrienne Brooks from Cartersville was selected as SGA vice-president.

Shealyn Alicia Allman from Moultrie received the Donaldson Award at the commencement ceremony on June 10.

Dr. Bettie Horne became the first female central administrator in the history of ABAC in August when she was named Vice President for Academic Affairs, replacing Dr. Jim Burran, who is now president of Dalton College. Horne was the director of instructional services at Lander University. Dr. Tim Wise was named as Vice President and Dean of Student Affairs in September, replacing Dr. Worth Bridges who held the position for 28 years before his retirement on June 30. Dr. Maggie Martin is the new Director of Counseling, replacing Dr. Rosemary Johnson, who held the position for 29 years. Assistant Dean of Student Affairs Henry “Bo” Miller also retired this summer after 24 years in that position. Vonda Doss (Class of ’85) is the new coordinator of the enrichment program.

Because of disease and age, the water oaks on the railroad side of Moore Highway will be removed this fall, eliminating the beautiful canopy which lined both sides of the highway for many years. The trees will be replaced with new oaks. The first women’s intercollegiate
volleyball team in the history of ABAC began play in September. Alton Hudgins is the coach. The Fillies finished undefeated at home and wound up second in the state tournament. Lori Bodiford, a physical therapy major from Tifton, was crowned Miss ABAC 1996 on November 14. Dr. Frank Thomas, former academic dean at ABAC, was elected president of the Georgia Cattlemen’s Association. His wife, Judy, was elected president of the Georgia Cattle Women’s Association. Thomas retired from ABAC in 1987. It’s the first time that a husband and wife have ever been presidents of the two associations.

1996

The ABAC newspaper claimed the top prize in the Georgia College Press Association contest for the 23rd time in the past 26 years. Dusty Vassey from Irwinville is the editor. Tom Call has been selected as the new ABAC registrar, and Merle Baker is the new director of evening and off-campus programs. Dr. Oscar Patton, chairman of the Division of Humanities, taught in Russia in a faculty exchange program with Syktyvkar State University from March 20-July 1. Dr. J.W. Reynolds from Ashburn donated his collection of Academy Award winning Best Picture films to the ABAC Humanities Division. The films cover every year from 1928 to 1996.

Rodeo Coach Jerry Lanier guided the ABAC Rodeo Team in the third annual Peach State Stampede on March 29-31. ABAC is ranked fifth in the Ozark Region. Brad Etheridge, an animal science major from Williston, Fla., was selected as Mr. ABAC in the annual contest on April 9. President Harold Loyd will serve as president of the Georgia Association of Colleges for the next year.

Alumni Association award winners at Homecoming on April 13 were Jack Legg, Distinguished Alumnus; Ben Strickland, Master Farmer; Marion Legg Mahaffey, Master Homemaker; Butch Davis, Outstanding Business Leader, Dr. Scott NeSmith, J. Lamar Branch Award; Laura Tucker, Outstanding Young Alumnus; Dr. Hal Henderson, Outstanding Educator; and Edna Branch, Honorary Alumnus. University System Chancellor Stephen Portch was the guest speaker at the Forum on Agriculture sponsored by the Ag Alumni Council. The Orene Allen Greene Memorial Garden was dedicated on the south side of the Donaldson Dining Hall in honor of Ginger Wheeler’s mother. Ginger is the wife of Dr. Bill Wheeler, former chair of the Division of Developmental Studies.

South Georgia author Janice Daugharty was the featured speaker at the Tom M. Cordell Distinguished Lectures Series on April 25. Amy Denise Welsh was selected as the J.G. Woodroof Scholar at the 1996 Honors Day ceremony on May 1. Dr. Ray Barber received the W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence, and Sara Willis received the Roy Jackson Award for Staff Excellence. Helen Reddy performed at the Dollars for Scholars Benefit Banquet and Show on May 10.
Coach Donna Campbell continued the ABAC run of success on the softball field when the Fillies won their second straight national championship on May 11 in her first year as the ABAC head coach. Players on the team included Tiffany McMillian, Paula Simmons, Sonya Chambliss, Deanna Roberson, Christa Timms, Tiffany Perry, Michelle Jackson, Ingram Perry, Kim Schell, Karla Santiago, Amy Johnson, Buffi Whitley, Anna Stripling, Alana Loper, and Dana Kay Eunice. Roberson was named the Most Valuable Player of the tournament. The Fillies compiled a record of 44-12 and defeated Meridian (Miss.) Community College for the national title. The team was selected for the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2012. It was the final year for slow pitch softball as Campbell led the Fillies into the fast pitch era of softball in 1997.

Coach Norman “Red” Hill and the men’s tennis team won the state championship and finished second in the national tournament. This is the fifth time that the Stallions have finished second in the nation. Coach Alan Kramer’s women’s tennis team won the state title for the third straight year and recorded a fifth place finish in the national tournament, marking the highest finish ever for the Fillies.

Steven Meeks and Lori Bodiford were announced as Mr. and Miss Baldwin at the student activities banquet on May 23. C.J. Reeve, an agricultural management/marketing major from Valrico, Fla., was elected as the president of the SGA. Joe Ezzard, an agricultural technology major from Eatonton, was elected vice-president. Retirees representing 159 years of service departed ABAC after the spring quarter. They included Dianne Cowart, Betty Cox, Dr. Eddie Griggs, Dr. Vincent Keesee, Tom Moody, and Dr. Leona Mott.

Margo Harris from Sparks was the Donaldson Award winner at the commencement ceremony on June 8. Don Coates and the ABAC Jazz Ensemble performed at the Montreux Jazz Festival in Montreux, Switzerland on July 5. The group also toured Germany and France and performed at Euro Disney near Paris. ABAC now has its own home page on the internet at http://stallion.abac.peachnet.edu.

For the fourth consecutive year, the ABAC Foundation set a record for total income. Development Director Melvin Merrill said the total income for 1995-96 was $858,778, exceeding the three quarters of a million dollar mark for the second year in a row.

Renovation on the ABAC building on the square in Moultrie got underway this summer. President Harold Loyd said construction should be complete in time for ABAC to offer classes in the building for the 1997 winter quarter. Standard Construction Company of Valdosta submitted the low bid of $440,179 to complete the first floor and exterior of the building. The second floor will be renovated at a later date. The ABAC Foundation raised approximately $212,000 for the project from alumni and friends in Colquitt County. President Loyd said state funds will cover the remainder of the project.

ABAC initiated two new programs in the Division of Agriculture and Forest Resources during the fall term, poultry technology and hospitality management. Daniel Goethe from Gothenburg,
Sweden will be the editor of *The Stallion* for the 1996-97 year. He is the first international student in the 32-year history of the newspaper to be named editor. Tamilla Kadymova from Baku, Azerbaijan is the editor of *Pegasus*. Development Director Melvin Merrill received the Distinguished Service Award in Educational Fundraising from the Georgia Education Advancement Council.

Dr. Bobbie Robinson from the Humanities Division was named the 1996 Board of Regents Distinguished Teacher of the Year. Fifty-nine family members and friends of the J. Alvin Rowan family attended a picnic and dedication ceremony for the Rowan Pavilion at Lake Baldwin. The Rowan family contributed $10,000 from the estate of their parents, J. Alvin and Lois Rowan, to renovate the pavilion. Bobby Rowan served as moderator.

The Stafford Fine Arts Series premiered on Nov. 3 in the dining hall when a 40-voice mixed ensemble of ABAC students joined the Tifton Choral Society, the Valdosta State University choirs, and the Valdosta Symphony Orchestra for a performance of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony. On November 12, Anesia Young, a psychology major from Fitzgerald, was crowned Ms. Abraham Baldwin 1997. Other titles she had already won included Miss Ben Hill Forestry, Miss South Georgia Charisma, Miss Georgia Peach and Miss Georgia Sweet Potato. She later won the Miss Tifton, Miss World Universal, and Ms. Georgia United States crowns.

### 1997

The ABAC Rodeo Club hosted the fourth annual Peach State Stampede Rodeo on April 3-5. The ABAC intercollegiate rodeo team, coached by Jerry Lanier, is ranked fifth in the Ozark Region of the National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association. The ABAC team is in its fifth year of competition.

United States Senator Paul Coverdell was the featured speaker at the Homecoming luncheon on April 5. Alumni Association award winners were Ford Spinks, Distinguished Alumnus; Dr. C. Jack Hearn, J. Lamar Branch Award; Dr. Charles P. Griner, Outstanding Educator; Jaimie Allen, Master Farmer; Dr. Chris Gibbs, Outstanding Young Alumnus; and Dr. Rosemary Johnson, Dr. Leona Reddick Mott, and Dr. Frank Thomas, Honorary Alumnus Award.

Writer Beverly Hall was the featured speaker at the Tom M. Cordell Distinguished Lecture Series on April 10.

Coach Donna Campbell guided the Fillies to the state championship in their first year of fast-pitch softball. She was named Coach of the Year in Region XVII. ABAC lost in Eastern Regional tournament action in North Carolina. The men’s tennis team of Coach Norman “Red” Hill won the Region XVII title behind the play of Conrad Hurter, the most valuable player of the
tournaments. The ABAC women’s tennis team finished fifth in the national tournament. The baseball Stallions rolled up a 35-16 regular season record.

Tracy Lynn Chason, a dietetics major from Tifton, was selected as the J.G. Woodroof Scholar at the Honors Day ceremony on May 7. She compiled a perfect 4.0 grade point average. Chason is the daughter of Public Relations Director Mike Chason and his wife, Kris. Ed Seagle received the W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence, and Patsy Hembree received the Roy Jackson Award for Staff Excellence at the ceremony. Assistant Secretary of State for the State of Georgia Cathy Cox (Class of ’98) was the guest speaker at the Honors Luncheon following the ceremony.

At 2 p.m. on May 7, a ceremony was held on the south side of the library building to name the entire structure in honor of ABAC benefactor O.D. Carlton, II, from Albany. A cloth was placed over the letters on the south side of the building, and Carlton’s daughter and granddaughter pulled long ropes to unveil the lettering for the Carlton Center. Carlton has been a member of the ABAC Foundation since 1974 and has supported the college since 1966. He is chairman of the board of the Carlton Company, the Caterpillar dealership in Albany.

Rebecca Callaway from Tifton assumed her duties as the SGA President at the student activities banquet on May 13. John White will serve as SGA Vice President. Dr. Larry Allen received the SGA Impact Award at the banquet. C.J. Reeve was voted Miss Baldwin, and John White was voted Mr. Baldwin. The Student Georgia Association of Educators was named Club of the Year. Pacesetter award winners were Helen Beard, Nita Lynch, C.J. Reeve, Esther Hanson, Angi Fulp, Farrah Hegwood, Luther Woodall, and Dr. Tim Wise. Andrea Savage received a special award for 23 years of service as the advisor to Pegasus. She will retire in August. President Harold Loyd received the most donations in his name and was the lucky winner of the Kiss-The-Pig contest.

A professional company of 17 musicians presented the music of Henry Mancini in a tribute titled Oh, Henry! at the annual Dollars for Scholars Benefit Banquet and Show on May 23. Pianist Mac Frampton and trumpet player Cecil Welch were the key figures in the orchestra.

Ralenda Thornton, an agribusiness major from Hoboken, received the Donaldson Award at the spring commencement ceremony on June 14. She served as an ABAC Ambassador for three years. She served as president of the Ambassadors for two of those years, winning the Distinguished Ambassador Award, the Leadership Award for Ambassador President for two years, and the Service Award for Ambassadors for two years.

Foundation Scholars selected by the ABAC Foundation for the 1997 fall quarter included Leanne Stalvey and Heather Powell from Berrien High School, Kelli Bass from Colquitt County, Leslie Walker from Cook High; Karly Branch, Sam Utley, and Jennifer Thompson from Tift County High; Amy Belflower and Chad Griffin from Tiftarea Academy; Kenneth Murphree, Jr., and Harold Hobby from Turner County High; Justin Joiner from Irwin County; and Holly Davis from
Worth County High. For the 10th straight year, the ABAC Foundation offered a scholarship covering all tuition and fees to the top five graduates from Berrien, Colquitt, Cook, Ben Hill, Irwin, Tift, Turner, and Worth counties. The top three students from each school who accept the invitations receive the scholarships.

Yana Bakshevskaya, a business major from Novosibirsk, Russia, became the first truly international student to be crowned Ms. ABAC 1998 on November 13. She was an exchange student when she graduated from Tift County High School and decided to pursue her college education at ABAC. Her only other pageant experience came when she finished second in the Miss Siberia contest.

Beth Doellefeld, an art major from Duluth, participated in the Miss Rodeo America competition in Las Vegas on November 29. She won the Miss Rodeo Georgia crown in May.

1998

ABAC opened the Multicultural Awareness Center on January 28. Wasdon Graydon, Jr., who also directs the ABAC minority advising program, is the director. Beginning in 1998 and continuing through 2000, the Center began instituting a series of Mandala Movement workshops with instruction by Dr. William C. Parker. Parker is the former Vice Chancellor for Minority Affairs at the University of Kentucky. Graydon said the purpose of the workshops is to create a prolonged, institutionally based effort that substantiates and sustains an environment that is continually sensitive to all people. Youth Connection Coordinator Vonda Fenn assists in the coordination of the workshops.

For the 25th time since 1971, The Stallion was named the best two-year college newspaper in the state by the Georgia College Press Association in February. Elizabeth Stone and Aaron Sagers, both from Tifton, are the co-editors of the paper. Rebecca Callaway from Tifton was elected as the president of the Georgia Press Institute. Chad Crews won the 1998 Mr. ABAC contest.

In March, Vera Conger Smith Bailey from Tifton gave the ABAC Foundation her 147-acre farm as the basis for the Vera Conger and Carlton Smith Charitable Remainder Annuity Trust. ABAC President Harold Loyd said the Trust was funded at $360,000. It was the second largest trust ever received by the Foundation. Bailey’s first connection to the college came in 1929, a week after she graduated from Tifton High School. She took a phonics class at the Georgia State College for Men to prepare for her teaching career. After completing the class, Bailey took the Georgia State Teachers’ Exam, passed it and taught for 41 years.

The ABAC Alumni Association sponsored a 90th birthday party for ABAC at the 1998 Homecoming Weekend on April 3-4. Activities included the Big Band Dinner and Dance featuring the Dave Mercer Band, the Peach State Stampede Rodeo, and the Birthday Bash Dinner.
Homecoming award winners were Newt Hudson, Distinguished Alumnus; Mary Alice Hasty Bolton, Outstanding Educator; Patty Garrett Clark, Outstanding Health Care Professional; William I. Bowen, Jr., Outstanding Young Alumnus; Carolyn Willis Grant, Outstanding Business Leader; R. Harry Thompson, J. Lamar Branch Award; Alan S. Verner, Master Farmer; and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson, Roy R. Jackson, Sr., and E. Ray Jensen, Honorary Alumni. For the first time ever, the Alumni Association presented the Family Legacy Award to the J. Curtis Branch family who had a total of 35 members of their family attend ABAC.

The Agricultural Engineering Technology building at ABAC was named for Professor of Agricultural Engineering Emeritus Jesse George Chambliss, Jr., at Homecoming on April 4. Chambliss began his teaching career at ABAC in January, 1944. He taught until 1946 and then resumed his ABAC teaching duties in June, 1948 until his retirement in 1981. He received the Carlton Award for Teaching Excellence in 1966, the Pacesetter Award in 1974, and the SGA Impact Award in 1981. The ABAC Alumni Association named him an Honorary Alumnus in 1982.

Patricia D. Giddens, a nursing major from Adel, was selected as the J.G. Woodroof Scholar at the Honors Day ceremony on May 6. Also in May, ABAC benefactor O.D. Carlton, II, from Albany purchased and placed in the Baldwin Library a beautiful English sideboard, side chairs, lamps and an Oriental rug at the west end of the building’s second floor.

Tim Meeks, an agribusiness major from Ty Ty, and Barbara Grogan, a family and consumer sciences major from Norman Park, received the Donaldson Award at the 1998 spring commencement ceremony. It marked only the third time in the history of ABAC that the award was presented to two students. Two recipients were also selected in 1972 and 1976.

Two-time Grammy Award Winner Jack Jones provided the entertainment at the 27th annual Dollars for Scholars Benefit Banquet and Show on May 15. Tickets cost $100 each. Amy Burt was the director for the Baldwin Players’ production of A Midsummer Night’s Dream on May 27-30 in Howard Auditorium.

Academic Affairs Vice President Bettie Horne said that Brenda Sellers will become Director of the Baldwin Library on July 1. Sellers had been serving as interim director following the resignation of Harriett Mayo in 1996. She joined the staff in 1972. Beginning July 1, Aramark will take over custodial services at ABAC as well as continuing to provide food service for the campus.

ABAC President Harold Loyd announced in July that prospective students can now find out more about ABAC on the internet at http://www.abac.peachnet.edu. ABAC’s new web site contains information about the conversion from quarters to the semester system.
ABAC welcomed two new administrators at the start of the fall term, Bernice Hughes in her role as director of student life, and Janelle Louder as director of financial aid and veterans affairs. Division of Nursing Chair Joy Conger said nursing classes will be offered at night for the first time during the 1998 fall semester.

Beginning in 1998 and continuing through 2000, the Center for Multi-Cultural Awareness on campus began instituting a series of Mandala Movement workshops with instruction by Dr. William C. Parker. Parker was the former Vice Chancellor for Minority Affairs at the University of Kentucky. Wasdon Graydon, Jr., director of the Multi-Cultural Awareness Center, said the purpose of the workshops was to create a prolonged, institutionally based effort that substantiates and sustains an environment that is continually sensitive to all people after the facilitators departed.

ABAC and the University System of Georgia switched to the semester system from the quarter system in the fall term of 1998, triggering a System-wide enrollment decline. The ABAC enrollment dropped from 2,633 students during the 1997 fall quarter to 2,502 students during the 1998 fall semester. The first fall semester in the history of ABAC began on August 20. Since Conger Hall was closed during the 1998 fall semester for renovation, students attended classes in Conger Commons, a series of mobile classrooms placed in the area between Fulwood, Branch, and Mitchell halls.

Casey Long from Ringgold led the women’s volleyball team of Coach Alton Hudgins into its fourth year of action on September 5 against Middle Georgia and Spartanburg Methodist. Long was named to the all-conference team and all-tournament team in 1997 after leading the Fillies in aces, kills, and blocks.

On November 12, Crystal Hunter from Ocilla was crowned Ms. Abraham Baldwin 1999. Hunter was born without a right hand but said the “inconvenience” does not hold her back in any way.

1999

The Georgia College Press Association awarded its 1999 top prize for publishing excellence among two-year colleges to The Stallion. Elizabeth Stone from Tifton was the 1998-99 editor of the newspaper. Helen Strickland was the advisor. She was also the advisor when the paper won its first general excellence award in 1971.

At the 1999 Honors Day ceremony, Suzanne Evans, an English major from Tifton, was named the J.G. Woodroof Scholar. Faculty/staff award winners were Michael J. Curry, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence; and Mike Williams, Roy R. Jackson Award for Staff Excellence.
Amanda Lord, a family and consumer sciences major from Jakin, was elected president of the Student Government Association in April. She will replace Kellie Richards, a liberal arts major from Fitzgerald, who was named SGA President during the spring semester. Richards received the Pivot Award during the ceremony. Andrea Day, a business information technology major from Sparks, was elected SGA vice-president.

The graduation speaker for the spring 1999 commencement ceremony was Georgia Secretary of State Cathy Cox (Class of '78), the first female Secretary of State in the history of Georgia. Jeff Harris, Jr., a pre-medicine major from Chula, received the Donaldson Award at the ceremony. The spring term enrollment was 2,337.

Coach Norman “Red” Hill won another national championship in men’s tennis for ABAC in 1999 when his team captured the national crown on Hill’s last day at ABAC before retirement. Members of the team were Richard Crabtree from England, Gildardo Lobo from Venezuela, Nathan Lundy from England, Eric Von Hellens from Australia, Glenn Allsop from Australia, Rajeev Rajapakse from Sri Lanka, and Richard Evans from England. The team was selected for the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2013.

Hill announced at the start of the 1998-99 academic year that he was retiring after the season. His players were well aware of that fact and wanted him to step into retirement in a grand style.

“I knew we had a chance to win it but I knew playing Tyler in Tyler, Texas was going to be hard,” Hill said. “It was just one of the most fantastic things that ever happened to me. To go out that way, the kids really played hard for the school and for me.”

Hill said the regular season leading up to the national tournament was not a smooth ride. In fact, Evans, playing at number one singles, decided to give up on the Stallions and return to England during the spring break.

“Then he called me and asked me if he could come back,” Hill said. “I told him he had to start at number seven and play his way back up the ladder. Eric played really well at number one after Richard left.”

Evans did return and in a storybook ending, captured the most valuable player trophy at the national tournament.

Hill remembers the volume of the Tyler crowd.

“Sarge (Newell Dorsey) and I started rubbing empty tennis cans across the chain link fence every time we got a point to try to make some noise of our own,” Hill said.

Good strategy. The Stallions won the championship, lifted Hill on their shoulders, and they all went to Outback Steakhouse to celebrate. When they got back to Tifton, members of the faculty, staff, and student body celebrated with the champions when their van pulled up in front of Tift Hall.
Hill carried the Stallions to the national tournament for 34 consecutive years, an alltime record. He wound up with an overall record of 848 wins and 183 losses. He retired as the winningest men’s college tennis coach in America.

Coach Alan Kramer led the 1999 ABAC women’s tennis team to the NJCAA Region XVII title and a second place finish in the national tournament. Kramer called the team “the most talented women’s tennis team in the history of ABAC” when the team members were inducted into the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2015. The second place finish was the highest ever for a women’s tennis team at ABAC.

Leading the way was Milena Stanoytcheva from Bulgaria. She won the national championship at number one singles, won Region XVII Tournament MVP honors, and was named first team All-America. Other team members were Annamaria Hodi from Hungary, Luciana Tamburini from Brazil, Nicola Sharp from Zimbabwe, Louise Holmvik from Sweden, and Georgians Amy Hopkins, Sabrina Harper, Casie Hodges, and Jodie Rayl.

James Tate and Rebecca Akins were named Mr. and Miss Baldwin 1999 in a campus wide vote. James Adair from Snellville was selected as Mr. ABAC 1999.

ABAC retirees in 1999 included Ed Byers (26 years), Dr. Libby Campbell (33 years), Wayne Cooper (30 years), Jeanie Doss (23 years), Norman Hill (34 years), Helen Strickland (31 years), Joann Sumner (26 years), and Sarah Willis (30 years). Strickland returned to work part time with the ABAC public relations office in the design and layout of campus publications until September 30, 2003.

Enrollment rebounded during the 1999 fall term to 2,609 as students across the state adjusted to the semester system. ABAC began offering classes in golf course management on Sea Island as a part of a new endeavor titled ABAC on the Island. Dr. Ed Seagle coordinated the classes. On November 16, Janie Cannon was crowned Ms. Abraham Baldwin 2000.

The first fall semester commencement ceremony in the history of ABAC took place on December 18 in Gressette Gym.

2000

The Georgia College Press Association and the Southern Regional Press Institute selected The Stallion as the best newspaper in Georgia in the two-year college category in February. Janet Heard from Vienna is the editor, and Dr. Eric Cash is the new advisor. Cash replaced longtime advisor Helen Strickland when she retired in 1999.

