

HISTORY OF ABRAHAM BALDWIN AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE

The Georgia General Assembly planted the first seed that grew into Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College on August 18, 1906, when it enacted Public Law 448. This bill established a state-run agricultural and mechanical school in each of Georgia's 12 congressional districts.

Called A&M schools, they were constructed on properties donated by their host counties, administered by the Georgia State College of Agriculture at the University of Georgia (UGA), funded by Department of Agriculture fees, and operated by a local Board of Trustees.

These schools filled a void at the time due to the lack of accredited statewide high schools. The schools were designed by a single architect so that the main campus buildings were almost identical statewide.

Construction on most of them began in 1907, and some opened for classes during the fall term of 1908. They were college preparatory boarding schools and included students from 14-21 years of age. The schools offered two and four-year programs with a study of agriculture for boys and a study of home economics for girls.

Some of the A&M schools operated until 1933 when the newly formed Board of Regents closed them as one of its first official acts. Because high school agricultural education programs had become so prevalent around the state by that time and because the number of accredited high schools had increased tremendously, the Regents believed the A&M schools had outlived their usefulness. The final classes graduated from the schools in 1933. Over the next two years, the state deeded the campus properties back to the host counties with the stipulation that they be used for educational purposes.

The First District A&M School in Statesboro became the South Georgia Teachers College. The Second District A&M School in Tifton became South Georgia A&M College in 1924. The Third District A&M School in Americus became the State Agricultural and Normal College. The Fourth District A&M School in Carrollton was converted for local use. The Fifth District A&M School in Monroe became the Georgia Vocational & Trades School. The Sixth District A&M School in Barnesville became the Georgia Industrial College. The Seventh District A&M School in Powder Springs, the Eighth District A&M School in Madison, the Ninth District A&M School in Clarkesville, and the Tenth District A&M School in Granite Hill were all converted to local use. The Eleventh District A&M School in Douglas became South Georgia State College. The Twelfth District A&M School in Cochran became Middle Georgia College.

1906-1923

Communities interested in serving as the site for an A&M School had to undergo a bidding process. On November 23, 1906, delegations from Albany, Camilla, Pelham, Tifton, and Ashburn met in Albany to submit bids for the Second District A&M School. Thirty men made up Tift County's delegation to Albany. This small party included Henry Harding Tift, the founder of Tifton. The group went with \$32,000, raised by individual subscriptions from the people of Tift County. *The Tifton Gazette* reported the meeting as follows:

"Soon after the opening of the afternoon session, at 3 o'clock, the bids were submitted, the counties being called in alphabetical order. Dougherty came first with an offer of \$20,000, 200 acres of land, an artesian well and free lights and water for 10 years. Camilla offered to raise \$51,000 in cash, donate 300 acres of land, buildings and timber estimated at \$4,000 and free lights and water for five years.

"Pelham offered a choice of several fine tracts of land, free lights and water and a certified check for \$19,000. The clerk that read Pelham's first offer erroneously read its cash contribution as \$100,000. This brought both wide eyes and gasps from both the general congregation and Pelham's own delegation.

"Tift County's offer was 315 acres of land lying along the Georgia Southern and Florida right-of-way located a mile north of town, and \$30,000 in cash. This offer was signed by 28 names of the Tift County delegation, citizens worth an aggregate of \$10 million. Ashburn's offer was 250 acres of land, lights, and water for five years and \$45,000 in cash.

"When he rose to fill five minutes of the time allotted Tift County, Mr. Tift presented an amended bid of \$55,000 in cash, free lights and water and telephone service for 10 years, a sewage system and 315 acres of land worth \$50 per acre. Later, learning that the timber on the land was desired for forestry study, he contributed this also, it being valued at \$4,500. The raise of \$25,000 at a jump caused the audience to catch its breath.

"After the committee went into executive session, Pelham's bid was raised to \$32,500 in cash, Camilla's bid to \$58,000 in cash, and Ashburn's bid to \$60,000 in cash.

"Mr. Tift gave out of his own pocket, having subscribed \$6,500 before going to Albany, a total of \$36,400 in cash, the land, \$4,500 worth of timber, and a portion of the light and water offer. It was estimated in the committee room that Tifton's offer now netted \$95,700. Mr. J.L. Phillips gave the phone service. Mr. Tift was willing, out of his own means, to again raise Tifton's bid, but the committee did not think it just for him to do so.

"After the financial question was settled, it was a tug of war between the personal influence of Mr. Tift and Mr. Hand (from Pelham), and in the end, when Tifton's progressiveness, excellent

record and prohibition were thrown into the balance, they (the Tifton delegation) won the fight, the high moral integrity of Tift County and her citizenship being the deciding straw.

“In the committee room, Tifton led every ballot, and in the fifth balloting had eight votes, while Pelham reached seven votes, its high-water mark. Finally, in the eighth balloting, Tifton received eleven, one more than necessary.”

The Tifton Gazette proclaimed in its next edition, “The Hallelujah Day Has Come, Tifton Lands the A&M School.” At a commencement ceremony years later, Tift said “of all the investments I have ever made, this school has brought me the biggest dividends.” Ironically, Tift was born in Mystic, Conn., a town located only 15 miles from Guilford, Conn., the birthplace of Abraham Baldwin, namesake for Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College. Tift Hall at ABAC is named in Tift’s honor.

Gresham Manufacturing Company from Griffin sent a letter to Georgia Governor J.M. Terrell on February 1, 1907, with a bid of \$48,400 to construct “the academic building and two dormitories.” In the bid letter, J.W. Gresham said, “If your honorable board desires to beautify their buildings by using selected red front brick with stone sills and lentils over all the windows, we will furnish same and build the three buildings for the sum of \$51,927. Unit brick work for the sum of thirty cents per cubic foot.”

According to the November 21, 1907, *Daily Bulletin of the Manufacturing Record*, Gresham did receive the bid soon after the bid letter was received by Governor Terrell. The architect for each of the 12 A&M schools was Haralson Bleckley from Empire Building in Atlanta.

Construction of the facility on the 315 acres given by Captain Tift continued for the next year, while the board went about appointing a faculty for the school and determining a method of selecting students to attend the first session.

On February 20, 1908, the Second District A & M School opened for its first classes which were filled with 27 students. Only boys could live on campus during the first term, but girls in the surrounding area attended classes. Opening day was declared a holiday by Tifton. Stores and the public school were closed. A special train ran from Tifton to the school, and some 1,200 people attended.

Built on the campus were two fine dormitories (later named Herring Hall and Lewis Hall) and an academic building (later named Tift Hall). During the construction of these buildings, the contractors built a long, narrow building to store tools. This building was used as a dining hall until 1910, when it was replaced with a large wooden dining hall.

Second District A&M fielded a football team that played against teams from Tifton High School and other area schools. Leo Jones was a member of the 1910 football team. He remembers it this

way. "In 1910, football was introduced to the school. Only one boy here at that time had ever seen a football game. Despite the good coaching received under Professor Thrash, the team lost a majority of its games. The next year was a successful one for football. With the exception of the team of 1915, all of the teams have been among the strongest in the state." James Howard Davis was the quarterback of the 1910 football team. His brother, Usher T. Davis, Sr., was also a member of the team.

The Davis Family has quite a legacy at the school since Maude Davis Allison, James Davis' sister, was a music teacher at the A&M School. John Baldwin Davis, Sr., who was James Davis' younger brother, also attended the A&M School. His son, John Baldwin Davis, Jr., was later an agronomy professor at ABAC until his death in 1981. His son, John Baldwin Davis, III, served for a time as a member of the ABAC Police force. James Montgomery Davis, the father of James, Usher, and John, was the farm superintendent at the A&M School. Around 1911, he and his three sons planted the oak trees which lined Moore Highway in front of the college.

Professor W.W. Driskell was chosen as the first principal of the Second District A&M School and served until June 1909. He was succeeded by Professor W.G. Acree, who served for one year. Professor Samuel L. Lewis then served two years as principal and was succeeded by Professor J.F. Hart, Jr., who served as principal until June 1914.

In September 1914, Lewis returned to the principal's position until 1924. He then served as president when the area high school changed to college level work in 1924 under its new name of South Georgia Agricultural & Mechanical College. Lewis received his bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Georgia. He also took special courses in agriculture at Cornell University. In honor of his accomplishments, UGA awarded him an honorary Doctorate of Education. Lewis was the principal of Madison (GA) High School and later served as superintendent of schools there before moving to his position in Tifton. After he retired as the South Georgia A&M College president, he served as principal of Campbell High School. Lewis was the featured speaker at A&M Day at ABAC on February 19, 1958. Lewis Hall on the ABAC campus is named in his honor.

Ethel Arnold Talley (Class of '28) remembered Professor Lewis in a quite favorable light.

"He was a wonderful person," Talley said in a 2015 interview when she was 105 years old. "When he was in the classroom, he was a teacher, no foolishness. When he was outside, he would participate in everything we did, even jump the rope. He taught me history. He was a good teacher."

Talley attended both the Second District A&M School and South Georgia A&M College. Born on January 22, 1910, her diploma from the South Georgia Agricultural and Mechanical College

is dated July 28, 1928. It declares her a High School Graduate who has completed the prescribed course of study in The Preparatory Department.

“Daddy bought a used Model T, and I would drive and bring two of the neighbors,” Talley said. “They paid for the gas. It was 25 cents a gallon. We couldn’t wear pants. We had to wear a dress. Most of the time it was a white dress.

“We were so happy when they built the dining room. I remember they baked biscuits and corn bread. We had black-eyed peas and tomato soup. I enjoyed it. I’m glad I went back to school and got my diploma.”

Members of the first graduating class from the Second District A&M School on June 14, 1910 were Joel Davis and Maude Paulk of Tift County and Charles Hinson of Grady County.

Among the first students at the Second District A&M School were many illustrious Georgians who milked cows, cooked, tended crops and animals on farms and worked in various ways to finance their education.

Those were the days when an education at the high school level in rural America provided the beginning of the realization of many dreams. Great numbers of A&M alumni succeeded in fields of medicine, public office, business, and commerce, as well as in farming. One of those successful alumni was Dr. George D. Conger, who founded the Conger Life Insurance Company in Miami, Fla. He became one of ABAC’s largest benefactors, and Conger Hall on campus is named in his honor. Born in Tifton in 1898, Conger entered the Second District A&M School on September 15, 1912 and graduated as a member of the Class of 1916. He continued his education at the University of Georgia and Emory University before receiving his Doctor of Medicine degree from the University of Tennessee Medical School in Memphis in 1925. For over 46 years, he practiced medicine and owned his own insurance company. Honored as the first recipient of the ABAC Alumni Association’s Distinguished Business Leader Award in 1979, Conger was one of the first members of the ABAC Foundation President’s Club. He also received a Golden Achievement Award, presented to those persons who have pledged or contributed more than \$100,000 to the ABAC Foundation. Development Director Melvin Merrill said Conger contributed over \$117,000 to the Foundation from 1965 until his death on August 10, 1981.

The commencement ceremony for the Class of 1913 was held on May 20, 1913 in the school auditorium. Charles Lane Clements served as president of the class. Jimmie Clements was vice-president, Ethel Van Landingham was secretary, and Ethel Schnauss was the treasurer. Other graduates were Mamie Miles, Lottie Davis, Cassie Martin, Etta Walker, Vivian Chason, Arthur

W. Hasty, Wyatt Arnton Clegg, John Lawrence Davis, Eugene Paul Drexel, Guy Boroughs, Lynwood Wingate, and William G. Wingate. J. F. Hart, Jr., was the principal, and the faculty included J.M. Thrash, Brandt Laboon, E.F. Striplin, Mrs. Lois McElreath, Mrs. J.J. Crumbley, Miss Annie Richardson, Miss La Verne Garrett, Miss Lucile Sasser, and Miss Ethel Van Landingham. The class motto was *Not how much, but how well*. The class colors were old gold and white. The jonquil was the class flower.

Lucy Fletcher from Chula and her sisters, Millie, Bertha, and Hattie, all attended the A&M School in 1917. In a 1968 story in *The Stallion*, Lucy Fletcher said, "I never stayed on the weekend. Daddy always came after us in the buggy. We took the 'Shoe Fly' back to school on Sunday afternoons." Fletcher said the 'Shoe Fly' was the daily train that ran from Atlanta south through Chula. She said a little pagoda-looking structure located next to the railroad tracks directly in front of Tift Hall served as the train depot. "The roof had four corners which turned upward to the sky. It had benches on both sides that you could sit on. We used to wait there for the 'Shoe Fly' to come and wave it down when we wanted to go to Atlanta," another alumnus who wished to remain anonymous, said.

Fletcher said A&M coeds during that time wore uniforms which consisted of blue skirts seven inches from the floor, long sleeved white blouses with heavy cuffs, red sweaters, and a blue raincoat. On Sundays and during the summer, the female students wore white skirts. Stockings were a necessity no matter the time of year. "If you didn't wear stockings, the professor might ask you to leave. He wouldn't tell you twice," Fletcher said.

Cooking in the rooms was forbidden. That didn't stop the coeds. "I remember one time we were frying sausage that the house mother came looking, and my roommate stuck that sizzling pan under the bed so she wouldn't find it. We made divinity on those stoves, and we mixed it up in our wash basins which we scoured with hot water and hand soap."

Girls were not supposed to leave the dormitories after dark. Lights out was at 11 p.m. "A few of the girls didn't like to turn out the electric lights and as punishment, they had to pick up paper on the campus," Fletcher said.

1924-1932

With the improvement of high school education in the rural areas, the need for maintaining district high schools decreased. For years it had been felt that a senior state college for men was needed in the southern part of Georgia.

