Perry Johnson Named New Dean of Stafford School of Business at ABAC

TIFTON—Helping students “be all they can be and providing them with real world business experience” will be the mantra for the new dean of the Stafford School of Business at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College.

Perry Johnson, a former chief investment officer and chief executive officer of BME Investment Partners in Atlanta, has been selected for the position to lead the Stafford School of Business.
“I’ve always wanted to come home and help young people discover their true gifts and talents,” Johnson, a 1977 ABAC graduate, said. “I was looking for a place where I could give back to the next generation.”

Johnson and his wife, Lucinda, are both from Pearson. He is a 1975 graduate of Atkinson County High School who came to ABAC with a definite purpose in mind.

“When I came to ABAC, I was basically illiterate,” Johnson said. “I had a 1.14 GPA at the end of my junior year in high school. My days as a student here were a tremendous blessing to me. Dr. Harold Loyd and the professors at ABAC put me on a life-long path of learning. A little bit of encouragement can have a meaningful impact on students.”

ABAC President David Bridges believes Johnson is a good fit for the position.

“He’s an alumnus, and he understands the Stafford School of Business and its mission,” Bridges said. “I believe he has the dedication and commitment to move the school forward. He also has a clear understanding of the skills necessary for our graduates to succeed when they enter the real world of business.”

After receiving his business degree from ABAC, Johnson completed his bachelor’s degree and master’s degree in accounting from the University of Georgia. He went to work with Hercules, Inc., in Savannah as a corporate controller in the paper chemicals division.

Johnson then entered the financial planning field with stops at Prudential Bache Securities in Savannah, Investment Performance Services in Savannah, Brinson Partners in Chicago, Watson Wyatt in Atlanta, Invesco in Atlanta, and then at BME Investment Partners. Perry is also a CPA and a Chartered Financial Analyst.
“I have worked in every phase of business from public accounting to investment consulting,” Johnson said. “The investment business allowed me to teach my clients how to reach financial goals and objectives. Then I reached the point where I felt like the investment business was robbing me of my true passion; to help others find their true identity and become all they can be.”

Johnson said his two “hot buttons” are leadership and providing people with economic and financial market perspectives. He wants to take the relatively new ABAC bachelor’s degree in business and economic development to greater heights.

“I look forward to building on what’s already here,” Johnson said. “Reaching and teaching young people is my passion. The classroom must always be an enthusiastic, encouraging environment. Students should be comfortable when they share their thoughts and ideas.

“A proper educational environment is one that encourages students to learn on their own, as well as to effectively collaborate and communicate with others. These are skills that are necessary for them to continue to learn, grow, and solve problems in their educational and professional careers.”

Johnson replaces Dill and Susan Driscoll, who are returning to private business. Dill Driscoll will continue to mentor ABAC students on a part time basis.

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