At the 2000 Honors Day ceremony, award winners included Dr. Larry McGruder, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence; Charles Griffin, Roy Jackson Award for Staff Excellence; and Dr. Larry Allen, E. Lanier Carson Leadership Award for administrators. Jodie Rayl from Fitzgerald was named the J.G. Woodroof Scholar at the
A member of the Fillies’ tennis team, she was also named the Donaldson Award winner at the spring commencement ceremony.

Milena Stanoycheva from Bulgaria became the first female tennis player in the history of ABAC to win back-to-back national championships at number one singles. The Fillies of Coach Alan Kramer won their seventh consecutive state title and wound up fourth in the national tournament. Jeff Kutac replaced the legendary Norman “Red” Hill as the coach of the ABAC men’s tennis team. He led the Stallions to a second place finish in the state tournament and a sixth place finish in the national tournament. Kutac resigned his post at the end of the season. Women’s tennis coach Alan Kramer was named to replace Kutac, and Margaret Treadway was named the new women’s tennis coach.

Coach Donnie Veal led the basketball Stallions to a second place finish in the state tournament in his final season as coach before his retirement. Robert Moore was named the new head men’s basketball coach. Coach Donna Campbell’s Fillies won the state softball title. During her five years as head coach, Campbell has won a national slow pitch championship and three state fast pitch titles. Coach Steve Janousek’s baseball team compiled a 31-20 record and finished fourth in the state tournament.

Carl Stalvey, an agricultural engineering major from Ray City, was named Mr. ABAC 2000 at the event on March 7 sponsored by annually by the Family and Consumer Sciences Club. ABAC students herded a small herd of cows through Tifton as a prelude to the annual Peach State Stampede Rodeo at the ABAC rodeo arena.

The spring semester enrollment was 2,327.

Dr. and Mrs. Loyd moved back to their home state of Missouri when he retired on July 31.

Dr. Homer Day began serving as Interim President on August 1. Day joined the college administration in 1972 and held a variety of leadership positions including Director of College Services and Coordinator of Federal Programs and as the Director of Financial Aid. He had also served as Interim Vice President and Dean of Academic Affairs. Day became the first African American to lead the institution in either the role of president or interim president.

A total of 2,630 students enrolled for the 2000 fall term. ABAC brought back its women’s basketball program after a 15-year absence in August. Tifton native Julie Conner was named head coach.

University System of Georgia Chancellor Stephen Portch charged the ABAC Presidential Search and Advisory Committee on September 21 with the task of finding candidates for the position of president atABAC. Dr. Chrystle Ross, professor of business information technology, was chair of the committee.

Under the direction of Dr. John Galyean, the Baldwin Players presented *Killer’s Head* and *Endgame* on November 9-11 in Howard Auditorium. Mary Jane Snow, a freshman psychology major from Tifton, was crowned Ms. ABAC 2001 on November 14.
2001

Bo Moore from Tifton was named the president of the Georgia College Press Association at its February convention. Moore is the 2000-01 editor of *The Stallion*. The newspaper finished third in the General Excellence competition.

At the 2001 Honors Day ceremony, Mary H. Spurlock, a business information technology major from Moultrie, was named the J.G. Woodroof Scholar. Faculty/staff award winners were Nancy Scott, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence; Teresa Williams, Roy R. Jackson Award for Staff Excellence; Wasdon Graydon, E. Lanier Carson Award for administrators; and Lorie Felton, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Excellence in Advising Award.

Bo Chesser, a forest resources major from Nahunta, and Ashli Metts, an animal science major from Alapaha, were selected as Mr. and Miss Baldwin in a campus wide vote. Chesser was treasurer of the SGA, and Metts was president of the Ambassadors.

Luiza Biktyakova, a freshman physical education major from Uzbekistan, won the national championship at #2 singles for the 2001 ABAC women’s tennis team. She finished the year 24-0 and was named to the NJCAA All-America team. Biktyakova teamed with Natalie Drabova for a 24-1 record playing doubles. They won the national title at #1 doubles. Coach Margaret Treadway’s Fillies finished fifth in the nation in the team competition.

Coach Donna Campbell’s softball Fillies won another state title and finished in the top six in the national tournament. Coach Alan Kramer’s tennis Stallions finished second in the state tournament and seventh in the national tournament. The baseball Stallions of Coach Steve Janousek finished third in the state tournament.

The featured speaker at the spring graduation ceremony was Michael L. Thurmond, Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Labor. The spring semester enrollment was 2,450.

Dr. Homer Day retired from ABAC on June 30 when his time as Interim President ended. He and his wife, Caroline, continued to live in Tifton.

Michael F. Vollmer became the ninth president in the history of ABAC on July 1. He is a Pennsylvania native who graduated from Greensboro (N.C.) College. He received his law degree from John Marshall Law School in Atlanta. He and his wife, Lennie, brought a lot of energy to ABAC.

Vollmer had served in state government for the previous 20 years. He was the first executive director of the HOPE Scholarship Program and the first executive director of the Pre-Kindergarten Program. Prior to taking over the ABAC presidency, Vollmer served as the Director of the Office of Educational Accountability for the State of Georgia.

Vollmer engaged the ABAC Foundation in an ambitious project to bring new student housing to the campus. The $32 million ABAC Place apartments now stand tall on the west side of ABAC.
as a result of Vollmer’s persistence. Under Vollmer’s leadership, ABAC’s enrollment climbed to over 3,000 students for the first time ever during the 2002 fall term, and then skyrocketed to 3,407 students during the 2003 fall semester. Upon Vollmer’s invitation, Valdosta State, Georgia Southwestern, and Macon State began offering junior and senior level classes on the ABAC campus. ABAC on the Square in Moultrie experienced its largest enrollment ever with over 400 students during the 2004 spring term.

Vollmer was a true visionary. He mapped out plans for new buildings at the college, including a new Agricultural Sciences building, a new Health Sciences building, and the Pedestrian Mall.

Vollmer’s first year as president was a very active one. The college opened the new Environmental Horticulture Building on August 15. The Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia also agreed to put Tift, Lewis, and Herring halls on the renovation list for a $10 million renovation project at some point in the future.

A total of 2,857 students enrolled for the 2001 fall semester. The campus community came together for a prayer service in the Chapel at noon on September 11 when the tragic events of that horrible day in American history unfolded. The next edition of The Stallion was filled with letters and thoughts about the tragedy from students, faculty, staff, and administrators.

Luiza Biktyakova won the Junior College Women’s Singles Championship at the Intercollegiate Tennis Association National Small College Tournament in Dallas in October. She became the first female ABAC tennis player to win the tournament.

Rebecca Paul, President/Chief Executive Officer of the Georgia Lottery Corporation, was the fall commencement speaker.

2002

The ABAC Foundation received the $1 million Forest Lakes Golf Club as a gift from Tifton ophthalmologist Larry Moorman and his wife, Debra, in January. The college operates the golf course as a public course but also uses it as a teaching laboratory for students in a variety of majors. The 2002 spring semester enrollment was 2,656.

Also in January, The Stallion was named the General Excellence award winner in the two-year college category for the Georgia College Press Association annual competition. Dr. Eric Cash serves as newspaper advisor. In February, The Stallion received the first place award from the Southern Regional Press Institute. Nathan Johnson from Tifton serves as the 2001-02 editor of the paper.

On March 2, the Fillies’ basketball team won the NJCAA Region XVII title for only the second women’s state basketball championship in the history of ABAC. The first came in 1984. In the tournament at Atlanta Metro, Coach Julie Conner’s Fillies defeated Georgia Perimeter 61-59, Middle Georgia 48-44, and Atlanta Metro 76-72 in the title game. Chelsie Miller was named the tournament’s Most Valuable Player, and Jasmin Lee was named to the All-Tournament team.
The Fillies lost the national tournament playoff game to Louisburg (N.C.) in Gressette Gym to end their season with a 16-16 record. It is the only women’s national tournament basketball game involving the Fillies ever played on the ABAC campus. Coach Robert Moore’s men’s basketball team compiled a record of 21-9 and lost in the first round of the state tournament.

President Vollmer pushed hard for bachelor’s degrees to be offered on the ABAC campus by other colleges and universities. As a result, Valdosta State offered the junior, senior, and graduate level classes necessary to obtain an undergraduate and graduate degree in education, Macon State offered the junior and senior level classes necessary to obtain a B.S. in information technology, and Georgia Southwestern offered all classes necessary to obtain a bachelor’s degree in either accounting or management. Albany State also offered the classes necessary to obtain a master’s degree in business administration on the ABAC campus.

At the 2002 Honors Day Ceremony, Leslie Ann Parrish, an animal science major from Savannah, was named the J.G. Woodroof Scholar. Faculty/staff award winners were Geoff Clement, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence; Van McGriff, Roy R. Jackson Award for Staff Excellence; Mike Chason, E. Lanier Carson Award for administrators; and Rebecca Arnold, Excellence in Advising Award.

ABAC broke ground on the $7.1 million Ag Sciences building on April 6. Carl Harrell from Columbus and Dalla Nascimento from Americus were selected as Mr. and Ms. Baldwin by the student body. Harrell was captain of the men’s basketball team.

The spring commencement ceremony featured Anna Marie Brown, an early childhood education graduate from Ashburn, as the guest speaker. Tiffany Chaney, an early childhood education major from Fitzgerald, won the Donaldson Award at the ceremony. Chaney was president of the Ambassadors in 2001-02.

Coach Alan Kramer’s men’s tennis team won the state championship and finished second in the national tournament. Gaston Verna was the MVP of the state tournament, and Kramer was named Coach of the Year. The women’s tennis team of Coach Alton Hudgins won its eighth straight state title and finished sixth in the national tournament. Luiza Bitzyakova was the state tournament MVP, and Hudgins was named Coach of the Year. The women’s softball team of Coach Donna Campbell won the state championship for the third straight year and wound up ninth in the nation with a record of 31-25. Jackie Moore was the MVP of the state tournament. Coach Steve Janousek’s baseball team had a record of 27-26 and lost in the first round of the state tournament.

The college had a “concrete cracking” to signal the beginning of the construction of the $1.5 million Pedestrian Mall project on August 5. John Hunt (Class of ‘59), a member of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, led the way with a sledge hammer as he pounded the old concrete benches in front of Conger Hall. On August 27, ABAC held a ceremony to announce the opening of the $1 million Red Hill Athletic Center in honor of legendary tennis coach Norman “Red” Hill.
ABAC celebrated its 3000th student with a ceremony on the front steps of Tift Hall on September 12. Mandee Smith was the 3000th student at ABAC that semester. The 2002 fall semester marked the first time in the college’s history that over 3,000 students were enrolled. The official fall enrollment was 3,033.

On November 12, Allison Lea Day was selected as Ms. Abraham Baldwin 2003. The fall 2002 commencement speaker was Regent John Hunt (Class of ’59).

2003

The ABAC student newspaper claimed the top prize among two-year colleges in both the Georgia College Press Association and the Southern Regional Press Institute competitions in February. Kristin MacKenzie from Fitzgerald is the 2002-03 editor of The Stallion, and Dr. Eric Cash is in his fourth year as the advisor.

ABAC alumnus and Board of Regents’ member John Hunt (Class of ’59) passed away at 1 a.m. on March 19. Dignitaries from across the state attended the funeral at the First Methodist Church on March 21. ABAC experienced its largest spring term enrollment to date with 2,296 students.

The college opened the first phase of the Pedestrian Mall at Homecoming on April 5. At the 2003 Honors Day Ceremony, Jeanine Dorminey, a mathematics major from Tifton and a member of the Fillies’ basketball team, was named the J.G. Woodroof Scholar. She was also the speaker at the 2003 spring commencement ceremony and won the Donaldson Award at that ceremony.

Faculty and staff award winners at Honors Day 2003 were Cathy Rogers, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence; Fran Kinchen, Roy R. Jackson Award for Staff Excellence; Bernice Hughes, E. Lanier Carson Award for administrators; and Pattie Clark, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Excellence in Advising Award.

Sam Freeman from Lagrange was elected president, and Brian Elrick from Pembroke was elected vice-president of the Student Government Association for 2003-2004. Pippa Mpunzwana, a fashion merchandising major from Harare, Zimbabwe, was selected by the students as Ms. Baldwin, and Brett Tucker from Ocilla was selected as Mr. Baldwin at the 2003 student activities banquet.

Over the past year, ABAC President Mike Vollmer and members of the ABAC Foundation have cultivated the ideas behind the $32 million project to build the ABAC Place apartments. The plan was approved by the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia on May 21. Vollmer said ABAC Place will be the largest privatized project ever undertaken by a two-year college in the United States. Under the plan, the ABAC Foundation will use funds from bonds issued by the Tift County Development Authority to build two three-story residence halls. All 835 students housed in the 14-acre complex will have private rooms. Most units are four-bedroom, two-bath. Every unit has a complete kitchen. Vollmer said the rent will be
approximately $345 per month for a 12-month lease. Vollmer drove a bulldozer to break ground for ABAC Place in a ceremony in front of Chandler Hall on June 23.

A total of 1,567 students enrolled for the summer term, the highest number in history. The college also began instituting a Maymester, a short session where students could pick up one or two classes in a very condensed schedule. These students counted toward the summer term enrollment.

Former Valdosta State assistant Todd Sheppard was named the men’s basketball coach at ABAC in July. He replaced Robert Moore, who became the head coach at Tift County High School.

President Mike Vollmer held his annual first day of class press conference for the fall semester on August 18 on the roof of the Baldwin Library with the ABAC Place construction project stretching out in the background behind him. ABAC experienced its highest enrollment to date with 3,407 students during the 2003 fall term.

President Vollmer was on the floor for the faculty team at the Moonlight Mania basketball event on September 29 in Gressette Gym. Phase Two of the Pedestrian Mall opened on October 14 when University System Chancellor Thomas Meredith, Representative Austin Scott, Representative Jay Roberts, and Regent Julie Hunt planted a tree beside the Mall.

President Vollmer instigated the idea for a new campus sign system and helped to secure funding for two electronic signs on Moore Highway and Davis Road which were turned on for the first time on November 5.

Pippa Mpunzwana, a fashion merchandising major from Harare, Zimbabwe, was selected as Ms. ABAC 2004 on November 11. Congressman Sanford Bishop and Mpunzwana were the featured speakers for the fall commencement ceremony on December 16. Mpunzwana was also selected as the recipient of the Donaldson Award at the ceremony.

2004

The first phase of the $32 million ABAC Place complex opened on a rainy January 9. The first residents and their parents pushed shopping carts full of their belongings through the rain with big smiles on their faces. The spring semester enrollment was 3,157.

President Vollmer drove a backhoe to start the demolition of Chandler Hall on January 27. Earlier on the same day Chancellor Thomas Meredith cut the ribbon to officially open the new $7.1 million Agricultural Sciences Building.

On February 18, ABAC celebrated its 400th student during any one semester at ABAC on the Square in Moultrie. Stephanie Withrow was that student. The event was coordinated by ABAC on the Square Director Kay Powell. The college kicked off Phase Three of the Pedestrian Mall project at Homecoming on April 3.
At the 2004 Honors Day Ceremony, Jennifer Raynor, a nursing major from Fitzgerald, was named the J.G. Woodroof Scholar. Faculty and staff award winners were Joy Shurley, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence; Duane Weeks, Roy R. Jackson Award for Staff Excellence; Kay Powell, E. Lanier Carson Award for administrators; and Sue Wilson, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Excellence in Advising Award.

The 2004 spring commencement speaker was Joel McKie (Class of ’04), National FFA organization vice-president for the southern region in 2002. Trisha Stephens from Tifton was selected as the Donaldson Award winner. She served as president of the ABAC Ambassadors during the 2003-04 academic year. The first three signs of the new campus outdoor sign system were installed July 14. On July 16, former Georgia Governor George Busbee passed away. He was a member of the ABAC Class of 1944. Busbee made history when he became the first Georgia governor to serve consecutive terms from 1975-1983.

On August 1, ABAC privatized its physical plant by contracting with Sodexho. The company took over all grounds maintenance, custodial work, and physical plant duties. The fall semester enrollment was 3,362.

The “glass-breaking” for the new $7.2 million Health Sciences Building was held on September 1. The “glass-breaking” involved Tift Regional Medical Center CEO Bill Richardson using a backhoe to crash through a window at the Moore Building, which was demolished along with Creswell Hall to make way for the new Health Sciences Building.

Vollmer’s last day as president of ABAC was on September 14. He became Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education on September 15. He will always be remembered as a president who accomplished a great deal in a relatively short period of time.

Vice President for Student and Enrollment Services Tom Call was named Interim President of ABAC, beginning September 15. He joined ABAC as a faculty member in the Division of Agriculture and Forest Resources in 1981. He entered the administrative ranks as the ABAC Registrar in 1996.

The official grand opening for ABAC Place was held on September 23, with a speech by Chancellor Thomas Meredith. At the ceremony, Meredith dedicated the John Hunt Town Center in honor of ABAC alumnus and Board of Regents member John Hunt (Class of ’59), who passed away in 2003. Hunt’s wife, Julie, also an ABAC alumnus (Class of ’65), took his place on the Board of Regents.

Call spoke at the dedication ceremony for the Steinway Grand Piano donated by the Stafford Foundation on September 21. He was also the featured speaker at the Sunbelt Expo Exhibitors’ Luncheon on October 19. ABAC was the featured exhibitor at the 2004 Expo and was honored for developing the farm show on its campus in the mid-1960s.

A new phone system went into effect at ABAC on November 16. Dr. Chrystle Ross, Executive Director of the Office of Information Technology, was the key person in the changeover from regular phone lines to Voice Over Internet Protocol.
In November, 2004, Call officially requested State College status for ABAC, paving the way for the college to offer four-year degrees of its own in Diversified Agriculture and Turfgrass and Golf Course Management. The University System gave ABAC approval to continue to develop its plans for State College status in April, 2005 but did not give the official sanction for State College status until May 16, 2006.

Fulwood Hall, Mitchell Hall, and Branch Hall were razed in the fall of 2004. Jessica Jones, an early childhood education major from Lenox, was crowned Ms. ABAC 2005 on November 16. Nancy Lott, an Honor graduate in nursing, was the featured speaker for the fall 2004 commencement ceremony. Mieko Camp, a biology major from Ocilla, received the Donaldson Award at the ceremony.

2005

Creswell Hall and the Moore Building were razed in January of 2005 to make way for the Health Sciences Building. Construction on the Health Sciences Building began in February. The spring term enrollment was 3,106. A Board of Regents’ study showed ABAC had an overall $110 million annual impact on the South Georgia area in January.

Larius Johnson, a journalism major from Tifton, served as the first African-American editor of The Stallion, in 2004-05. The paper was named the best in the state among two-year colleges by the Georgia College Press Association in January. Dr. Eric Cash was the advisor.

At the 2005 Honors Day Ceremony, Kaedy Cawthon, an Early Childhood Education major from Jackson, was named the J.G. Woodroof Scholar. She was also the speaker for the 2005 spring commencement ceremony. Cawthon was president of the ABAC Ambassadors in 2004-05.

Faculty and staff award winners at Honors Day 2005 were Dr. Kay Weeks, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence; Pathelyn Smith, Roy R. Jackson Award for Staff Excellence; Diane Kilgore, E. Lanier Carson Award for administrators; and Joy Shurley, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Excellence in Advising Award.

Ellis Washington, III, a political science major from Tifton, won the election for Student Government Association president in the spring of 2005. Sodexho replaced Aramark as the ABAC food services provider on July 1.

The college experienced another all time enrollment record in the fall of 2005 with 3,423 students from 149 Georgia counties, 16 other states, and 17 countries. In her first pageant ever, Melissa Maher, an animal science major from Snellville, was selected as Ms. ABAC 2006 on November 8. She is president of the ABAC Rodeo Club and a barrel racer on the ABAC intercollegiate rodeo team. ABAC brought back golf to the athletics’ program after a 10-year absence in the fall of 2005 with Herb Hendrix as coach.
Pedro Perez, an engineering major from Moultrie, received the $2,500 Hispanic College Fund Scholarship from the Ford Motor Company. He participated in the 12th annual awards gala and leadership development program in Washington D.C. and met the CEO of Ford Motor Company.

On November 30, Interim Chancellor Corliss Cummings charged the ABAC Presidential Search and Screening Committee with the task of finding ABAC a new president. Alumnus William Bowen, Jr., chaired the committee. Call issued a charge to the college’s 100th birthday celebration committee on December 1. Public Relations Director Mike Chason will serve as chair. The 2005 fall commencement speaker was State Senator Joseph Carter.

2006

The spring term enrollment was 3,152, a slight increase over the 3,106 students enrolled in the spring of 2005. The Master Plan for ABAC was approved by the Board of Regents after a presentation by Interim President Call and Master Plan Committee Chair Mike Chason in Atlanta on January 10. The plan called for extensive changes to the physical face of the campus including a new Perimeter Road and moving the Physical Plant facility.

At the 2006 Honors Day Ceremony, Michael Maw, an agronomy and agricultural communications major from Tifton, was named the J.G. Woodroof Scholar. Faculty and staff award winners were Dr. Herbert Shippey, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence; Janice Payne, Roy R. Jackson Award for Staff Excellence; Bertha Daniel, E. Lanier Carson Award for administrators; and Dr. Luke Vassiliou, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Excellence in Advising Award.

The ABAC women’s tennis team finished in a tie for 12th place at the NJCAA national tournament in Tucson. Whitney Lightfoot received the NJCAA Arthur Ashe Sportsmanship and Leadership Award.

Governor Sonny Perdue was the guest speaker at the spring graduation ceremony on May 9. Maleria Brown, a journalism major from Sycamore, was the Donaldson Award recipient.

After months of searching and interviews, the Board of Regents named Dr. David C. Bridges as ABAC’s 10th president on May 11. Bridges became the first alumnus ever to serve as president. The Parrott native was a member of the Class of 1978. He received his undergraduate and graduate degrees from Auburn University and his Ph.D. from Texas A&M University. He spoke to an enthusiastic ABAC crowd on the front steps of Tift Hall on the afternoon of May 11. His wife, Kim, is also an ABAC alumnus. In fact, they met in Rosalyn Donaldson’s English class on the ABAC campus.

Trisha Yearwood performed for over 1,800 patrons at the largest Dollars for ABAC Scholars event in its history on May 12. Yearwood’s father, Jack, was a 1952 ABAC graduate. Assistant Development Director Betty McCorvey coordinated the event.
President-Elect Bridges and Interim President Call returned to the front porch of Tift Hall on May 17 for a celebration party when ABAC was named a State College by the Board of Regents. The announcement actually came at 2:03 p.m. on May 16 at the Regents’ meeting in Atlanta. Interim President Call was in Atlanta for the historic announcement.

Call walked out of the president’s office into retirement on June 30. He became the longest serving interim president in ABAC’s history. He and his wife, Judy, continued to live in Tifton.

Pattie Garrett Clark (Class of ’76) passed away on June 5. She was a former Chair for the Division of Nursing and a faculty member in the nursing program at ABAC for 26 years.

Bridges’ first official day on the job was July 1. He became the first ABAC president to be formally inaugurated in an impressive ceremony on August 25 in Gressette Gym. The ceremony attracted presidents and representatives from 17 other colleges and universities. Bridges called it “a day I will never forget.”