Through the influence of R.C. Ellis in the Georgia House of Representatives and John Adams in the Georgia Senate, a bill creating the South Georgia A&M College was passed in 1924. The Second District A&M School was renamed the South Georgia A&M College and began the

gradual transition from high school to college work. By the beginning of the 1928-29 fall term, all high school classes had been eliminated. The first college class graduated in June 1929. After serving as principal of the Second District A&M School, Samuel L. Lewis continued his service to the institution as the first and only president of the South Georgia A&M College.

Ethel Arnold Talley was a member of the Class of 1928 at South Georgia A&M College. Her diploma shows a graduation date of July 28, 1928. Born on January 22, 1910 in Irwin County, Arnold's family moved to Tift County when she was two years old, where she lived the rest of her very long life. She married A.W. Buster Talley on June 23, 1929, and they were married for 62 years until his death in 1991. Ms. Talley passed away on December 24, 2016 at the age of 106. Until her death, she was the oldest ABAC alumnus. Her recipe for a long life was simple.

"Live right and don't eat a lot of sweets," Talley said. "That's the main thing. Keep walking and talking."

Ironically, just as the first South Georgia A&M College class graduated, state legislators were working on another name change. In an effort to grow and broaden the institution, the college's name was changed to the Georgia State College for Men (GSCM) in the summer of 1929. At the time, there was not a senior college for men south of Macon. The new school's expanded curriculum was intended to serve communities in the southern region of the state.

Dr. Frank G. Branch was the first and only president of the Georgia State College for Men, serving from 1929-1933. Enrollment climbed steadily during Branch's tenure from 101 students with a graduating class of six to 345 students with 33 seniors in 1932. Prior to moving to Tifton, Branch served as president of South Georgia College in McRae for five years and Andrew College in Cuthbert for 11 years. Branch was also the superintendent at Rockwell Academy in Putnam County, the first recognized and accredited consolidated school in Georgia.

Under Branch's leadership, GSCM was admitted to the Georgia Association of Colleges in 1932, paving the way for the college to join the new University System of Georgia in 1933. President Branch favored a broad spectrum of academic and extracurricular activities, so students interested in literary pursuits attached themselves to *The Rambler*, the college yearbook, or the *Ram's Horn*, the semi-monthly college newspaper. When GSCM became Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College in 1933, Branch was named president of North Georgia College, where he served for one year. Branch Hall, a former dormitory on the ABAC campus, was named in his honor.

GSCM had two divisions: Liberal Arts and Sciences, leading to the A.B. and B.S. degrees and the Division of Agriculture, leading to a B.S. in Agriculture. Candidates for either degree could major in commerce or in education as well as in the liberal arts or sciences.

There were three fraternities and two sororities on the GSCM campus. The fraternities included Omega Epsilon Pi, Phi Kappa Rho, and Sigma Omega. The seeds of Sigma Omega were planted in the 1920s with the Sigma Club, a non-Greek honor society whose members were chosen with great care. The Sigma Club stressed leadership and academics. In the early 1930s, several members from the Sigma Club wanted something more than a strictly academic organization and decided it was time to form a social organization. These members formed Sigma Omega.

When GSCM became a two-year college called Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College in 1933, all fraternities and sororities were disbanded. Some of the Sigma Omega members transferred to North Georgia College, and in 1933 they formed a local fraternity called Sigma Theta. Later, Sigma Theta decided to go national and in doing so became Sigma Phi Epsilon. Sororities at the Georgia State College for Men included Eta Tau Epsilon and Kappa Mu.

In sports, the Georgia State College for Men football team had its most successful season to date in the fall of 1930 with a 5-0-1 record, marred only by a 0-0 tie with the Clemson "B" Team. Coach Orion Mitchell's Rams defeated Fort Benning 31-0, Middle Georgia 19-0, Southern 19-13, the Florida "B" team 13-6, and Norman 6-0. In the win over Fort Benning, the campus yearbook, *The Rambler*, stated, "The Rams could have probably run up a larger score, but Coach Mitchell put in some of his new men to see how they would look in action."

The Rams continued their winning ways in the 1931 season. On Oct. 16, 1931, Georgia State College for Men defeated the University of Miami 13-12. An Associated Press story about the game ran in the October 17th edition of *The Tifton Gazette*. According to that account, Miami went in front on a touchdown run in the second quarter. Down 6-0, the Rams of GSCM took the lead when Mike Donehon intercepted a pass and ran 70 yards for a touchdown.

Still in the second quarter, the Rams expanded the lead when Sherman England blocked a punt on the Hurricanes' two-yard line and recovered it in the end zone for another touchdown. Miami had a 13-yard TD run in the third period, but GSCM was able to hold on for the victory.

Besides the win over Miami, the 1931 Rams defeated Fort Benning (Artillery) 38-0, Alabama State Teachers 28-0, Fort Benning (Tank) 20-0, Oglethorpe "B" 21-0, and Florida "B" 20-0. GSCM lost to Howard 31-0, Parris Island Marines 25-12, and Stetson 28-0.

The 1932 edition of GSCM football ran roughshod over its opponents, rolling up a 7-1 record behind the antics of halfbacks Smitty Smithwick from Quitman, Gene Nix from Colquitt, Jimmy Cliett from Bainbridge, and Pee Wee Holt from Commerce. Nix was described by *The Rambler* as "the hardest running back on the squad who could use the stiff arm." Smithwick was called "one of the fastest to ever wear a Rams' uniform." Jo Jo Caudill from Ashland, Ky., was a tackle

and captain of the team. He was described as “big and powerful, a relentless tackler always tearing opposing lines to shreds.”

The Rams defeated Miami for the second year in a row in 1932 by a score of 19-6. They also thumped Fort Benning 40-0, Alabama Teachers 19-0, Stetson 33-6, Parris Island Marines 20-13, Statesboro Teachers 27-0, and Appalachian Teachers College 32-0. GSCM's only loss was to the University of Florida freshmen by a 20-15 score. Coach Mitchell's football players won for themselves the title of "Fighting Rams" as they accumulated a score of 205 points to opponents' 45 in 1932. The basketball team came out with a respectable 75 percent win average.

In 1933, state legislators changed the name of Georgia State College for Men to Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College. It became a two-year college, but football survived through the 1936 season.

Mitchell coached football, basketball, and baseball at GSCM and at ABAC from 1931-45. His 1937 and 1943 ABAC basketball teams were the Georgia junior college champions. Mitchell was an inaugural member of the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2008. Mitchell Hall, a former residence hall on the campus, was named in his honor.

1933

The depression years brought financial troubles to many of the old "district" schools and, in 1933 Governor Eugene Talmadge granted the newly formed Board of Regents of the University System "power to consolidate, suspend, or discontinue institutions, and merge departments."

Dr. Phillip Weltner, Chancellor of the University System, said that in deciding what to do about the college at Tifton that several things were apparent: here was a community vitally interested in having a college, here was a section of the state with agricultural problems particular to its own geography, and here in the guise of the Coastal Plain Experiment Station was a ready-made laboratory for agricultural classes.

Consequently, Georgia State College for Men was changed to a two-year college stressing agriculture and home economics, and the name was changed to Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College to pay honor to Abraham Baldwin, the first president of the University of Georgia and one of two Georgia signers of the U.S. Constitution.

Born in 1754 as the son of a Connecticut blacksmith, Abraham Baldwin enrolled at Yale University at the age of 14 and completed his degree four years later. He then studied theology at Yale and became a minister. He served on George Washington's staff as a chaplain during the

Revolutionary War before beginning a study of law. After being admitted to the bar, he moved to Georgia in 1783 to set up a law practice near Augusta.

One year later, Baldwin was elected to the Georgia House of Assembly and in 1787 he represented Georgia as a member of the Constitutional Convention where he was one of the signers of the United States Constitution. In fact, he and William Few are the only Georgians who signed the Constitution. Baldwin served as the first chief executive of the University of Georgia from 1785 until 1801. He later served Georgia as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate. On July 1, 1933, the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia closed the Georgia State College for Men and opened the institution as Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College, naming the college in Baldwin's honor.

The change in college status was somewhat of a shock to the people of Tifton who were justly proud of the four-year college. However, as they had always done, as soon as the objectives of the college became known, the citizens rallied to its support and have been to a large measure responsible for its success.

Helen Sasser from Sylvester was the first female student to enroll at ABAC in 1933. On the first day of classes after the name change to Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College, faculty member George P. Donaldson, later to become president of ABAC in 1947, came up with the idea of each student receiving a number. He then drew two numbers to determine who would be the first female and the first male student to register at ABAC. Sasser had the number 13, and she was the first female to register. Marvin Loyd was the first male to register.

"There were about 100 of us lined up in front of the administration building," Loyd said. "We drew numbers. I was the first boy, and Helen was the first girl. It was just luck of the draw."

Sasser's younger brother, Charles, had attended the school when it was Georgia State College for Men. He helped prepare the college for the switch to two-year status. Since he had graduated, ABAC offered to pay the tuition for someone he knew to attend the college as his payment. "My brother came home and wanted to know if I wanted to go," Sasser said. "I told him no, but later decided to go."

Sasser said there were only 18 female students enrolled at ABAC at the time, and they cooked all the meals. "Two of us did it for a week at a time for ten cents an hour," Sasser said. She said the male students kept up the grounds and chopped and carried the wood for the wood stove where the females cooked. The females also cleaned the dormitories and the classrooms.

"Our first night there we talked about the colors and the mascot," Sasser said. "We chose the stallion as the mascot. The colors we picked were green and yellow. The yellow was to be the shade of the jonquil flower that was on the campus."

Sasser later became the first female president of the ABAC Alumni Association. During her time as president, she initiated the Master Homemaker Award as a companion to the Master Farmer Award. Her sister, Sara, was the first recipient of the award in 1959. Helen Sasser won the award in 1987 and beginning in 1999, the award was named in her honor.

The first president of ABAC was Dr. J.G. Woodroof, who served as president from 1933-34. The enrollment at the time was 99. Woodroof said “the principal objective will be to educate the boys and girls back to the farm.” Answering a question as to whether the new college would be co-ed, Woodroof said “farm life without women would offer no attraction, and therefore ABAC will enroll both boys and girls.”

At the age of 32, Woodroof was the youngest state college president in Georgia when he was selected for the position on May 10, 1933. A native of Mountville, Ga., in Meriwether County, Woodroof turned 33 on May 23, 1933. He received his undergraduate degree in horticulture from the University of Georgia in 1922 and his master’s degree in horticulture from UGA in 1926. Woodroof completed his Ph.D. in horticulture from Michigan State University. Woodroof moved to Tifton from his research duties at UGA’s Griffin Experiment Station. He joined the Tifton Kiwanis Club in 1933 as its youngest member.

Woodroof’s wife, the former Naomi Chapman, was also quite renowned. As a youngster, she crossed the Snake River daily by rowboat to attend school. She was the first female student and the first female graduate of the University of Idaho College of Agriculture and one of the first two females in the United States to hold a degree in agriculture. She was also the first woman scientist at the Georgia Experiment Station, the first state-employed plant pathologist at the Coastal Plain Experiment Station, and the first female named to the Georgia Agricultural Hall of Fame. She married Woodroof in 1926.

1934-1939

After only one year, Dr. J.G. Woodroof announced on April 14, 1934 that he was stepping down from as the ABAC President to return to scientific research. He went on to have a brilliant research career, particularly in the study of blueberries. The 200-acre J.G. Woodroof Farm at ABAC is named in his honor, and the top academic student during the annual Honors Day ceremony receives an award in his memory.

Dr. George H. King was named the ABAC president after the resignation of Woodroof. King served as president from 1934 until 1947. He was serving as a Professor of Farm Management and Dean of Instruction at the college when he was selected as the second president in the history of ABAC. King received undergraduate and graduate degrees from UGA and did graduate work at Cornell. Student enrollment increased from 188 to 468 students during his tenure.

Football survived the name change from the Georgia State College for Men to Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College. The 1935 Golden Stallions' football team went 4-4, winning over Bowdon 20-0, University of Tampa freshmen 26-13, Norman 13-0, and Homerville CCC 40-13. ABAC lost to South Georgia Teachers 13-0, Georgia Military 14-12, South Georgia State 38-6, and Gordon 7-0.

Football might have continued at ABAC after 1936 but the uniforms and equipment were destroyed when the gymnasium burned down during the Thanksgiving holidays. ABAC never had football again. A new dormitory which eventually was named Weltner Hall was added to the front of the campus in 1936. It was named for Dr. Phillip Weltner, Chancellor of the University System of Georgia. Weltner was razed in 2018 to make way for the fine arts building.

One ABAC athlete from 1936-37 went on to become a World War II hero. Henry Will Jones, a Marine Captain from Lakeland, received the Silver Star posthumously for his bravery against the Japanese forces at Peleliu in the Palau Islands in the south Pacific in World War II.

At ABAC, he played the guard position for the basketball team on Coach Orion Mitchell's 1937 state junior college champions. He also played on the 1937 ABAC baseball team and was a member of the 1936 football team. He received the prestigious "B" for football and basketball. Captain Jones was selected posthumously to the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2013.

In 1937, Coach Orion Mitchell led the ABAC basketball team to a 25-24 victory over Gordon Military for the state championship. Three members of that state title team were honored at halftime of the Golden Stallions' game 60 years later on January 16, 1997. Dorsey Brooks, Wallace Childs, and Jason Chastain received a standing ovation from the crowd. The ABAC gym burned during the Thanksgiving Holidays of 1936 so all the home games were played in the Tifton High School gym. The team members said the state basketball tournament was played in Milledgeville and because of a lack of funds, the ABAC team stayed at the new Milledgeville jail. The Gordon team, because of a lack of funds, reportedly stayed at the mental institution. The state title game featured the center jump after every made basket. Under Mitchell's direction, ABAC also won the state basketball title in 1943.

