ABAC Names 2015 Inductees to Athletics Hall of Fame

TIFTON—Six individuals and one team covering the sports of baseball, tennis, golf, and basketball have been selected for the 2015 class of the Athletics Hall of Fame at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College.

Athletics Director Alan Kramer announced today that Ralph Bryant, Monika Lalewicz, Tommy Dial, Dr. Larry and Debra Moorman, Sonny Skinner, and the 1999 women’s tennis team will be the inductees for the eighth 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, coaches, and contributors 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 10, 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.
The Hall of Fame event will be a part of the alumni awards ceremony. For more information on the 2015 Homecoming Week activities, interested persons can visit the ABAC web site at www.abac.edu/homecoming.

Bryant was drafted in the first round of the 1981 amateur draft by the Los Angeles Dodgers after playing for the Golden Stallions’ baseball team in 1980 and 1981. He made his major league debut with the Dodgers on Sept. 8, 1985 and spent the next three years traveling between the major and minor leagues. His last professional appearance with the Dodgers was on Oct.4, 1987.

A native of Fort Gaines, Bryant then embarked on a seven-year career with the Chunichi Dragons and Kentetsu Buffaloes in the Nippon Professional Baseball League in Japan. He led the Pacific League in home runs three times and was the 1989 Pacific League Most Valuable Player. Bryant hit 49 home runs that year to lead the Buffaloes to their third Pacific League championship.

Bryant led Lee County High School to back-to-back Class AA state title game berths before joining Coach Tom Moody’s ABAC squad in 1979. He hit .294 in his freshman year with the Stallions before a tremendous sophomore campaign when he hit .371 with 10 doubles and two home runs.

Lalewicz occupied all the headlines at ABAC when she played tennis for the Fillies in 2008 and 2009. The Mississauga, Canada native won the 2008 National Junior College Athletic Association championship at number one singles and finished second in the 2009 NJCAA championship at number one singles.
The talented lefthander led the Fillies to a fourth place finish in the national tournament in 2008 and to a sixth place finish in 2009. She was named the NJCAA Player of the Year in both 2008 and 2009.

Lalewicz also won the 2007 Intercollegiate Tennis Association National Small College Championship. She was named to the ITA National Collegiate All-Star Team, earning an opportunity to participate in a ceremony at the U.S. Open in New York City in 2008.

Dial was the Most Valuable Player on the 1964 ABAC basketball team that won the state championship. He scored 28 points in a 71-65 semifinal win over Young Harris and then tossed in 27 points in a 76-58 victory over Columbus to clinch the title for Coach Benny Dees’ team.

A Waycross High School graduate where he was named to the All-State and All-America teams, Dial continued his stellar play for the Stallions by being named All-State in his freshman and sophomore seasons as well as claiming All-District and All-America honors during his sophomore year.

Dial went on to play for the Georgia Southern team which finished second in the nation in the 1966 NAIA national tournament. As a coach at Cartersville High School from 1967-74, Dial won region titles and garnered over 100 wins for the girls’ basketball team in a five-year stretch.

Moorman, a Tifton ophthalmologist, and his wife, Debra, donated the Forest Lakes Golf Club to the ABAC Foundation in 2002. In 2009, the Moormans added the clubhouse at Forest Lakes to their contribution. The Foundation owns the course, and it is operated by the college as an outdoor learning laboratory. It is also open to the general public.
ABAC students use the nine-hole course on almost a daily basis in the ABAC bachelor’s degree program in Turfgrass and Golf Course Management. Students in many other programs such as horticulture, agricultural engineering, forestry, wildlife, physical education, and agricultural equipment technology also use the 91-acre course. The ABAC golf team also practices at the course.

“It’s a perfect fit,” Dr. Larry Moorman said in 2002. “A golf course used for educational purposes is great for the students. I am a big supporter of ABAC, and for me, this donation is all about ABAC.”


A Sylvester native, Skinner has also played on the Nationwide Tour and the Champions Tour. He won the Nike Shreveport Open in 1993 and the Nike Dominion Open in 1994. Skinner tied a Warwick Hills Golf Course record when he shot a 62 at the 1997 Buick Open PGA event. He was the 2010 National PGA Match Play champion.

Skinner, a recipient of the Worth County Goodwill Ambassador Award, was named the PGA Professional Player of the Year in 2008 and the PGA Senior Professional Player of the Year in 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014. He is the only player in PGA of America history to win both awards and the only PGA of America member to win five PGA Senior Professional Player of the Year awards.

Kramer, who was the ABAC women’s tennis coach at the time, called the 1999 edition of Fillies’ tennis “the most talented women’s tennis team in ABAC history.” The team won the
1999 NJCAA Region XVII title and then finished second in the NJCAA national tournament. That marks the highest national finish by a women’s tennis team in the history of ABAC.

Milena Stanoytcheva, inducted into Hall of Fame in the inaugural class of 2008, led the charge for the Fillies by winning the national championship at number one singles. She repeated that feat in 2000. She was the Region XVII Most Valuable Player and won first team All-America honors in 1999.

Other team members were Annamaria Hodi, Luciana Tamburini, Nicola Sharp, Louise Holmvik, Amy Hopkins, Sabrina Harper, Casie Hodges, and Jodie Rayl. Holdi was named to the ITA All-America team and was named All-Region in singles and doubles. Tamburini and Holmvik were named All-Region in singles and doubles.

Sharp was a second team NJCAA All-America selection and was an All-Region selection in singles and doubles. Hopkins won All-Region in singles, and Harper was named All-Region in doubles. Rayl received the prestigious Donaldson Award at the commencement ceremony for her academic prowess.

The inaugural Hall of Fame class in 2008 included Thomas Cheney, Bruce V. Gressette, Norman “Red” Hill, Orion Mitchell, Philip Simpson, and 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 Newell 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, Harley Stewart, A. B. Malloy, and Dees.

The 2012 Hall of Fame class included Donnie 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.

The 2014 Hall of Fame class included Marshall Taylor, Andrea Pate Willis and the 1993 ABAC Intercollegiate Softball State Champions.

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