ABAC Will Honor Alumni April 1 at Homecoming

TIFTON—Former students of Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College will be honored at the annual ABAC Alumni Association awards ceremony as a part of the 2016 Homecoming Week on April 1 at 6 p.m. at Gressette Gymnasium on the ABAC campus.

The ceremony will recognize ABAC alumni who impacted the college and their communities in significant ways. Tickets to the event are $30 per person. The deadline to purchase tickets is March 21. There will be no tickets sold at the venue. Tickets can be purchased from the College Advancement Office at (229) 391-4895. For more information on the 2016 Homecoming Week, interested persons can visit the web site at www.abac.edu/homecoming.

ABAC Alumni Association award winners this year include William H.H. Clark of Ringgold, Distinguished Alumnus; Judy Perry of Tifton, Helen Brown Sasser Award; Marcus Pollard from Madison, Outstanding Young Alumnus; Donald F. Gilman of Ashburn, J. Lamar Branch Award; Gloria Beard of Tifton, Outstanding Educator; Bennie Branch from Tifton, Outstanding Business Leader; Alice Ray of Lenox, Outstanding Healthcare Professional; and Jonathan M. Harris of Screven, Master Farmer. Larry Montgomery of Carrollton was
selected as an Honorary Alumnus. The Nugent Family from Alapaha will receive the Family Legacy Award.

Clark and his wife, Eleanor, reside in Ringgold where he is retired from the United States Army Veterinary Corps. He attended ABAC as a pre-veterinary medicine major from 1954-1956 and transferred to the University of Georgia (UGA), earning a doctorate degree in veterinary medicine. He then joined the U.S. Army Veterinary Corps as a First Lieutenant.

Clark furthered his education at Tulane University, receiving a master of public health in tropical disease degree. He served both overseas and stateside before being selected to the U.S. Military Advisory Group in Iran from 1968-70. He was stationed stateside from 1970-74 before heading to Korea as commander of the 106th Medical Detachment. He returned to the United States in 1975 and served 15 years in Washington, D.C. in the Office of the Army Surgeon General. He retired in 1990 with over 29 years of service to the United States Army.

Clark then followed in the footsteps of his father and grandfather to become the third generation of his family to serve in the Georgia House of Representatives from 1996-2000 and became the first ever Republican to win a contested race for public office in Catoosa County. He served as chair of the Catoosa County Board of Commissioners from 2005-09. Clark has authored three books, started The Catoosa Tribune newspaper, and is currently the manager of a family business involving commercial real estate development, stocks, bonds and timber.

A member of the ABAC staff since 1985, Perry received a business administration degree from ABAC in 1996. After 20 years working with the business office, she presently serves as the Administrative Assistant in the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources. She has been a co-advisor to the Sigma Alpha sorority since it became chartered in 2012; co-advised the ABAC
Equestrian Club for several years; and participated in the ABAC staff forum, where she previously served as secretary.

Perry and her husband, Robert, are members of the ABAC President’s Club, and she is a lifetime member of the ABAC Alumni Association. Perry was the 2010 recipient of the prestigious Roy Jackson Staff Award, the 2012 Student Government Association Impact Award winner, and received a student newspaper Pacesetter in 2014.

Perry is a member of Tift County Saddle Club, where she served as treasurer for many years. She is also a member of the Turner County Saddle Club, Deep Dixie Barrel Horse Association and Georgia Federation of Saddle Clubs, the National Barrel Horse Association, and the American Quarter Horse Association. Perry is a member of Wayside Baptist Church, where she has served as a choir member and director of the Children’s Church. Both of her children are ABAC graduates.

Pollard received his associate degree in wildlife technology from ABAC in 2003 before completing his bachelor’s degree in wildlife and fisheries science from Tennessee Technological University; his M.A. of Education from Lipscomb University; and his education specialist degree in workforce education from UGA. A resident of Madison, Harper teaches agricultural education at Newton College & Career Academy. In 2012-13, he was a visiting lecturer in Moscow, Russia with Clemson University’s study abroad program.

