Sylvester Resident to Be Honored at ABAC on April 10

TIFTON—John T. Cochran from Sylvester will receive the 2015 Master Farmer Award on April 10 at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College during the annual ABAC Alumni Association awards ceremony.

The ceremony will recognize ABAC alumni who impacted the college and their communities in significant ways. Advance tickets are $30 per person. There will be no tickets sold at the event.

Tickets can be purchased from the ABAC College Advancement Office at (229) 391-4895. For more information on the 2015 Homecoming Week, interested persons can visit the web site at www.abac.edu/homecoming.

The Master Farmer Award has been presented annually since 1955 in recognition of alumni who have distinguished themselves as outstanding farmers. The award is based on leadership in the home, church, and community, as well as the use of wise and unique ideas in farm management and operation. The Master Farmer must earn two-thirds of his income on the farm. It is the oldest of the awards presented by the Alumni Association.
**Cochran** received his associate degree in agriculture from ABAC in 1976. A Sylvester resident, he currently farms 1,200 acres of land focusing on timber, cotton, and peanuts. Cochran’s farming career began in 1975 when he share-cropped 35 acres of peanuts with a family friend. He purchased his first 200 acres of farm land in 1986.

“My philosophy of farming is summed up in one phrase, ‘leave the land in better shape than when you started farming it,’” Cochran said in his application. “Earth has a very thin layer of life sustaining top soil. I think it is very important that we nurture and care for it as a natural resource.”

A member of the Worth County Farm Bureau board of directors since 1985, Cochran served as president of the organization from 1992-1996. He is also a member of the Georgia Farm Bureau and the Worth County Young Farmers. Cochran has also served on the Tiftarea Academy Board of Directors, as a county committee man with the Worth County Agricultural Stabilization office, and on the Worth County Extension Ag Advisory Committee.

At present, Cochran serves on the Sylvester Banking Company Advisory Board, and the Mitchell EMC Board of Directors. He is also the current vice chairman of the Phoebe-Worth Hospital Board of Directors.

Named Young Farmer of the Year at the Georgia Peanut Festival in 1991, Cochran was also selected as the Middle South Georgia Conservationist of the Year in 1999, received the Award of Merit for Conservation Accomplishments at the Goodyear Conservation Awards in 1999, and was named Senior Farmer of the Year at the Georgia Peanut Festival in 2011.
In both 1996 and 1998, Cochran’s family was named Farm Family of the Year by the Worth County Young Farmers. In 1987, the family was named Junior Women’s Club Family of the Year.

Cochran and his wife of 35 years, Cindy, a retired registered nurse, have two children, Brett and Rebekah. Brett attended ABAC from 2003-2004, and Rebekah attended in 2006. The Cochrans attend First Baptist Church in Sylvester.

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