During his first year as president, Bridges evaluated every area of the college and set the stage for many changes. He announced a record enrollment at his first day of class press conference on August 21 of 3,574 students from 10 states, 11 countries, and 153 Georgia counties. He kicked a soccer ball into the net at the E.B. Hamilton Complex on August 26 to signal the opening of the first ever women’s intercollegiate soccer season at ABAC. Under the direction of Coach Jimmy Ballenger, the Fillies recorded a first year record of 9-5-1.

Bridges was the keynote speaker when ABAC opened the $7.2 million Health Sciences building on September 20. Tift Regional Medical Center provided $1 million toward the construction of the building which involved a public-private partnership with the ABAC Foundation.

For the first time ever, the WALB-TV news team from Albany broadcast its evening newscast live on the ABAC campus on October 5. On October 23, Bridges and ABAC Foundation Board of Trustees Chair Ruth Raines pushed a plunger to set off a small charge of dynamite to signal the groundbreaking on the ABAC Lakeside student housing project on the north shore of Lake Baldwin.

On November 30, the groundbreaking ceremony for the soccer field/intramural fields project was held. A helicopter loaded with soccer balls flew over the ABAC intramural field and Public Relations Administrative Associate Pam Leonard pushed out the balls to signal the beginning of the groundbreaking on the $1 million first phase of the project.

John Ellington (Class of ’80), Judge for the Court of Appeals of the State of Georgia, served as the fall 2006 commencement speaker. Michael Maw, an agronomy and agricultural communications major from Tifton, was selected as the recipient of the Donaldson Award at the ceremony.

2007
ABAC opened the 2007 spring semester with 3,146 students, six students less than the previous spring. However, the summer term numbers showed 1,403 students, up 11 students over the summer of 2006, to set the stage for the fall semester which yielded the largest enrollment in ABAC history, 3,665 students.

Under the direction of Coach Todd Sheppard, the men’s basketball team at ABAC won the most games in the history of the program during the 2006-2007 season with a record of 27-5. The Stallions lost in the state title game to Georgia Perimeter. ABAC also lost twice to Georgia Perimeter during the regular season.

The atrium in the Health Sciences Building was dedicated to the memory of former Division of Nursing Chair Pattie Garrett Clark (Class of ’76) in a ceremony on March 15, 2007.

ABAC kicked off its 100th birthday celebration at the Homecoming luncheon on March 31, 2007 with a parade of students holding lighted birthday cakes and a short play which told the story of the bidding ceremony for the A&M School. Alumni Director Nancy Coleman coordinated the event.

At the 2007 Honors Day Ceremony, Casey Allison, a business administration major from Dahlonega, was named the J.G. Woodroof Scholar. Faculty/staff award winners were Beth Thornton, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence; Pam Leonard, Roy R. Jackson Award for Staff Excellence; Dr. Bobbie Robinson, E. Lanier Carson Award for administrators; and Kay Powell, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Excellence in Advising Award.

Miles Drummond, an English major from Tifton, and Jill Dunn, a veterinary medicine major from Tifton, were voted Mr. and Ms. Baldwin 2007.

Alumnus George T. Smith was the guest speaker at the spring graduation ceremony on May 4, 2007. Smith (Class of 1940) is the only Georgian ever to win contested elections to all three branches of state government. He is a former Speaker of the House, Lieutenant Governor, and Supreme Court Justice. Smith was also selected for the Board of Regents Hall of Fame on March 3, 2007.

Amy Grant performed at the Dollars for ABAC Scholars Benefit Banquet and Show at the UGA Tifton Campus Conference Center on June 15, 2007. Sponsored by the ABAC Foundation, it was the last concert of its kind in the longtime Dollars for Scholars format. Dollars for Scholars began in 1972 with Anita Bryant as the first performer in an effort to raise funds to build the Chapel of All Faiths.

On June 19, 2007, the president’s office moved out of Tift Hall for the first time in the history of ABAC. The president’s office, public relations office and fiscal affairs office relocated to Evans Hall, the former health center. Ashley Williamson joined the staff as the Public Relations Assistant on June 19. Tift Hall was closed on July 25, 2007 when Procurement became the last office to move out of the building. Tift, Lewis, and Herring are now awaiting rehabilitation.
Dr. Niles Reddick became the vice president for academic affairs at ABAC on July 1, 2007 after the retirement of Dr. Caroline Helms. Dr. Bridges named him to the President’s Cabinet along with Dr. Gail Dillard, vice president for student affairs; John Clemens, vice president for fiscal affairs, and Dr. Chrystle Ross, Chief Information Officer.

On July 1, 2007, ABAC took over management of the ABAC Place apartments from Place Properties. Director of Residence Life Bernice Hughes and her staff now direct all housing on the campus, including the new ABAC Lakeside complex.

The ABAC Jazz Band toured Europe in July, 2007 and actually played at the opening of the Tour de France bike race in London. Don Coates directed the band and coordinated the trip.

Classes opened for the 2007 fall term on August 20, 2007 with the alltime enrollment record of 3,665 students from 154 Georgia counties, nine countries and 14 states. President Bridges said in his first day of class press conference that the college also had a record number of students living on campus, almost 1,300 with the opening of ABAC Lakeside.

The dedication ceremony for the new soccer field was held on August 28, 2007 when the Fillies cut the ribbon on a gorgeous new field on the ABAC campus. The team then defeated Georgia Military College 3-0 in the first home game ever for women’s soccer at ABAC.

One hundred green-and-gold balloons fell from the ceiling of the Grand Lobby of ABAC Lakeside on September 10, 2007 when President Bridges pulled the rope, signifying the opening of the $17 million complex which features rooms for 489 students. Ruth Raines, chair of the ABAC Foundation, spoke on behalf of the Foundation, which again helped to provide the funding for the project.

The 100th birthday celebration continued throughout the fall semester with a special ceremony at the ABAC Sunbelt Expo exhibit on October 17, 2007. As an extra added attraction to the celebration, ABAC was named the 10th best community college in the nation in a poll by the Washington Monthly Magazine. The associate degree Turfgrass Management program was rated seventh in the nation in another poll by Turfnet Magazine, and the new four-year degree turfgrass program was rated 26th in the nation without a single class being taught.

President Bridges announced his Second Century Project in a Town Hall meeting in the Health Sciences Building on November 13, 2007. He outlined a plan for the college to grow and prosper in its second century of service and established a goal for ABAC to become “Georgia’s State College of Choice.”

Mike Chason and Ali Csinos were the emcees for the first ever students’ iMovie Festival on November 8, 2007 in Howard Auditorium. Men’s basketball coach Todd Sheppard was the fall 2007 commencement speaker.

2008
Dr. Tim Marshall, chair of the Division of Agriculture and Forest Resources, cut the ribbon on January 7, 2008 to signal the first day of class for the brand new bachelor’s degrees in diversified agriculture and turfgrass and golf course management. Dr. Renata Elad taught the first class. Enrollment leaped to 3,230 students for the 2008 spring semester. Evelyn Eve, assistant to the registrar at ABAC for 28 years, passed away on January 31, 2008.

The final days leading up to the Centennial Celebration of ABAC passed in a blur. Mike Chason, chair of the 100th birthday celebration committee, met with the group for the final time on January 8. Through the assistance of committee members and particularly the help of Public Relations Assistant Ashley Williamson and Executive Assistant to the President Pam Leonard, the details were hammered into place.

President Bridges made special arrangements for an entire ABAC contingent to travel to Atlanta on February 14, 2008 to meet with legislators at the state capitol. Senator Joseph Carter headed an effort to have ABAC recognized in the State Senate that morning, and Representatives Austin Scott and Jay Roberts arranged for a recognition ceremony in the State House later the same morning. Bridges and George T. Smith both spoke at the two ceremonies. They were surrounded by legislators who were ABAC alumni.

The entire ABAC group then went to Governor Sonny Perdue’s office for a group photo. Those representing ABAC included President David Bridges, Vice President for Academic Affairs Niles Reddick, Vice President for Student Affairs Gail Dillard, Vice President for Fiscal Affairs John Clemens, Chief Information Officer Chrystle Ross, ABAC Alumni Association President Joy Carter, ABAC Ambassadors President Ashton Harper, First Lady Kim Bridges, Chief Advancement Officer Melvin Merrill, Director of Grants and Development Betty McCorvey, Public Relations Assistant Ashley Williamson, and Public Relations Director Mike Chason.

It was a great day for ABAC under the Gold Dome! The event served as a prelude for a terrific week of the Centennial Celebration on February 18-22.

The Celebration Week began on February 18 with a breakfast in the Donaldson Dining Hall for the entire faculty and staff. It continued at noon on that day with the slicing of a birthday cake in Moultrie for all students at ABAC on the Square. Kay Powell, Director of ABAC on the Square, arranged for an impressive ceremony.

More birthday cakes were needed on February 19 when ABAC students were served cake in the dining hall. Also on that day, Bridges spoke to the ABAC Foundation Board of Trustees at their quarterly meeting and did a live WTIF radio show with Chason. The students enjoyed a Centennial Celebration parade around campus arranged by Dean of Students Bernice Hughes. Singer Corey Smith entertained over 1,200 spectators in the John Hunt Auditorium of the UGA Tifton Campus Conference Center that evening.

On February 20, the big moment arrived with a brilliant blue sky on a perfect 70-degree day. Exactly 100 years earlier, a total of 27 students had walked up the steps of Tift Hall for their first day of class at the Second District A&M School.
One century later, ABAC had a breakfast for retired faculty and staff, a presentation in Howard Auditorium featuring a fantastic documentary on the college’s first 100 years by Cindy Barber from Media Services, a tribute to the college from George T. Smith, a speech by President Bridges which addressed the first century and the century to come, recognition of former presidents at the Presidential Plaza Dedication, and free rides on a hot air balloon. Mike Vollmer was the only former president to return but he was joined by former interim presidents Dr. Frank Thomas, Tom Call, and Dr. Homer Day.

ABAC alumnus Steven Meeks (Class of ’96) read a resolution in Howard Auditorium commending ABAC on its 100th birthday from United States Senators Saxby Chambliss and Johnny Isakson. Meeks works for Chambliss in his Atlanta office. A resolution was also received from United States Congressman Jim Marshall which was read on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives. ABAC was also honored by resolutions from the City of Tifton and the Tift County Board of Commissioners.

On the evening of February 20, Don Coates, Dr. Susan Roe, and Woody Leonard directed the ABAC Concert Band, Concert Choir, Jazz Band, Jazz Choir and Dixie Stallions Dixieland Band in a wonderful concert featuring “100 Years of Musical Memories” in Gressette Gym. Following the concert, an awe-inspiring fireworks display took place over Lake Baldwin in front of the ABAC Lakeside complex. Fireworks watchers were even treated to an eclipse of the moon after the fireworks had faded away.

On February 21, President Bridges and Chason addressed the Tifton-Tift County Chamber of Commerce luncheon on the 100th birthday celebration. Alumni Director Nancy Coleman and Athletics Director Alan Kramer coordinated a dinner for the first ever ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame. Chason conceived the idea for the Hall of Fame as a part of the 100th birthday celebration in a planning session with Ashley Williamson in November, 2007.

Six legends from the ABAC athletics program were recognized and presented crystal stallions between games of the ABAC-South Georgia Tech basketball matchups in Gressette Gym on February 21. Named to the first Hall of Fame were Orion Mitchell, Bruce Gressette, Thomas Cheney, Phillip Simpson, Norman “Red” Hill, and Milena Stanoytcheva. Mitchell, Gressette, Cheney, and Stanoytcheva were named to the Hall posthumously. The state runner-up team from 1958 was also recognized at halftime of the men’s game that evening.

On February 22, the Centennial Celebration Week ended on the front steps of Tift Hall where ABAC student Sam Webb explained how ABAC students constructed ABAC’s very own time capsule. Agriculture and Forest Resources Division faculty members John Franklin and Ray Lundy directed the design and construction of the capsule. The time capsule will be placed in the remodeled Tift Hall. The capsule is to be opened on February 20, 2108. The event ended when faculty members, staff members, administrators, and students gathered on the steps of Tift Hall to release 100 balloons into the gray South Georgia sky as a salute to the next 100 years of ABAC.
ABAC took a step toward the future on March 28-30 when a design team from the University of Georgia College of Environment and Design came to Tifton for the weekend to come up with a new design for the front of campus to include the three historic buildings of Tift, Lewis, and Herring halls. All three of the 100-year-old buildings are now vacant and awaiting rehabilitation.

The Centennial Celebration continued on Homecoming weekend on April 3-5 when Alumni Relations Director Nancy Coleman directed a jam-packed schedule which featured ABAC alumni from different decades adding candles to a gigantic birthday cake during a luncheon in Gressette Gym. The evening hours featured “Jukebox Saturday Night” and fireworks over Lake Baldwin. Former interim president Jim Burran returned for the Homecoming luncheon.

Copies of the 100 Years of ABAC Memories book were sold for the first time at Homecoming. The book was edited by Mike Chason and designed by Ashley Williamson. President Bridges and ABAC Alumni Association President Joy Carter sealed the 100th birthday time capsule during the Homecoming luncheon in Gressette Gym.

At the 2008 Honors Day Ceremony, Christina Ann Norton, an art major from Tifton, was named the J.G. Woodroof Scholar. Faculty/staff award winners were Lorie Felton, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence; Jimmy Felton, Roy R. Jackson Award for Staff Excellence; Andrea Willis, E. Lanier Carson Award for administrators; and Tammy Dennis, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Excellence in Advising Award.

ABAC alumni were in the news in the spring of 2008 when Michael Johns, known as Michael Lee when he was an ABAC student in 1998, finished as one of the finalists in the nationwide “American Idol” competition. Another alumnus, Thomas “Boo” Weekley (Class of ’93), won $990,000 when he captured the title in the PGA Verizon Heritage golf tournament at Hilton Head, S.C., for the second year in a row.

The ABAC Cattleman’s Association won the prestigious “Chapter of the Year” award for the state of Georgia in 2008. Dr. Mary Ellen Hicks is the advisor for the chapter. Coach Alan Kramer and the Fillies’ tennis team won their 15th consecutive state title behind the outstanding play of Monika Lalewicz, who went on to win the national championship at #1 singles. The freshman from Mississsauga, Canada was named the NJCAA Player of the Year. The Stallions’ Paul Fitzgerald was named men’s NJCAA Player of the Year. Fitzgerald, a native of Cork, Ireland, led the Stallions to a third place finish in the national tournament.

For the first time ever, two members of the junior class were elected by the student body to lead the SGA when Nate Carney was elected president, and Dan Pennington was elected vice-president. Matthew Harrell from Tifton and Taylor Hand from Tifton were selected by the students as Mr. and Ms. Baldwin. U.S. Senator Saxby Chambliss from Moultrie was the spring graduation speaker. He congratulated ABAC on its very successful first 100 years. Taylor Hand, a journalism major from Tifton, received the Donaldson Award.

ABAC and Georgia Southwestern State University announced a joint agreement to offer junior and senior level classes in a bachelor’s degree in Resource Management at ABAC in May, 2008.
Southwestern also offers junior and senior level classes in Management, Accounting, and Early Childhood Education at ABAC.

President Bridges and his wife, Kim, accepted the Arts Citizen of the Year award for ABAC from the Tift County Arts Council at the 2008 Love Affair festival, which actually began as the Arts Circus on the ABAC campus in an endeavor started by Syd Blackmarr. Blackmarr was the first director of Arts Experiment Station at ABAC.

Governor Sonny Perdue announced in May, 2008 that ABAC would receive $6 million in funding in the 2008-09 state budget toward the rehabilitation of the three original buildings on the front of the campus.

Jessica Kalina from Williamson, Colton Farrow from Pitts, and Tanner Newhouse from Bonaire were named as the first three recipients of the Presidential Scholarships at ABAC in May, 2008. A total of 1,217 students enrolled for the 2008 summer term.

ABAC began the 2008-09 academic year on July 1 with the news of a statewide five per cent budget cut, amounting to almost $900,000 for the College. ABAC’s first response to the cut was leaving vacant positions unfilled. Two of those unfilled spots belonged to the two basketball coaches since Todd Sheppard had resigned to go into the business world, and Julie Conner had resigned to take the head girls’ basketball job at Tift County High School. President Bridges announced on July 14 that ABAC was dropping both its men’s and women’s basketball programs.

“The final decision and its timing were made because of three reasons,” Bridges said. “Eliminating two of the eight intercollegiate athletic programs provided much needed financial relief for the remaining programs, without coaches we couldn’t run a program, and by not filling the two positions we could maintain the flexibility to fill higher priority academic positions and meet forthcoming budget cuts.”

That left ABAC with six intercollegiate sports including soccer, softball and tennis for women, and baseball, golf, and tennis for the men.

ABAC alumna Cathy Cox (Class of ’78) was inaugurated as president of Young Harris College on July 26. Cox, the first female to serve as Georgia’s Secretary of State, was one of Dr. Bridges’ ABAC classmates. Nancy Coleman retired after 23 years of service as the only fulltime Director of Alumni Relations in the history of ABAC on July 31. Keith Barber was named Chief Development Officer at ABAC on August 1. The 2008 fall term enrollment showed 3,600 students, the beginning of a gradual fall semester enrollment decline which continued until the fall semester of 2013.

Karla Heath-Sands and the Reflections provided the entertainment for the first Evening for ABAC on September 18. College Advancement Officer Melvin Merrill said the event previously known as Dollars for ABAC Scholars had changed its scope “to provide greater benefit to the scholarship program at ABAC.” Dollars for Scholars had a 36-year run at ABAC,
featuring such top name entertainment as Trisha Yearwood, Roy Clark, Ray Stevens, Debbie Reynolds, and many more.

A study commissioned by the Board of Regents showed that ABAC had a total economic impact of over $237 million on Tifton and the surrounding area during 2007. Dr. Jeff Gibbs helped to develop the report. Dr. Bridges said the economic impact figure more than doubled since 2001.

Ashley Williamson headed a design team to design new logos and a new stallion mascot logo for the college. Alumnus Thomas “Boo” Weekley (Class of ’93), a professional golfer on the PGA Tour, helped lead the United States to victory in the Ryder Cup matches. He later donated $30,000 to the college through the Play Golf America University.

Tanya Rafferty was selected for the first four-year scholarship in the history of ABAC beginning with the 2008 fall term. She received a Regents’ Foundation Scholarship for four years. Rafferty was later selected as one of two students to be featured in a video at the annual Board of Regents Gala on March 28, 2009.

ABAC Police Chief Bryan Golden announced a new emergency messaging system called Connect-Ed, which was tested for the first time on October 22. The College used the system several times during the year to reach students when severe weather threatened the campus.

ABAC was selected for a Rapid Process Improvement project by the Governor’s Office of Customer Service in the fall of 2008. The nine-month project to benefit students in the enrollment and financial aid process was headed up on the campus by Dr. Chrystle Ross and Diane Kilgore.

Katrina Duncan-Marshalleck scored an all time record of 26 goals for the Fillies’ soccer team, which finished with a best ever record of 13-6 in the 2008 season. Keegan Westberry was crowned Ms. ABAC 2009 on November 11. A new design on the ABAC web site went live for the first time on December 1.

Wasdon Graydon, ABAC’s Director of Sponsored Programs and the Minority Advising Program, was the fall graduation speaker. Graydon, an ABAC alumnus (Class of 1970), closed out the 100th birthday celebration year. Graydon was one of the first African American students to attend ABAC. Lum Roberts and Duane Weeks from Sodexo put up new pole banners on the campus with the new “Georgia’s State College of Choice” logo in December.

2009

Director of Enrollment Services Donna Webb reported that ABAC had its highest spring semester enrollment in the history of the College with 3,234 students during the 2009 spring term.

Director of Institutional Research Donna Miller (Class of ’66) passed away unexpectedly on January 4. She had served in her Director of Institutional Research position since July 1, 1993.
The second annual ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame event was held on February 13 when Ellen Vickers, Newell “Sarge” Dorsey, Cook Holliday, P.W. Bryan, Jr., Dorsey Brooks, and the national championship men’s tennis team of 1984 were inducted in an impressive ceremony in the Grand Lobby of ABAC Lakeside. The inductees were then recognized on the tennis court during an ABAC tennis match.

President Bridges announced that ABAC’s academic curriculum will now be divided into six schools of study including Agriculture and Natural Resources, Nursing and Health Sciences, Human Sciences, Liberal Arts, Science and Mathematics, and Business effective April 1. Deans selected for the schools included Dr. Tim Marshall, Agriculture and Natural Resources; Wanda Golden, Nursing and Health Sciences; Dr. Darby Sewell, Human Sciences; Dr. Bobbie Robinson, Liberal Arts; Dr. Ray Barber, Science and Mathematics; and Dr. Jeff Gibbs, Business.

The ABAC student newspaper, The Stallion, was again named the best in the state of Georgia by the Georgia College Press Association in February. Dr. Eric Cash served as the advisor for the newspaper.

Junior Chapman was selected as Mr. ABAC at the 18th annual competition. Governor Sonny Perdue named ABAC Police Chief Bryan Golden to the Georgia Peace Officers Standards and Training Council. Michael Arena from Fitzgerald was selected as the first Presidential Scholar for 2009-10.

Alumni were honored at the newly-titled Celebrate ABAC weekend on March 5-7. Award winners included Christa G. Steinkamp, Outstanding Young Alumnus; Debbie R. Phillips, Helen Brown Sasser Award; Dr. Peggy Ozias-Akins, J. Lamar Branch Award; Jack C. Drew, Jr., Outstanding Business Leader; Patrick Atwater, Jr., Outstanding Educator; Dick Byne, Master Farmer; Gene Ragan, Distinguished Alumnus; Andrea Willis and Melvin Merrill, Honorary Alumni, and the John and Clara Hollis Davis family, Family Legacy Award. The weekend replaced the traditional Homecoming weekend, which was usually in April.

Dr. Eddie Seagle took eight ABAC students to China on March 12-27 to present a program on golf course planning, construction and maintenance at the Nansha Golf Club and Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou, Peoples Republic of China. All the students were enrolled in the new bachelor’s degree in turfgrass and golf course management. Seagle was presented a Customer Service Award from Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue on May 28 for his role in the expedition.

Under a brilliant blue sky, ABAC unveiled its bachelor’s degree in Rural Studies on March 23. President Bridges and Vice President Reddick talked about the degree in front of a backdrop of a cotton wagon and two mules on loan from the Georgia Agrirama.

In March, ABAC received a $76,425 Fulbright-Hays Grant from the U.S. Department of Education. Fifteen educators learned more about the people and culture of Brazil on June 4-July 3. ABAC faculty making the trip included Dr. Jeff Gibbs, Lorie Felton, Alan Kramer, Dr. Brian Ray, and Saj Rashti. Rashti coordinated the grant application.
Tifton ophthalmologist Larry Moorman and his wife, Debra, donated the clubhouse at Forest Lakes Golf Club to the ABAC Foundation in March to complete the gift they started in 2002 with the donation of the nine-hole Forest Lakes Golf Club.

At the 2009 Honors Day ceremony, Hector Olguin, an engineering major from Ty Ty, received the J.G. Woodroof Scholar award. Faculty/staff award winners were Geoff Clement, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence; Shirley Wilson, Roy R. Jackson Sr., Award for Staff Excellence; Dr. Jeff Gibbs, E. Lanier Carson Award Leadership Award; and Dr. Jewrell Rivers, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Excellence in Advising Award.

