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This year marks the 226th anniversary of the signing of the Constitution of the United States. Abraham Baldwin (left) was one of the signers of this historic document (right) as a representative for the state of Georgia.

**ABAC Namesake One of Two Georgians to Sign Constitution**

**TIFTON**—The namesake for Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College penned his name on one of the most famous documents in the world 226 years ago. Abraham Baldwin was one of
only two Georgia signers of the United States Constitution, which was signed by 39 men on Sept. 17, 1787.

Constitution Day celebrates the event, which took place in Independence Hall in Philadelphia. Fifty-five men attended the four-month long Constitutional Convention which resulted in the 4,543-word document, the oldest and shortest national constitution. Nine of the 13 states were required to ratify the Constitution.

ABAC President David Bridges said Baldwin was a key figure on the national level as well as in the history of Georgia.

“We are proud that our college is named for an individual who set the stage for higher education in Georgia and then helped to shape a document on the national level that has now lasted 226 years,” Bridges said. “One of our historical exhibits in the renovated Tift Hall honors Abraham Baldwin and his many accomplishments.”

ABAC Director of Public Relations Ashley Mock said the Baldwin exhibit is one of several historic panels on the lower floor of Tift Hall. Other panels focus on Tifton founder Henry Harding Tift, ABAC alumnus George T. Smith, and the history of the college from 1908 to present day. All the exhibits are open to the public. Tours can be arranged by calling (229) 391-5055.

Baldwin was born on Nov. 22, 1754 as the son of a Connecticut blacksmith. He 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. Of the Georgia delegates, only Baldwin and William Few signed the document.

Baldwin was the architect for an educational plan for both secondary and higher education in Georgia. Because of his leadership in this area, the state approved a charter for the University of Georgia in 1785. Baldwin served as the first president of the University of Georgia from 1785 until 1801, prior to the time students actually attended the institution.

Baldwin never had a wife or children but had strong convictions about the importance of a quality education for the youth of Georgia. He believed Georgia should “place the youth under the forming hand of Society, that by instruction they may be moulded to the love of Virtue and good Order.”

Beginning in 1789, Baldwin served Georgia for five consecutive terms as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives. He was then elected for two terms in the U.S. Senate, one of those as president pro-temp. Baldwin passed away on March 4, 1807 while serving in the Senate. Baldwin County is named for him.

On July 1, 1933, the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia opened the institution known as Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College in his honor.

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