ABAC Names New Inductees to Athletics Hall of Fame

TIFTON—A hot-shooting guard from Enigma who led the Stallions to the state basketball title, a longtime ABAC faculty member who directed the Fabulous Golddusters dance team and a state intercollegiate champion softball team have been selected for the 2014 class of the Athletics Hall of Fame at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College.

Athletics Director Alan Kramer announced today that Marshall Taylor, Andrea Pate Willis and the 1993 State Intercollegiate Softball Champions will be the inductees for the seventh class of the Hall of Fame. He said the group reaches deep into the ABAC history book.

“Every year I continue to be amazed at the high quality athletes and coaches who are nominated for the Hall of Fame,” Kramer said. “ABAC has a rich heritage of athletics, and this is just one small way to honor some of these individuals and teams.”

Tickets are now available at a cost of $30 per person for the induction dinner in Gressette Gym at 6 p.m. on April 4, which is a part of the ABAC Homecoming Week activities. Kramer said that persons who wish to attend the dinner can contact the Office of College Advancement at (229) 391-4895 for tickets. Tickets will only be sold in advance.
For the first time this year, the Hall of Fame event will be a part of the alumni awards ceremony. For more information on the 2014 Homecoming Week activities, interested persons can visit the ABAC web site at www.abac.edu/alumni.

Taylor scored 25 points for Coach Donnie Veal’s Stallions when they held off Gainesville 67-66 to win the National Junior College Athletic Association Region XVII championship in Gressette Gym on March 6, 1982. The 5-foot-9 Berrien High School graduate was named the Most Valuable Player of the tournament.

Taylor averaged 13.8 points per game during his sophomore campaign to lead the Stallions to a 25-5 overall record and the state title. At one point during the season, ABAC won 17 consecutive games. Taylor’s season high was a 29-point effort in an 83-79 win over DeKalb South when he hit 17 of 19 free throws.

Through his first 16 games as a freshman, Taylor averaged 21.1 points a game, shooting 60 per cent from the field and 86 per cent from the free throw line. He scored 42 points in a 104-90 win for the Stallions over Georgia Military, connecting on 18 of 19 free throws in the game. The Stallions wound up 16-12 during Taylor’s freshman year, and he finished second in the Player of the Year balloting.

Willis served ABAC for 35 years as a faculty member, academic division chair, and director of the popular dance team, the Fabulous Golddusters. She also choreographed 10 editions of the ABAC Beauty Revue before becoming director of the Ms. ABAC event. She was the chair for the Division of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation for nine years.

The popularity of the Golddusters soared to an all-time high during the 26 years Willis served as their director. The precision dance team traveled to high schools and civic club events all over the states of Georgia, Florida, and Alabama. The Golddusters also danced at halftime of
all the home basketball games and performed on the ABAC stage at the Sunbelt Agricultural Exposition.

Elaborate costumes and strenuous dance routines proved to be a big hit for the Golddusters as they helped to recruit students to ABAC by performing in high school gyms and auditoriums, often traveling two or three times per week. Willis retired from ABAC in 2009.

“Sarge’s Crew” went undefeated in the ABAC intramural softball program and then became the first ABAC intramural softball team ever to win the Georgia Intercollegiate Softball Tournament in 1993 with an overall record of 21-1. Named after their coach, Newell “Sarge” Dorsey, a 2009 inductee into the Hall of Fame, the team was beaten by Georgia Southern #2 in the quarterfinals.

Not to be denied, they played their way into the finals by defeating Georgia Southern #1 in the finals of the losers’ bracket. “Sarge’s Crew” had to beat West Georgia twice to win the title, and they did, rolling to a 22-9 triumph in the final game and becoming the first two-year college to win the tournament.

Brian Barrett was selected as the Most Valuable Player of the tournament. He was named to the All-State team along with teammates Bart Smith, Pat Fisher, and Kevin Branch. Other team members were David Freeman, Larry Mullis, Marshall McLean, James Cushman, Joey Truitt, Kevin Platt, Patrick Hill, and Bryan Carr.

The inaugural Hall of Fame class in 2008 included Thomas Cheney, Bruce V. Gressette, Norman “Red” Hill, Orion Mitchell, Philip Simpson, and Milena Stanoytcheva.

The Hall of Fame class of 2009 honored the 1984 national championship men’s tennis team, Ellen Vickers, Dorsey Brooks, Cook Holliday, P.W. Bryan, Jr., and Dorsey.
The 2010 Hall of Fame class included the 1991 national championship women’s softball team, Harley Klepfer, Jim Sparks, Joseph Grist, and Thomas “Boo” Weekley.

The 2011 Hall of Fame class included the 1995 ABAC national championship women’s softball team; Kyle Farnsworth, Benny Dees, Harley Stewart, and A. B. Malloy.

The 2012 Hall of Fame class included Veal, Greg Tanner, Jean Francoise Lagloire, William E. Batton, and the 1996 national championship women’s softball team.

The 2013 Hall of Fame class included the 1999 national championship men’s tennis team, Henry Will Jones, Julie Conner, Z.B. Hamilton, and Derrick Racine.

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