In 1939, Doris McGill from Tifton graduated from Tifton High School. She then became perhaps the only person in history to turn down a scholarship to The Juilliard School to attend ABAC and major in home economics. She was an ABAC cheerleader and met her future husband, Garrett J. Jones, on the ABAC campus. They were married for 50 years before he passed away in 1995. Doris McGill Jones passed away at the age of 92 on March 20, 2015.

George Thornewell Smith from Hopeful, Ga., began attending ABAC in 1939 after trying Middle Georgia College for one quarter. "Momma and I looked at all the college books in the

world, and I wound up at Middle Georgia, which turned out to be a mistake,” Smith said in a 2007 interview. “It’s a very good school, but it’s a rich man’s school. At Christmas, I switched to Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College. It’s the best thing I ever did. I just loved ABAC. If it hadn’t been for ABAC, I never would have made it. I only had two pair of pants my whole two years.”

Smith later became a legend in Georgia politics as the only person ever to win contested elections to all three branches of state government. He was Speaker of the House, Lieutenant Governor, and the Presiding Justice on the Georgia Supreme Court. His political career started at ABAC. “My roommates decided they would run me for student body president,” Smith said. “Well, I didn’t know anything about being president of the student body. They probably didn’t know what they were doing either, so we had to lay plans. There were 440 students, and I set a goal to learn everyone’s name, and I learned every one of them. I won by 11 votes, and that’s all that did it.”

ABAC dedicated the George T. Smith Parlor in Tift Hall in the distinguished statesman’s honor on March 1, 2013. He was the first recipient of the Baldwin Alumni Association Distinguished Alumnus Award in 1969 and became the only recipient of the ABAC Distinguished Service Award in 2007. During the 100th birthday celebration for ABAC in 2008, Smith addressed both the Georgia State Senate and the Georgia House of Representatives in session. He passed away on August 23, 2010 at the age of 93.

1940-46

In 1940, President George King hired Tom Cordell, the principal at Morven High School, to direct a new adult and continuing education program at ABAC. The program was established from a grant from the Sears and Roebuck Foundation. It was the first program of its kind at a two-year college in the country. Classes were offered free to farmers who came to campus and stayed in the dormitories. In the first year, a total of 1,049 farmers attended some or all of the 20 classes available. With the advent of World War II, the classes took a brief hiatus. The classes resumed in 1946 when they became a part of the college’s budget. The number of courses increased until 1953 when they leveled off at 50 per year.

Through the vision of King and Cordell, the program had a tremendous impact on generations to come, including the agricultural interests of a future president of the United States, Jimmy Carter. He attended some of the short courses at ABAC when he was a peanut farmer in Plains. Cordell was named “Man of the Year” by the *Progressive Farmer* magazine in 1971. He

received the Georgia Adult Education Council Citation in 1972. Cordell became the only person to serve as acting president of ABAC on five different occasions. He served as Dean and Coordinator of the continuing education program until his retirement in 1979.

Future Georgia Governor George Busbee enrolled at ABAC for the 1944 fall quarter and the 1945 winter quarter. In the April 21, 1981 edition of *The Stallion*, Busbee said, "During my college days at Abraham Baldwin, I remember many pleasurable and not so pleasurable events. However, an experience which stands out in my mind is a job I held at ABAC and the manner in which I had to perform that job.

"As a young man working my way through school, I took a job with the college as a delivery boy. However, the only things I delivered were coal and kindling, and the only place I delivered these items was to the girls' dormitory on campus. Back in those days, the girls' dormitory was furnished with potbellied stoves. Therefore, my job was to take two scuttles of coal and kindling into every room in the girls' dormitory every morning and every afternoon. Being a young lad at the time, this job was quite an enjoyable way to earn some money, not to mention a quite pleasurable way in which to meet new acquaintances. As you can imagine, it's a time in my life which brings back pleasant memories." Busbee became the first Georgia governor to serve two terms from 1975-83. He ran his campaign on the slogan, "a workhorse, not a show horse."

During the height of World War II, ABAC enrolled 147 students in 1943 and 173 students in 1944. Both years stand out because for the first time in the college's history, the enrollment showed more females than males. There were 77 females and 70 males in 1943 and 88 females and 85 males in 1944. The females would not outnumber the males again at ABAC until the 1981 summer term.

During the last year of King's presidency, 150 male students, including many veterans from World War II, took classes at Spence Field near Moultrie. Paul Gaines, who later became the ABAC registrar, was an instructor there. In 1942, King's presidential duties expanded when he was named the director of the Coastal Plain Experiment Station, located adjacent to the ABAC campus. King became the fulltime director of the agricultural research facility when he stepped down as the ABAC president in 1947. King Hall, an academic building in the center of campus, is named in his honor.

Coach Bruce Gressette joined the ABAC faculty in 1945. For the next 18 years, he achieved greatness not only in the classroom, where he was an excellent mathematics instructor, but on the basketball court and the track as well. His teams won Georgia junior college basketball titles in 1946, 1947, and 1949. The 1949 and 1952 teams won National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) region championships. Gressette's track and field teams won state championships in 1961 and 1962. His cross-country team won the state title in 1961. Gressette

was an inaugural member of the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2008. Gressette Gym is named in his honor.

1947-1954

In 1947, the Board of Regents named George P. Donaldson president of ABAC. One of the most popular presidents in ABAC history, Donaldson joined ABAC in 1933 as a faculty member after serving two years as a Georgia legislator. He received his B.S. degree in Education from UGA and his M.S. degree from Ohio State University. Donaldson directed the first play in the history of the Baldwin Players on December 15, 1933, titled *Stop Thief*. He became Dean of Students and Director of Dramatics in 1935 and served in that capacity before beginning his presidency.

A big fan of the ABAC Glee Club, Donaldson led the singing at the Georgia State FFA Convention in 1954. He held honorary life memberships in FHA, FFA, and 4-H. *Progressive Farmer* magazine named him the 1955 Man of the Year in Service to Georgia Agriculture. Upon his retirement, Donaldson became the Executive Secretary for the Georgia Agricultural Commodity Commission for Peanuts. He was named an Honorary Alumnus of ABAC on April 5, 1980 at Homecoming. The Donaldson Dining Hall at ABAC is named in his honor, and the top associate degree award at every ABAC commencement ceremony is bestowed on a worthy graduate in his memory.

During Donaldson's tenure, ABAC grew rapidly in student enrollment, faculty personnel and physical plant. Through the help of the state administration and the Board of Regents, the physical plant was enlarged to accommodate these students. The additions from 1948-53 included a dormitory for girls (later named Creswell Hall), a modern shop building (later named the Chambliss Building), a new science building (later named Gray Hall), an adequate water system, and a new central heating system to replace the old potbelly stoves located in each room. The college also received a special allotment for the purchase of 109.6 acres of farmland during this period.

The original design on Gray Hall provided for a much larger building. Because of a lack of available funds, the size of the building was cut, and that's why it was the only classroom building on campus where the doors open to an outside corridor instead of to an inside corridor. The building was named for Claude Gray, the ABAC Registrar from 1933-46. Gray Hall was connected to Britt Hall, the science and mathematics building named for Mary Lou Britt, professor of chemistry from 1946-58. A favorite gathering place for students was the Log Cabin. Students could dance and listen to music. Built in 1932, probably from trees cut on the campus, The Log served at various times as the campus post office, a recreation area, and a snack bar.

In 1952, Tom Cheney, a right hander from Morgan, Ga., pitched the ABAC baseball team to the state championship. Cheney later pitched in the major leagues for the Cardinals, Pirates, and Senators. He pitched in two games in the 1960 World Series which the Pirates won on Bill Mazeroski's walk-off home run. Cheney's greatest day as a major leaguer took place on September 12, 1962 when he set the major league record for striking out the most batters in a single game. He struck out 21 members of the Baltimore Orioles in a 16-inning 2-1 win for the Senators. Cheney pitched all 16 innings. Cheney was an inaugural member of the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2008.

Coach Bruce Gressette's ABAC men's basketball team won the regional championship in 1952. The Stallions didn't play in the regional tournament again until Coach Benny Dees' team lost in the first round of regional play in 1964.

In December 1953, the college was admitted to the Southern Association of College and Secondary Schools. This recognition permitted Baldwin graduates to transfer to other colleges in the nation and in foreign countries without losing credits. The Board of Regents again granted permission for broadening the courses of instruction. Added this time was a Secretarial Science Department and a course in Farm Equipment Sales and Service. The Farm Equipment course was offered at only seven colleges in the United States.

During the next three years, a modern Home Management House (later named the Moore Building) was built on campus, and the auditorium and gymnasium (Howard, Thrash) were remodeled. Construction began on an annex to the Weltner Hall dormitory and a Rural Life Building, which was located on the site now occupied by the Carlton Center. Funding for the Rural Life Building was provided through the Governor's Emergency Fund.

President George P. Donaldson also formed the first fundraising arm of the college in 1954, the Greater Baldwin Foundation. He wanted a way for businessmen to donate money to ABAC to provide typewriters for the college's secretarial science program.

1955-59

The Baldwin Alumni Association presented its first Master Farmer Award at Homecoming in 1955. Eugene G. Adams was the first recipient. *The Tifton Gazette* reported that Ann McMillan scored 66 points while playing for the ABAC women's basketball team in a game against Norman College in 1955. The ABAC women's team was called the Deers at that time. ABAC won the game 87-56 under the direction of Coach Charles A. Milford.

In 1956, the girls' dormitory was named for Edith Vaughn Creswell. She was one of the first four females who enrolled for classes at the University of Georgia in September 1918. Creswell received her bachelor's degree from UGA in 1920. She later became the first Dean of Women

and a Professor of Home Economics at ABAC. The building was called the “Girls’ Dormitory” from 1954-56.

Peter Rhyne won the Master Farmer Award from the Baldwin Alumni Association at Homecoming in 1956.

After graduating from Dixie High School in Brooks County, Tom Moody and his high school buddy, Philip Simpson, came to ABAC in 1956 where Simpson was a standout basketball player, and Moody played basketball and baseball. Simpson was inducted into the first ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame class in 2008, and Moody joined his friend in the Hall of Fame in 2016.

Simpson took the college basketball world by storm both at ABAC and at the University of Georgia. Nicknamed “Goose” in honor of former Harlem Globetrotter Reece “Goose” Tatum, Simpson averaged 26 points per game as a freshman at ABAC when he was named to the Georgia Junior College All-State team. During his sophomore season, he averaged 24 points a game for the Stallions and was recognized for being the ninth highest scoring player in the nation. Simpson was selected for All-America status and was chosen as the most valuable player in the state tournament where ABAC finished second in 1958. ABAC retired his jersey on the night of his last game as a Stallion.

Simpson finished his college career as a two-year starter for the University of Georgia where legendary Kentucky Coach Adolph Rupp called him “the best rebounder in the SEC” in 1960. Simpson played for Georgia Coach Red Lawson and was named Most Valuable Player for the Bulldogs during his junior season when he led UGA in total field goals, total free throws, rebounds, total points, and a 14.1 scoring average. Simpson was named captain of the UGA team during his senior season. He was a second team All-SEC selection for the 1960-61 season. He received the Joe Jordan Memorial Trophy for his outstanding play that year.

The Stallions made the state tournament both years that Moody played second base for ABAC. After hitting .286 his sophomore year at ABAC, Moody attended Georgia Southern on a baseball scholarship where he led the Eagles with a .377 batting average during his senior season and helped to catapult the team to a berth in the national championship game where they lost to Whitworth College and future St. Louis Cardinals’ ace Ray Washburn. Moody returned to ABAC in 1967 where he became the baseball coach for 24 years and the golf coach for four years.

In 1957, David L. Newton received the Master Farmer Award from the Baldwin Alumni Association at Homecoming. Ernest Edwards joined the faculty in the humanities division and assumed leadership of the Baldwin Glee Club in 1957. He began directing the Glee Club when he was an ABAC student.

At the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Second District A&M School in 1958, many evidences of growth were observed. The enrollment that year was 492, the largest in 50 years. David Glynn West was the Baldwin Alumni Association Master Farmer Award recipient at the 1958 Homecoming celebration. The Short Course Program, begun in 1940 under the direction of Tom Cordell, continued to grow in pace with the college. By 1958 over 55,000 people had attended the more than 50 short courses offered each year. Samuel L. Lewis was the featured speaker at A&M Day at ABAC on February 19, 1958. Lewis was a principal at the Second District A&M School and president of the South Georgia A&M College. Lewis Hall on the ABAC campus is named in his honor.

Upon the recommendation of Helen Sasser, the first female president of the Baldwin Alumni Association, the Association began awarding the Master Homemaker Award at Homecoming in 1959. Sara Brown Tate was the first recipient. Ironically, she was Helen Sasser's sister. Helen Sasser won the award in 1987 and beginning in 1999, the award was named in her honor. Pleasant L. Jowers received the 1959 Master Farmer Award at Homecoming.

1960

In the fall of 1960, Baldwin College, as President George P. Donaldson often called it, was approved to be the first two-year college in the state to offer Distributive Education courses through the Business Administration Division.

At Homecoming in 1960, the Baldwin Alumni Association awarded its Master Homemaker Award to Merl Ellis, and Ralph J. Balkcom received the Master Farmer Award.

1961

President George P. Donaldson, known as "Mr. Pete," retired in 1961. During his tenure, enrollment increased from 468 in 1947 to 616 in 1961. He later served as Executive Secretary of the Georgia Agricultural Commodity for Peanuts and as president of the Greater Baldwin Foundation. He is regarded as one of the most beloved ABAC presidents in the history of the institution. "Mr. Pete was the most unselfish man I've ever met," Emory McMillan, who was the ABAC assistant comptroller from 1951 through 1987, said. "He genuinely cared about his fellow man. If somebody wanted to go to school, he found a way for them. He could walk with the highest, and he could walk with the lowest."

