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Savannah Brown (center), a nursing major from Wray, received the prestigious George P. Donaldson award at the spring commencement ceremony on Thursday at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College. ABAC President David Bridges (left) and Alumni Association President Keith Rucker (right) presented her with the award.

Wray Student Wins Top Award at ABAC Commencement

TIFTON – Savannah Leigh Brown, a nursing major from Wray, received the prestigious George P. Donaldson award at the spring commencement ceremony on Thursday at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College.
“The family-like atmosphere at ABAC has never ceased to amaze me,” Brown said in her Donaldson Award application. “When I first stepped foot on this campus, I was greeted with opens arms, friendly smiles, and most importantly, by my name. I have gained lifelong friendships and learning experiences in education and life that will stay with me for the rest of my days.”

Named to both the President’s List and the Dean’s List, Brown earned distinguished, superior, and honor student status during her ABAC career. The nursing degree she received at Thursday’s ceremony was actually her second diploma from ABAC. She graduated with honors from ABAC in 2012 with her associate degree in speech communications.

Besides her stellar academic achievements in the classroom, Brown excelled in extracurricular activities including four years of service as an ABAC Ambassador where she represented the college at civic club speaking engagements, at high school recruiting events, at the Sunbelt Agricultural Exposition and at a special visit by Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue. She was also selected by the college administration for the 2010 Georgia Women’s Leadership in Public Service Institute.

Brown was crowned Ms. ABAC in 2010, opening the door for a WALB-TV interview and a front cover photo on the “Tifton Scene” magazine. Active in the Phi Theta Kappa honor society and the Baptist Collegiate Ministries, Brown expanded her leadership skills this year by being selected as president of the ABAC chapter of the Georgia Association of Nursing Students.

Beyond her ABAC accomplishments, Brown has volunteered for the Tift County Relay for Life and was named Miss Tift County Relay for Life in 2010. Her willingness to volunteer has made a difference at Satilla Baptist Church, where she is a Sunday School teacher for 3-5
year-olds. The daughter of Wesley and Kim Brown from Wray is also the co-founder of Pearl Ministries, established in 2011.

The guest speaker at the event was Coleman Ruiz, a former United States Navy SEAL. Ruiz encouraged the students to challenge themselves in several different areas including functional excellence, physical and mental toughness, and teamwork and leadership.

“You must ask yourself are you just doing things or are you doing the things that help you achieve what you really want out of life,” Ruiz said. “I want you to be among the elite but not an elitist.”

A total of 319 students completed their requirements for degrees from ABAC this semester. Sixty-five students received bachelor’s degrees.

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