BEING AN ABAC AMBASSADOR IS A FAMILY TRADITION FOR THE TUCKERS

TIFFON--Laura Beth Tucker and her son, Brett, have established a unique tradition in their family: The Ocilla residents are the first parent and child in the history of Abraham Baldwin College to both serve as ABAC Ambassadors.

Laura Beth, who was a member of the first group of Ambassadors in 1987, attended ABAC from 1986-88. Brett has served as an ABAC Ambassador for the past two years and is currently president of the organization.

The ABAC Ambassadors are a select group of students chosen for their enthusiasm, leadership ability, and communication skills. They represent the college in Tifton and across the state of Georgia. Ambassadors assist the offices of public relations and admissions, representing and promoting the college at a variety of community and college events, including the Sunbelt Expo in Moultrie, the President’s Club Dinner, the annual Scholarship Benefit Banquet and Show, and Open Campus Day.

Laura Beth said joining the ABAC Ambassadors appealed to her because it was a new organization on campus and also because she was a non-traditional student.

“I was interested in representing the college and sending a message to other non-traditional students like myself,” she said. “There were not many non-traditional students enrolled in college at that time, and I wanted to set an example—to show others that you can still go to college even if you already have a family. I was married to my husband, Tony, and Brett was only three years old, but I made the decision to pursue a college education. I knew others could do it, too.”

Laura Beth definitely accomplished her goal of obtaining a college education, graduating with honors in each degree she earned. She holds an A.S. degree in business administration from ABAC and a B.S. degree in marketing and a B.S. degree in management, both from Valdosta State University (VSU). She graduated magna cum laude from VSU. She also holds an M.B.A., which she received from the degree program offered at ABAC through a partnership with Albany State University.

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Her education provided Laura Beth with various career opportunities. She served as City Manager in Social Circle and as Economic Development President in Colquitt County. Laura Beth is currently a stay-at-home mom to Matthew, who is five years old. She also teaches a business communication class at ABAC each semester and works as a grant writer and project manager from her home.

Laura Beth said being an ABAC Ambassador definitely influenced her career path and the choices she has made.

“The public relations and communication skills I developed as an Ambassador carried over into my career,” she said. “Conducting tours, giving speeches, and working at major events, such as the Expo and the President’s Club Dinner, strengthened my people skills. I had the opportunity to meet new people and gain networking experience, which helped me establish contacts. Serving as an ABAC Ambassador and developing all of these valuable skills helped me advance my career.”

Brett, a sophomore agri-business major, said his mother definitely influenced his decision to become an ABAC Ambassador.

“For me, there was never any question about becoming an ABAC Ambassador,” Brett said. “I knew that was what I wanted to do. I had some public relations experience from high school, but I wanted to obtain more skills. My mother’s experiences definitely had an impact on me. I saw all that she had accomplished, and she spoke very highly of the ABAC Ambassadors.”

Brett, who will graduate from ABAC in December 2003 with an A.S. degree in agri-business, plans to pursue a B.S. degree in agri-business from the University of Georgia. He will also obtain a Master’s degree.

“I am definitely a ‘people person,’” Brett said. “Whatever I do in life—whatever career I chose—will involve dealing with people. I am not sure right now what I will do as a career, but I do know that I have many opportunities available to me and that my public relations and communication skills will definitely help me in whatever career I choose. Maybe I can use my strong background in agriculture to promote ag-related issues. Or maybe I will decide to pursue some aspect of politics. Being an ABAC Ambassador has helped me develop my ‘people skills’ even more. And these skills will definitely play an important role when I am choosing my (more)
The Tuckers live on a family farm in Ocilla. The house they live in was built in 1905 and was originally owned by Laura Beth's grandparents. The Tucker farm consists of a pecan orchard and various fruit trees, and every member of the family helps with the farming and gardening.

For the past five years, Brett has also owned and operated his own sweet corn business. Tony, who is also an ABAC alumnus, is the Vice President of Finance at Irwin EMC. The family is very active at Northside Baptist Church.

ABAC Ambassador applications are now being accepted for the 2003-04 academic year. To obtain an application, contact ABAC's Public Relations Office at (229) 386-3264. The deadline for submitting applications is noon on Aug. 26.

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