Dr. J. Wilson Comer became president of the college in July 1961. Born on a farm near Gray, Ga., Comer received his undergraduate degree from UGA in agriculture and his master's degree in horticulture, education, and home economics from the University of Tennessee. He received his Ph.D. from Ohio State University in 1953. He taught high school agriculture classes for five

years before beginning a 19-year stay as a faculty member at the Georgia State College for Women in 1940. Comer was serving as the Dean of Columbus College when he was selected for the ABAC presidency.

During his administration, Comer reorganized ABAC into formal academic and administrative divisions to provide for growth and efficiency to handle the impact of the exploding population in the United States. New buildings which opened during Comer's presidency included the dining hall, the Baldwin Memorial Library, and a men's dormitory, which later was named in his honor as Comer Hall. A horticulturist, Comer initiated plans for a college nursery and greenhouses. He believed in a beautiful environment for faculty, staff, and students.

Comer geared ABAC up for the Self Study, which set the stage for re-accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools that would allow ABAC to expand with higher quality instruction. Committees were appointed and began their work. Comer also brought ABAC up to date in the technology world with the installation of data processing equipment which served as the foundation for a Center for Automation.

Innovations to improve communications included a weekly administrative bulletin (later known as the *FOCUS*), publication of a student handbook, a faculty-staff social committee, a unit of the Georgia Educators Association, and a women's group---the "Dames Club." For the first time academic regalia was worn at commencement.

At the 1961 Homecoming, Ike M. Newberry, Jr., received the Master Farmer Award, and Dorothy Parrish Akins received the Master Homemaker Award presented by the Baldwin Alumni Association. Coached by Bruce Gressette, the ABAC track and field team and the cross-country team won state championships in 1961.

1962

During the 1962 Homecoming celebration, Roy McDonald was named the Master Farmer Award winner, and Nan Shealy Rushing received the Master Homemaker Award from the Baldwin Alumni Association. The popular campus recreation center, The Log Cabin, was dismantled in 1962 due to a termite infestation. ABAC students had enjoyed The Log since 1932. Construction began on a new dormitory next to The Log, which was eventually named Comer Hall.

Benny Dees was hired as the ABAC basketball coach in the summer of 1962. He spent the summer trying to convince the father of ABAC freshman David Owens that his son needed to return to school for his sophomore year. Owens was earning some money cropping tobacco in Canada just prior to the start of the fall quarter. "I spent the whole summer talking to his daddy

to make sure David was going to come back,” Dees said in a telephone interview in 2016. “I knew we needed him. He was one of the best players I ever had.”

The ever-persuasive Dees worked his magic, and Owens did return to ABAC where he led the Stallions to a fourth-place finish in the 1963 state junior college basketball tournament. The Pavo native and Central High of Thomasville graduate was named the Most Valuable Player of the tournament. For his expertise on the basketball floor, Owens was named as a member of the 2016 class of the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame.

“David could score, and he was quick,” Dees said. “He could dunk two basketballs at one time. He was the best player by far on that team.” Owens chuckled as he remembered the hard charging Dees. “He could make you feel like you could jump out of the gym,” Owens said in a 2016 interview. “He was a great coach. I was just a country boy from Pavo. I had gotten a couple of calls from Florida State and Valdosta State but I wasn’t playing basketball for the scholarship. I just loved the game.”

Owens played for ABAC Coach Lamar DuBose during his freshman year in 1961-62 when the Stallions wound up with a losing record. Owens also ran on the ABAC track team and won the state title in the high hurdles. Coach Bruce Gressette’s ABAC track and field team won its second straight state title in 1962.

1963

At Homecoming in 1963, Emmett Reynolds received the Master Farmer Award, and Marie Griffin Morgan received the Master Homemaker Award. J. Dewel Lawrence received the George P. Donaldson Award at the graduation ceremony.

In the first round of the 1963 state basketball tournament at the Georgia Southern gym in Statesboro, ABAC knocked off Georgia Southwestern 71-63 behind 23 points by Tommy Dial and 12 by David Owens. In the second round, the Stallions thumped Young Harris 86-51. Owens led the way with 20 points. Top-rated South Georgia beat the Stallions 80-63 in the semifinal game despite 22 points by Owens. Norman College then surged past ABAC 88-73 in the third-place game when Owens tossed in 19 points.

Owens said he was quite shocked when he was named the Most Valuable Player of the tournament by the Georgia Southern coaching staff. “I had gotten tonsillitis just prior to the tournament, and I lost about 27 pounds,” Owens said in a 2016 interview. “I had to have vitamin shots so I could play. I got most of my shots off rebounds.”

Owens averaged 17.3 points and 12.1 rebounds in the four tournament games. He also captured the eye of Georgia Southern Coach J.B. Scarce who recruited him to play for the Eagles. Owens started every game at Georgia Southern and helped to lead the team to the National

Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) national tournament in his junior year and to a number one national ranking in his senior season.

Owens was captain of the Georgia Southern basketball team, and his future wife, Marsha, was the captain of the cheerleaders. “ABAC was an awesome place to play,” Owens said. “They were hanging from the balcony in that little gym. It was a great experience for me.” Owens was selected for the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame Class of 2016.

ABAC student Cook Holliday from Rochelle also made a name for himself and for ABAC. During his freshman year in 1963, he set the state junior college pole vault record. Holliday also became the first ABAC track athlete to qualify for the National Junior College track meet in Big Springs, Tex. En route, his steel pole was misplaced, and he used a borrowed pole to finish fifth in the nation. Holliday also played on the ABAC basketball team, earning the nickname, “The Baldwin Blaster,” for his shooting skills. He helped to lead the Stallions to the state basketball championship during his sophomore year in 1964. The University of Wyoming awarded Holliday a track scholarship. Holliday was selected for the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame Class of 2009.

President Comer passed away in December of 1963. During his presidency, he envisioned the larger role that ABAC should play as the unique college of all the units within the University System. The dormitory that opened in 1963 was named Comer Hall in his honor.

1964

Dean Tom Cordell was appointed Acting President by the Board of Regents when Comer passed away. During his interim presidency, Cordell continued to hold fast to the growth and development ABAC was experiencing.

By the time Dr. J. Clyde Driggers reported for duty as the new president in August, the Self-Study was well underway and the addition to the Science and Classroom Building (later named Britt Hall), the Infirmary (later named the E.L. Evans Health Center), and the new gym (later named Gressette Gym) were approved. Britt Hall was named for Mary Lou Britt, a former ABAC chemistry professor. The Evans Health Center was named for Dr. E.L. Evans, and Gressette Gym was named for Coach Bruce Gressette.

A University of Florida graduate, Driggers was a Professor of Poultry Science at the University of Florida and head of the Poultry Science Department at the University of Georgia prior to taking over at ABAC. Through his travels, ABAC became better known on the national and international scene. All six of the academic divisions of study expanded their curriculums. The value of the ABAC physical plant increased to more than \$13 million during his tenure.

Driggers encouraged the Adult Education and Public Service program to stretch out to include night classes for both credit and non-credit courses. He promoted on-campus living with the opening of four dormitories (later named Fulwood, Branch, Mitchell, and Chandler halls) for students who traveled from all over the state and the world. He also presided over the opening of two new classroom buildings (later named Bowen Hall and Conger Hall) as well as a new student center (later named the J. Lamar Branch Student Center).

Soon after taking office, Driggers refined the organizational structure of the college to fulfill many emerging needs. Four mid-level administrators began reporting directly to the President. An Advisory Council to the President gave opportunity monthly to all faculty and staff for representative views. Driggers was named "Man of the Year" in Georgia Agriculture in 1964 by Alpha Zeta. He was a veteran of World War II where he attained the rank of colonel before his retirement.

At the 1964 Homecoming celebration, Carolyn Harris received the Master Homemaker Award, and Charles Everett was named the recipient of the Master Farmer Award.

The Golden Stallions of Coach Benny Dees won the state basketball championship in 1964. The Stallions entered the 14-team tournament at Georgia Southern in Statesboro as the number three seed after going 14-3 in the league and 15-5 overall during the regular season. ABAC beat Armstrong 64-43 in the first round behind 13 points by Gwendell McSwain, 12 points by Cook Holliday, and 10 points by Jimmy Scearce. In the second round, the Stallions knocked off Augusta 80-72. McSwain scored 25 to lead an ABAC scoring parade which included 14 points apiece by Tommy Dial, Jake Popham and Holliday, and 13 points by Scearce. "Jimmy Scearce was the guts of that team," Dees said in a 2017 interview. Dees had recruited Jake Popham and his brother, Russell, to ABAC from Manor High School, where Dees was the head coach before coming to ABAC. In the semifinal game, ABAC slipped by second-seeded Young Harris 71-65 as Dial scorched the cords for 28 points. McSwain had 16, and Scearce added 12. The Stallions thumped top-seeded Columbus 76-58 in the title game on February 29 when Dial hit 11 of 16 shots and added five free throws for 27 points. Scearce chipped in 14 points. Dial was named the tournament's Most Valuable Player, and McSwain and Scearce made the all-tournament team. The victory marked the first men's basketball state title for ABAC since Coach Bruce Gressette's team won the 1949 crown. The Golden Stallions won only one other state men's basketball title in 1982 when Coach Donnie Veal's team beat Gainesville 67-66 in Gressette Gym. Both men's basketball and women's basketball were discontinued at ABAC after the 2008 season.

"Tifton just fell in love with us," Dial said in a 2015 interview. "Benny Dees was Bobby Knight before there was a Bobby Knight. We were just a bunch of old country boys with a crazy coach." Dial played at Waycross High School where he was selected for All-State and All-

America honors where he lettered three years in baseball. He played in the North vs. South All-Star game and got scholarship offers from Florida State and North Carolina State. But he had a girlfriend in Waycross. Plus, who could resist the country boy charm of Benny Dees? “Benny had a persuasive way about him,” Dial said with a laugh. “He promised me a full ride scholarship to ABAC. Well, my full ride was that I had to get up every morning at 5 o’clock and go to the lunchroom to work. That was my scholarship. Seven of us stayed in a garage apartment. It was so cold in the winter we had to use electric blankets. ABAC built a new dorm before my sophomore year, and I was glad to live in it.”

Nicknamed “Rail” because he stretched 150 pounds over his 6-foot-3 frame, Dial carried over his stellar high school play into the college realm. He was named All-State in his freshman and sophomore seasons at ABAC as well as claiming All-District and All-America honors during his sophomore year. “It was quite a run,” Dial said. “The ABAC students went to the Army Surplus Store and bought a bunch of old helmets. Then they lined up like a platoon and marched in that old gym. It was crazy. They had metal trash cans with Coke bottles inside. You can’t imagine the noise in that place. We just won the town over. Benny was a coach that made you better than you were.”

The Stallions lost to Gulf Coast 85-82 in Tallahassee, Fla., in the first round of the 1964 regional tournament. Dial said Gulf Coast hit 41 of 52 free throws while the Stallions connected on 21 of 31 free throws. Dial had 12 points in that game. Holliday was selected for the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2009. Dees was selected for the Hall of Fame in 2011, and Dial was a member of the Hall of Fame Class of 2015. The entire 1964 team was selected for the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2017. Team members present for the ceremony were Tommy Dial, Gwendell McSwain, Cook Holliday, Jake Popham, Russell Popham, Neal Joseph Tippens, Peter Dees, Tyron Spearman, Bill Mathis, and Jimmy Fountain. Jimmy Scarce and Ronnie Archer had passed away. J.E. Griffis and Maury Long were unable to attend the event.

Faculty and staff members in the agriculture division, particularly in the Agricultural Equipment Technology area, began a farm equipment show in 1964 on the banks of Lake Baldwin called “Dealer Days.” This program eventually became the Sunbelt Agricultural Exposition, which opened at Spence Field near Moultrie in 1978. ABAC was one of the original sponsors for the show, and ABAC personnel including Jesse Chambliss, Wright Crosby, and Jimmy Grubbs helped to develop the Spence Field site for the Sunbelt Expo. This is the same former air base on which ABAC taught classes after World War II.

1965

Accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools in 1965 brought great satisfaction; yet it pointed out the need for continued study to keep abreast of new developments in the various fields of study. As a result, many members of the faculty and some of the staff took advantage of leaves-of-absence or in-service training. All six of the academic divisions expanded curriculums but of special interest was the growth of the Law Enforcement, Social Work, Horticulture, Wildlife, Music, Art, Secretarial, Home Economics, and Data Processing.

ABAC began awarding the Carlton Award for Faculty Excellence in 1965. The first recipient was Dr. Ernest Edwards, Jr. The award was named in honor of ABAC benefactor, O.D. Carlton, II, who ran the Caterpillar dealership in Albany. At Homecoming in 1965, Derrell Thompson received the Master Farmer Award, and Gloria Bostick Davis received the Master Homemaker Award.

1966

ABAC began offering Nursing Education classes in 1966. At that time, nursing graduates were guaranteed an automatic commission in the U.S. Air Force or Army. “ABAC took over the Norman Bible College nursing program that year,” Troy Spicer, Dean of the School of Nursing and Health Sciences, said in a 2015 interview. “It was too expensive for the Bible College to continue the program. Half of that year’s program was already over so ABAC picked up where they left off.”

ABAC English Professor Rosalyn Ray Donaldson remembers the campus announcement. “No one would have guessed that day what an incredible decision that would be for the college as a whole and what an asset for the community would develop over the next 50 years,” Donaldson said in a 2015 interview.

Suzette Cofer Alexander, Warren Marilyn Jackson, Thresia Wayne Matthews, Emily Bernice Shivers, and Georgia Bledsoe Simmons were the five students who transferred from the nursing training program at Norman Bible College

“As student nurses in training we were assigned charge nurse positions on the medical surgical floors,” Alexander said in a 2016 interview. “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 was the guest speaker at the ABAC spring commencement ceremony in 2016 when ABAC culminated a year-long salute to the nursing program on its 50th anniversary.

