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ABAC 1984 State Basketball Champions Selected for Hall of Fame

TIFFON—On the night of March 3, 1984, Keith Barr had to be the happiest man in Tifton. His Golden Fillies’ basketball team at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College had just
beaten Emmanuel College 62-60 in Gressette Gym on the ABAC campus to win the first women’s state basketball title in the history of ABAC.

“It feels unbelievable,” Barr said at the time. “Unreal. Winning the state title won’t hit me until tomorrow morning.”

In his third year as the head coach of the Fillies, Barr guided the team to a 20-8 record, the state championship and a seventh place finish in the National Junior College Athletic Association tournament in Senatobia, Miss.

Barr and the team will be honored on April 1 when they will be inducted into the 2016 class of the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame at the ABAC Alumni Association Homecoming Awards Dinner in Gressette Gym. Tickets to the 6 p.m. ceremony are $30 per person. The event also includes top award winners from the ABAC Alumni Association as a part of the 2016 Homecoming Week activities.

Tickets can be purchased from the ABAC College Advancement Office at (229) 391-4895. The deadline to purchase tickets is March 21. There will be no tickets sold at the event. For more information on the 2016 Homecoming Week, interested persons can visit the web site at www.abac.edu/homecoming.

ABAC roared out of the starting blocks in the 1983-84 season with an 8-2 record. Both losses were to Truett-McConnell by the lopsided scores of 79-56 and 89-66. Redemption for those defeats came in the state tournament when the Fillies slipped by Truett 62-57 in the semifinal round after a 68-52 first round win over Gainesville.

The championship game was a classic. Terri Lee scored 14 points and connected on two free throws with 11 seconds left to give ABAC the lead over the Lions from Franklin Springs.
Then the Fillies turned to their strength, a defense rated as the fifth best in the nation during the regular season.

“I feel really good about the way this team performed all year long,” Barr said.

In the state title win over Emmanuel, Rose Wilcher added 14 points, Jernese Thomas chipped in with 13, and Peggy McConnell had 10. Cynthia Hargrove, a 5-foot-9 sophomore from Eatonton, was the Most Valuable Player for the tournament. Other team members were Sheila Williams, Lisa Howard, Patricia Mitchell, Allison Handley, and Glenda Maddox.

Fresh off the state championship, ABAC traveled to the home of Northwest Mississippi Community College for the national tournament. In the double elimination event, the Fillies clipped Lakeland (Ohio) 63-60, lost to Northwest 60-51, lost to Moberly (Mo.) 88-80, and defeated Gadsden (Ala.) 62-55. It marked the highest finish ever for an ABAC women’s basketball team in the national tournament.

Other 2016 Athletics Hall of Fame inductees include Wayne Cooper, Paul Fitzgerald, Tom Moody, Jackie Moore, David Owens, and Ty Wright.

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