A member of the Georgia Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association, Quality Deer Management Association, and Ducks Unlimited, Pollard is also an executive board member for Piedmont Cattlemen’s Association, serves as director of the Piedmont Area Livestock Show, is a member of the Newton County Young Farmers through the Georgia Farm Bureau and coaches
the Newton County 4-H Shooting Sports Team. He is certified in beekeeping, prescribed burning through the Georgia Forestry Commission, and first aid.

Pollard supports the ABAC School of Agriculture and Natural Resources and various FFA organizations. He serves as the volunteer chairman of the ABAC Ag Alumni Council and is heavily involved in the ABAC Ag Classic held annually at Forest Lakes Golf Club. He and his wife, Catrina, also an ABAC alumnus, have a one-year old son, Max.

Gilman is an agricultural educator at Lee County High School. He attended ABAC from 1979-1981, majoring in business administration, before receiving his bachelor’s degree in business from Georgia Southwestern State University, his teacher certification from Fort Valley State University, his master’s degree in agricultural leadership from UGA and both his specialist in education–agriscience education degree and his Ph.D. in philosophy from Auburn University.

A former sales representative for R.J. Reynolds Tobacco and then Stewart Candy Company, Gilman began his career in education as an agricultural educator with Worth County Middle School in 2003. He was the Georgia Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association Teacher of the Year in 2008.

An avid recruiter for the college, Gilman has guided a number of students to ABAC. He and his wife, Kim, a 1992 graduate of ABAC’s nursing program, have a daughter, Heather Gilman Fletcher. She was a political science major who was crowned Miss ABAC 2006 and is now the events coordinator and marketing assistant for the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village at ABAC.

A 1987 ABAC graduate with an associate degree in business, Beard is the department chair for mathematics at Tift County High School. She received a bachelor’s in business
administration and her master of education in mathematics from UGA, and her education
specialist in mathematics education and certification in instructional technology and educational
leadership from Valdosta State University.

Beard taught at Coffee High School from 1992-2001. Her professional honors include
 inductions into the Delta Kappa Gamma International Society for Key Women Educators and the
Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, a two-time recipient of the Tift County Foundation for
Excellence in Education grant, a nomination for the Gladys M. Thompson Mathematics Award,
and a selection as the Tift County High School Teacher of the Year.

At TCHS, Beard is co-advisor to the Beta Club, assists with Honors Night, serves as
scorekeeper of the TCHS varsity basketball games, and is involved with the Governor’s Honors
program. She is a member of Northside Baptist Church where she has served as a Sunday
School teacher and nursery worker. She has been active in Special Olympics, the American
Cancer Association, Toys for Tots, Relay for Life, and a number of other community-related
causes and organizations.

**Branch** is the president of Kelley Manufacturing Company. He is a 1986 ABAC
graduate with an associate degree in agricultural engineering, who received his bachelor’s degree
and his master’s degree, both in the field of agricultural engineering, from UGA. Branch
returned to ABAC to take night classes on the campus through Albany State University, earning
his master’s in business administration degree.

Employed by Kelley Manufacturing Company (KMC) for 25 years, Branch has held
many positions within KMC, including serving as design engineer, project engineer, assistant
engineer manager, and executive vice president of the business. A member of the KMC Board
of Directors, Branch is a co-trustee of KMC’s Employee Stock Ownership Plan. He is a member of the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers and is registered as a professional engineer in Georgia.

An ABAC President’s Club member, Branch regularly attends the annual Evening for ABAC scholarship gala, has supported Baptist Collegiate Ministries, and served several years on the Ag Alumni Council. His wife, Dina, also attended ABAC. They have three children, Ben, Annabelle, and Celiabeth. Ben is currently a sophomore at ABAC, and Annabelle is taking dual enrollment classes through the college.

Now a part-time clinical instructor at ABAC, Ray graduated from ABAC’s nursing program in 1982 before receiving her B.S.A. from Georgia Southwestern and her M.S.N. from Albany State. She has been devoted to the field of nursing since 1972, where she began her nursing career as a part-time licensed practical nurse with Tift Regional Medical Center (TRMC). From 1982-1993, she served as a registered nurse at TRMC. She joined the ABAC faculty in 1993 as an instructor and assistant professor of nursing.

