Alexander to Speak at ABAC Spring Commencement May 5

TIFTON – To culminate the celebration of 50 years of nursing at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College, Suzette Cofer Alexander will be the guest speaker at the ABAC spring commencement ceremony on May 5 at 10 a.m. in Gressette Gym.
Alexander was part of the first graduating class of nurses from ABAC. In 1966, ABAC took over the Nurse Training Program at Norman College. Alexander was one of five students who transferred to ABAC’s program.

“As student nurses in training we were assigned charge nurse positions on the medical surgical floors,” Alexander said. “The nursing supervisor would spot check our medications before they were given to patients, and we spent a lot of time preparing instruments and sterilizing equipment for patient care. Our nurses’ notes were done on paper. Nothing was disposable; this was before computers, plastic and disposable items.”

Alexander later continued her education at California State University in Sacramento, Calif., where she earned her bachelor’s degree in nursing in 1976. In 1982 she went on to complete her master’s degree in nursing from Chico State University in Chico, Calif. Over the course of her nursing career from 1967-1990, Alexander worked as a staff nurse, nurse manager, nursing supervisor, ICU Clinical Instructor, Associate Chief Nursing Service, and Chief of Nursing Service in the Veterans Administration.

At the Veterans Administration, Alexander served as a consultant on national and regional levels in regard to patient falls, medication errors, staffing effectiveness and facility patient care monitoring. She increased awareness of the vital role nurses play in health care research with her involvement to promote patient safety and improve patient care guidelines.

For 15 years, Alexander served as the Performance Improvement Coordinator for Nursing Service at the Audie L. Murphy Division in San Antonio, Texas. She has also served as an expert for the Department of Nursing Central Office in Washington, D.C. by serving as a
panel member in the writing of a National Policy on Staffing Effectiveness Plans, which was presented to Congress for approval in July, 2003.

A captain in the Army National Guard, Alexander held professional memberships with Sigma Theta Tau, the Reserve Officers Association of the United States, and the Association of Military Surgeons of the United States. During a time in her life when she lived in South Carolina, she traveled extensively throughout the state presenting lectures/briefings on AIDS to National Guardsmen. She received the Army achievement medal for meritorious service in 1988.

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 280 students are expected to receive diplomas.

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.

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