Dr. Beverly Sparks will be the featured speaker at the spring commencement ceremony at ABAC on May 7. Sparks was presented with the Distinguished Alumnus Award on April 10 at Homecoming by (l-r) Alumni Board Member Gloria Beard, Alumni Association President Keith Rucker, and ABAC President David Bridges.

Distinguished Alumnus to Speak at ABAC Commencement May 7
TIFTON – Dr. Beverly Sparks will be the guest speaker at the spring commencement ceremony at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College on May 7 at 10 a.m. in Gressette Gym on the ABAC campus.

Sparks served as the Associate Dean for the University of Georgia (UGA) Cooperative Extension Service before her retirement earlier this year. She received the Distinguished Alumnus Award from the ABAC Alumni Association at Homecoming on April 10. The Distinguished Alumnus Award is presented by the ABAC Alumni Association in recognition of alumni who have distinguished themselves through professional achievement, community service and service to the college. It is the highest honor bestowed on an alumnus by the Alumni Association.

Sparks grew up in Tifton and attended ABAC from 1974-1976, earning her associate degree in agricultural science. As a student she worked at the Coastal Plain Experiment Station. She continued her education at UGA, receiving a bachelor’s degree in horticulture and a master’s degree in entomology. She earned her Ph.D. in entomology from Louisiana State University.

An extension urban entomologist at Texas A&M from 1983-89, Sparks was the first female extension agricultural specialist for the university’s agricultural extension service. She was also the first female president of the Southeastern Branch of the Entomological Society of America and later became the first female Associate Dean for Extension at UGA.

While in Athens, Sparks served as an Extension Entomologist from 1989-95 before becoming Extension Program Coordinator for Entomology from 1996-2002. From 2002-2006, she was District Extension Director for the North and Northeast districts. She was Assistant
Dean and Interim Associate Dean for Cooperative Extension from 2006-2007 and Associate Dean for Cooperative Extension from 2007 until 2015.

Six members of her family have attended ABAC. Her husband, Allen Lee Tibbetts, is also an ABAC graduate who attended from 1974-76.

A ticket is required to attend the commencement ceremony at ABAC. Those without a ticket may view the ceremony via a live video feed in Howard Auditorium. A limited number of tickets are available to each graduate.

The ABAC commencement ceremony will include the ABAC Alumni Association presentation of the prestigious George P. Donaldson award to the top associate degree graduate who participates in the event and the ABAC Alumni Association Award to the top bachelor’s degree graduate who participates in the ceremony. Approximately 299 students are expected to receive diplomas.

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