A member of the Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society, Ray is involved with ABAC’s Run for the Nurses, the advisory committee for Tift County School of Practical Nurses, the American Red Cross, American Heart Association, Alzheimer’s Association, and served as a member of the Patient Safety Advisory Council at TRMC.

Ray has also taught classes in CPR, developed an outreach program for local elementary schools on hygiene care and nutrition in the Tift, Ben Hill, and Berrien school systems, spoke at Tift County High School about careers in healthcare, and served on the Commerce, Business and Education Partnership Committee.
A 1971 ABAC graduate with a degree in agriscience, Harris and his family manage Greenview Farms near Screven on 3,500 acres of land focusing on registered seedstock Hereford and Braford cattle, timber, annual forages, hay, haylage, cotton, corn, soybeans, peanuts and pecans. In 1860 his ancestors bought land in what is now Wayne County and one family member from each generation has continued to farm the land. Greenview Farms in the oldest, continuously active Polled Hereford breeder in Georgia.

Harris has hosted ABAC student groups on his farm, provided consulting assistance to ABAC staff members, provided industry networking assistance for the placement of ABAC students in internships and jobs, and donated the use of bulls to the ABAC beef teaching unit. A fifth generation farmer, Harris and his wife, Toni, have three children, Jon, Paul, and Kacee. Jon graduated from ABAC in 1997, Paul attended ABAC, and Harris’ oldest grandson is presently at the college.

Harris has received a number of awards for forage and hay quality and has been featured in various agriculture publications. In 2007, he was awarded the Georgia Governor’s Environmental Stewardship Award. A year later he was honored as the Georgia Cattlemen’s Association Purebred Cattleman of the Year and in 2009 he received the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association Environmental Stewardship Region II Award. He also received the 2014 Wayne County Chamber of Commerce Excellence in Agriculture award.

Montgomery received his bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering from Georgia Tech in 1978 and his master’s degree in business administration from Emory University in 1981. A native of Carrollton, he spent 28 years with Kimberly-Clark Corporation and four years with AMEC Engineering Consultants. His involvement with ABAC didn’t come about until 2011.
when he bought an ABAC sweatshirt during the Sunbelt Agricultural Exposition. Knowing nothing about the college, he asked questions.

The answers he received prompted him to create four scholarships for the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources and the Stafford School of Business through the Montgomery Family Foundation. He has surprised his scholarship recipients by personally delivering Final Exam Care Packages.

Montgomery has also lent a hand to special projects on campus and at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village. He accepted the invitation to join the ABAC Foundation as a trustee, his first association with a college foundation and in 2015 Montgomery and the Montgomery Family Foundation contributed $120,000 to various projects across the campus. Montgomery and his wife, Mary, have two children, Elizabeth and Christine.

The Nugent family from Alapaha has a total of 19 family members who have attended ABAC. Herman Nugent, Sr., and his wife, Nell Rose, along with Herman’s brother, Kenneth, and his wife, Ella Mae, have grown a dynasty of ABAC alumni that include nurses, farmers, politicians, and local business owners.

Out of Herman’s 10 children, nine of them have attended ABAC. They include Herman (Joe) Nugent, Rose Spurlock, Regina Nugent Clark, Mary Hollard Clark, James Nugent, Jason Nugent, Wilma Nugent Glausier, Angie Nugent Jordan, and Rachel Davis. Herman also has another daughter, Patricia Mathis, whose daughter, Wynona White, went to ABAC. Two other grandchildren, Chad Nugent and Katelyn Davis Allen, are also ABAC alumni.

Kenneth and Ella Mae Nugent have five children - Mary Louise Nugent Williams, Debra Nugent Brantley, Bonnie Nugent Purvis Nobles, Owen Nugent, III, and Christine Johnson. Mary
Louise, Bonnie, and Christine attended ABAC. All four of Kenneth’s grandchildren – Marvin Curtis William, III, Perrin Re’ Williams, Liz Purvis Cary, and Stephanie Nugent are also former students of ABAC.

###