In Adult Education and Public Service, the 1966 short course program was adapted to include night study for non-credit and credit. Jimmy Grubbs (Class of '66) began a 40-year career with ABAC as an ag technician on March 1. Jesse Chambliss won the 1966 Carlton Award for Faculty Excellence award at Honors Day. Terry I. Tatum received the Donaldson Award at the graduation ceremony. At Homecoming, S. Louie Perry, Jr., received the Master Farmer Award, and Rhodabel Gay Chappell was named the Master Homemaker Award winner. Larry Parkman was selected as president of the student body for the 1966-67 year.

The Drama Club presented *Our Town* as its fall quarter production. Bobby Goldsboro performed for the students at a dance and concert on November 22. The admission price was \$2 per person in advance and \$2.25 at the door. At the Fall Formal on December 10, President Clyde Driggers crowned Glen Busby and Sandra Lovinggood as Mr. and Miss Baldwin. Joe Chapman was named Mr. TABAC, and Jane Wood was named Miss TABAC.

1967

Faculty and staff committees became more active in making plans for the various functions of the college in 1967. An Academic Assembly was formed to provide a formal voice for recommending ideas for growth and development. The Student Government Association and the Student Judiciary became realities as well. The administrative and academic structure for students, faculty, and staff solidified into an active, workable organization.

ABAC celebrated Homecoming 1967 on February 17 with the dedication of the Bruce V. Gressette Physical Education Center and the E.L. Evans Health Center. University System of Georgia Chancellor George L. Simpson, Jr., was the guest speaker for the dedication ceremonies. He was introduced by Lieutenant Governor George T. Smith (Class of '40). Gressette was the longtime basketball coach and math teacher at ABAC, and Evans was the college physician from 1934-55. Baldwin Alumni Association President George M. Sosebee from Ducktown, Tenn., opened the day with the annual meeting of the Association in the auditorium. Students ended the day with a pep rally, free movie, and a sock hop. Paul Bandy was selected as the recipient of the Master Farmer Award, and Joann Reeves Brittingham was named the Master Homemaker Award recipient at the Homecoming luncheon.

ABAC Opens Gressette Gymnasium on February 18

On February 18, Coach Benny Dees' Golden Stallions defeated the Oglethorpe University freshmen 73-72 in the first game ever in Gressette Gymnasium. The Stallions rolled up a season record of 29-5 record and a ranking of 13th in the nation in the 1966-67 campaign. The team set the record for most wins in a season. The losses included a 104-92 decision to the University of Georgia freshmen team and an 87-84 loss to the University of Florida freshmen team. ABAC

was undefeated in league play during the regular season. ABAC's Dave Westerfield was named the top player in the Southern Division, barely edging his teammate, Keith Lawson, for the honor. In the quarterfinal round of the state tournament on February 23 in Statesboro, ABAC defeated Southern Tech 66-58 behind 19 points by Westerfield. The Golden Stallions then lost a 79-78 heartbreaker to South Georgia in the semifinal game of the tournament, despite 20 points by Lawson, 13 by John Norman and 10 by Westerfield. Dees resigned from ABAC later in 1967 to become the first basketball coach in the history of Virginia Commonwealth University. He was replaced as the ABAC coach by his assistant, Vann Brackin.

Under the direction of new head coach Norman "Red" Hill, ABAC fielded its first tennis team in 1967. The Golden Stallions finished third in the state tournament. ABAC student Pat Dixon was crowned Miss Tifton 1967 on April 3 in ABAC's new gym. The Drama Club presented *Send Me No Flowers* on May 2-3. Kenneth Suggs from Moultrie had the lead role. Nada Fincher was elected president of the student body, and Jimmy Hill was elected as vice-president. Donald Hand won the election for sophomore class president. Under the direction of editor Faye Vickers and advisor George Scott, the campus newspaper, *The Stallion*, was published on a weekly basis during the 1966-67 year.

At Honors Day on May 9, the Top Ten Sophomores were Hilda J. Braswell from Alamo, Daniel W. Israel from Dawson, Jim N. Keith, Jr., from Greenville, Sharon N. Lasseter from Moultrie, Alan D. McAllister from Tifton, Jerry A. Nichols from Oxford, Fla., William F. Nutt, Jr., from Locust Grove, Diane K. Ruis from Doerun, William T. Sharp from Sylvania, and Ted W. Tyson from Enigma. The Top Ten Freshmen were Eddie E. Brantley from Warner Robins, James W. Cannon from Cairo, Kathryn A. Carpenter from Tifton, Edwin R. Drinkard from Lincolnton, Debbie R. Duke from Havana, Fla., Marvilyn Harden from Tifton, Walter I. Horne from Tifton, Cynthia R. Moore from Tifton, Dannie M. Sparks from Tifton, and Judith V. Thomas from Covington. Jake J. Whitehead received the 1967 Carlton Award for Faculty Excellence at Honors Day.

The first class of nursing students graduated from ABAC on June 3. Of the 36 graduates, five were transfers from Norman Bible College, and the rest were students who enrolled in the ABAC program in 1966. Judith Ann Norton received the Donaldson Award at graduation. The three departments of agriculture, home economics, and forestry merged into the Division of Agriculture, Home Economics, and Forestry on July 1, 1967. Dr. Frank McCain is the chair of the division. Worth Bridges joined the administration as Dean of Men, Director of Student Activities, and Assistant Professor of Social Science.

Tom Moody (Class of '58) returned to ABAC as the head baseball coach in the summer of 1967. He replaced David Patton as the ABAC baseball coach. Moody played for the Stallions from 1956-58. "We practiced on a field where the big parking lot is now," Moody said in a 2016

interview. "We played our games at Eve Park." ABAC recruited the National Guard to help build a baseball field and tennis courts during Moody's tenure.

Jim Hill served as editor of *The Stallion*, and Danny Carter was the sports editor during the fall quarter. New faculty member Lew Akin directed and performed in the Drama Club's production of *The Skin of our Teeth* during the fall quarter. Lillian Smith and Sara Jo Nelson were key performers. Jake Whitehead also directed the Drama Club in *Ten Little Indians*. The fall quarter dance and concert featured *The Tams* on November 7. Ben Williams of Martin and Nada Fincher from Conyers were named Mr. and Miss Baldwin at the fall formal dance on December 2. Fincher is serving as president of the student body, and Williams is president of the Baptist Student Union.

1968

Neal Ganzel took over as editor of *The Stallion* at the start of the winter quarter. At the Homecoming celebration on February 10, Robert D. Humphrey was selected as the recipient of the Master Farmer Award, and Nell Lee Hurst was named the winner of the Master Homemaker Award. Governor Lester Maddox was the guest speaker at the Homecoming high noon general assembly in Gressette Gymnasium. He also participated in the Homecoming Parade in downtown Tifton along with Lt. Governor George T. Smith (Class of '40), State Senator Ford T. Spinks (Class of '45), University System of Georgia Chancellor George Simpson, Jr., former ABAC President George King, who is now the executive secretary of the Georgia Cotton Commission, and former ABAC President George P. Donaldson, who is the executive secretary of the Georgia Peanut Commission. Odell Pack scored 29 points to lead the Golden Stallions to a 120-101 victory over North Florida Junior College in the Homecoming game. Harold Adkins scored 36 for the Stallions in a 126-122 loss to North Florida earlier in the year. He was named Georgia Junior College Player of the Week.

The ABAC stables opened in mid-February. Accommodations for 12 horses are available for a \$10 per month per horse rental fee. No stallions will be allowed. Physical Plant Director Nathan Dyer said he employs 34 men who work 42 hours a week to maintain the campus. His budget is \$130,000.

The basketball Stallions of Coach Vann Brackin wound up 12-14 overall after losing in the first round of the state tournament. Coach Tom Moody guided the ABAC baseball team to a 10-6 league record and 11-13 overall record in his first year as the head coach. Jerry Marshall from Dawson hit .312 to lead the way for ABAC. All games were played at Eve Park since ABAC did not have an on-campus field. The Golden Stallions' tennis team of Coach Norman "Red" Hill won the state championship in its second year of existence. ABAC was ranked 10th in the nation. In an editorial, Danny Carter, sports editor of *The Stallion*, called for the college to construct new

tennis courts since ABAC had a great program but played on the two concrete courts located west of Thrash Gymnasium. Tommy McDougal won 29 straight regular season tennis matches for the Stallions before losing on May 10 against Southern Tech. Coach Vann Brackin and the first organized ABAC golf team finished fourth in the state tournament.

Baldwin Davis received the 1968 Carlton Award for Faculty Excellence at Honors Day on May 15. Dr. Frank Rose, president of the University of Alabama, was the featured speaker. James W. Cannon from Cairo was named first honor graduate, and Virginia Thomas from Covington was named Second Honor Graduate. Thomas was selected for the Donaldson Award. Cannon said the most valuable thing he learned from attending ABAC was how to deal with people. "Anyone who has survived ABAC dorm life can live with anyone, anywhere," he said. The Top Ten Sophomores with the highest grade point averages were Eddie E. Brantley, James W. Cannon, Debby R. Duke, Walter I. Horne, Dannie M. Sparks, Judith V. Thomas, Donna G. Tyson, Larry W. Wheeler, Yvonne D. Wiggins, and Wanda K. Wright. The Top Ten Freshmen with the highest grade point averages were Ronald C. Campbell, John K. Carson, John W. Emberson, Lynn Forbes, Gail P. Guillebeau, Sarah B. Harris, Paul L. Page, Sara E. Parker, John T. Thornton, and June L. Timmons. Henry C. Stewart was elected as the president of the student body on May 16. Sandra Golden was elected as vice president.

Governor Lester Maddox proclaimed May 19 as Chapel of All Faiths Day statewide to give citizens of Georgia a chance to make contributions to the proposed Chapel on the ABAC campus. Former ABAC presidents J.G. Woodroof, George H. King, and George P. Donaldson have agreed to serve as co-chairs of the Baldwin Alumni Association fund drive to raise funds for the Chapel. ABAC Comptroller and Greater Baldwin Association Treasurer J. Talmadge Webb said a total of \$16,910.50 has been raised through April 30. The first gift of \$100 came from the Lebanon Baptist Church in Epworth, Georgia "in the interest of the spiritual life of the young people at ABAC." ABAC President J. Clyde Driggers has asked every ABAC student to contribute \$100 toward the Chapel.

Lew Akin directed the Baldwin Players in *Summer and Smoke* on May 21-22. Elaine Banks and David Dukes played the lead characters. Food Services Director Lennie Stansell said she is open to talking to students about improved meal service in the dining hall on the 40 cents per meal cost that students pay. Registrar Paul Gaines said 1,257 students enrolled for the spring semester. Male students outnumber females 888 to 369.

Members of the ABAC faculty met on May 30 in the Rural Life Building Auditorium to ratify the list of proposed graduates for the commencement ceremony on June 8. Dr. Felix C. Robb, director of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools is the guest speaker. Registrar Paul Gaines said 250 students are expected to participate in the ceremony. Brenda Sekul, Chair of the Department of Nursing, said 25 of the graduates will be nursing students.

Beginning August 1, Assistant Professor of Spanish John Dell Evans will spend the 1968-69 academic year on a Fulbright Scholarship at the University of San Marco in Lima, Peru studying Contemporary Peruvian Prose. Mary LeMar, chair of the business division, became the first female member of the ABAC faculty to achieve the doctorate degree when she received her Ed.D. from Colorado State College in Greeley, Colo., on August 16. LeMar joined the ABAC faculty in September 1962. Dr. Ralph Kickliter, chairman of the humanities division, was the first individual on the faculty to receive a doctorate degree. ABAC employed 212 faculty and staff members at the start of the 1968 fall quarter, which had an enrollment of 1,638 students.

Wasdon Graydon, Jr., from Tifton enrolled as a freshman at ABAC when classes began for 1968 fall quarter on September 27. He was one of the first African-American students at the college. He said ABAC didn't have any African-American instructors at that time. "I think there were eight of us," Graydon said in a 2015 interview. "We had good days and bad days. You have to consider the culture of ABAC at the time."

Helen Strickland joined the ABAC faculty in the fall of 1968 as an instructor in the Humanities Division and as the Director of Student Publications. During her 31-year career, the ABAC student newspaper, *The Stallion*, gained tremendous attention for the college. It was named the top junior college paper in the state by the Georgia College Press Association 26 times from 1968 to 1999. Strickland, wife of ABAC alumnus John Strickland, drove to the campus every day from her home in Lakeland, Ga. She was also the advisor to the quarterly magazine, *The Agriculturist*, and to the campus yearbook, *TABAC*, which continued publication through 1986. The college discontinued publication of the yearbook after 1986 because the students decided it was not a good use of the student activities funds. Strickland passed away on December 19, 2019.

In November, the Golden Stallions' basketball team defeated Jones College from Jacksonville, Fla., 140-64 to set the record for most points ever scored in one game by ABAC. The previous high was a 133-96 win over Georgia Southwestern in 1964. Albert "Mud" Lewis led the Stallions with 22 points followed by Jerry Johnston with 20, Buddy Whitley with 19, Mark Hall with 18, Harley Stewart with 16, and Ashley Deloach with 13. Lewis was one of the first African American players at ABAC.

The ABAC Women's Club held a Christmas Bazaar on November 23. Beginning December 2, ABAC personnel can take advantage of a new airline service from Tifton to Atlanta. Air South will use twin engine prop jet Beech 99s which can carry 15 passengers. Flight time is 70 minutes to Atlanta including a stop in Albany. The annual lighting of the campus Christmas tree was held on December 4 on the west side of the New Classroom Building.

1969

Tyron Spearman (Class of '65) joined the ABAC staff as the Director of Public Relations and Assistant Professor of Poultry Science on January 1. Spearman was a former ABAC student body president who was selected Mr. Baldwin 1965. He also taught Poultry Science classes in addition to his public relations duties.