Coach Alan Kramer’s Fillies won their 16th consecutive NJCAA Region XVII women’s tennis title at the Red Hill Athletic Center on April 25. The Stallions also captured the Region XVII crown behind the play of MVP Rasid Winklaar. ABAC’s Monika Lalewicz from Mississauga, Canada was the MVP for the women for the second year in a row. Lalewicz finished second in the national tournament at #1 singles and received National Player of the Year honors for the second consecutive year. She was trying to become the first women’s player at ABAC to win back-to-back national titles since Milena Stanoytcheva in 1999-2000. Matt Holland from Cochran won the national championship at #6 singles for the Stallions. ABAC finished third in the team standings.

Bachelor’s degrees were awarded at ABAC for the first time at the graduation ceremony on May 7. Edwin Glover, Richard Irvin, Garrett Jones, and Joshua Lanier were the first bachelor’s degree recipients. ABAC alumnus Jim Sparks (Class of ’83) was the guest speaker at the ceremony. Keith Lee, a political science major from Cartersville, won the Donaldson Award.

Andrea Pate Willis retired on June 1 after 35 years as a faculty member and division chair at ABAC. She was perhaps best known as the director for the Fabulous Golddusters precision dance team for 26 years. The Golddusters performed all over Georgia, Florida, and Alabama on behalf of the college. They got their start by performing at halftime of ABAC basketball games. Under the leadership of Willis, the Golddusters danced annually at the Sunbelt Agricultural Exposition, at high school student recruitment shows, and at community festivals. She was named to the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2014.

In July, ABAC received a $411,354 grant from the United States Department of Education for the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP). This program assists freshman students from migrant farm worker families. The 2008-09 year represented the 10th year of CAMP at ABAC. Federal funding for the Classic and Tiftarea Upward Bound programs at ABAC was also announced in the amount of $572,934. The Upward Bound program has been funded at ABAC every year since 1977.

Diane Kilgore, Director of the Public Service and Business Outreach Center, was selected as the quarterly recipient of the 2009 Governor’s Commendation for Excellence in Customer Service. The Donaldson Dining Hall opened a new food service area on the north side of the building featuring Pizza Hut and Sub-Connection.
At a Town Hall meeting for all faculty and staff on July 28, President Bridges announced that because of state budget reductions, all employees would have to take six furlough days without pay during the year. A total of 1,291 students enrolled for the 2009 summer term.

ABAC alumnae Jodie Rayl Snow (Class of 2000) was the guest speaker for the annual freshman convocation on August 14 in Gressette Gym. Dr. Brian Ray was named as the director of the ABAC Honors Program. The campus took precautions against a nationwide H1N1 (Swine Flu) outbreak. Fortunately, very few ABAC students were affected.

The fall semester 2009 enrollment included 3,326 students from 17 states, 11 countries, and 152 Georgia counties.

The ABAC Alumni Association embarked on a new endeavor called the Alumni Connecting To Involved and Outstanding New Students (ACTIONS) team. Members included Gary Lee, Mike Davis, Beth Bland, Scott Carlson, Bobby Barber, Jr., George Granade, Steve Spooner, Frankie Hall, Brett Tucker, Chuck Scarborough, Kevin Morgan, Laura Beth Tucker, Barbara Grogan, Jodie Snow, Andrea Willis, Amber Davis Collins, and Kim Bridges. Their purpose is to attract academically talented and engaged students to ABAC.

Amy Howell was selected as the Director of Institutional Research and Planning on August 10. Dining Hall Director Kurt Hoffman passed away on August 19. President Bridges taught an Introduction to Biofuels class during the 2009 fall semester, his first stint back in the classroom since being selected as the ABAC President. Students in the brand new Rural Studies bachelor’s degree program began taking classes for the first time on August 17.

ABAC kicked off the Historic Front of Campus renovation project on September 8 with a ceremony on the front steps of Tift Hall. Greenline Architecture and J.T. Turner Construction, both from Savannah, will handle the renovation of Tift, Lewis, and Herring halls. Members of the faculty, staff, and administration gathered for a picture wearing gold plastic hard hats with the ABAC logo on them. Director of Capital Planning Melvin Merrill serves as the ABAC liaison to the architects and the construction company.

Rebecca Hamilton, Nicholas Urquart, Rebecca Cofer, and Derek Sutton joined the staff as the first ever Student Development Specialists in the Enrollment Services office. Their purpose is to serve as mentors for ABAC students from the beginning of their college careers all the way through graduation.

Chancellor Erroll B. Davis presented President Bridges with the Gold Outstanding Customer Service Leadership Award from the University System of Georgia on September 15. The award recognizes a leader who has made significant impact on customer service within the state. A new State of Georgia Employee Satisfaction Research Report showed that ABAC employees gave the institution top marks in regard to quality of the workplace and employee satisfaction. In a comparison with five other state agencies, ABAC earned the highest score.

ABAC students in the Rural Studies program traveled to Telfair County on September 22 to begin a semester-long project relating to tourism possibilities for the county. Alma Young
became the first fulltime webmaster in the history of ABAC when the college closed the ABAC Information Center on ABAC Circle, and her duties were changed to maintaining the ABAC web site.

Javier Gonzalez, Director of HEP/CAMP, and Dr. Billy Reynolds, Interim Head of the Department of Literature and Language, were selected for the University System of Georgia Executive Leadership Institute. Keith Barber was named the Vice President of External Affairs and Advancement and became a member of the President’s Cabinet.

A construction fence went up around the three original buildings, Tift, Lewis, and Herring, on October 8 to signal the beginning of the renovation of Tift, Lewis, and Herring halls. Governor Sonny Perdue visited ABAC for a meeting in the Health Sciences Building on October 13. Katrina Duncan-Marshalleck wound up with 23 goals in the 2009 season to finish her ABAC career with a school record 49 goals during her time with the Fillies’ soccer team. President Bridges received the Honorary American FFA degree from the National FFA Organization in Indianapolis, Ind.

ABAC was one of the hosts for a speech by Dr. Harry Kroto, the 1996 Nobel Prize winner in Chemistry, on November 6. AT&T Georgia presented ABAC with a $48,297 grant to expand the use of video instruction and communications at ABAC.

Javier Gonzalez, Director of the CAMP and HEP programs, was the guest speaker for the fall commencement ceremony. Sara Ervin, a Rural Studies major from Commerce, received the Donaldson Award. Alumnus Dan Miller returned to the campus as director of dining services for Sodexo. University System Chancellor Erroll Davis visited the campus on December 7. He said ABAC had developed a “statewide brand.”

ABAC student Dorminey McCrae was selected for the National Association of Police Organization’s “Top Cop” award for his heroism in a Tifton grocery store robbery. Former ABAC Registrar Paul Gaines passed away on Christmas Day, 2009 at the age of 89. He was employed by ABAC from 1946 until 1982 and actually taught classes at Spence Field in Moultrie for servicemen returning from WWII.

2010

President Bridges announced on January 14 that at the request of the Office of Planning and Budget and the Governor’s Office, that he will begin working with legislators, local elected officials, and members of the Georgia Agrirama Development Authority to move management and operations of the Georgia Museum of Agriculture (Agrirama) to ABAC.

For the first time in many years, it snowed on the ABAC campus on February 12. Many ABAC students said they had never seen snow. They threw snowballs and built snowmen. Cain Thurmond from Jefferson was selected Mr. ABAC 2010. Savannah Brown from Wray was chosen as Ms. ABAC 2010. Both students are members of the ABAC Ambassadors.
The new ABAC Stallion mascot, “Thunder,” has his debut at the Stallion Day event for prospective students on February 13. A total of 3,044 students were enrolled during the 2010 spring semester.

For the third year in a row, The Stallion, the ABAC student newspaper, was named the best in Georgia at the Georgia College Press Association competition. Amelia Gutierrez and Jacob McWhorter were the managing editors during the two semesters reviewed. The Southern Regional Press Institute also named the ABAC newspaper the best in Georgia. Dr. Eric Cash served as faculty advisor. Director of Human Resources Bertha Williams (Class of ’74) and Student Support Services Director Wasdon Graydon (Class of ’70) both retired on March 1. Williams began her ABAC career on September 1, 1991, and Graydon started working at ABAC on September 1, 1973.

The Celebrate ABAC Alumni Weekend on March 5-6 included the alumni awards ceremony where the winners were Dr. Paul Newberne and Dr. James Newberne, Distinguished Alumni; Ann Hammons and Dr. Eddie Seagle, Honorary Alumni; Nancy Coleman, Helen Brown Sasser Award; Dr. Jay Phillips, Outstanding Health Care Professional; Louis Perry, Jr., J. Lamar Branch Award; Beth Bland, Outstanding Young Alumnus; Rodney McDonald, Outstanding Business Leader; John Harrell, Master Farmer; and T. Lynn Barber, Outstanding Educator.

Selections for the third annual ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame were Thomas “Boo” Weekley, a member of the PGA Tour; former ABAC basketball player Joseph Grist; tennis booster Harley Klepfer; former ABAC golfer Jim Sparks; and the 1991 women’s softball team, which was the first women’s team at ABAC to win a national championship. The induction lunch and ceremony were held in a tent beside the softball field on March 6 as a part of the Celebrate ABAC Alumni Weekend activities. Ashley Williamson and Shirley Wilson coordinated the event.

On March 5, the Continuing Education Program had a 70th birthday party to commemorate the founding of the program by Dean Tom Cordell in 1940. Current Director Diane Kilgore and former directors Bob Keith and Jane Tanner were on hand to cut the cake. The ABAC Jazz Band and the Jazz Choir performed at the Evening for ABAC scholarship fundraiser, sponsored by the ABAC Foundation, which was the culminating event of the Celebrate ABAC Weekend on March 6.

The Board of Regents approved a new Associate of Fine Arts in Music degree from the School of Liberal Arts on March 10. It is the only degree of its kind in the University System. ABAC students held a budget cuts protest rally in Howard Auditorium on March 11 to protest the proposed budget cuts to the ABAC state budget by legislators. As it turned out, the cuts were not as severe as anticipated, perhaps because of rallies such as this one across the state.

Dr. Niles Reddick, Vice-President for Academic Affairs, released his first novel in March, 2010, titled, Lead Me Home. He is also the author of a short story collection, titled Road Kill Art and Other Oddities. Diane Kilgore retired from ABAC on March 31.
At the 2010 Honors Day Ceremony, David L. Chapman, an agricultural education major from Jasper, was named the J.G. Woodroof Scholar. Faculty/staff award winners were Melanie Partlow, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence; Judy Perry, Roy R. Jackson Award for Staff Excellence; Dr. Chrystle Ross, E. Lanier Carson Award for administrators; and Dr. Shelley Fandel, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Excellence in Advising Award.

Recipients of Presidential Scholarships at Honors Day for a third year of study were Colton Farrow from Pitts; Jessica Kalina from Williamson; and Tanner Newhouse from Bonaire. Recipients of Presidential Scholarships for a second year of study were Andrea Sweeney from Eatonton; Michael Arena from Fitzgerald; and Kayla Davenport from Hazlehurst.

Coach Alan Kramer’s Fillies won the NJCAA Region XVII women’s title for the 17th consecutive year at the Red Hill Athletics Center on April 17. Kramer’s Stallions also won the region title behind the heroics of MVP Rasid Winklaar. Kramer was named the statewide Coach of the Year for men and women. Kramer was also named to the NJCAA Women’s Tennis Hall of Fame during the national women’s tennis tournament in Tucson, Ariz. The Fillies finished 17th in the national tournament, and the Stallions finished eighth in the national men’s tennis tournament.

The Ag Business Club at ABAC was named the National Outstanding Student Chapter by the National Agri-Marketing Association for 2009-10. Dustin Bass is the club advisor. Jazmin Thomas from Perry was elected president of the Student Government Association during the spring election.

ABAC finished second in the Hispanic College Quiz Bowl competition in Chicago. Team members were Karina Guerrero, Leandra Gonzales, Katia Arevalo, Juan Rico, Gabby Ramirez, and Felipe Pedraza.

Vice President for Student Affairs Gail Dillard announced in April, 2010 that Greek fraternities Kappa Sigma and Alpha Gamma Rho had been approved to establish colonies on the ABAC campus. They are the first Greek organizations at ABAC. Cain Thurmond from Jefferson is president of Alpha Gamma Rho, and Brent Wagner from Roswell is president of Kappa Sigma.

Dr. Greg Anderson (Class of ’78), a Tifton urologist, was the guest speaker at the 2010 spring commencement ceremony. David L. Chapman, an agricultural education major from Jasper, received the Donaldson Award. The ABAC Jazz Ensemble was selected to perform on May 22 at the Jazz Education Network International Conference in St. Louis, Mo. Don Coates is the director.

Sara Beth Pelham from Bainbridge was selected as the recipient of the Presidential Scholarship for the upcoming year. ABAC students Savannah Brown from Wray, Jessica Gandy from Lenox, and Randi Walden from Stockbridge were selected for the Women’s Leadership in Public Service Institute in Tallulah Falls. Deidra Jackson was named as the ABAC Comptroller on June 7, 2010.
The 2010-11 state budget signed by Governor Sonny Perdue on June 8 contained $4.75 million toward the rehabilitation of the ABAC Front Campus. ABAC received an allocation of $6 million in the FY 2009 budget to begin work on the mammoth project, which will restore Tift Hall, Lewis Hall, and Herring Hall, the three original buildings on campus.

The new ABAC Bass Fishing Club won first and second place in a tournament at Lake Eufaula on June 26. Matt O’Dillon and Jake Holloway fished for ABAC. Pulitzer-Prize nominated author Janice Daugharty joined the campus on July 1 as ABAC’s first Writer-in-Residence. She is the author of *Earl in the Yellow Shirt*, which was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize in Fiction in 1997. Other books by Daugharty include *PawPaw Patch* and *Dark of the Moon*.

ABAC took over the operation of the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village on July 1. The change of control from the Georgia Agrirama Development Authority to ABAC has been in the works since Jan. 14 when the Office of Planning and Budget and the Governor’s Office requested that President Bridges work with legislators, local elected officials, and members of the Authority to move management and operations to ABAC.

Georgia lawmakers passed House Bill 1090 on April 12 which paved the way to move all assets of the Museum to the University System of Georgia (USG). The bill was introduced by Representatives Austin Scott (153rd) and Jay Roberts (154th) with the support of other area representatives. The legislation was carried in the Senate by Senator John Crosby (13th District) and Senator John Bulloch (11th District).

The USG Board of Regents took action on May 12 to facilitate the transfer of assets, including land and buildings, from the Georgia Agrirama Development Authority to the USG. Governor Sonny Perdue signed the bill on May 20. Paul Willis, Director of College Enrichment, led the transition team for ABAC and was named as the director of the Museum.

On July 1, Vice President for External Affairs and Advancement Keith Barber announced that the ABAC Foundation had received a gift of $1 million from the estate of Herbert and Meade Bynum. Herbert Bynum was a 1946 ABAC alumnus who was originally from Blakely but lived most of his life in Tampa, Fla., in the egg production business. Barber said the gift will be used as a student enhancement endowment for the Rural Studies program. It will be called “The Herbert and Meade Bynum Endowment for Student Enrichment in Rural Studies.”

Dr. Ray Barber, Dean of the School of Science and Mathematics, announced on July 15 that ABAC will receive a $600,000 National Science Foundation grant to attract students interested in careers in the science and mathematics fields. Students who receive the scholarships through the grant will be a part of the new Achievement through Student Support and Experiential Training in Sciences (ASSETS) program. The Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) scholarships will be awarded over a five-year period beginning Aug. 1.

ABAC softball player Alyssa Simmons from Lenox was named as an NJCAA Distinguished Academic All-America selection in July. ABAC golfers Kenneth Bragg of Peachtree City and Winston Gibbs from Hartwell were also named NJCAA Academic All-America selections.
Vice President for External Affairs and Advancement Keith Barber was appointed to a one-year term on the Board of Directors for the National Agricultural Alumni and Development Association. ABAC faculty member Dustin Bass and ABAC student Jonathon Cassiday spent the summer of 2010 at Perrotis College in Thessaloniki, Greece in a study abroad program.

A study commissioned by the University System showed that ABAC had an economic impact of $251,799,738 on Tifton and the surrounding area. Dr. Jeff Gibbs, Dean of the School of Business, assisted with the data interpretation. The figure represents the highest economic impact in the history of the college.

Assistant Director of Housing Chris Kinsey and four members of the Student Financial Services team, Dr. Chrystle Ross, Gay Ann Hodge, Krystle Williams, and Stefane Whiddon, were named this quarter’s recipients of the 2010 Governor’s Commendation for Excellence in Customer Service. Dr. Aercio Cunha, a Fulbright Scholar from Brazil, will teach business classes and rural studies classes at ABAC during the 2010-11 year. Richard Spancake was named the new Director of Human Resources.

ABAC received a National Science Foundation grant worth $204,435 to bring cutting edge technology to the J.G. Woodroof Farm. Dr. Renata Elad, professor of agricultural economics, is the primary contact for the grant. Former ABAC Comptroller J. Talmadge Webb passed away on August 6. He served as the college’s chief business officer from 1958 through 1988. Former ABAC Ambassador Joel McKie (Class of ’04) was the guest speaker at the annual freshman convocation.

Javier Gonzalez is serving a term as president of the National HEP/CAMP association. He directs both programs at ABAC. Vice President for Academic Affairs Niles Reddick announced that ABAC will add a new major to the Rural Studies curriculum, titled Writing and Communication. It joins Business and Economic Development, Rural Arts and Culture, and Social and Community Affairs as Rural Studies majors.

Athletics Director Alan Kramer was named the 2009-10 Junior and Community Colleges Southeast Region Under Armour Athletic Director of the Year by the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics. He is a past recipient of the ITA/Wilson National Intercollegiate Women’s Tennis Coach of the Year in 1998 and 2007 and has been named the NJCAA Region XVII Coach of the Year 19 times.

ABAC alumnus George T. Smith passed away on August 23 at the age of 93. A member of the Class of 1940, he is the only person in the history of Georgia to win contested elections to all three branches of state government. He was a former Speaker of the House of Representatives, Lieutenant Governor, and Presiding Justice of the Georgia Supreme Court.

Vice President for Fiscal Affairs John Clemens and Physical Plant Director Andy Bihl honored Charles Turner for 40 years of service to ABAC at his retirement party on September 10.
President Bridges announced that the 2010 ABAC freshman class had the highest grade point average of any freshman class in the history of the college with a cumulative GPA of 2.97 on a 4.0 scale. ABAC enrolled 3,284 students during the fall term.

ABAC’s very first Family Weekend event was a tremendous success on October 1-2 at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village. The Georgia Intellectual Capital Partnership Program awarded ABAC a $234,000 grant to assist with the nursing program. Longtime Tifton resident Roger Dill began a two-year term as chair of the ABAC Foundation Board of Trustees on October 1.

Performers at the ABAC building at the Sunbelt Expo were the Bluegrass Band, the Jazz Choir, and the Thundering Herd Pep Band. Public Relations Director Mike Chason received a Legion of Honor award from the Tifton Kiwanis Club on September 28 for 30 years of service. He was also honored by the Georgia Education Advancement Council on November 18 with a Lifetime Achievement Award at the annual GEAC meeting at St. Simons Island.

ABAC signed an articulation agreement with the University of Florida to ensure a smooth transition for students who begin their careers at ABAC and transfer to the university. The ABAC women’s soccer team defeated South Georgia 2-1 on October 26 in the first ever state playoff game on the ABAC soccer field. ABAC wound up its season with a 4-0 loss to Georgia Perimeter in the second round but still rolled up a 15-7 record, the most wins in Fillies’ soccer history.

ABAC students held a Campout for the Homeless on the ABAC Lakeside lawn on November 12. They spent the night in cardboard box “homes” and raised money for the Atlanta Children’s Center. An exhibit at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture spotlighted the carvings collection of C.L. Morehead (Class of ’48). Each piece in the collection was carved by Randy Anthony from Fitzgerald.

Public Relations Assistant Ashley Williamson championed a campaign for ABAC to have its own license plate. After over a year’s worth of work, the first license plates were distributed in November. William H. “Dink” NeSmith, Jr., a member of the Board of Regents, was the fall 2010 commencement speaker. Cody Seagraves, a forest resources major from Hull, received the Donaldson award.

For the first time ever, Dr. Bridges and his wife, Kim, hosted their annual holiday open house at the National Peanut Museum at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture. The University System awarded ABAC and Tift County High School a Near Peer Service Learning Program grant to increase access and readiness for the college experience for students at TCHS. Dr. Darby Sewell, Dean of the School of Human Sciences, is the ABAC contact person for the program.

Dr. Eric Cash, faculty advisor for the award-winning ABAC student newspaper, passed away on December 18. Under Cash’s leadership, The Stallion was named the top paper in the state in its category in 2007, 2008, and 2009.
ABAC opened the spring term by cancelling classes on January 10 because of inclement weather, which left the roads in the area iced over. Classes began on January 11. ABAC alumnus Sonny Skinner (Class of ’80) received the Senior PGA Professional Player of the Year award on January 27 in Orlando, Fla. He became the first player in PGA of America history to win both the PGA Professional Player of the Year award (2008) and the Senior PGA Professional Player of the Year award. Skinner is the PGA teaching professional at the River Pointe Golf Club in Albany.

Matthew Keen, a rural studies major from Nashville, won the $3,000 top award for the William Zimmer Prize in Art Criticism. Dr. Chrystle Ross, Chief Information Officer, announced a new website portal titled “myABAC” which is designed to make web access easier for ABAC students.

Dr. Bridges and Dr. Rod Brown helped forestry and wildlife industry officials saw a log in half as a symbolic start to the announcement of a new bachelor’s degree in Natural Resource Management with majors in Forestry and Wildlife Management on February 10.

Laurel Higginbotham from Baxley was crowned Ms. ABAC 2011. Bernard Green from Tifton was selected as Mr. ABAC 2011. Both students are members of the ABAC Ambassadors. ABAC alumnus Whitney Conner from Rochelle was selected as the 2011 National Watermelon Association queen.

ABAC Alumni Association award winners at the annual Celebrate ABAC Weekend were Mack Crawford of Zebulon, Distinguished Alumnus; Jodi Rayl Snow from Belle Glade, Fla., Outstanding Young Alumnus; Terry Clark from Moultrie, Master Farmer; Dr. Jerry W. Johnson from Griffin, J. Lamar Branch Award; Suellen Coleman Perry from Moultrie, Outstanding Educator; Mark Mobley from Moultrie, Outstanding Business Leader; Dr. Jay Williams from Albany, Outstanding Health Care Professional; and Alan Kramer from Tifton and Tommy Irvin from Habersham County, Honorary Alumni. The Ollie E. McMillan family from Berrien County also received the Family Legacy Award.

Due to popular demand, the ABAC Alumni Association brought back a “Gee Haw, Whoa Back” rodeo to the Celebrate ABAC Weekend on March 4-5. Grand Ole Opry member Mike Snider headlined the “Evening for ABAC” Foundation scholarship fundraiser at the Museum on March 4.

