Ashburn Student Wins Top Academic Award at ABAC Honors Day

TIFTON—Sarah A. Rooks, a junior biology major from Ashburn, was named the top academic student at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College at Wednesday’s Honors Day ceremony.
Rooks received the J. G. Woodroof Scholar Award, given annually to a student at Honors Day in recognition of top academic-standing at the institution. Rooks also received the Award of Distinction from the School of Science and Mathematics.

Woodroof was president of ABAC from 1933-34. Each of the 31 units of the University System of Georgia selects a top student as the Academic Recognition Day Student of the Year who is also honored in a proclamation by the Georgia General Assembly.

This year, Rooks was named a Distinguished Honor student with a perfect 4.0 grade point average. Her other accolades include being named to the President’s List and being selected as an Achievement Through Student Support and Experiential Training in Science (ASSETS) Scholar. She is a member of ABAC’s Honors Program and the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society.

Also during the ceremony, Awards of Distinction were presented to the students with the greatest overall positive impact in each school of study, both academically and through college service.

Award of Distinction winners for each school were as follows: School of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Troy S. Highsmith, a diversified agriculture major from Wray; Stafford School of Business, Elisabeth P. O’Quinn, a rural studies major from Fitzgerald; School of Human Sciences, Gabi Diaz-Hernandez, a psychology major from Tifton; School of Nursing and Health Sciences, Megan E. Guest, a nursing major from Tifton; and School of Liberal Arts, Devin K. Gibbs, a rural studies major from Doerun.

A total of 43 discipline awards were also presented to students who excelled in their individual disciplines. Discipline award winners from the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources included Kollin R. Pyle from Blakely, Agribusiness and Agricultural Economics;
Marshall R. Bennett from Valdosta, Agricultural Education; Guy H. Higdon of Central, S.C., Biological and Agricultural Engineering; Katie M. Bennett from Lilburn, Animal Science; Chynna M. Cutsail from Macon, Plant Science; Riley G. Davis from Dawson, Diversified Agriculture Technology; Matthew T. Griffis from Danville, Forest Technology; Jesse Woods from Clayton, Forest Resources; Savannah K. Brown from Roopville, Wildlife Technology; Troy S. Highsmith, Diversified Agriculture; Jonathon A. Marchant from Tifton, Natural Resources Management - Forestry; Scott K. Dismuke from Tifton, Natural Resources Management – Wildlife; and Brad G. Thompson of Augusta, S.C., Turfgrass and Golf Course Management.

In the Stafford School of Business, the Business Administration discipline award was presented to Timothy A. Hauber from Fitzgerald. Kimberly K. Cawley of Ashburn received the Economics award. The Information Technology award went to Nestor Nunez from Omega. Raquel Beltran of Hartselle, Ala., received the Rural Studies – Business and Economic Development award.

Discipline award winners in the School of Liberal Arts included Ashley C. Dunn from Miami Gardens, Fla., Art; Ashley L. Smith from Tifton, English; Douglas S. Burnette from Cordele, History; Dixon J. Fletcher from Tifton, Journalism; Leola R. White of Arlington, Political Science; Daniel F. Gibson from Ty Ty, Music; Crystal E. Goines from Ty Ty, Spanish; and Devin K. Gibbs from Doerun, Rural Studies – Writing and Communication.

The School of Science and Mathematics presented John J. Williams from Tifton with the Allied Health award. The discipline award in Biology went to Danielle B. Simmons from Vienna. Caleb J. Studstill from Abbeville received the discipline award in Chemistry. The discipline award in Engineering went to Jose Y. Santana from Norcross. Robert E. McBride
from Fayetteville received the discipline award in Mathematics. Henry D. Mallard of Moultrie received the Biology - Pre-Professional award. The Pre-Professional award was presented to Ethan S. McBrayer of Tifton.

Discipline award winners from the School of Human Sciences included Cori A. Poppish of Tifton, Early Childhood Education; Daniel A. Harrell from Arlington, Middle Grades Education; and Emily R. Wheeler from Ranger, P-12 Education. Elizabeth L. Kitchens from Washington received the Criminal Justice award, and the award in Criminal Justice (Law Enforcement) went to Pooja Patel of Americus. The Psychology award went to Gabi Diaz-Hernandez from Tifton. Lorenzo Gomez from Omega received the award in Family and Consumer Sciences. The discipline award for Physical Education went to Tyler S. Hobby from Ashburn. Arfannie D. Brown of Tifton received the Human Services award. The award for Sociology went to Amanda N. Willis of Moultrie, and Kristen N. Ray from Waycross received the Rural Studies – Social and Community Affairs award.

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