President Clyde Driggers formed a Lake Utilization and Safety Committee which met for the first time on January 28. Dean Worth Bridges, Ellen Vickers, Harvey Johnson, and Raymond Busbee attended the meeting. Recommendations included no swimming, no water skiing, and no gas-powered motors in the lake. The committee said the fish population will not be in suitable condition for fishing for at least one year. Perhaps the most interesting recommendation came in the parking area.

“This committee feels that it would be appropriate to provide an after-dark parking facility near or in proximity to the south side of the lake. A minimum amount of lighting should be installed at this facility. It is quite obvious that our male and female students are going to seek out and find areas where they can park after dark. We constantly hear talk of this nature from our students. It appears the proper thing for us to do is to provide such a facility on our campus and to encourage our students to utilize it rather than forcing them to seek out desolate back-wood areas which are potentially dangerous for obvious reasons. Many cities and institutions of higher education are providing patrolled, after-dark parking facilities for young couples. For the most part, such facilities have been very beneficial from both parent and the young people’s point of view.”

The Drifters performed for a dance in Thrash Gym on February 6. The first TABAC Beauty Revue to select Miss Homecoming was held on February 11. Marolyn Goff from Tifton was selected as the 1969 Homecoming Queen. Helen Strickland coordinated the event. The 27 contestants dressed in a trailer which was pulled up behind Howard Auditorium. Strickland said that prior to 1969, Miss Homecoming was chosen by student balloting. TABAC sponsored the Beauty Revue for 18 years until the yearbook ceased to exist in 1986. The student newspaper then picked up the sponsorship.

At the 1969 Homecoming event on February 15, George T. Smith (Class of '40) was named the first recipient of the newly established Distinguished Alumnus Award by the Alumni Association. Paul F. English received the Master Farmer Award, and Ann Brown English received the Master Homemaker Award.

ABAC alumnus Jimmy Allen (Class of '63) opened a CPA firm on 4th Street in Tifton. Humanities Division Chair Ernest Edwards presented a recital on the Schantz pipe organ at the First Methodist Church on February 24. Congressman W.S. “Bill” Stuckey was the guest speaker at the student assembly program in the new gym on February 28.

Lewis and Adams Become First African-American Athletes at ABAC

Coach Vann Brackin's 1968-69 Golden Stallions rolled up a league record of 12-0 and an overall record of 25-5 on the basketball floor. Those numbers are impressive but perhaps the most significant achievement of the team was the fact that the Stallions were the first intercollegiate athletics team at ABAC with African-American players, Albert "Mud" Lewis and David Adams. Other team members included Leslie Moore, Ashley DeLoach, Harold Adkins, Julian Deaton, Mark Hall, Jerry Johnston, Odell Pack, Dennis McSwain, Carlos McSwain, Harley Stewart, and Buddy Whitley. The team was inducted into the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2019. "It was not an easy time in our country," Brackin said in 2019, referring to African-American athletes joining previously all-white college teams. "Every kid on that team handled it like a true champion. We never had a problem." The Golden Stallions averaged 93 points a game and scored over 100 points nine times. ABAC set a single game scoring record with a 140-64 win over Jones Junior College on Nov. 20, 1968. ABAC lost only one home game in Gressette Gym all year, a 93-77 decision to Gardner Webb, led by its 7-foot-2 center Artis Gilmore. Nine ABAC players signed with senior colleges. Young Harris ended the ABAC season with a 77-70 win over the Golden Stallions in the first round of the state tournament.

Pack led the team in scoring with 18.9 points a game and pulled down 11.3 rebounds a game. A two-time GJCAA Player of the Week, he was named to the All-GJCAA first team. He continued his career at Virginia Commonwealth University. Whitley averaged 13.1 points and 9.5 rebounds a game. He shot 80 percent from the free throw line. He was the Most Valuable Player for the ABAC baseball team and started every game for the Golden Stallions on the basketball floor and the baseball diamond in 1968-69. He signed a baseball contract with the Minnesota Twins and played four years in the Twins' system. Carlos McSwain led the team in rebounding with 13.9 rebounds a game. He also scored 11 points a game and later played for Valdosta State and Palm Beach Atlantic. Lewis averaged 11.7 points and 5.4 rebounds and earned a scholarship to Tennessee Tech where he was named All-Conference in 1972 and 1973. Stewart, named to the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2011, was the Most Valuable Player at ABAC during the 1969-70 campaign when he was named to the All-State team, the All-Tournament team, and the District All-Tournament team. Stewart had a standout basketball career at West Georgia after completing his ABAC eligibility. Hall set an ABAC single game scoring record during the 1969-70 season with 64 points and later played for Columbus College. Adkins was a GJCAA Player of the Week during the season. One of the toughest defenders on the team and called a "true team leader" by Brackin, DeLoach played for Valdosta State after his ABAC career and then had a successful high school coaching career. Deaton later played baseball for Morehead State, and Dennis McSwain helped to lead the 1969-70 Stallions to a second-place finish in the state tournament. Moore later played for Virginia Commonwealth, and Johnston was a team captain on the 1969-70 ABAC team. Adams later played for Albany State. Brackin, a Donalsonville native who earned 10 varsity athletics' letters at Seminole County High School, later served as an assistant coach at Virginia Commonwealth under former ABAC Coach Benny

Dees. He was also the head coach at McDowell High School in Marion, N.C., where he was named Western North Carolina Coach of the Year when the team finished second in the state with a 24-6 record. Brackin also coached at Dekalb South where his team won the GJCAA state title, and he was named Junior College Coach of the Year. He was also the Eustis (Fla.) High School coach where he was named the Florida 3-A Coach of the Year and his team won two district championships.

Dr. Raymond Busbee took over as coach in the ABAC golf team in 1969 and guided the Stallions to a state title and a finish of seventh in the nation. The ABAC tennis team of Coach Norman "Red" Hill won the 1969 state title and ranked sixth nationally. Coach Tom Moody's 1969 baseball team won the southern division of the Georgia Junior College Conference with a 13-3 record. In the state tournament, ABAC lost a 20-inning game to the South Georgia Tigers, who finished third in the nation. The two best hitters on the ABAC team, Jerry Marshall and Buddy Whitley, both signed professional contracts with the Minnesota Twins organization.

The public relations office took over the publication of the weekly administrative bulletin for faculty and staff on March 24 from the academic dean's office. A convocation program was held in the main auditorium on March 26 featuring eight lively Frenchmen known as the "Chanteurs De Paris." The weekly administrative bulletin took a new title as *FOCUS* with the edition on April 11.

The Agriculturist published its first issue in 1969 under the leadership of Tyron Spearman and student editor James L. Bramblett. The magazine focused on achievements in agriculture nationwide, but particularly at ABAC. It ceased publication in the early 1980s but resumed publication in 2013.

First Rodeo at ABAC on May 24, 1969

According to the student newspaper, *The Stallion*, the first rodeo in the history of ABAC was held on May 24, 1969. It was sponsored by the Baldwin Rodeo Club, the Student Cabinet, and several ABAC alumni. Events included bronco busting, bull riding, bulldogging, and roping. Gerald Floyd was president of the Rodeo Club. Dr. George Conger provided \$5,000 toward the construction of the rodeo arena. The cost was \$1.75 for adults and \$1 for children. Brantley Harrell and Kathy Wyatt were voted Mr. and Miss Baldwin by the student body. The student body approved the first Student Government Association constitution in the spring quarter. Rosalyn Ray received the Carlton Award for Faculty Excellence at Honors Day.

After the resignation of Vann Brackin, who left to work on his doctorate degree at the University of Mississippi, Lowell Mulkey was hired as the new ABAC basketball coach for the 1969-70 season. Health and Education Division Chair Raymond Busbee made the announcement.

Mulkey was the athletics director, baseball coach, and basketball coach at Norman College, ABAC's archrival, for eight years prior to coming to ABAC. "Winning is certainly important," Mulkey said. "But the place of athletics is to mold men and women into our society."

The fall quarter enrollment was 1,648, 10 more students than in the fall term of 1968. Charles Hall was selected as the Student Government Association president, and Emory Johnson was selected as vice-president during the fall quarter. Percy Sledge was the guest performer in a student concert in Thrash Gym in October. The Baldwin Players presented *Arsenic and Old Lace* for their fall production.

One of the highlights of the fall quarter was Dr. George Conger Day in Tifton. A native of Tifton and a 1911 graduate of the Second District A&M School, Conger became a highly successful physician and founded the Conger Life Insurance Company. He was feted with a parade in downtown Tifton and was the guest of honor at a banquet in the dining hall. Georgia Governor Lester Maddox was the guest speaker at the banquet. At the end of the banquet, Conger presented 166,666 shares of stock in the Conger Life Insurance Company to ABAC.

1970

For the second consecutive year, *The Stallion* received top honors from the Georgia College Press Association for Best Campus News Coverage. Mittie Vaughan is the editor, and Helen Strickland is the advisor. Susan Radford is the editor for the 1970 TABAC. The Baldwin Players performed *Waiting for Godot* in February.

At Homecoming on February 14, the Baldwin Alumni Association named Dr. George Conger as the recipient of the Distinguished Alumnus Award. Conger attended ABAC when it was the Second District A&M School. Other Homecoming award winners were A. Walstein James, Master Farmer; and Frances Ridgeway Smith, Master Homemaker. Activities during the day included the dedication of dormitories in honor of Frank G. Branch and Coach Orion Mitchell. Branch was the president of the Georgia State College for Men from 1929-33, and Mitchell coached football, basketball, and baseball from 1931-45. Hilda Haskins from Willacoochee was selected as Miss Homecoming at the second annual TABAC Beauty Revue. The Golden Stallions nipped South Georgia 87-84 in the Homecoming game.

Coach Lowell Mulkey led the 1969-70 ABAC basketball team to a record of 19-11 and the Southern Division Championship. In the state tournament at Statesboro, the Stallions beat Southern Tech 78-73 in the quarterfinals. In the semifinal game, Mark Hall scored in the final second of overtime for a 77-75 ABAC win. The Stallions lost to Dalton in the championship game, 85-78. Tim Dominey from ABAC was named the Most Valuable Player of the state tournament, and Harley Stewart was named to the All-Tournament Team. Mark Hall set a

record during the regular season when he scored 64 points for ABAC in a 129-119 overtime victory for the Stallions over DeKalb Junior College.

In an 84-80 win over Brunswick in the regular season, Harley Stewart had 20 points and 27 rebounds for the Stallions. Stewart received the ABAC Athlete of the Year award and was named as Most Valuable Player for ABAC basketball. He was selected as part of the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) Region 17 All-Tournament First Team, the Georgia Junior College Athletic Association (GJCAA) First Team All-Tournament, and the GJCAA All-State Team. "On game nights, the local people would pack the gym," Stewart said in a 2011 interview. "It was such a good atmosphere to play in. ABAC really embraced me and made me feel at home." After completing his ABAC career, Stewart was recruited to West Georgia College, where he played in two national tournament games and averaged 24 points and 15 rebounds per game. During his time at West Georgia, the Braves won the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) District 25 Tournament and earned the college's first trip to the NAIA national tournament. Stewart was inducted into the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2011.

The Rodeo Club sponsored the second annual ABAC Rodeo in April. Danny McClellan is president of the club. Dr. George Powell received the Carlton Award for Faculty Excellence at Honors Day. Performers at student concerts during the winter and spring quarters included The Tams, Big Brother and the Holding Company, The Strawberry Alarm Clock, Strange Bedfellows, Noah's Ark, Leaves of Grass, The Classics Four, and the Swinging Medallions.

Sandy Morris, captain of the Baldwin cheerleaders, and Emory Johnson, vice-president of the SGA, were voted Miss Baldwin and Mr. Baldwin. *TABAC* instituted awards called Pacesetters, designed for those who make exceptional contributions to life at ABAC. Pacesetter recipients were Dean Gary Branch, Maida Ragan, Jerry Johnston, Rosalyn Ray, Mittie Vaughan, Carson Salyer, Arlene Miller, Sandra Pate, Jim Lever, and Helen Strickland. Charles T. Hall, Jr., received the Donaldson Award at graduation.

Dr. Mary LeMar, chair of the business division, said the highlight of the year was the procurement of the new Univac computer. The Department of Nursing Education moved to remodeled Home Economics building, according to Brenda Sekul, head of the department. Dr. Thomas Milam, chair of the division of social science, said law enforcement and social work have been added to the curriculum. Dr. Loyal Norman, academic dean, said the college now has 24 different programs of study.

Enrollment increased to 1,776 during the fall quarter, up from 1,648 in the 1969 fall term. The Baldwin Players had a four-night run of *Harvey* during the fall quarter. Coach R.F. Littrell led the Baldwin College Soccer Club in its inaugural season this fall. Glee Club Director Ernest Edwards and his students performed at the Sweet Potato Festival in Ocilla and at the annual

ABAC Christmas Concert this fall. Editor Chuck Anderson and his staff published four editions of *The ABAC Agriculturist* during the year.

1971

The campus newspaper, *The Stallion*, brought home five of the seven top awards at the annual Georgia College Press Association gathering. David Wansley is the editor, and Helen Strickland is the advisor.

ABAC sent a busload of students to Macon in 1971 to the Georgia Implement Dealers Association Tractor Pull. Virgil Barrett, a representative for the Allis Chalmers Harvester Company, was there and needed someone to drive the Allis Chalmers pulling tractor. One of the ABAC students volunteered. The tractor placed in the event and won a trophy. Because of this relationship, Barrett and Allis Chalmers later donated a tractor to the club. The tractor, named *Cracker Jack*, got its name from the fact that Barrett would always go to the tractor pulls eating the caramel popcorn and peanuts snack food. ABAC began hosting its own tractor pull in 1974. *Cracker Jack* won the title at the ABAC Nationals in 1976. In fact, ABAC staff member Jimmy Grubbs (Class of '66) drove *Cracker Jack* to two national championships.