The School of Science and Mathematics partnered with Georgia Tech through the Regents’ Engineering Program to better facilitate students who begin their engineering degree at ABAC and then transfer to Georgia Tech. President David Bridges placed the 100th Birthday Time Capsule in a compartment in the history room of the renovated Tift Hall on March 8. The capsule was sealed on April 5, 2008 at the 100th birthday celebration at Homecoming.
Dr. Gail Dillard now directs all activities at ABAC on the Square in Moultrie, replacing Kay Powell who expressed a desire to return to the classroom. Dillard was previously the Vice President for Student Affairs. Academic Affairs Vice President Niles Reddick now handles those duties.

Melanie Partlow, assistant professor of mathematics and Quality Enhancement Plan Director at ABAC, received the 2011 Regents’ Teaching Excellence award at the seventh annual Regents’ Awards for Excellence in Education Celebration in Atlanta on March 26. The AET Club debuted a new Agco Allis 9650 pulling tractor on March 19. The club also completed renovations to the original ABAC pulling tractor, “Cracker Jack.” Ken Newkirk retired on March 31 after 35 years of service directing the Upward Bound Program.

Inductees into the Athletics Hall of Fame included the 1995 national championship women’s softball team, Kyle Farnsworth, Benny Dees, Harley Stewart, and A.B. Malloy. The ceremony was held in the ABAC Lakeside Lobby on April 2. Alan Kramer, Ashley Williamson, and Shirley Wilson coordinated the event. Later on April 2, a new scoreboard for the ABAC Fillies’ softball team was dedicated in a ceremony which honored donors A.B. Malloy, the Spurlin family, and the ABAC Fillies softball alumnae.

Kevin Vantrees, a freshman from Douglasville, was elected president of the ABAC SGA in the 2011 spring election. Faculty member Dustin Bass received the Impact Award, and Director of Student Activities Kris Liebegott received the SGA President’s Award.

Michael Arena from Fitzgerald was selected as the top academic student at ABAC during the Honors Day ceremony when he was named the J.G. Woodroof Scholar. Faculty-staff award winners were Donna Hatcher, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence; Dr. Amy Willis, Roy R. Jackson, Sr., Award for Staff Excellence; Dr. Ray Barber, E. Lanier Carson Award for administrators; and Dr. Mary Ellen Hicks, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Excellence in Advising Award. Retirement plaques were presented to Stephanie Holcombe, Ken Newkirk, Jerry Edwards, Dr. Larry McGruder, and Mike Chason.

Most Valuable Player Chanel Cunningham led the Fillies to their 18th consecutive Region XVII state tennis championship on April 22. The Stallions also won the men’s title. Alan Kramer was named Coach of the Year for both women’s and men’s tennis in the state. The Fillies finished fifth, and the Stallions wound up eighth in their respective national tournaments.

Dustin Bass, instructor of agricultural business, was named the National Outstanding Advisor by the National Agri-Business Association in Kansas City. The ABAC Cattlemen’s Club won the College Aggies Online Scholarship Competition of the Animal Agriculture Alliance.

The ABAC English Department in the School of Liberal Arts won the Diana Hacker Outstanding Programs in English award at the 2011 Conference on College Composition and Communication ceremony. Governor Nathan Deal was the guest speaker at the spring commencement ceremony. Cain Thurmond from Jefferson received the Donaldson Award. Thirty-one students received
bachelor’s degrees, the largest number ever to receive bachelor’s degrees at an ABAC commencement.

Kristen Ray from Alma was one of six students nationwide selected to serve on the Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America Leadership Training Team. Ben Bennett from Valdosta received the Presidential Scholarship for 2011-12. He is the state FFA president. Dr. Darby Sewell, Dean of the School of Human Sciences, graduated from the University System of Georgia Executive Leadership Institute.

The ABAC Chamber Singers performed at Lincoln Center in New York City on May 30. Dr. Susan Roe directs the group. Mike Chason retired as the Director of Public Relations at ABAC on May 31, 2011. He began his ABAC career on May 15, 1979. Ashley Williamson was named Interim Director of Public Relations. Chason returned to the college to work in a part time capacity with the public relations office on July 1.

Governor Nathan Deal’s signature on the state budget allows ABAC to continue work on the historic front of campus project with $3.25 million in the budget to further the rehabilitation of Tift Hall, Lewis Hall, and Herring Hall. ABAC unveiled a Bachelor of Science degree with a major in Biology in a press conference on June 9 in Evans Hall. Dr. Ray Barber, Dean of the School of Science and Mathematics, made the announcement.

The Natural Resources Conservation Workshop celebrated its 50th anniversary with its annual camp at ABAC on June 5-9. President David Bridges attended the camp when he was a high school student in his first visit ever to ABAC. Dr. Chrystle Ross retired on June 15 from her position of Chief Information Officer. She served the college in a variety of roles since her first day on the job on September 10, 1979.

Fireworks lit up the skies over the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village on July 2 for the annual Independence Day Celebration at the site. Country music artist Kevin Sport headlined a concert that evening. It was the 35th anniversary of the founding of the museum, known originally as the Agrirama. A 400-pound cake made to resemble the Museum’s steam train was designed to feed over 600 people.

Four athletes at ABAC were selected for NJCAA Exemplary Academic Achievement Awards. They included Alexander Byrd from Byron on the baseball team, Case Gard from Lakeland, Fla., on the golf team, Charles Griffin, Jr., from Tifton on the men’s tennis team, and Darylanne Thompson from Perry on the softball team.

The U.S. Department of Education named ABAC as one of America’s Most Affordable Colleges in July. Tuition and fees for the 2009-10 year at ABAC were $2,696, well below the national average of $6,397. Shawn Thomas was named the new Director of Student Financial Services on July 5. Dr. Jeff Newberry was selected to serve as the new faculty advisor to the student newspaper, The Stallion. He also advises the ABAC literary magazine, Pegasus.

Beth Bland Oleson (Class of ’99) was the guest speaker at the annual Freshman Convocation, which was moved to a Sunday afternoon for the first time on August 14. The State Traditional
Arts Research Archive is now on loan to ABAC and makes available to the community over 3,000 items including photos, videos, sound recordings, books, and research field notes.

Dr. Brian Ray spent the summer in London as a co-site director for the USG European Council for its England Summer Study Abroad Program. Dr. Bobbie Robinson and Dr. John Farrar were selected for the USG Executive Leadership Institute. Van McGriff retired after 26 years at ABAC. Tarrah Mirus became the ABAC Registrar on September 1.

ABAC enrolled 3,248 students for the 2011 fall semester. Former President Jimmy Carter cut the ribbon for an exhibit on his life at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village on October 8. The visit by Carter and his wife, Rosalynn, was the first time that a former U.S. President had ever been on the ABAC campus.

Melissa Johnson set the ABAC record for goals scored in a soccer season with 31 and was named the National Junior College Athletic Association Player of the Week. Attila Szekes was named the new general manager of Sodexo and Plant Operations at ABAC.

ABAC set the American record for the largest game of hide-and-seek on November 9 with 419 students participating. Dr. Niles Reddick was honored by the College of Arts and Sciences at Valdosta State University as an Outstanding Alumnus in the area of Philosophy.

Melvin Merrill received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Georgia Education Advancement Council at its annual meeting at the Brasstown Valley Resort on November 17. Merrill joined the ABAC administration on July 1, 1978 as Director of Development. He is now Director of Capital Planning.

AT&T Georgia presented ABAC with $2,500 to be used for the scholarship program. An ABAC team of Rural Studies students finished second in the USG Social Business and Microcredit Forum. Professor Muhammad Yunus, a former Nobel Prize recipient, judged the competition. Former ABAC President Stanley Anderson passed away on November 26. He served as president from 1975 through 1985.

Dr. Zsuzanna Boegre, a Fulbright Scholar from Hungary, will teach classes at ABAC during the fall and spring terms. Medal of Honor recipient and retired Major General of the Marine Corps James Livingston was the fall commencement speaker on December 9. William Rogers from Brunswick received the Donaldson Award.

Sigma Alpha will become the first sorority on the ABAC campus on January 20, 2012. ABAC student Randi Walden received a Wine and Spirits Wholesalers scholarship worth $2,776. Marie Davis was named the interim director of the Baldwin Library.

**2012**

ABAC enrolled 3,002 students for the 2012 spring semester. The Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village kicked off the new year with an exhibit titled “Tea for Three”,...
featuring the works of Mary Ann Cox, Dr. Vincent Keesee (longtime ABAC faculty member), and Anthony Scheffler.

Ashley Williamson Mock (married C.J. Mock on November 12, 2011) was named Director of Public Relations on February 1. Mock had been serving as Interim Director of Public Relations since the retirement of Mike Chason on June 1, 2011. Prior to that time she had been the Public Relations Assistant since June 19, 2007.

Keaton Griner, a sophomore Family and Consumer Sciences major from Moultrie, followed in her mother’s footsteps and won the Ms. ABAC title on February 23. Griner’s mother, Monika, won the title in 1987. Ironically, Mike Chason was the emcee for both events.

A play written by ABAC alumna Melita Easters (Class of ’74) served as the annual Evening for ABAC scholarship fundraiser on March 2. The one-woman show titled *Mrs. John Marsh—The World Knew Her As Margaret Mitchell* told the story of the reclusive author’s life before and after she became a publishing sensation with her novel, *Gone With The Wind*.

ABAC Alumni Association award winners at the “Celebrate ABAC” ceremony on March 3 included Cook Holliday of Monroe, Distinguished Alumnus; Nancy Gurley Jenkins of Moultrie, Helen Brown Sasser Award; Barbara Grogan of Americus, Outstanding Young Alumnus; Von G. Peavy of Moultrie, J. Lamar Branch Award; Dr. Mary Ellen Hicks of Sycamore, Outstanding Educator; John Redding of Monroe, Outstanding Business Leader; and Garth Webb from Tifton, Honorary Alumnus. The Johnie Clark family from Colquitt County received the Family Legacy Award.

The “Peanuts, Mules, and Presidents” exhibit at the Museum Gallery received an excellence in planning award from the Georgia Association of Museums and Galleries.

Inductees for the 2012 Athletics Hall of Fame on March 3 were Greg Tanner, coach of the 1995 national championship softball team; longtime men’s basketball coach Donnie Veal, who led the Stallions to the state championship in 1982; tennis star Jean Francoise Lagloire, who won consecutive national championships at number one singles; William E. Batton, captain of the 1950 men’s basketball team; and the players on the 1996 national championship softball team, coached by Donna Campbell.

ABAC instituted a Near Peer program with Colquitt County High School (CCHS) which allowed five ABAC students to serve as mentors to CCHS students. Natalie Sconiers, Hannah Saunders, Tevores Sumlin, Carrie Carnes, and Candace Jackson were selected for the program. The ABAC Bass Fishing team took first place in a tournament at Logan Martin Lake (Ala.). Matt O’Dillon and Jake Holloway led the way for ABAC.

ABAC took its college experience on the road on March 27 for a special student recruitment event at the Georgia National Fairgrounds in Perry. Zebb Luster, a senior Diversified Agriculture major from Ft. Myers, Fla., won the Mr. ABAC title on March 29.
Award recipients at the Honors Day ceremony on April 11 were Dr. Sandra Giles, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence; Nancy Brannen, Roy R. Jackson, Sr., Award for Staff Excellence; Alan Kramer, E. Lanier Carson Leadership Award for College Administrators; and Amanda Urquhart, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Excellence in Advising Award. Brenda Doss received the J.G. Woodroof Scholar award presented to the top academic student at ABAC.

Dr. Jeff Gibbs, Dr. Ray Barber, and Joy Shurley retired at the end of the spring term with a combined 77 years of service to ABAC. The women’s tennis team won its 19th consecutive state championship on April 21. The Stallions also won the state title. Alan Kramer was named Coach of the Year in the state for both men’s and women’s tennis. The Stallions finished seventh in the national tournament, and the Fillies wound up 11th in national play. The ABAC golf team won the state championship on April 21. Herb Hendrix was named Coach of the Year. The Stallions finished 12th in the national tournament. Jacob Tompkins from the tennis team, Kelby Barber from the baseball team, and Aleisha Edenfield from the softball team received NJCAA Academic Student-Athlete awards.

Dr. John Farrar and Dr. Bobbie Robinson graduated from the University System of Georgia Executive Leadership Institute. The ABAC student newspaper presented Pacesetter Awards on April 25 to Bernice Hughes, Laquincia Brown, Penny Chesnut, Savannah Carter, Dr. Erin Campbell, Woody Leonard, Stephen Aaron, Austin Flanders and Dr. Chase Hagood. A Superior Pacesetter award went to Huong Pham.

Dr. Chris Kinsey received the SGA President’s Award, and Judy Perry received the SGA Impact Award at the Student Leadership Banquet on April 25. Stephen Aaron was sworn in as the President of the SGA for 2012-13. Georgia Commissioner of Agriculture Gary Black was the speaker for the spring commencement ceremony on May 4. Randi Walden, a Diversified Agriculture major from Stockbridge, received the Donaldson Award.

Personnel in the offices of the President, Public Relations, Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Vice President for Planning and Operations moved back to Tift Hall on May 14. The building had been vacated in 2007 to prepare for renovation. President David Bridges announced that former public relations director Mike Chason had been granted emeritus status by the University System of Georgia on June 1.

Jodie Rayl Snow (Class of 2000) began duties on June 11 as the Chief Operating Officer of the ABAC Foundation. As a student, she was the recipient of the J.G. Woodroof Scholar award and the George P. Donaldson award. Dr. Joseph Brown was named as a Governor’s Teaching Fellow. Brown is an assistant professor of English in the School of Liberal Arts.

Vice President for External Affairs and Advancement and Chief Development Officer Keith Barber left ABAC to become the Vice Chancellor for Development for the Institute of Agriculture and the University of Tennessee Foundation on July 1. President David Bridges
named Paul Willis the Vice President for External Affairs and Chief of Staff, effective July 1. Lindsey Roberts (Class of ’09) joined the staff as Public Relations Assistant on July 9.

Mark “Dill” Driscoll and his wife, Susan, were named Deans of the ABAC School of Business on July 1. Marketing pioneers whose work spans 80 countries and five continents, the Driscolls have started many companies including the global marketing agency, “ignition”.

As a part of the Tift Hall renovation, information panels detailing the history of ABAC were installed on July 26-27 by Murphy & Orr Exhibits from Atlanta. Dr. Lisa Lishman and Mike Chason headed up the project. Lishman, curator at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture, spent many hours examining the ABAC archives in the Baldwin Library. She gathered information and memorabilia for the information panels on display in The History Room in Tift Hall.

Lishman and Chason examined pictures, checked facts, and proofread the panels for the Tift Hall lobby, The History Room, the Arts Alcove and the President’s Alcove on the second floor of Tift Hall, and eight Student Life panels on the first floor. Chason also researched and prepared information for small panels attached to each presidential portrait in the Presidential Gallery on Tift Hall’s second floor. Chason edited and Lishman designed a hard cover book titled *The Presidents* which was released as a part of the rededication of the front campus ceremony on March 1, 2013.

After a summer-long renovation, the new look Donaldson Dining Hall opened on August 6. Dr. Sandra Giles (Class of ’87) was the guest speaker at the annual Freshman Convocation ceremony in Gressette Gym on August 12.

ABAC began the fall semester on August 13 with a 30 per cent increase in the number of students majoring in baccalaureate degrees over the fall term of 2011. “These programs will shape the institution’s future for the next 100 years,” President David Bridges said. A total of 3,227 students enrolled for the fall term. The ABAC Public Relations Office and the ABAC Ambassadors began a new initiative by selling “Welcome Back ABAC Students” signs to local businesses. The green-and-gold signs dotted the Tifton landscape.

Dr. Brian Ray was named the new Theatre Director and Director of the Baldwin Players in the School of Liberal Arts. Dr. Cynthia Hall was selected as the new Director of the Honors Program. Traci Bryan was named Director of Student Financial Services.

President David Bridges, Melvin Merrill and Mike Chason visited Mary Threatte (Class of ’32) on her 99th birthday on August 22 in Lakeland, Ga. She is one of ABAC’s oldest living alumni. Threatte attended ABAC when it was called the Georgia State College For Men in 1932. Her husband, Jim, was also a GSCM alumnus (Class of ’32). He passed away on ABAC’s 100th birthday on February 20, 2008. Mrs. Threatte passed away on October 18, 2013. Chason was one of the speakers at a service celebrating her life on October 21 at the Threatte Center in Lakeland.

ABAC students gained another hands-on learning opportunity in September with the acquisition of a rare pitcher plant bog in Turner County. One half of the 8.74 acre tract was donated by
Fitzgerald native Ben Mills, and the other half of the property was purchased by the ABAC Foundation with the help of several local conservationists including Dan and Ellen Corrie, Dr. and Mrs. Richard F. Davis, Brenda and Keith Douce, Lisa M. Kruse, Freda W. Massey, Karan Rawlins, Dr. Patricia Timper, Dr. and Mrs. Joseph M. Turner, Dr. Bret B. Wagenhorst, Julie Sharpe, and the Georgia Native Plant Society.

The School of Business began a new speakers’ series for students with Erik Daniels, Executive Vice President of Ronald Blue & Company. ABAC students Caitlin Rodgers and Kirsten Duncan partnered with ABAC President David Bridges and his wife, Kim, and Business School Deans Dill and Susan Driscoll to represent ABAC in the Game Ball Relay at the University of Georgia on September 1.

The Valdosta Symphony Orchestra kicked off the ABAC Arts Connection series titled “ABAC Presents”. Other performances in the series included Mike Wiley in “Dar He: The Story of Emmett Till,” Madame Butterfly by the Peach State Opera Company and the Vega String Quartet. Rural Studies students traveled to Pelham for a project to develop a plan for the use, funding, and marketing of the newly restored Hand Trading Company building. A one-man play by Dr. Brian Ray opened an exhibit at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village on the 150th anniversary of the signing of the Morrill Act.

ABAC had an economic impact of $281,563,172 on Tift County and the surrounding area according to a study by the University System of Georgia. Dr. Jeff Gibbs helped to analyze the information to determine ABAC’s total impact.

After 38 years of service to ABAC in the Computer Center and Business Office, Patsy Hembree (Class of ’74) retired in September. The WPLH radio tower and antenna were removed from the top of the J. Lamar Branch Student Center on October 2 after an estimated 44 years on top of the building. WPLH Advisor Keith Perry said a new tower will be installed atop the ABAC water tower.


Troy Spicer was selected as the Interim Dean of the School of Nursing and Health Sciences. Wanda Golden will continue to teach classes and serve as an outreach liaison. Six ABAC Turfgrass and Golf Course Management majors assisted with the McGladrey Classic at St. Simons Island on October 17-21.

Nikita Morris from Norfolk, England became the first ABAC soccer player to ever be named Player of the Year for the Georgia Collegiate Athletic Conference. Morris set the ABAC record for goals scored in a season with 34. She was also an All-Conference first team selection and an NJCAA All-America selection. The Fillies ended their season with a 12-8 record and advanced to the semifinal round of the state playoffs.
Jeff Kilgore was named interim coach of the Stallions’ baseball team, replacing Steve Janousek who moved to a full time faculty position in the School of Human Sciences. Kilgore had been the assistant coach since 2010.

In the first press conference ever held in The History Room in Tift Hall on November 7, President David Bridges announced that the college would honor ABAC’s largest benefactor by naming the business school the Stafford School of Business. DeNean Stafford, III, made remarks for the family at the ceremony, and Dill and Susan Driscoll, co-deans of the Stafford School of Business, talked about their plans for the future.

Richard Wood spoke on his book, Survival of Rural America: Small Victories and Bitter Harvests, at the Cordell Lecture Series on November 14. A memorial service for Intramurals Director Alton Hudgins was held in the Chapel on November 20. Hudgins also coached the women’s tennis team and the women’s volleyball team during his ABAC career. He passed away on November 16. Faculty member Cathy Rogers retired in December after 22 years at ABAC.

ABAC alumna Niki Knox (Class of 2000), senior community economic development consultant for the Georgia Electric Membership Corporations, was the guest speaker at the fall commencement ceremony. Justin Gilliard from Nicholls, who earned his bachelor’s degree in diversified agriculture, received the George P. Donaldson Award. The Wildlife Society received the 2012 Southeastern Section of the Wildlife Society Student Chapter of the Year award at the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies conference in Hot Springs, Ark.

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The ABAC Jazz Ensemble was selected to perform at the International Jazz Educators Network Conference in Atlanta on January 4. Diane Jackson retired in January after 12 years at ABAC. ABAC implemented a new identification policy on January 14 to increase safety on campus. ABAC students, faculty, and staff are now required to clearly display their identification cards at nights and on weekends and holidays while on the campus.

Seven new trustees joined the ABAC Foundation on January 14. They included James Lee Adams, Jr., from Camilla; Greg Goggans from Douglas; James Holcombe from Savannah; Niki Knox from Peachtree City; John W. Langdale, III, from Valdosta; James H. Moore, III, from Albany; and Jim Sparks from Hendersonville, N.C.

Because of the dishwater gray skies, the first light of dawn came late to the campus of ABAC on January 17. But just as the eastern sky began to show its first glimmer of sunshine, a yellow Patten Seed/Super Sod Company tractor-trailer load of gigantic rolls of TifBlair centipede sod pulled to a stop on Moore Highway squaring up with the front lawn of the campus.

Before the truck had time to even settle in its tracks, a fork lift operator began lifting the rolls off the trailer onto the ground so that personnel from Landscape Associates in Tifton could begin the task of carpeting ABAC’s front yard with what Dr. Wayne Hanna calls the “most improved and
only certified centipedegrass cultivar on the market.” It was developed in Tifton jointly by the University of Georgia and the United States Department of Agriculture Agricultural Research Service.

“It has superior seedling vigor and improved tolerance to low soil pH and cold temperatures,” Hanna, a longtime researcher at the Coastal Plain Experiment Station, said. “It prefers lower fertility and adapts well to dry conditions.”

Patten Seed/Super Sod President Ben Copeland, a 1964 graduate of ABAC, said 13 tractor-trailer loads of the sod, which will cover 130,000 square feet, arrived on the ABAC campus in a span of two days from the company’s fields in Lakeland, Ga. Copeland said TifGrand and Emerald will also be used on the ABAC front lawn to enhance an already spectacular view of Tift Hall, Lewis Hall, and Herring Hall.

ABAC President David Bridges received the John Hunt Entrepreneur of the Year Award at the annual Tifton/Tift County Chamber of Commerce Banquet on January 24. Hunt was an ABAC alumnus (Class of ’59) who was also a member of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia.

J.T. Turner Construction Company employees lifted the new bronze Stallion Statue into place between the Student Center and Tift Hall on January 29, 2013. The statue weighs over 1,000 pounds. The aluminum Stallion Statue will be stored in the physical plant and used for special occasions such as the Expo. The Peach State Opera Company performed Madame Butterfly in Howard Auditorium on January 31 as a part of the “ABAC Presents” performing arts series.

U.S. News & World Report named ABAC one of the top public schools in the South Region of the United States in its annual “Best Colleges” ranking. ABAC was ranked 14th in the poll. The Gallery at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village opened an exhibit titled “Dodd’s Cosmos” on February 1, featuring renowned Georgia artist Lamar Dodd. The pieces of art came from the collection of ABAC alumnus C. L. Morehead (Class of ’48).

Jimmy Harper (Class of ’07) was named interim registrar at ABAC on February 1. He replaced Tarrah Mirus, who left ABAC to take a position in Albany. Ashley Mock and Lindsey Roberts worked with Athens Social Media for six months to develop a new web site for ABAC. After many days of intense scrutiny, the new web site opened on February 3.

