For IMMEDIATE Release

J. G. Woodroof Award recipient Sarah Rooks is congratulated by ABAC President David Bridges at Wednesday’s Honors Day. The Ashburn native became the first student to receive the award twice.

Ashburn Student Wins Top Academic Award at ABAC Honors Day

TIFTON—Sarah A. Rooks, a senior biology major from Ashburn, was named the top academic student at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College at Wednesday’s Honors Day.
Rooks became the first person in the 28-year history of the J.G. Woodroof Award to receive the distinction on two occasions. She received her first Woodroof Award in 2013. The award is given annually to a student at Honors Day in recognition of top academic standing at the institution. Rooks also received the discipline award in biology from the School of Science and Mathematics in the General Studies track at the ceremony.

Woodroof was the first president of ABAC in 1933. Each of the 30 units of the University System of Georgia selects a top student as the Academic Recognition Day Student of the Year who is also honored in a proclamation by the Georgia General Assembly.

A Distinguished Honor student with a perfect 4.0 grade point average, Rooks has been named to the President’s List and has been selected as an Achievement Through Student Support and Experiential Training in Science (ASSETS) Scholar. She is a member of the ABAC Honors Program and the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society.

Rooks has also served as a member of the national biological honors society, TriBeta; served as a judge for the Georgia Regional Science Fair; participated in the Miss ABAC contest; and presented research at two conferences during her time at the college.

A total of 19 discipline awards were also presented to ABAC students who excelled in their individual disciplines. Discipline award winners from students obtaining associate degrees in the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources included Meagan R. Giddens from Ocilla, Diversified Agriculture Technology; Jeb C. Stewart from Swainsboro, Environmental Horticulture Technology; and Ryan M. Falk from Dublin, Forestry Technology.

Discipline award winners working toward a bachelor’s degree in diversified agriculture included Joshua A. Willis from Bogart, Agribusiness track; Matthew S. Bridges of Lakeland,
Crop Production track; Matthew D. Makarow from Nashville, Crop and Soil Science track; Nelson R. Rentz of Ehrhardt, S.C., General Studies track; and Allison L. Williams of Lakeland, Fla., Livestock Production track. Discipline winners working toward a bachelor’s degree in the field of natural resource management included David-Lee Bradford from Macon, Forestry track; and Scott W. Fulton of Whitesburg, Wildlife track.

Kristoff Cohran from Thomasville received the discipline award in the bachelor’s degree track in Business and Economic Development from the Stafford School of Business. The School of Human Sciences awarded Rural Studies bachelor’s degree candidates Edith D. Barrios of Ocilla and Jessica L. VanDeVelde of Omega with the discipline award for the Social and Community Development track.

Megan C. Wehmeier of Douglas received the discipline award for the associate’s degree in Fine Arts with an emphasis in Music from the School of Liberal Arts. Other discipline winners from the School of Liberal Arts included Rural Studies bachelor’s degree students Maggie M. Hart of Moultrie, Agricultural Communication; Crystal E. Goines of Ty Ty, Writing and Communication; and Douglas Shawn Burnette of Cordele, Politics and Modern Cultures.

The discipline award winner in the School of Nursing and Health Sciences was Brittany L. Benton of Gainesville. Besides Rooks’ award, the School of Science and Mathematics also presented Eduardo D. Moreno from Moultrie the Biology pre-professional track award. He is working toward the bachelor of science degree in biology.

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