At the 1971 Homecoming celebration, the Baldwin Alumni Association selected Murl Rountree for the Distinguished Alumnus award. S. Charles Lanier, Sr., won the Master Farmer Award, and Gail McCormick Paulk won the Master Homemaker Award. Prior to Homecoming, ABAC students worked night and day to renovate a former farmhouse on the campus into a coffeehouse they called "The Croker Sack," because of the burlap wall covering the interior of the building. Ellen Bowen from Blackshear won the third annual TABAC Revue before an overflow crowd in the auditorium. Home Economics Club President Norma Green accepted the Homecoming participation trophy from former Lieutenant Governor George T. Smith (Class of '40). Phi Sigma Delta, a service group on campus, purchased a new brick campus entrance sign for the event. Coach Lowell Mulkey's basketball team, dubbed Mulkey's Magicians by *Tifton Gazette* Sports Editor John Bowman for their come-from-behind style, defeated defending state champion Dalton 97-94 in the Homecoming basketball game.

The Baldwin Players staged *The Odd Couple* during the winter quarter. Student Government Association concerts during the year included Archie Bell and the Drells, Leaves of Grass, Jerry "The Iceman" Butler, Dennis Yost and the Classics IV, Chairman of the Board, and Peace Corps. Dr. Gaye Elder received the Carlton Award for Faculty Excellence at Honors Day. Motivation expert David J. Schwartz was the guest speaker at the ceremony. The Baldwin Players staged *Antigone*, *Animal Farm*, and *Spring for Sure* in the spring quarter. ABAC student Ray Turner was named state president of the Distributive Education Clubs of America.

The Rural Development Center opened across the railroad tracks from ABAC on April 22. Governor Jimmy Carter was the featured speaker. Comer Hall captured the participation prize at Student Activities Day on May 11. A *TABAC* story said the events of the day included tennis, volleyball, horseshoes, broad jump, 100-yard dash, cross country race, tug-of-war, high jump, and croquet. Dennis Yost and the Classics IV and Chairman of the Board performed at the end of the day followed by a dance to the music of Peace Corps. Eddie Dalton was named Mr. Baldwin, and Janice Brown was named Miss Baldwin at the intermission of the concert. Dr. Worth Bridges has been named Dean and Coordinator of Student Personnel Services. He joined the ABAC administration in 1967 as Dean of Men, Director of Student Activities, and Assistant Professor of Social Science.

The ABAC golf team finished in eighth place in 1971 state tournament. The tennis team finished second in the state and second in the Alabama-Georgia regionals. The Stallions wound up 7-9 in conference play on the baseball field.

Dr. Herbert Phillips, president of Lake City (Fla.) Community College, was the commencement speaker on June 5 when over 200 students received diplomas. Student Government Association President Eddie Knowlton gave the benediction. *TABAC* came out in late summer instead of the spring because of a fire at the Atlanta photo lab where all the pictures were developed. Janice Brown is the editor.

Dr. Harold Loyd joined the faculty of the business division on September 1. He rose through the administrative ranks to become chair of the business division and evening and off-campus programs coordinator before being appointed as the ABAC president on October 1, 1989. Enrollment took a leap in the fall quarter with 2,153 students, up from 1,776 in the fall of 1970.

1972

Governor Jimmy Carter was the guest speaker at the Georgia Young Farmers Convention on the ABAC campus. Lamar Branch received the Distinguished Alumnus Award from the ABAC Alumni Association at the Homecoming awards ceremony. Stewart I. Bloodworth was named the Master Farmer Award recipient, and Dianne Hartley English received the Master Homemaker Award. Betty Claxton received the Carlton Award for Faculty Excellence at Honors Day. ABAC staff member Donna Dickson founded the Golddusters as a drill team designed to mainly perform at ABAC basketball games.

ABAC Foundation Begins Annual Fundraising Event on June 2

Under President Clyde Driggers' direction, the ABAC Foundation began an annual fundraising event with Anita Bryant as the first performer on June 2. "At that time, we were trying to find a

way to pay for the Chapel of All Faiths,” former Director of Public Relations Tyron Spearman said in a 2015 interview. “Dr. Driggers had a contact through Dr. George Conger down in Miami with Anita Bryant, and we hired her to come to Tifton.” Spearman said that Bryant was best known as the spokesperson for the Florida Citrus Commission. The talented singer was a former Miss Oklahoma and second runner-up in the 1958 Miss America contest. “She was a fun person to be around,” Spearman said. “We filled up the dining hall at \$50 a plate. We brought her back in 1975 because everybody loved her so much.” The event became known as Dollars for Scholars in 1973. Profits from the first few years of the Dollars for Scholars events were used to pay off the debt on the Chapel.

During his tenure, Driggers helped to secure private funding for the Chapel of All Faiths and chronicled the tremendous effort in his 1974 book, *It Took a Miracle*. The Chapel is named the Driggers Lecture Hall in his honor. A dynamic leader, Driggers focused on enrollment growth during his presidency, which led to a record enrollment of 2,191 students for the 1972 fall quarter. ABAC became Georgia’s largest residential two-year college.

1973

Esteen Castagna, former director of the Tifton Nursing Home, has been named Director of Health Services at ABAC. Buses from Tifton churches pick up ABAC students at 9:45 a.m. every Sunday morning at the Business-Humanities building. Author David Wilkerson and folk singer Dallas Holm were featured at a Tifton Ministerial Association Rally in Gressette Gym on January 16 which attracted 3,000 persons, the largest crowd in the history of the facility.

Jesse Chambliss, Wright Crosby, and Marshall Guill appeared on Channel 5 and Channel 11 in Atlanta on January 20 in a special program on their new “Powder Puff Mechanics Program” and the “Fix-It” program offered by Continuing Education. Chambliss and the Ag Engineering staff plan to visit 22 high schools this year to recruit students to their program. Construction is now complete on the Business-Humanities building (later Conger Hall) and the new men’s dormitory (later Fulwood Hall).

Adabeth Pirkle and Luther Green edited the 1973 *Agriculturist*. Lieutenant Governor Lester Maddox gave the keynote address at the Georgia Young Farmers Convention at ABAC on January 26-27. The Cornelius Brothers and Sister Rose appeared in Gressette Gym on January 31 for the winter concert. Glenn Parkman was student chairman for the event.

State representative Chappelle Matthews from Athens said “Georgia has the finest agricultural junior college in America” during his recent visit to the campus. Self-Study Director William Wheeler met with the Self-Study Steering Committee composed of Gerald Fletcher, Vernon Yow, Mary Emma Henderson, and Dr. Loyal Norman. The nation’s only collegiate tractor pull

team exists at ABAC. Nolan Gibbons is the coach. ABAC finished second in the Georgia Championship and 12th in the National Tractor Pull in Macon on February 17. At the February meeting of the Greater Baldwin Association, the board of directors agreed to change the name to the Greater Baldwin Foundation.

The Army Reserve and the Georgia National Guard are using the ABAC campus as a teaching station on large earth-moving equipment while saving ABAC over \$100,000 in the development of the new athletic fields. Bids are now being accepted on the construction of the new ABAC tennis courts. The Baldwin Players will present *J.B.* on February 20-24, a modern re-telling of the Book of Job. Seven hundred high school students will be on campus on February 28 for Country and Western Day sponsored by the Division of Agriculture, Forestry, and Home Economics. Ron Jones is the chair of the committee.

Freshman Worth Hartry wound up the 1972-73 basketball season with an average of 23.1 points per game to go along with an average of 18.6 rebounds per contest. The 6-foot-5 player from Milledgeville was named All-State and All-Region for Coach Lowell Mulkey's Stallions. Hartry was named to the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2017. ABAC wound up 18-14 on the year and lost to Alexander City 78-74 in the first round of the NJCAA Region 17 tournament in Birmingham, Ala., on March 1.

The Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society was chartered at ABAC on March 2. David Kelley was the first president. Frank Kelley is the faculty advisor. *The Stallion* won the Georgia College Press Association General Excellence award for the third year in a row as the best two-year college paper in the state on March 3. Adabeth Pirkle is the editor, and Helen Strickland is the advisor.

At its March meeting, the Greater Baldwin Foundation adopted Dollars for Scholars as the theme for its \$50 a plate fundraising dinner on May 18 featuring Eddie Arnold. He will be accompanied by the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra.

Denise Eldridge from Ocilla was crowned Miss Homecoming 1973 at the TABAC Beauty Revue on April 12. A new campus literary magazine titled *Pegasus* arrived on campus April 13. United States Senator Herman Talmadge was the featured speaker at the Homecoming Awards Luncheon on April 14.

ABAC Breaks Ground on Chapel of All Faiths on April 14

Talmadge was also present for the groundbreaking for the Chapel of All Faiths at 1:30 p.m. on April 14 on the proposed site of the Chapel where the former President's Home was standing. President Driggers described the groundbreaking in his book about the Chapel, *It Took a Miracle*. "Tyron Spearman came out with a one-horse turning plow with enough plow lines so that everybody could have a hand. George Sosebee held the plow, and since he was an old

plowboy from way back, he knew he could keep everybody slowed down to his pace by sinking the plow deeper and deeper! He did not have to sink it too deep because the front lawn of the President's old home was mighty well packed from thousands of feet trampling over it through the years. This was a joyful day indeed for all who had a part in helping the Chapel become a reality."

In his book, Driggers said Hilda Goodman, an ABAC house director, received the bid to move the President's Home from its site so the Chapel could be constructed. "She had the house removed to her farm near Brookfield and brick veneered so that now it has the appearance of a new structure. Surely, it was appropriate that it stay in the ABAC Family."

Bobby Rowan was selected as the Distinguished Alumnus award winner at Homecoming. Other award recipients were Sandra Matthews, Master Homemaker; J.R. Rigsby, Master Farmer, and Armond Morris, Master Young Farmer. This is the first year of the Master Young Farmer Award presented by the alumni. The Lettermen sang at the Homecoming Concert in Gressette Gym on April 14. The Fifth Annual World Championship Rodeo during Homecoming was also a great success.

ABAC Distinguished Professor of Humanities Stellanova Osborn was honored April 21 during the annual Boy Scouts of America meeting at Camp Osborn. She is the widow of former Michigan Governor Chase Osborn. Governor Osborn hired Stellanova Brunt as his researcher and secretary in 1924. In 1931, Osborn and his wife, Lillian, legally adopted Stellanova. After Lillian died, the adoption of Stellanova was annulled. At the age of 89, Governor Osborn married Stellanova, 54, on April 9, 1949, at his residence at Possum Poke in nearby Poulan in Worth County. Governor Osborn died two days later. The ABAC Foundation later received the Possum Poke property from Stellanova Osborn.

ABAC began its presentation of the Carlton Award for Staff Excellence and the Carlton Award for Administrative Excellence at Honors Day on May 9. Cecile K. Bailey was the first recipient of the staff award, and J. Dale Sherman was the first recipient of the administrative award. Vernon Yow won the Carlton Award for Faculty Excellence, an award which began in 1965. The awards were funded by ABAC benefactor O.D. Carlton, II, who runs the Caterpillar dealership in Albany. Each recipient received a plaque and a check for \$1,000.

Tommy Rhodes from Leesburg has been elected president of the student body. Baldwin Players' Director Sonny Burt said *Carousel* will be produced in the main auditorium on May 9-12 with help from the ABAC Chorus and the ABAC Band. Holly Donaldson, wife of president emeritus George P. Donaldson, passed away on May 10. The flag at ABAC will be lowered to half-staff in her memory.

Vince Vance and The Valiants performed for the Student Activities Day Concert at the new gym on May 15. Mark Newman and Martha Sue Spence won the Kissing Contest at Student Activities Day with a time of 86 minutes. New Men's Dorm stuffed 28 boys in one Volkswagen for first place in that event. Paul Baldwin from Ashburn and Diane Bass from Cochran were named Mr. and Miss Baldwin. Henry "Bo" Miller won the SGA Impact Award. Pacesetter awards were presented to Beth McDuffie, Luther Green, Dick Byne, Bonne Davis, Richard Bass, Merle Baker, Wayne Cooper, Bob Ragsdale, Talmadge Webb, and Mrs. J. Clyde Driggers.

Coach Wayne Cooper's golf team won the 1973 state title, finished second in the southeastern region, and wound up 11th in the nation. Cooper was named Coach of the Year in the state after his team compiled a 13-0 conference record. ABAC golfer Paul Staples was named to the All-America team, and Joe Corry was named to the All-State team. Coach Norman "Red" Hill's men's tennis team won the state title and finished fifth in the nation. Steve Pierre from Panama was named the top player in Georgia for the second straight year after compiling a record of 34-0. Edwardo Marulanda was an All-America selection for the Stallions at the national tennis tournament.

The Greater Baldwin Foundation reports that 486 tickets were sold for the Eddy Arnold performance at Dollars for Scholars on May 25. "Eddy was a people person who visited back in the kitchen with all the dining hall staff," former Director of Public Relations Tyron Spearman said in a 2015 interview. "He loved George and Aliene Graul's cooking. He said it was the best meal he ever had." Friends and alumni presented Tillie Howard with the keys to a new car during the show in honor of her retirement. T.W. Tift was inducted into the President's Club after contributing over \$20,000 to the Chapel of All Faiths project.

President Emeritus George P. Donaldson was the guest speaker at the commencement ceremony on June 9. He spoke on *Challenge of Change*. Adabeth Pirkle from Hoschton won the Donaldson Award. She was the editor of *The Stallion* and *The Abraham Baldwin Agriculturist*. ABAC hosted the 12th annual Natural Resources Conservation Workshop on June 10-15. In its June meeting, the Greater Baldwin Foundation changed its name to the Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College Foundation.