Plum Creek forester Rob Hicks presented a check for $9,982 from the Plum Creek Foundation to Dr. Rod Brown to fund new equipment and software license purchases for the forestry program.

ABAC sponsored 10 recruiting events around the state in February and March titled ABAC In Your Town. Counties involved included Tift, Houston, Colquitt, Coffee, Irwin, Ben Hill, Henry, Gwinnett, Thomas, Floyd, and Lowndes. Students from the School of Human Sciences partnered with the admissions office to contact 875 prospective students in a February calling campaign.
The top three academic students at Tiftarea Academy announced they were planning to attend ABAC. Valedictorian Caitlyn Morehead of Ocilla, Salutatorian Tiffany Tanner of Ty Ty, and Katy Johnson of Chula had their picture made with ABAC President David Bridges.

ABAC Foundation Chief Operating Office Jodie Snow and Honors Program Director Cynthia Hall presented Ashley Childs and Kira Carreira with $1,000 scholarships at the first ever Stallion Scholars Evening. The ABAC Chapter of the Cattlemen’s Association was named the Georgia Cattlemen’s Association Chapter of the Year. Dr. Mary Ellen Hicks was the advisor for the club. Kristen Ray, a junior Rural Studies major from Waycross, was crowned Ms. ABAC in the 44th annual contest on February 28.

Director of Public Relations Ashley Mock coordinated the Historic Front Campus Rededication Ceremony on March 1. As a build-up to the historic day, Murphy and Orr representatives returned to Tift Hall on January 30 and February 13 to complete the hanging of the historic panels, and Fitzgerald sculptor Randy Anthony delivered the busts of Abraham Baldwin and Henry Harding Tift to Tift Hall on February 26. The two busts were each carved from 500-pound blocks of Georgia Marble. Each bust weighs about 250 pounds, and the Georgia Marble pedestals on which they rest weigh 800 pounds each.

A reception was held for family members and special friends of George T. Smith on February 28 to open the George Thornewell Smith Parlor in Tift Hall. President David Bridges talked about Smith in a special ceremony in The History Room as a part of the evening. Other guests including Judge John Ellington (Class of ’80) shared poignant stories about Smith and his remarkable life. Nationally known portrait artist June Elizabeth Blackstock was on hand for the unveiling of her portrait of Smith from his days as Lieutenant Governor of Georgia. Smith’s widow, Joan, unveiled the portrait. Smith, a 1940 ABAC graduate, remains the only Georgian to win contested elections to all three branches of state government. He was Lieutenant Governor, Speaker of the House, and Presiding Justice of the Georgia Supreme Court.

Ashley Mock, Lindsey Roberts, and Mike Chason collaborated on the pictures and information on the Smith historic panels which now hang in the Smith Parlor. The Parlor includes a replica of a lawyer’s desk with nameplates from Smith’s years in state government and a story, picture, and cup from an ABAC episode in Smith’s life when he showed a prize-winning bull with the name of “Ferdinand.”

A clear and cold blue sky greeted the crowd of over 300 persons at the Front Campus Rededication Ceremony which began at 1:30 p.m. on March 1 on the front steps of Tift Hall. President David Bridges presided over the event which included the presentation of colors by the Marine Color Guard from Albany, the National Anthem by ABAC voice performance major Joseph Bishop, the Pledge of Allegiance by Police Chief Bryan Golden, and the invocation by Dr. Joseph Njoroge, professor of political science and religion.

ABAC Alumni Association President George Granade (Class of ’74) led the list of speakers followed by Director of Capital Planning Melvin Merrill, Greenline Architecture President Monica Mastrianni, and J.T. Turner Construction Company Chief Operating Officer Tripp
Turner. UGA Senior Vice President for External Affairs Tom Landrum offered remarks on the life of Abraham Baldwin, and Tommy Tift, grandson of Henry Harding Tift, talked about the Tift family. Bridges spoke on behalf of the college, and University System of Georgia Chancellor Hank Huckaby spoke on behalf of the System.

As a part of the ceremony, President Bridges directed three alumni, Cathy Cox (Class of ’78), A.J. Powell (Class of ’40), and Mamie Ethel Talley (Class of ’28) to ring the original bell that was on the campus in 1908 that summoned students to class and signaled the change of classes. At the age of 103, Talley could be ABAC’s oldest alumnus.

Ashley Mock tied the green-and-gold ribbon to the two newest pillars on the front porch of Tift Hall for the traditional ribbon-cutting. The two white pillars were made from Redwood trees from Washington. Tift Hall had four pillars in 1908 but sometime in the 1940s, two of the pillars were removed because of water damage. The two new pillars were added during the renovation.

After the cutting of the ribbon, everyone entered a renovated Tift Hall which looked quite a bit different than the structure did at its original opening on February 20, 1908. Former faculty members Rosalyn Donaldson, Gary Roberts and Hal Henderson conducted tours of the various areas of the building with assistance from Michelle Reddick, wife of Academic Affairs Vice President Niles Reddick; Kris Chason, wife of Director of Public Relations Emeritus Mike Chason; and the newly crowned Ms. ABAC, Kristen Ray.

Other events during the afternoon included the open house at Herring Hall, which now includes offices for admissions, human resources, and the business office. Members of the Stafford family were on hand for the opening of the Stafford School of Business at 3 p.m. in Lewis Hall. This ceremony also included the unveiling of a special painting by renowned artist, Steve Penley, which focused on the many faces of ABAC. A limited number of prints of the painting were made available for a contribution through the ABAC Foundation to the Stafford School of Business.

MainStream performed for ABAC students in The Meadows on the night of March 1. On the south side of the campus, many supporters of ABAC enjoyed the ABAC Jazz Band at the annual Evening for ABAC in Gressette Gym followed by a special tour of Tift Hall. Retired faculty member Leon Benefield portrayed Captain Tift on the back steps of Tift Hall to welcome the group. Fireworks over Tift Hall ended one of the most spectacular days in the history of ABAC.

ABAC Alumni Association award winners at the annual awards brunch at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village conference room on March 2 included C. L. Morehead, Jr., of Athens, Distinguished Alumnus; Sonya Dale Martin Aldridge of Pavo, Helen Brown Sasser Award; Catrina Kennedy Pollard from Waynesboro, Outstanding Young Alumnus; Elzie Argene Claxton of Perry, J. Lamar Branch Award; Ann Graham from Tifton, Outstanding Educator; Jeff Sinyard from Albany, Outstanding Business Leader; Patricia Barber from Tifton, Outstanding Health Care; Greg Crumley from Tifton, Master Farmer; and Jeff Gibbs from Tifton, Honorary Alumnus. The Grady and Mary Ann Medford Family from Eldorado received the Family Legacy Award.
Inductees for the 2013 class of the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in Gressette Gym on March 2 included members of the 1999 national championship men’s tennis team; Henry Will Jones from the 1936-37 baseball, basketball, and football teams; women’s basketball coach Julie Conner; baseball player Z.B. Hamilton, and tennis player Derrick Racine. The Gee Haw, Whoa Back rodeo brought alumni and friends back to the rodeo arena that evening and concluded on the afternoon of March 3.

ABAC President David Bridges accompanied members of the Student Government Association and the Political Science Club to Atlanta on March 7 to meet with Governor Nathan Deal, Senator John Crosby, Senator Tyler Harper, Representative Penny Houston, Representative Jay Roberts, and Representative Sam Watson. Harper, Roberts, and Watson are ABAC alumni. Also attending from ABAC were Dr. Chris Kinsey, Dr. Hans Schmeisser, and Dr. Joseph Njoroge.

The Baldwin Players, under the direction of Dr. Brian Ray, presented The Glass Menagerie on March 7-9 in Howard Auditorium. Personnel moves at ABAC in March included Elaine Auger as the new marketing assistant at the Museum, Vonda Fenn (Class of '85) as the program coordinator for the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and Lynda Fisher as the new assistant director of advancement.

The ABAC Bass Fishing Team ranked 16th in the nation in the latest Cabella’s Association of Collegiate Anglers poll. ABAC’s competition includes over 100 NCAA Division I universities. The ABAC Forestry Club and Society of American Foresters Student Chapter were accepted into the National Association of Southern Forestry Clubs by a unanimous vote. The national organization presented the ABAC club with a cross cut saw valued at $1,400 upon acceptance.

Logan Layne, a freshman rural studies major from Manning, S.C., won the Mr. ABAC competition on March 28. The Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village at ABAC welcomed over 700 visitors at the annual Folklife Festival on April 6.


The Pegasus literary magazine celebrated its 40th year with a reading and reception at the annual George Scott Day Celebration of the Arts on April 18 and a Ruby Celebration on April 19 at the Peanut Museum at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village. Former faculty advisors Andrea Savage and Herbert Shippey were featured in a tribute in the 40th edition by student editor Angelo Smith. The Pegasus began in 1973 under the faculty leadership of Helen Strickland and Tom Liner and the student leadership of Ronnie Wheeler. Current advisors are Dr. Sandra Giles, Dr. Jeff Newberry, and Diantha Ellis.

ABAC’s award-winning student newspaper, The Stallion, extends Pacesetter recognition annually to those who have worked for ABAC through their actions and exemplary service.
Pacesetters are chosen from the student body, the administration, the faculty, and the staff who, through their hard work, talent, and devotion, embody the spirit of the college.

The 2013 faculty and staff Pacesetter recipients included Dill and Susan Driscoll, Deans of the Stafford School of Business; Donna Webb, Director of Enrollment Management for the Office of Admissions; Nicholas Urquhart, Lead Academic Support Counselor for the Office of Academic Support; and Mary White, custodian in the Branch Student Center and Herring Hall.

Efrain Ruiz, a diversified agriculture major from Whitmire, S.C., received the Superior Pacesetter. The Superior Pacesetter is given to the person who students believe has done the most for the college during the year while exemplifying leadership and service to the campus.

Student Pacesetters included Suzanne Black, a diversified agriculture major from Clermont, Fla.; Devin Gibbs, a rural studies - writing and communication major from Doerun; Sue Mastrario, a rural studies – business and economic development major from Ashburn; Luis Mendez, a business administration major from Lizella; Jacob Nyhuis, a diversified agriculture major from Montverde, Fla.; and Kristen Ray, a rural studies – social and community affairs major from Waycross. In the SGA spring election, Melissa Escobar was selected as the 2013-14 student body president.

Both ABAC tennis teams finished second in the state tournament. The Fillies ended a string of 19 consecutive state titles. The Stallions finished ninth out of 26 teams in the national tournament in Plano, Texas. The Fillies did not participate in the national tournament. The ABAC golf team finished second in the state tournament. Freshman Robbie Johnson earned All-Tournament honors and participated in the national tournament in Lubbock, Texas.

At the annual Honors Day ceremony on April 24, Dr. Mary Ellen Hicks, Professor of Animal Science, received the W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence. Ernest Kelly, Senior Systems Administrator in the Office of Information Technology, was honored with the Roy R. Jackson, Sr., Award for Staff Excellence. Dr. Tim Marshall, Dean of the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources, received the E. Lanier Carson Leadership Award for College Administrators, and Lorie Felton, Associate Professor of Environmental Horticulture, received the W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Excellence in Advising Award. At the same ceremony, Sarah A. Rooks, a junior biology major from Ashburn, was selected as the J.G. Woodroof Scholar.

Six retirees were honored, and service awards were presented to 46 other employees at a picnic outside Gressette Gym after the Honors Day Ceremony. Retirees included Patricia Barber, Patsy Hembree, Dr. John Galyean, Bobby Mathis, Catherine Rogers, and Teresa Williams. Barber, an associate professor of nursing in the School of Nursing and Health Sciences, had 32 years of service. Hembree, the Information Services Coordinator for the Business Office, had 38 years of service, and Galyean, an associate professor of speech and theatre, was a faculty member for 14 years in the School of Liberal Arts.
Mathis, a staff member at the Forest Lakes Golf Course, had 31 years at ABAC. Rogers, an associate professor of reading, was a faculty member for 22 years in the School of Liberal Arts. Williams, the Senior Administrative Assistant in the Stafford School of Business, had 28 years at ABAC. Melvin Merrill and Mike Williams were each honored for 35 years of service to the college. A 30-year service award went to Bobbie Baldree. Jimmy Felton, Lori Felton, Alan Kramer, and Vicki Walker were recognized for 20 years of service to ABAC. Honored for 15 years of service were JoAnn Brannen, Nancy Brannen, Brenda Doss, Bernice Hughes, Donna King, Melanie Partlow, Lori Pearman, Kay Powell, and Kim Talley.

Recognized for 10 years of service were Robert Carpenter, Robin Crumley, Dr. James Galt-Brown, Javier Gonzalez, Jokabeth Gutierrez, Mouyyed Hassouna, Todd Hicks, Rhonda Lewis, Dr. Barnabe Miburo, Alan Murphy, Keith Perry, Dr. Doris Roundtree, Reba Selph, and Troy Spicer.

Recognized for five years of service were Tonia Carpenter, Todd Daunhauer, Marie Davis, Dr. Susan Farmer, Gay Hodge, Holly Lawrence, Dr. Lisa Lishman, Ana Martinez, Dr. James McCrimmon, Ashley Mock, Dr. Niles Reddick, Theresa Ryan, Shawn Seat, Lawrence Shepherd, Vicki Sherling, and Amy Warren.

ABAC celebrated Arbor Day on April 26 by planting two Weeping Willow trees on the shore of Lake Baldwin. ABAC faculty member Abul Sheikh was the first person to drive a vehicle on the new four-lane road on April 29 which connects Highway 41 to Moore Highway in front of ABAC. ABAC President David Bridges and ABAC Foundation President Roger Dill worked extensively to get the road changed from two lanes to four lanes.

United States Congressman and Tifton native Austin Scott was the guest speaker at the spring commencement ceremony in Gressette Gym on May 3. Of the 217 graduates participating in the ceremony, a total of 48 students received bachelor’s degrees including the first ABAC bachelor’s degrees ever awarded in Natural Resource Management (Forestry), Natural Resource Management (Wildlife) and Biology.

Elisabeth O’Quinn, a rural studies – business and economic development major from Fitzgerald, received the prestigious George P. Donaldson award at the ceremony. O’Quinn became the first Summa Cum Laude graduate in the history of ABAC with a grade point average of 3.94 on a 4.0 scale. To be eligible for the Summa Cum Laude distinction, graduates must complete a bachelor’s degree. ABAC awarded its first bachelor’s degree in 2009.

The ceremony was the first ever at ABAC to require tickets for admission. Each graduate could request seven tickets to the event. The ceremony was also broadcast live on television by Plant Telecommunications. A special live feed was also viewed by the overflow crowd in Howard Auditorium.

The Stafford School of Business partnered with State Farm Insurance agents Chad Sumner (Class of ’89) and Brent Dixon to place students in the State Farm Intern Program. Weltner Hall
emptied in May when the ABAC Police Department moved to Evans Hall, the Office of Multicultural Education moved to Conger Hall, and the South Region Agricultural Education Office moved to the Chambliss Building. Due to a lack of interest by students during the 2012 Maymester, the college did not offer Maymester classes in 2013.

ABAC alumnus Thomas “Boo” Weekley (Class of ’93) won the Crowne Plaza Invitational at Colonial PGA tournament in Fort Worth, Texas on May 26. He received over $1.1 million for his third win on the PGA Tour. He also won at Harbour Town in 2007 and 2008.

ABAC enrolled 936 students for the 2013 summer term. Jeff Kilgore was named Head Coach of the ABAC baseball team on June 3 after serving as interim coach during the past year when the Stallions compiled a record of 21-27. Before June came to an end, Kilgore resigned the head coach’s job to take the head coaching job at his alma mater, Emmanuel College. The search for a new baseball coach began anew. High school students from 75 Georgia counties attended the annual Natural Resources Conservation Workshop at ABAC on June 9-13. President David Bridges stepped on the ABAC campus for the first time when he was a Natural Resources camper in the 1970s.

ABAC representatives including Dr. Tim Marshall and Donna Webb visited the FFA/FCCLA camp in Covington once a week during the summer to speak to potential ABAC students. Congressman Austin Scott wore an ABAC baseball jersey and cap during the annual Congressional baseball game in June between the Republicans and the Democrats in Washington D.C.

Georgia Power Company Area Manager Lynn Lovett presented a check for $3,000 to ABAC Foundation Chief Operating Officer Jodie Snow for the general scholarship fund on June 13. Dr. Johnny Evans assumed the position of Dean of the School of Science and Mathematics on July 1. He was a professor of chemistry and physics and the chemistry program coordinator at Lee University in Cleveland, Tenn., for the past 13 years. Evans received his undergraduate degree in chemistry from Georgia College and State University and earned his Ph.D. in physical chemistry from the University of Florida. His father was in the military so he spent most of his formative years on the road, attending 13 different schools before his junior year of high school.

Alan Kramer gave up his role as the men’s and women’s tennis coach at ABAC on July 1 to become the Assistant Dean of Students. He will continue his duties as the ABAC Athletics Director. Kramer compiled a career record of 339 wins and 217 losses including a 191-110 record with the Fillies and a 148-107 record with the Stallions since he began his ABAC career in 1993. The Fillies won the Region XVII Championship 19 straight years before the streak ended this season when they finished second.

Kramer won 24 Region XVII Coach of the Year awards and led ABAC to 14 Fillies’ and 10 Stallions’ Georgia Collegiate Athletic Association (GCAA) Championships. Kramer’s women’s teams finished in the top 10 nationally 10 times, and his men’s teams finished in the
top 10 nationally 12 times. Kramer was named the Under Armour Athletic Director of the Year for the Southeast Region in 2009-10.


Taking over as the head coach of the ABAC men’s and women’s tennis teams on July 1 was Dale White. He had served as Kramer’s assistant since 2008. Originally from Boston, England, White came to the United States on a tennis scholarship to Armstrong Atlantic State University where he was an All-America selection for three seasons. He earned his graduate degree in sports psychology from Georgia Southern University. He will also serve as an academic support counselor.

Nicholas Urquhart was named Director of Academic Support Services beginning July 1. Jackie Rose also began her duties as Migrant Education Consortium Coordinator on July 1. Elisabeth O’Quinn (Class of ’13) became the first ever Business Apprentice for the Stafford School of Business on July 1.

The Independence Day Celebration at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village was canceled due to stormy weather on July 3. The fireworks portion of the celebration was rescheduled for November 9 with the Veterans Day holiday.

A new art exhibit titled “Sullo’s South” began its run at the Museum Gallery on July 13. The exhibit features the works of New York native turned Georgian Joseph A. Sullo. Jimmy Harper resigned his position on July 13 to become the Chief Information Officer for South Georgia State College. Dr. Amy Willis (Class of ’89) was named Interim Chief Data Officer and Registrar.

On July 19, Sodexo announced the consolidation of its dining and facilities operations at ABAC. Prior to that time, the two divisions had been managed independently of each other. ABAC Vice President for Planning and Operations John Clemens said the consolidation will improve communication, reduce costs and improve services. Sodexo named Dan Miller as the new Director of ABAC Operations. Miller has been with the company since 2005 and at ABAC as director of dining operations for the past four years. The ABAC Alumni Association and the admissions office hosted an event for alumni and prospective students in Chatsworth on July 20.

Robert Morgan was named the head baseball coach and academic support counselor at ABAC on July 26. Morgan served as an assistant coach at Valdosta State University, Georgia Southwestern State University, and Georgia Perimeter College. As a player at Valdosta State in 2004, Morgan set single season records with a .436 batting average, 32 doubles, 172 total bases, 49 extra base hits, and a 31-game hitting streak. With the 32 doubles, he also set an NCAA Division II record. For his heroics on the field for the Blazers in 2004-05, Morgan was named to the All-Americ
team in 2004, selected as the Gulf South Conference East Division Player of the Year in 2004, and was picked as the best shortstop in the 40-year history of Valdosta State baseball. He was also a member of the Gulf South Conference All-Decade team for 2000-2010. In 2013, Morgan was named to the Athletics Hall of Fame at Valdosta State. Morgan was also an All-Conference player for ABAC rival South Georgia College before transferring to Valdosta State.

Fall semester classes began on August 14 with 3,394 students in attendance, marking the first fall term enrollment increase since the alltime record of 3,665 students enrolled in the 2007 fall term. ABAC President David Bridges said every room was filled at ABAC Lakeside and ABAC Place. Almost 1,000 students were enrolled in bachelor’s degree programs, the highest number in the 105-year history of the college.

Only 13 colleges and universities in the 31-unit University System of Georgia reported enrollment increases for the 2013 fall term. Only two, Southern Polytechnic and Atlanta Metropolitan, topped the ABAC increase of five per cent. The ABAC enrollment included students from 151 of Georgia’s 159 counties, 19 states, and 24 countries. The states included Maine and Washington, and the countries included Japan, Jamaica, Australia, and Morocco.

The bachelor’s degree in biology is the fastest growing single major with 202 students enrolled in a program that began offering junior and senior level classes in the fall term of 2011. Six hundred of the 1,000-plus students in the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources are enrolled in bachelor’s degrees including 170 in Natural Resource Management. The number of Rural Studies majors has grown from 50 to almost 200. Fifty-four per cent of the students at ABAC are female.

At the August Board of Regents meeting, ABAC was designated as Georgia’s official agricultural state college. The honor coincided with the fact that the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources enrolled over 1,000 students for the first time ever. Andy Dunn, a diversified agriculture major from Menlo, was the 1,001st student to enroll in the school. To celebrate, Director of Public Relations Ashley Mock organized a press conference in the Ag Sciences Building on August 15 with 1,000 green-and-gold doughnuts and remarks by ABAC President David Bridges and Dr. Tim Marshall, Dean of the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Caroline Black (Class of ’09), the Education and Agritourism Coordinator at Jaemor Farms in Alto, was the guest speaker at the freshman convocation ceremony in Gressette Gym on August 16. Dr. Cyndy Hall, director of the ABAC Honors Program and a faculty member in the School of Liberal Arts, said 50 new students joined the Honors Program, up from 23 in 2012. She said there is a new Honors Hall in ABAC Lakeside and an Honors Lounge in Conger Hall. Academic Achievement Center Coordinator Rebecca Cofer said the AAC received the International Tutor Training Program Certification from the College Reading and Learning Association.

Stoney Hart joined the staff as the Recreational Sports Director. He had been the assistant director of facility operations and intramural/club sports at Southwestern Oklahoma State
University. He had never seen a Georgia pine tree.

Assistant Director of Advancement Lynda Fisher coordinated the first ever Scholarship Milk and Cookies (MAC) Day at the Alumni House on August 27. Over 100 students attending ABAC on scholarships gathered to write personal letters of appreciation to individuals and companies who provided scholarship funding. The ABAC Alumni Association sponsored the event, and ABAC alumni baked homemade cookies for the occasion.

The Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village at ABAC received a surprise gift in August when Stephen Wehunt sent the Museum his dad’s 1898 Winchester squirrel rifle. Curator Polly Huff said Wehunt’s dad, Roy Dean Wehunt, served under General George Patton in World War II. Stephen Wehunt’s wife, Laveta Margret Waters, graduated from ABAC in 1969.

“My dad was a simple farm boy, and he loved farming,” Stephen Wehunt wrote in an accompanying letter. “I am sure if he had gone to college, he would have chosen ABAC.”

The Albany Symphony Orchestra opened the third season of the ABAC Presents! Performing Arts Series on Sept. 29. Twenty-nine high school students from Georgia, Alabama, Florida, and South Carolina participated in the second annual Stallion Scholars Evening on October 3 in Tift Hall. Dr. William Moore (Class of ’91) was named the Department Head for Forest Resources in the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

The total economic impact of ABAC on Tifton and the surrounding area during the 2012 fiscal year was $261,313,451, according to a study commissioned by the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia. Retired ABAC professor of economics Jeff Gibbs said ABAC sustained 15,205 jobs in Tifton and surrounding communities based on direct expenditures of $107,369,226 from student spending, personnel services, operating expenses, and capital outlays.

ABAC tennis player Josh Page won the men’s singles event at the ITA regional championship, earning an invitation to play in the Small College National Championship tournament. He wound up fifth in the nation in that tournament.

Georgia Governor Nathan Deal and Georgia Commissioner of Agriculture Gary Black visited with students at the ABAC building at the 36th annual Sunbelt Agricultural Exposition on October 15. The Expo began as a series of small equipment shows on the ABAC campus in the mid-1960s.

The Gallery at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village opened an exhibit titled *Back Roads of Georgia* on October 18 which highlighted photography and literary works depicting rural life and culture in Georgia. Traci Bryan stepped down as the Student Financial Services Director in October. She was replaced on a temporary basis by Bill Thumser.

ABAC students working at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village constructed...
a counterweight trebuchet, which they affectionately dubbed a “Pumpkin Chunker.” The Chunker tossed pumpkins hundreds of feet into the lake at the annual Fall Frolics. Thomas Jeffrey Vasseur, author of *Discovering the World: Thirteen Stories*, spoke at the annual Writers’ Harvest sponsored by the Pegasus literary magazine on October 22 at the Peanut Museum.

The Wildlife Society won first place in the annual Halloween Hay Bale competition. Chick-fil-A Vice President for Marketing David Salyers spoke at a Stafford School of Business seminar on steps to becoming “Remarkable” on October 23. The original Golden Stallion statue was erected in front of the Alumni House on Lake Baldwin in October. A new bronze stallion went up between the J. Lamar Branch Student Center and Tift Hall on January 29.

Tim Carpenter was named the Director of Housing Operations on November 1. He replaced Dr. Chris Kinsey, who moved to the position of Director of Residence Life. The Baldwin Players presented *The Taming of the Shrew* in Howard Auditorium on October 31-November 2. Former Navy SEAL team member Coleman Ruiz spoke to ABAC students on November 6. His visit was sponsored by the Stafford School of Business.

Michelle Sheffield, an animal science major, presented a poster at the National Collegiate Honors Conference in New Orleans on November 7 on behalf of the ABAC Honors Program. The Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village hosted a Salute to Veterans on November 9 topped off by fireworks. The fireworks display was originally scheduled for July 3 but was postponed due to inclimate weather.

Longtime ABAC benefactor Clarice Eubanks Turk passed away on November 10 at the age of 102. Dr. Tim Marshall, Dean of the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources, announced that he was stepping down from his position on June 30, 2014 to move to Virginia and marry Dr. Allison Faber.

ABAC received the Regents Award of Excellence from the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia for the Historic Front Campus Project. USG Vice Chancellor for Facilities Jim James said the Regents present the award for projects which redefine the “spirit of place” on a campus. Director of Capital Planning Melvin Merrill, who coordinated the project for ABAC, accepted the award.

George and Betty Turk established an ABAC endowment to fund enrichment opportunities for students in the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Mr. Turk was a member of the ABAC Class of 1952. Three generations of his family have attended ABAC.

Dr. Rod Brown was honored at a Professor Emeritus of Forestry ceremony in the Yow Forestry-Wildlife Building on November 20. President David Bridges presented him with a framed copy of his emeritus recognition letter, and Dean of Agriculture and Natural Resources Tim Marshall presented him with an engraved Wise Old Owl. Brown was a faculty member at ABAC from 1982 until his retirement in July, 2013.
ABAC hosted the premier of the documentary *deepsouth* in Howard Auditorium on November 21. Lisa Biagiotti, who produced and directed the film, talked to several ABAC classes during the day before the screening. Education Department Coordinator Amy Warren coordinated the annual visit by 142 kindergarten students at ABAC on November 22. ABAC education majors arranged seven different stops on the tour.

Amanda Biondino, goal keeper on the women’s soccer team, was selected All-Region First Team for the Georgia Collegiate Athletic Association. ABAC Coach Jimmy Ballenger said Biondino was the best goal keeper in the eight-year history of the Fillies’ soccer program. ABAC missed the playoffs for only the second time in history with a 7-10 overall record.

Members of Alpha Beta Gamma and other students from the Stafford School of Business visited with Doug Ivester, the former chairman of the Coca-Cola Company, at his plantation near Albany in November. Dr. Larry Moorman and his wife, Debra, donated a ball-washing machine to the Forest Lakes Golf Club driving range. The Moormans donated the course to the ABAC Foundation in 2002 and the clubhouse at the course to the Foundation in 2009.

The Academic Support Center and Media Services sponsored a therapy session for ABAC students with six dogs from Therapy Dogs, Inc., on December 3. The dogs provided welcome relief for ABAC students preparing for final exams. President David Bridges and his wife, Kim, hosted their annual Holiday Open House in Tift Hall for the first time ever on December 3. The ABAC Presents! Performing Arts Series staged *It’s a Wonderful Life: Live from the WVL Radio Theater* on December 5. The family of Earl H. Bennett (Class of ’57) set up an ABAC Foundation endowment fund to assist ABAC forestry students.

Laura Daniel Major from LaGrange became the first student in the history of ABAC to receive two bachelor’s degrees at the same commencement ceremony on December 13. She completed degrees in diversified agriculture and rural studies. Major also received the Donaldson Award at the ceremony. She is the wife of Glen Major of LaGrange and the daughter of Larry (ABAC Class of ’78) and Ann Daniel. Dr. Tim Marshall, Dean of the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources, was the featured speaker. A total of 197 students received degrees.

**2014**

ABAC enrolled 3,132 students for the 2014 spring semester, a 7.2 per cent increase over the 2013 spring term enrollment. The increase was the second largest among the 31 units of the University System of Georgia. Only 16 members of the System had increases over the previous spring term.

Kevin Owens (Class of ’09) presented a $10,000 check from Agrium Tifton to Dr. Tim Marshall,
Dean of the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources. The funds will be used for student scholarships in Agriculture. ABAC students D.J. Thomas from Willacoochee and Charles Conger from Chula represented the ABAC Bass Fishing Club when they finished seventh in the Carhartt Bassmaster College Series in Lake Okeechobee, Fla. ABAC Bookstore Manager Tracy Dyal earned the designation of Certified Collegiate Retailer from the National Association of College Stores.

Mamie Ethel Arnold Talley, ABAC’s oldest living alumnus, celebrated her 104th birthday on January 22. She was a member of the Class of ’28 at South Georgia A&M College. She also attended the Second District A&M School. A “Women’s Faces” exhibit opened January 30 at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village.

ABAC President David Bridges (Class of ’78) received the Stafford Award at the Tifton-Tift County Chamber of Commerce Banquet on January 30. Dallas Hunt (Class of ’83) presented the award. Rural Studies major Andrew Smith from Folkston spent a portion of his spring semester in Atlanta as one of the participants in the Georgia Legislature Internship Program. Military Advanced Education awarded ABAC recognition as a 2014 Top Military-Friendly college.

Former ABAC business office accountant Lester Nalls passed away at the age of 88 on February 2. He was employed at ABAC from 1969 until his retirement in 1988. The ABAC Alumni Association hosted a regional roundup at the home of ABAC Foundation Board of Trustee member James Holcomb (Class of ’70) in Savannah. The ABAC performing arts series presented the Azalea Quartet on February 18. Sigma Alpha sorority members celebrated the 106th birthday of ABAC on February 20 with birthday cake and cupcakes in the dining hall.

Kristen Card from Cordele won the 45th Ms. ABAC crown in Howard Auditorium on February 25. She will also compete in the Miss Georgia pageant in June. Dr. Tim Marshall was awarded honorary membership in the Georgia Young Farmers.

The annual Evening for ABAC scholarship fundraiser netted over $48,000 for the ABAC Foundation on March 7. The guest performers were von Grey, a group of four classically trained sisters who formed an indie-alternative folk group. The Baldwin Players’ spring musical, Smoke on the Mountain, was held at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture.

Museum Curator Polly Huff and a group of ABAC English professors staged an incredible exhibit around a series of photographs taken in 1909 of the Tifton Cotton Mill Village by photographer Lewis Hine. As a part of a Georgia Humanities Council grant, they brought together descendants of the Catherine Young family at the Museum on March 15. Young was pictured with nine of her 11 children in one of the photographs. Massachusetts historian Joe Manning worked diligently to write the story of the family and played a huge role in the reunion. One of the descendants was Dr. Earl Parker, a former ABAC Professor of Biology and Botany.

During the spring break in March, ABAC students headed to all points of the globe such as
traveling on the beef industry tour in Astoria, Ill., washing elephants in India, studying in Belize at the Jaguar Temple, and competing in the Forestry Conclave in Dublin, Va. Scott Blount was named Special Projects Coordinator at ABAC on March 6. The Arbor Day Foundation honored ABAC with Tree Campus USA recognition. Melvin Merrill was named Acting Vice President for Planning and Operations on March 21 after John Clemens left his vice-president’s position after seven years to become the Interim Vice President for Fiscal Affairs at Darton State College.

On March 25, President David Bridges announced that the Stafford School of Business at ABAC had been approved by the Board of Regents to offer a Bachelor of Science degree in Business and Economic Development. A press conference and celebration was held on the lower floor of Lewis Hall which was jammed with students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

The Georgia Museum of Agriculture dedicated the Wiregrass Barn Quilt on March 29. Created by the Wiregrass Quilters Guild, the “Churn Dash” pattern will hang on the Wiregrass Opry Shelter. Also on March 29, the ABAC performing arts series presented the Fisk Jubilee Singers. Troy Spicer was named the Dean of the School of Nursing and Health Sciences on April 1. Spicer had served as the Interim Dean since October, 2012. He earned his associate degree in nursing from ABAC in 1982. His mother, Nellie Jo Spicer, was an ABAC nursing student in 1972.

Michael Wright assumed duties as the Student Financial Services Director at ABAC on April 1. Ross McClellan from Tifton was selected as Mr. ABAC on April 2. Savanna Thompson from Nicholls and Daniel Andrews from Jackson, S.C., were named Homecoming Queen and King on April 3 at the Ben Wells Concert at the rodeo arena.

ABAC Alumni Association award winners at Homecoming 2014 on April 4 included Dr. Tim Marshall, Distinguished Alumnus; Alisha Hall, Helen Brown Sasser Award; Niki Knox, Outstanding Young Alumnus; James Lee Hall, J. Lamar Branch Award; Lola Henning West, Outstanding Educator; James Holcomb, Outstanding Business Leader; Nancy Hilton, Outstanding Health Care Professional; David Moore, Master Farmer; and Dr. Rod Brown, Roger Dill, and DeNean Stafford, III, Honorary Alumnus status. The Gay and Howell families from Lincolnton, Gordon, Irwinville, and Athens received the Family Legacy Award.

For the first time ever, the ABAC Alumni Association awards were presented with the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame awards in Gressette Gymnasium. Hall of Fame inductees for 2014 were Marshall Taylor, Andrea Pate Willis, and “Sarge’s Crew,” the 1993 State Intercollegiate Softball Champions.

The third annual Run for the Nurses on April 5 raised $10,000 for the Lisa Purvis Allison Spirit of Nursing Scholarship. The ABAC Ambassadors won the first ever Stallion Cup by being a major part of activities during Homecoming Week.

Jordan Gill from Enigma received the J.G. Woodroof Scholar Award during the Honors Day
Ceremony on April 9. Other award winners were Amy Warren, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence; Brenda Doss, Roy R. Jackson, Sr., Award for Staff Excellence; Paul Willis, E. Lanier Carson Leadership Award for College Administrators; and Dr. Abul Sheikh, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Excellence in Advising Award. The Honors Day Ceremony was held at 3 p.m. for the first time ever.

At the annual service awards picnic after the Honors Day ceremony, four retirees were honored and service awards were presented to 30 other employees. Retirees included Dr. Rod Brown, Wanda Golden, Bobbie Baldree, and Dr. Doug Waid. Dr. Kay Weeks received a 35-year service award, and Shirley Wilson received a 30-year service award. Those recognized for 25 years of service were Cindy Barber, Janet Haughton, Dr. Mary Ellen Hicks, and Wayne Jones. Rebecca Arnold was recognized for 20 years of service.

Fifteen-year service awards went to Dr. Renata Elad, Anthony Fitzgerald, Philip Hightower, Katrina McCrae, and Beverly Wesley. Honored for 10 years of service were Nancy Anthony, Emily Cheek, Shawn Cox, Teri Mathis, Deborah Pyles, and Keisha Spears. Five-year service awards went to Elaine Auger, Christina Dent, Dr. Kingsley Dunkley, Dr. Cynthia Hall, Nicholas Hardin, Robbie Hawsey, Joseph Johnson, Debbie McComas, John Layton, Mickie Tompkins, Amanda Urquhart, and Donna Webb.

The Omega Delta Chapter of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society at ABAC was named a Five-Star Chapter at the PTK regional conference. Roger Pemberton was the featured performer at the 36th annual ABAC Jazz Festival on April 17. The event was also a part of the ABAC performing arts series and marked the final concert for Don Coates, director of the ABAC Jazz Band since 1974. Coates retired from ABAC at the end of the spring term after 40 years of service with the music program. At his final concert, Coates was honored by letters from the United States Congress, the Georgia Senate and the Georgia Music Educators. Dr. Jeff Newberry was recognized as the first ever Poet-in-Residence at ABAC in a Tift Hall reception on April 23.

Dill and Susan Driscoll were selected as 2014 Superior Pacesetter Award winners by The Stallion staff. Pacesetter recipients were Stoney Hart, Alan Kramer, Dr. Jeff Newberry, Elisabeth O’Quinn, Judy Perry, Carlton Brooks, Shawn Burnette, Melody Harper, Trent Hester, and Andrea Smith. Dr. Chris Kinsey received the SGA President’s Award. Kevin Vantrees from Alpha Gamma Rho fraternity was named Greek Man of the Year, and Haley Webb from Sigma Alpha sorority was named Greek Woman of the Year.

Stafford Business School Dean Dill Driscoll headed an ABAC event from noon until 6 p.m. on April 24 as a part of the national Carry the Load program which honors the sacrifices of the military, law enforcement, firefighters, and rescue personnel while bringing back the true meaning of Memorial Day. Seven ABAC students will accompany Driscoll and Stafford School of Business Placement Coordinator Lyndsey Walters on a 2,000-mile trek from West Point, N.Y., to Dallas, Texas from April 29 to May 25 as a part of the National Carry the Load Relay.
Mike Williams retired after 36 years of service to ABAC on April 30. Robert Gerhart began his duties as Chief Information Officer at ABAC on May 1. Slayten Carter from Willacoochee received the Distinguished Ambassador Award for the 2013-14 year from the ABAC Ambassadors. She will serve as president of the group in 2014-15. Dr. Jordan Cofer, associate professor of English in the School of Liberal Arts, released a book titled *The Gospel According to Flannery O’Conner*.

The Sigma Chapter of Alpha Beta Gamma at ABAC won the national championship in the presentation competition at the Alpha Beta Gamma national convention in San Antonio. Lindsay Partridge from Bushnell, Fla., was selected as the national president of the organization, Colleen Leu from Chula was named National Marketing Director, and Melody Harper from Pelham was named as the National Secretary.

Dr. James Galt-Brown, Associate Professor of History, spoke on Rural America at the national headquarters of Wal-Mart in Bentonville, Ark. He was selected based on his expertise as a lecturer in the ABAC Rural Studies program, which is the only one of its kind in America.

President David Bridges announced on May 7 that Vice President for Academic Affairs Niles Reddick had been selected as the Vice Provost/CEO for the University of Memphis at Lambuth campus in Jackson, Tenn., effective July 1. Reddick served seven years at ABAC. Dr. Gail Dillard was named the Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Savannah Leigh Brown, a nursing major from Wray, received the George P. Donaldson Award at the spring commencement ceremony on May 8. Former Navy SEAL Coleman Ruiz was the guest speaker. A total of 319 students completed their requirements for graduation at the end of the spring term. Sixty-five students received bachelor’s degrees. One of the graduates who didn’t participate in the ceremony was Kay Parten Wylie, who received her ABAC associate degree in arts 59 years after she started classes at ABAC in 1955. She had already received degrees from Valdosta State and Georgia Southwestern but decided she wanted to transfer back some classes to get her degree from ABAC as well. At the age of 76, she got it.

Coach Donna Campbell’s ABAC Fillies’ softball team wound up second in the NJCAA Region XVII tournament. ABAC recorded a 29-16 overall record. Jenna Byrd from Macon and Rachel Hill from Snellville made first team all-region, and Brittany Davis from Lizella and Taylor Boyett from Fayetteville, Tenn., made second team all-region. Campbell announced in December that she was retiring from coaching after the 2015 season but would stay on at ABAC as a faculty member. In her first year at ABAC, the Fillies won the 1996 National Junior College Athletic Association Slow-pitch championship with a record of 44-12.

Coach Robert Morgan’s ABAC baseball team made the state tournament, the first time the Stallions qualified for the tournament since 2010. ABAC wound up with a 21-29 overall record in Morgan’s first year at the helm. Christian Miller from Eastman made second team all-state
with a .373 batting average.

The ABAC men’s tennis team won the 2014 state championship, and first year head coach Dale White won Coach of the Year honors. After winning Most Valuable Player honors at the state tournament, Josh Page, a freshman from the United Kingdom, blitzed the field at the national tournament to win the national championship at number one singles. He became the first ABAC player to win the national title at number one singles since Richard Evans led the Stallions to the national championship in 1999.

After winning the first set 6-4 in the national title match over Harry Busby from Cowley (Kans.) College, Page fell behind 4-1 in the second and took a medical timeout for a painful blister on his left foot.

“I felt like he was in command of the match, and I was already thinking about the third set,” Page said. “Then I kind of loosened up, and he got a little tight.”

Page roared back for a 7-6 victory on the tiebreaker, and his teammates mobbed him on the court. The Stallions wound up fifth in the nation in the team standings by playing what White called “our best tennis all season.” Page was also named the ITA Region IV Rookie of the Year at the national tournament. The ABAC Fillies’ tennis team finished second in the state tournament and 12th in the national tournament. Kelly Burge from the United Kingdom was named Region IV Rookie of the Year at the national tournament.

The ABAC golf team finished second in the state tournament and eighth in the district tournament. Chris Rogers from Dawson and Lee Wright from Moultrie were named first team All-Region selections. Jimmy Ballenger took over as coach of the golf team when Herb Hendrix retired during the season.

Dr. Jerry Baker was selected as Dean of the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources on July 1. He replaced Dr. Tim Marshall who served for eight years in the position. Baker came to ABAC from his position as Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director of Sigma Xi: the Scientific Research Society.

President David Bridges unveiled a new strategic plan called Destination ABAC on July 14. As a part of the plan, Paul Willis was named Vice President for Finance and Operations and Chief Business Officer. Director of Public Relations Emeritus Mike Chason was named Interim Vice President for External Affairs and Advancement to replace Willis in that position. Robert Gerhart was named Vice President for Technology and Chief Information Officer. Dr. Darby Sewell, Dean of the School of Human Sciences, will assist with operations at ABAC on the Square in Moultrie while Dr. Gail Dillard serves as Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs.

ABAC became the only college in Georgia to be selected as a Best Value School by the University Research and Review.
Garrett Boone was named the Director of Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village at ABAC on August 1. He had been serving as assistant director since 2012. Charles Conger, a mechanical engineering major from Chula, represented ABAC in the 2014 Bassmaster College National Championship at Lake Chatuge near Hiawassee on July 31-August 2. Randi Walden (Class of ‘12) became the Information Center Coordinator in Tift Hall on August 4. Larry Byrnes began his duties as the ABAC golf coach on August 7. John Wesley Langdale, III (Class of ’90), was the guest speaker at the annual Freshman Convocation on August 14. Alumni Director Lynda Fisher (Class of ’89) coordinated a regional alumni roundup in Nashville, Tenn., on August 16.

ABAC enrollment continued to climb in the fall semester with 3,457 students, a 1.9 per cent increase over the 2013 fall term. The enrollment included students from 151 Georgia counties, 16 states, and 25 countries. ABAC was the only college or university south of Macon in the University System to increase its enrollment in both the 2013 and 2014 fall semesters.

The ABAC Alumni Association hosted its annual Milk and Cookies Day on August 26 when over 200 ABAC students stopped by the Alumni House to write thank you letters to their benefactors for their ABAC scholarships.

Rowena Loyd, wife of former ABAC President Harold Loyd, passed away on September 6. Dr. Susan Roe and members of the ABAC choral program sang the National Anthem on the front steps of Tift Hall on September 12 to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the song. The Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village was one of only nine places in the state to host the Georgia Art Collection Inspired Georgia exhibit beginning September 13. Danielle Buehrer assumed her duties as Director of Institutional Research on September 15.

Paul W. Williams was selected as Interim Vice President for External Affairs on October 1. Also on October 1, every campus in the University System of Georgia adopted a tobacco and smoke-free campus policy. One hundred and fifty families attended the annual ABAC Family Weekend on October 3-5. Former Arts Experiment Station Director Syd Blackmarr was selected as one of 13 recipients for the Governor’s Awards for the Arts and Humanities by Governor Nathan Deal on October 7. University System of Georgia Chancellor Hank Huckaby visited the ABAC campus on October 9. Ashley Mock resigned her position as Director of Public Relations on October 17.

Marlee Mathis from Nashville was crowned Ms. ABAC 2015 on October 23. Andy Paul, a sophomore agricultural education major from Lexington, was named the president of the national FFA organization at the annual convention in Louisville, Ky. He became the first ABAC student ever selected as the National FFA President.

President Jimmy Carter enthralled a standing room only audience in Howard Auditorium on October 28 when he spoke on the Carter Center and his life after the White House. He was
hosted by the ABAC College Democrats. The student chapter of the National Wildlife Society at ABAC was named best in the nation at the annual conference in Pittsburgh, Penn. The Baldwin Players presented the female version of *The Odd Couple* on November 6-8. The Stafford School of Business launched a new club called Enactus ABAC.

Baseball Coach Robert Morgan resigned on November 6. Assistant Coach Brandon Reeder was named interim head coach by Athletics Director Alan Kramer. Coach Jimmy Ballenger’s ABAC soccer team lost to Darton 5-0 in the second round of the state playoffs. The Fillies had a 2014 record of 6-8-3. Kerry Newman from Hemstead, England was named first team all-conference, and Jasmine Johnson from Warner Robins was named second team all-conference.

ABAC President David Bridges announced on November 14 that all ABAC housing will be under the direction of Corvias Campus Living beginning on July 1, 2015 as a part of Phase One of the University System of Georgia’s Public Private Partnership. The ABAC Foundation and its subsidiary organizations, First ABAC LLC and Second ABAC LLC, had worked with the Tift County Development Authority and the University System to build and maintain student housing at ABAC Place and ABAC Lakeside since 2002.

“We are grateful to the ABAC Foundation, its previous and present leadership, and the Tift County Development Authority for stepping up and investing in the College,” Bridges said. “Without the housing that was built under the previous public partnership, ABAC would be a fraction of its current size and its economic impact to the area would have been greatly diminished.”

Bridges said the ABAC Foundation’s effort has been very successful but the University System’s Board of Regents decided that a new financial model was necessary to provide affordable housing for all System institutions without raising the debt load of the State of Georgia. Under the new agreement, which affects nine System institutions, neither ABAC nor the ABAC Foundation will have debt liabilities associated with student housing.

Retha Martin, a business major from Moultrie, received the Donaldson Award at the fall commencement ceremony on December 11. Andrea Smith, a biology major from Fitzgerald, received the first ever ABAC Alumni Association Award for bachelor’s degree graduates at the ceremony. Jim Hall (Class of ’83) was the commencement speaker. He is the Chief of Law Enforcement for the National Wildlife Refuge System through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Dr. Worth Bridges passed away on December 14. A former vice president and dean of student affairs at ABAC, Bridges retired in 1995 after 28 years of service.
A total of 3,138 students enrolled at ABAC for the 2015 spring semester, a slight increase over the 3,132 students enrolled in the spring term of 2014. The enrollment included students from 150 Georgia counties, 18 states, and 28 countries. ABAC has now increased its enrollment for four consecutive semesters.

Dr. Vincent Keesee, an art professor at ABAC from 1965-95, opened a one-man art show at the Gallery of the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village on January 8. The Peach State Opera Company presented *The Elixir of Love* on January 22 in Howard Auditorium as a part of the ABAC Arts Series.

From tablets to Telehealth, the nursing students at ABAC began incorporating the latest technology into their preparations for Registered Nurse certification in January. Troy Spicer, Dean of the School of Nursing and Health Sciences, said ABAC is the first college in the state to offer certification of nursing students through the new Telehealth technology.

“Telehealth is the delivery of health-related services using telecommunications and related technologies in the support of patient care, health education, and administrative activities,” Spicer said. “It’s a technology that’s really changing the way we think about connecting to our health care.”

Tools of the Telehealth trade include probes equipped with cameras so a doctor in another location can see the image on a video screen. A Bluetooth stethoscope allows ABAC nursing students to share what they’re hearing from a patient on site with a doctor in his office miles away.

Spicer said the ABAC nursing students are adapting rapidly to the new Telehealth technology but they seem to be even more impressed with the new tablets that every student entering the program this semester now utilizes.

“No more giant book bags with heavy textbooks,” Spicer said. “These tablets contain all of their textbooks, allow access to specialized nursing and health care apps, and provide access to a web-based simulated patient records platform.”

Spicer said as long as the students can get a WiFi connection, they can access learning resources on campus, in the classrooms, and in the hospitals where they spend many hours in clinical experiences.

“ABAC is the first nursing program in the state to provide tablets and electronically integrate learning resources for a more up to date student learning experience,” Spicer said.

ABAC President David Bridges presented Mamie Ethel Arnold Talley with green-and-gold balloons and flowers on her 105th birthday on January 22. She is ABAC’s oldest alumnus. Talley attended the Second District A&M School and graduated from the South Georgia A&M College in 1928.
The Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village captured three statewide awards at the annual meeting of the Georgia Association of Museums and Galleries. Polly Huff, assistant director and curator at the Museum, said the Museum received the Best Museum Exhibit Award, the Best Museum Gallery Event Award, and the Best Educational Program Award.

The ABAC newspaper received four overall awards and nine individual awards at the Georgia College Press Association convention. The newspaper also received 10 awards at the Southern Regional Press Institute. Dr. Thomas Grant is The Stallion advisor.

Equus, a new ABAC dance troupe, performed for the first time at the Stallion Day recruitment event on February 14. For the second year in a row, ABAC met the standards to become a Tree Campus USA community on February 18. ABAC replaced 19 trees and planted 37 new trees in 2014.

The ABAC Ambassadors served cupcakes in the dining hall on February 20 to celebrate ABAC’s 107th birthday. Dr. Deidre Mercer Martin joined the ABAC staff on March 1 as Director of Advancement/Development Officer. Originally from Omega, she recently retired from her position as Vice Chancellor for University Advancement at the University of South Carolina Aiken.

Dr. Alison Mann, assistant professor of history and political science, helped ABAC students rewrite the constitution for the Student Government Association. ABAC President David Bridges signed his approval of the updated document on March 6 in The History Room in Tift Hall. The SGA has been inactive at ABAC for the 2014-15 academic year.

Laura Groover Whiddon (Class of ’74) and her husband, Darrell Whiddon (Class of ’73) presented a 150-year-old Burdett pump organ to the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village.

The AET Club brought a full scale Truck and Tractor Pull to the campus on March 5-7 for the first time in 30 years. An Evening for ABAC was a complete sellout on March 6 when Katie Deal performed the songs of Patsy Cline in Gressette Gym. Vice President for External Affairs and Advancement Paul Williams said the event raised $62,500 for student scholarships.

The Baldwin Players presented The Whipping Man at the Peanut Museum of the Georgia Museum of Agriculture on March 5-7 for their spring production. Dr. J.P. Rowe (Class of ’58) passed away on March 12. He was a chemistry professor at ABAC from 1959 until his retirement in 1991.

ABAC students traveled all over the world for spring break 2015, visiting Belize as a part of marine biology and marine science classes; Paris, France for a world literature class; Starkville, Miss., for the 58th annual Southern Forestry Conclave; Orlando, Fla., for a choral engagement at
EPCOT; and the states of Iowa, Illinois, Tennessee, and Nebraska for a beef industry tour.

Former ABAC Media Services Coordinator Sandra Hunt (Class of ’80) passed away on March 25. She joined the college as a learning resources specialist with the Independent Learning Center on February 21, 1977 and retired on July 2, 1997. Cooper Mayhall threw a no-hitter for the ABAC baseball team in its 3-0 win over East Georgia on March 27. The freshman lefthander from Thomas County Central High School finished with seven strikeouts and continues to lead the Georgia Collegiate Athletic Association in earned run average. He has a 5-1 record and an ERA of 1.05. Mayhall was named the National Junior College Athletic Association Co-Pitcher of the Week.

Betty McCorvey retired from her position as director of sponsored programs on March 31. She joined the ABAC staff as assistant director of development on Sept. 2, 1997. McCorvey helped to coordinate the Trisha Yearwood Dollars for Scholars event in 2006 which attracted the largest crowd in the history of the show. She assumed leadership of sponsored programs in 2009 and was instrumental in $22.6 million in funds benefitting the college through sponsored programs in the last six years.

Melvin Merrill retired from his position as Director of Capital Planning on April 1. He joined the college as director of development on July 1, 1978. Honored in 2011 by the Georgia Education Advancement Council with its Lifetime Achievement Award, Merrill was recognized at that time for over 8,600 ABAC constituents contributing in excess of $23,540,000 in support of ABAC programs. Merrill became Director of Capital Planning in 2011 and led the charge on capital projects valued at almost $80,000,000.

At the 2015 Honors Day ceremony on April 8, award winners included Dr. Hans Schmeisser, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence; Sherin Nixon, Roy R. Jackson, Sr., Award for Staff Excellence; Javier Gonzalez, E. Lanier Carson Leadership Award for College Administrators; and Rebecca Daly Cofer, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Excellence in Advising Award. Sarah A. Rooks, a senior biology major from Ashburn, became the first and only person in the 28-year history of the award to be named the J.G. Woodroof Scholar on two occasions. She also won the award in 2013. From this time forward, the award will only be presented to students in bachelor’s degree programs.

At the annual faculty-staff picnic after the Honors Day ceremony, plaques for 30 years of service to ABAC were presented to Randy Carter and Judy Perry. Other service award recipients included Dr. Gail Dillard and Dr. Abul Sheikh, 25 years; Donna Campbell, Dr. Maggie Martin, Jean Oliver-Burks, Beth Thornton, and Anita White, 20 years; Dr. Erin Campbell, Donna Hatcher, Dr. Joseph Njoroge, and Donnie Thompson, 15 years; Jimmy Ballenger, Tracy Dyal, Diantha Ellis, Dr. Chris Kinsey, Ray Lundy, Dr. Brian Ray, Clayton Riehle, Donna Sledge, Susan Thompson, Elizabeth Wilcox, and Mary Willis, 10 years; and Bonnie Asselin, Dr. Jordan Cofer, Rebecca Cofer, James Lewis, Dr. Hans Schmeisser, Charla Terrell, Nicholas Urquhart, Paul Willis, and Alma Young, five years.
Clay Degler from Greenville and Lisa Stephens from Turin were crowned 2015 Homecoming King and Queen at the annual concert on April 9 in the Tractor Pull Arena. Ray Fulcher and Faren Rachels provided the entertainment.

ABAC softball coach Donna Campbell was the Grand Marshal of the Homecoming parade on April 10. The Forestry Society won the Homecoming Stallion Cup.

Both ABAC tennis teams won NJCAA Region XVII championships at the Red Hill Tennis Center on April 10. The Stallions defeated Georgia Perimeter 9-0, and the Fillies beat Georgia Perimeter 8-1. Josh Page was selected MVP of the men’s tournament, and Lizanne Jinkertz was named MVP of the women’s tournament. Coach Dale White was named the Coach of the Year for both men’s and women’s tennis in the state. The Fillies finished 12th in the national tournament, and the Stallions wound up third in the national tournament. Page lost his bid to become only the second ABAC men’s tennis player in history to win back-to-back national titles at number one singles when he lost in the semifinal round. Jean Francoise Lagloire won national titles in 1989 and 1990.

Dr. Beverly Sparks (Class of ’76) received the Distinguished Alumnus Award from the ABAC Alumni Association at the annual awards dinner in Gressette Gym on April 10. Other award winners included Lauri Jo Bennett (Class of ’88), Helen Brown Sasser Award; State Senator Tyler Harper (Class of ’06), Outstanding Young Alumnus; Jimmy Grubbs (Class of ’65), J. Lamar Branch Award; Dr. Shelley Fandel (Class of ’01), Outstanding Educator; Keri Jones (Class of ’99), Outstanding Business Leader; Johnny Cochran (Class of ’76), Master Farmer; Jack Perry, Honorary Alumnus; and the Marshall Bennett, Sr., family from Adel, Family Legacy Award.

Athletics Director Alan Kramer recognized the 2015 class of the Athletics Hall of Fame at the alumni dinner. Recipients included Ralph Bryant (Class of ’81), Tommy Dial (Class of ’64), Monika Lalewicz (Class of ’09), Sonny Skinner (Class of ’80), the 1999 women’s tennis team, and Dr. Larry and Debra Moorman.

On April 11, the School of Nursing and Health Sciences raised more than $10,000 for the Lisa Purvis Allison Scholarship at the fourth annual Run for the Nurses, the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village at ABAC had almost 600 people at its annual Folklife Festival, alumni involved in the journalism program enjoyed a reunion with former faculty member Helen Strickland at the Alumni House, and Homecoming culminated with the annual Gee Haw Whoa Back Rodeo.

In Larry Byrnes’ first year as coach, the ABAC golf team finished second in the NJCAA Region XVII tournament. Jeb Stewart from Swainsboro finished in a tie for fourth in the individual standings and made the All-Region team. The baseball Stallions finished fourth in the conference with a 27-30 overall record. Brandon Reeder was the interim coach for the season.
Caleb Slaughter hit .364 with two home runs and 25 runs batted in to earn a first team spot on the All-Conference squad. Jacob Baxter was named to the second team, and Nick Higginbotham earned a Gold Glove award for handling 127 chances without an error in the outfield.

In her final year as coach, Donna Campbell led the ABAC softball team to the regular season championship in the Georgia Collegiate Athletic Association with an overall record of 26-12 and a conference record of 16-6. The Fillies finished second in the league tournament. Mikela Barlow and Brittany Davis were selected for the NJCAA All-Region XVII team and the Region XVII All-Tournament Team. Taylor Boyett, Brooke Keen, and Taylor Owens were named to the All-Region team, and Jenna Byrd was named to the All-Tournament team. Campbell will continue to be an ABAC faculty member but will retire from the coaching profession. She ended her career with a record of 753 wins and 494 losses.

Dr. Jordan Cofer completed the Executive Leadership Institute of the University System of Georgia. Rebecca Cofer was named a Superior Pacesetter and 11 other Pacesetter award winners were named at the annual leadership banquet. Student Pacesetter recipients were Slayten Carter, Josh Clements, Clara Grace Coker, Tiffany Miller, and Tre’mon Mills. Faculty-staff Pacesetter winners were Cindy Barber, Bernice Corbin, Doug Hicks, Lindsey Roberts, Terence Turner, and Kaci West.

Taylor Martin, a biology major from Hephzibah, was elected as the 2015-16 Student Government Association president. ABAC has been without an SGA for the past year as ABAC students put together a constitutional convention and restructured the entire organization. Andrew Belk, a music major from Douglas, was selected as SGA vice-president.

Former ABAC faculty member Helen Strickland received the Distinguished Alumni Educator Award from the Grady School of Journalism at the University of Georgia on April 18. ABAC alumnus Jay Shaw (Class of ’68) passed away on April 20. He was a state representative for 16 years and Mayor of Lakeland for 10 years.

The second annual Carry The Load Step-Off Rally was held at ABAC on April 23. ABAC students Victoria Burnette, Jessica Gorseth, Aaron Harrell, Lane Riley, Rilea Stapf, Spencer Wilbanks, Demarcus Bateman, Matt Reid, and Rodney Troupe will accompany Dill Driscoll, Dean of the Stafford School of Business, on the national Carry The Load relay route from West Point, N.Y., to Dallas, Texas on April 28 through Memorial Day. Carry The Load is a national effort to restore the true meaning of Memorial Day.

As a part of the Carry The Load rally, ABAC President David Bridges and his wife, Kim, hosted a reception for the family of Harold Bascom “Pinky” Durham, Jr., who gave his life for his country on October 17, 1967 in Vietnam. He was awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously in a presentation to his mother, Grace Durham Jolley, on October 30, 1969. Durham was an ABAC alumnus as was his brother, John, who was present at the reception. Bridges said that ABAC will be the home for a Pinky Durham Museum on the campus with memorabilia including the
actual Medal of Honor. He also said ABAC will be the home to a Veterans Center where veterans can “gather, study, work together, and access the support they have earned and deserve.” In another show of support for veterans, Bridges said he and his wife would commit to the funding of the $20,000 first phase of the new ABAC Veterans Enrichment Fund. He challenged members of the ABAC Foundation Board of Trustees to grow the fund to $100,000 by May 1.

Georgia Power Area Manager Lynn Lovett assumed the responsibility of Chair of the ABAC Foundation Board of Trustees at their meeting on April 23. She welcomed five new trustees including Dr. Greg Anderson (Class of ’78), Amber Davis Collins (Class of ’98), Jaclyn Dixon Ford, Larry Montgomery, and Cain Thurmond (Class of 2011).

Brittney Gunter, Kevin Vantrees, and Allison Gordon received Larry Allen Leadership awards from Dr. Jerry Baker, Dean of the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Allen is a former chair of the Division of Agriculture at ABAC. Jessica Swords (Class of 2008) was named Director of Student Accounts in the Office of Fiscal Affairs.

Grounds and Maintenance Supervisor Monty Spinks retired after a 21-year career with the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village at ABAC on May 1. His father, former state senator Ford Spinks, spearheaded efforts to build the Georgia Agrirama, which opened to the public on July 4, 1976. On July 1, 2010, Georgia legislators made the Museum a part of the ABAC campus.

More students than at any other time in the 107-year history of ABAC completed their requirements for graduation at the end of the spring term. President David Bridges said a record-breaking 409 students completed degree requirements and 264 of them participated in the spring commencement ceremony on May 7. A total of 117 graduates received bachelor’s degrees, shattering the previous record of 67. The Stafford School of Business also set a record by awarding 24 bachelor’s degrees in business and economic development.

Allison Gordy, a natural resource management major from Sharpsburg, received the ABAC Alumni Association Award for the top bachelor’s degree graduate participating in the ceremony, and Samuel Peraza, a journalism major from Loganville, received the George P. Donaldson Award for the top associate degree graduate participating in the ceremony. Dr. Beverly Sparks (Class of ’76) was the guest speaker. Gressette Gymnasium was completely filled, and a total of 90 visitors watched the ceremony on a live audio/video feed in Howard Auditorium.

Brandon Reeder, who led the baseball Stallions to fourth place finish in the state tournament, was named head coach of the ABAC baseball team in June after serving one year as interim coach. ABAC outfielder Nick Higginbotham was selected to receive a national Rawlings Gold Glove Award for his stellar play in center field for the Stallions. He was one of only three outfielders in the nation to receive the award. Caleb Slaughter was selected for the East Central All District team.
Clara Grace Coker, an English major from Ashburn, was one of 90 students nationwide to receive a 2015 Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation. Marlee Mathis, a nursing major from Nashville, was the first recipient of the Christie Ann Vickers Murphy scholarship in nursing. Mathis is the reigning Miss ABAC.

New ABAC staff additions in June included Heather Gilman Fletcher (Class of 2007) as the conference facilities coordinator and marketing assistant at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village, Josie Smith (Class of 2010) as the advancement coordinator for the office of college advancement, and Kristoff Cohran (Class of 2015) as the business coordinator with the Stafford School of Business.

Stafford School of Business instructor Franzelle Pertilla and Georgia Museum of Agriculture Director Garrett Boone completed the Region 11 class of the Georgia Academy for Economic Development.

Ten shovels filled with red soil worked in unison on June 25 for a groundbreaking photo opportunity. Then a yellow motor grader smoothed out the dirt as the real construction began on the new $8.5 million laboratory sciences building on a steamy hot summer morning.

“It is more than symbolic that this building will stand at the academic crossroads of the ABAC campus,” ABAC President David Bridges said at the brief ceremony. “More than 80 per cent of our students are enrolled in science, technology, engineering or mathematics disciplines.”

Bridges thanked a long list of all those who helped to make construction funds for the building possible. Georgia legislators topped the list including Representative Penny Houston who was present for the ceremony. He also expressed his appreciation to Georgia Governor Nathan Deal, University System of Georgia (USG) Chancellor Hank Huckaby and members of the Board of Regents, USG staff including Michael Miller, who was present for the ceremony, ABAC Capital Planning Director Melvin Merrill, and the trustees of the ABAC Foundation, who made a commitment of up to $1.5 million to complete the project.

Dr. Johnny Evans, Dean of the School of Science and Mathematics, said the 20,966 square-foot building will be utilized by every student who enrolls for classes at ABAC.

“This building will provide an amazing study space for students along with access to the most modern equipment and lab technologies,” Evans said. “It is focused on meeting students’ needs and providing a space for discovery, research, and creativity.”

Sarah Rooks, the only two-time recipient of the prestigious J.G. Woodroof Scholar Award in the history of ABAC, spoke from a student’s viewpoint.

“Frankly, I am a little jealous of the incoming students who will get to use these new labs,” Rooks, who graduated with her ABAC bachelor’s degree in biology in May, said. “There are times when you don’t truly learn something until you can put your hands on it and see it with your own eyes.”
International City Builders from Warner Robins was selected through a bid process to construct the building. The Georgia State Finance and Investment Commission will manage the construction process. Rob Evans from Ingram Parris Group in Valdosta is the architect for the project.

Merrill said the building will contain eight laboratories focusing on general biology, microbiology, molecular biology, general chemistry, tissue culture, organic chemistry, and anatomy/physiology. Preparation rooms will support each lab. The building is scheduled to be ready for use by ABAC students during the 2016 fall semester.

Dr. David Bridges began his 10th year as president of ABAC on July 1. The fact that ABAC is the only college or university south of Macon in the University System of Georgia (USG) to experience an enrollment increase for the past two years tops his points of pride list.

“The primary reason for the increase is that we have an identifiable mission,” Bridges said. “We know who we are. Our enrollment went up because we had an increase in the number of students choosing the bachelor’s degrees in agriculture and natural resources. Our bachelor’s degrees in biology and business are doing pretty well also.”

Much has changed since Bridges stood on the front porch of Tift Hall on May 11, 2006 when he was selected by the Board of Regents of the USG to serve as the 10th president in the history of ABAC. On May 17, 2006, he returned to that same front porch to announce that ABAC had been granted state college status and would begin offering bachelor’s degrees.

That changed everything.

“The addition of bachelor’s degrees to the ABAC curriculum is the single biggest change during my tenure as president,” Bridges said. “Nothing else comes close. I think we hit it about right. We didn’t add a lot of bachelor’s degrees overnight. We raised our admissions standards. Now I think more of our students have a start-to-finish mentality. We have more students committed to getting a bachelor’s degree, and we certainly have more graduates. Our graduation rate is 200 per cent of the state college average.

“Scholarships have really helped the enrollment as well. We had about $300,000 worth of scholarships when I started and now we have just shy of $1,000,000 worth of private financial assistance.”

With nine years of his presidency behind him, Bridges reflected on how necessity has altered his presidential style a bit.

“We have been through some austere budget years,” Bridges said. “I would have liked to have spent more time on leadership and less time on management but we have a much smaller number of non-academic personnel that we did at one time. The number of bureaucratic demands has increased exponentially.
“We don’t have the autonomy we once had. Now everybody from the federal government to the state government to accrediting agencies to the Board of Regents to the Supreme Court tells us what we need to be doing. I’ve had to become more of an operational president because of that. In tough times, you just manage through it. I don’t necessarily like that but right now we’re operating in that type of environment.”

As Bridges looks to the start of the 2015 fall semester, he hopes to focus on the implementation of a new strategic plan for the college. The cornerstone of the plan involves making sure ABAC graduates are prepared for the real world.

“Our value is cast in preparing students for life,” Bridges, the only ABAC president who was also an ABAC graduate (Class of ’78), said. “We have to keep mentoring, coaching, and placing students in internships. Unless we keep doing things of that nature that distinguish us, we’re just like everyone else. We have to remain student-focused.”

The list of ABAC accomplishments during Bridges’ tenure is a long one. In 2006, ABAC opened the Health Sciences building. In 2007, ABAC added the ABAC Lakeside housing facility and the soccer field. ABAC celebrated its 100th birthday in 2008 with a year-long centennial celebration.

In 2009, the ABAC academic curriculum was divided into six schools of study, and deans were selected to head each school. In 2010, ABAC took over the operation of the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village. In 2012, a USG report said that ABAC had an economic impact of $281,563,172 on Tift and surrounding counties.

In 2013, the college completed the Historic Front of Campus renovation, which changed the physical look of the three original buildings on campus, the front lawn, and the area behind Tift, Lewis, and Herring halls. In recent news, ABAC broke ground on a new $8.5 million laboratory sciences building on June 25.

Not many presidents enjoy double digit tenures at their respective institutions. Bridges, 57, feels fortunate to be in that group. But it’s obvious he is still hungry to climb another hill or two to see what’s on the other side before his time at ABAC ends.

“My hope is that I realize it’s time for me to go before others let me know it’s time for me to go,” Bridges said with a chuckle. “I’m not looking for another executive academic position. I am beginning to consider what my post-ABAC life will be like. I will not be here forever but I do have a few more things I want to accomplish.”

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Edited by Michael Chason on July 2, 2015.