Retirees honored at the end of the spring quarter were Virginia Lindskog, Rebecca Miller, and Assistant Registrar Tillie Howard. Dr. Worth Bridges, Dean of Student Personnel Services, has announced that Dianne Cowart has been hired as Dean of Women and Emory Johnson (Class of '70) has been hired as the Director of the ABAC Student Center. Johnson is a former Mr. Baldwin and vice president of the ABAC student body. Dr. William Wheeler has been appointed as the Director of the Center of Developmental Studies, and Ray Walker has been named Procurement Officer, effective July 1.

Sonny Burt was the guest conductor for the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra when it performed at an Independence Day Rally in front of Tift Hall on July 7. “My knees were literally shaking when I stepped up on that little box to direct the national anthem,” Burt said in a 2016 interview. “It wasn’t like I really had to direct anything. They knew what they were doing.”

America’s only two-year college agricultural magazine, *The Abraham Baldwin Agriculturist*, received second place in the nation for the second consecutive year. Ohio State University won the competition. The University of Georgia and Iowa State tied for third. Advisor Helen Strickland, Editor Adabeth Pirkle, and Editor-Elect Roger Byrd accepted the award in Guelph, Canada. Pirkle was elected the national president of the Agricultural College Editors at the meeting.

At the July meeting of the Baldwin Alumni Association Board of Directors, President Jimmy Hodge Timmons said the board endorses the resolution to support an agricultural museum in Tifton. Director of Development Bob Ragsdale said the ABAC Foundation will be named the trustee of a \$22,000 gift from the Cloudman Educational Fund. A new WATTS phone line has been installed in Tift Hall, primarily for recruitment. Lavon Donaldson and Ed Byers will begin a three-week Police Academy for area law enforcement officers on August 6.

Comptroller J. Talmadge Webb said student meal tickets will increase in price for the fall quarter. Individual meals will increase from \$1.25 to \$1.50. Five-day and seven-day plans will remain the same at a cost of 70 cents per meal.

Wasdon Graydon, Jr., (Class of ’70) was hired as the director of student support services on September 1. He went on to have a 37-year career at the institution and served as the commencement speaker in the final event of ABAC’s 100th birthday celebration in 2008.

The fall quarter enrollment was 2,074 students. A total of 56 percent of the students enrolled in college transfer programs, and 44 percent enrolled in career programs. One of those students is Cynthia Morris from Lake Placid, Fla., who was named Grandbaby of the Year at the 1957 ABAC Homecoming. ABAC employs 116 full and part-time faculty members and 92 staff members.

Two former students of ABAC, Mary Jane Bassett and Ronnie Wheeler, got married on the proposed site of the Chapel of All Faiths on September 1. A reception was held in the Home Economics Department. On September 6, the Chapel of All Faiths committee of the Baldwin Alumni Association rejected all bids on the Chapel of All Faiths project. The projected cost of the project was \$190,000. The low bid was from Decker Construction of Tifton for \$298,543. Over \$165,000 plus some materials has been donated for the project. Baldwin Alumni Association Executive Secretary and ABAC Director of Public Relations Tyron Spearman said the project will be delayed until a time when the additional funds can be secured.

“We all cried about it for a while,” Spearman said in a 2016 interview. “The students, the faculty, the staff, and everyone else had worked so hard to raise the money.” In *It Took a Miracle*, President Clyde Driggers wrote “In our many contacts and acquaintances, I did not know anyone who would be willing or able to give that much money in such a short time. I did not know which way to turn. All I could do was pray.”

“Channel 10 (WALB-TV) carried a story where they interviewed me and Dr. Driggers about us coming up short,” Spearman said. “Then an anonymous donor called the public relations office, and said, ‘I understand you don’t have the money to finish your Chapel.’ We explained the situation, and then he said, ‘can one of you be here on Monday?’ I told him Dr. Driggers and I would be there. When we got there, he wrote us a check for \$150,000. His only requirement was that it be anonymous.” In his book, Driggers wrote, “Surely a miracle had happened—a marvelous and wonderful example—an anonymous donor had made it possible to complete a Temple of God on the ABAC campus. Praise God!” Construction should begin in October.

With a low bid of \$1,217,700, Alcon Associates of Albany will build the new Student Center beginning in October. ABAC hosted the annual meeting of the Georgia Association of Junior Colleges on October 18-19. The Golddusters performed at the national peanut festival in Dothan, Ala., on October 20. Described as the “best group yet” by advisor Donna Cannington, the Golddusters are scheduled to perform at the Sweet Potato Festival in Ocilla, the Christmas parade in Griffin, the Christmas parade in Dublin, the Peach Bowl parade in Atlanta, and the Rose Festival in Thomasville. In existence for almost four years, the Golddusters are a drill team that practices on Tuesday and Thursday each week.

Student publications director Helen Strickland received the Distinguished Advisors Award for two-year college yearbooks from the National Council of College Publications at its annual meeting in Chicago. She is the first Georgian to win the award. The award honored her for “outstanding service to student publications at ABAC and the nation’s student press.” Strickland has been the advisor for *The Stallion* and *TABAC* for six years. She has been the advisor for *The Agriculturist* for three years and was a founding advisor for *Pegasus*.

Coach Ron Evans’ ABAC men’s soccer team ended its season with 2-5-1 record after a 4-0 loss to Dekalb in the first round of the state tournament. Baseball Coach Tom Moody said the Stallions have been hampered in preseason practice in 1973 because the baseball field has yet to be completed. Foundation Board member Jordan Short donated \$10,000 worth of sporting goods and camping and wildlife equipment to the ABAC Foundation after Short and Paulk closed its sporting goods department. George T. Smith (Class of ’40) has donated a 24-foot Champion Mobile Recruiting Van to ABAC through the ABAC Alumni Association to help admissions director Bill Massengale with the recruitment of students.

President Clyde Driggers called on students, faculty and staff to make use of energy conservation measures including lowering thermostats to 65 to 68 degrees, turning off all heat in buildings not used on weekends, and hosting all night classes on the campus in one building. Employees traveling in ABAC vehicles are not to exceed 50 miles an hour. Melita Easters, editor of *The Stallion*, echoed Driggers' comments by urging the campus community to institute a program of paper recycling in an editorial.

The Grass Roots appeared in a concert on November 8. The Stallions opened their basketball season on November 8 in Milledgeville with a 92-54 victory over Georgia Military. Sophomore Worth Hartry returned to his hometown to score 36 points and pull down 20 rebounds for Coach Lowell Mulkey's team. Freshman Joseph "Pogo" Burns from Tifton had 13 points. Hartry was selected for the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2017.

The Baldwin Players presented *No Time for Sergeants* on November 14-17. The best-selling novel was written by Cordele native Mac Hyman. Directing the production was Mitzi Hyman, the late novelist's sister who is an assistant professor of speech and drama at ABAC. Brad Howell and Bill Andrews headed the play's very large cast.

Athletics Director Norman "Red" Hill said the new 12-court tennis complex at ABAC will open sometime in November as soon as the Board of Regents approve the finished product. Eva Mae "Tillie" Howard passed away on November 27. She contributed 37 of her 67 years to ABAC as a housemother, secretary, registrar, and assistant to alumni affairs.

ABAC Radio Station Goes on the Air on December 1

WABR-FM went on the air on December 1 as the first radio station on the campus of a two-year college in the state of Georgia. Station Manager Bowie "Doc" Blackburn said the station will be on the air from 6 p.m. until midnight during the week. The station will be at 90.5 on your FM radio dial. The station's studio is now located at the Rural Development Center. It will move to the campus when the new student center is completed. Dr. Lew Akin is the advisor.

Ted Williams directed the ABAC Band and ABAC Chorus in its annual Christmas program at the Rural Development Center on December 4. Emory Giles was a soloist, and Andrea Savage was the accompanist. The ABAC Foundation launched a \$25,000 fund drive on December 5 with all Tifton businesses as the target. John Hunt of Hunt Chrysler-Plymouth will lead the effort and will be supported by George P. Donaldson, president of the ABAC Foundation. Tyron Spearman and Bob Ragsdale will assist from the public relations office.

Terri Jo Langford from Oxford, Fla., has been selected as Miss Rodeo USA. She will spend the next year traveling to rodeos around the country. She was sponsored by the ABAC Rodeo Club and the ABAC Foundation. Her coaches for the event were Tyron Spearman and Mary Owens.

1974

The ABAC Foundation Fund Drive has ended with a grand total of \$28,500, well ahead of the \$25,000 goal. New President's Club members include Paul Fulwood, Jr., Neil Christman, E.G. Thornhill, Jr., Mrs. George A. Wright, and T. Christman. Dr. Tom Milam, Brenda Sellers, Dr. Homer Day, and Wasdon Graydon will teach an Afro-American Culture class this winter quarter. A total of 124 African-American students were enrolled at ABAC in the 1973 fall quarter.

The Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia has approved an associate degree in animal health for ABAC. Jobs will be available to graduates as animal technicians. ABAC Basketball Coach Lowell Mulkey was named headmaster at Tiftarea Academy on January 23. He will continue to work for ABAC part-time until May 15. Athletics Director Norman Hill has announced that all intercollegiate sporting events between ABAC and Middle Georgia are suspended because of the actions of students from both colleges at the ABAC-Middle Georgia basketball game on the ABAC campus on January 23. Middle Georgia won the game 93-85 to leave the two teams in a tie for first place in the Southern Division of the Georgia Association of Junior Colleges.

Georgia Senator Sam Nunn and comedian Jerry Clower highlighted the fourth annual Georgia Young Farmers Convention at ABAC on January 25-26. A record crowd of 2,736 attended the Winter Quarter Concert to see The Raspberries and Jim Stafford on January 30.

ABAC President Clyde Driggers and Middle Georgia President Louis Alderman signed an agreement on February 7 to continue the athletic tradition between the two colleges, urging true sportsmanship on both sides for the game on February 14 in Cochran. Middle Georgia won the game 74-72. The Stallions ended their season in the first round of the state tournament in a 79-61 loss to Truett McConnell. Worth Hartry had 10 points for the Stallions in the final game of Coach Lowell Mulkey's coaching career at ABAC.

The Baldwin Players presented *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* on February 20-24. Jeannie C. Riley, known for her song, *Harper Valley PTA*, performed in a Gressette Gym concert on February 25 sponsored by Tiftarea Academy and ABAC athletics. A fire in Mitchell Hall on February 28 resulted in \$7,000 worth of damages. *The Stallion* received the General Excellence Award at the Georgia Press Institute on March 1. Melita Easters was elected president of the Georgia College Press Association, and Kathy Gill was elected to the GCPA Executive Board.

First ABAC Nationals Tractor Pull on March 1-3

The Ag Engineering Technology (AET) Club hosted the first annual ABAC Nationals Tractor Pull on March 1-3 with staff member Jimmy Grubbs driving the ABAC pulling tractor, *Cracker*

Jack. The ABAC tractor won the 7,000 and 9,000-pound classes. Over 10,000 people attended the three sessions of the event, coordinated by Nolan Gibbons.

Hundreds of students gathered in front of the New Women's Dorm to watch or participate as the nationwide fad of streaking settled on the campus for a brief stay on March 7. According to *TABAC*, the crowd moved over to Creswell Hall where a panty raid was dispersed when a can of Mace was released in the dorm. The students then moved to Bowen Hall where streaking took place along the construction fence surrounding the site of the new student center. "We cannot, must not, and will not condone streaking," ABAC President Clyde Driggers said after four arrests were made. "When I accepted the job as president, I made an oath to uphold all Georgia laws, and indecent exposure is punishable by law."

Peter Dees (Class of '65) took over as head coach of the Stallions basketball team on March 25 upon the resignation of Lowell Mulkey. Dees played for his brother, Coach Benny Dees, on the 1964 ABAC state championship team. Pearl Dees, the mother of Benny and Peter, is the house director in the new men's dormitory. Dr. Paul May will head up the new Animal Technology program.

Toni Robinson from Pavo was crowned Miss Homecoming 1974 at the *TABAC* Beauty Revue on April 4. J. Frank McGill was named the Distinguished Alumnus Award winner at Homecoming on April 6. Other award winners were Wilbur T. Gamble, Jr., Master Farmer; Patricia Timmerman Womack, Master Homemaker; and Dobson M. Gay, Jr., Master Young Farmer. Cecile Bailey, secretary for continuing education, and George K. Dillard, professor of animal science, received Distinguished Service Awards. Both are retiring this year, Bailey with 25 years of service, and Dillard with 27 years at ABAC. Bill Skinner from Macon assumed the reins of Alumni Association President. During the day, three building dedications were held. Howard Auditorium was named for Registrar Emeritus Eva Mae "Tillie" Howard, Thrash Gymnasium was named for Professor Joseph M. Thrash, and Fulwood Hall was named for Tifton businessman Paul Fulwood, Sr. The Ike and Tina Turner Revue performed at the Homecoming concert in Gressette Gym.

ABAC Foundation President George P. Donaldson said the Foundation approved a request on April 16 of \$1,500 for wind screens for the new tennis courts. The Foundation also approved a grant for \$500 for the development of the Foundation property at Possum Poke. During the sixth annual rodeo on April 27, ABAC announced plans to implement a horse program in the divisions of agriculture and physical education with courses in horse management, horse breeding, and western pleasure riding. ABAC has secured a Palomino stallion from Archie Fuller in Moultrie. The ABAC Foundation is now accepting donations for 12 Palomino mares.

For the first time in history, ABAC coeds received no-curfew privileges. President Clyde Driggers approved the plan on May 2. Female students must meet certain criteria to enjoy the

no-curfew rule. George and Ailene Graul, who manage the dining hall, received the Carlton Award for Staff Excellence at Honors Day on May 7. Ann Hammons received the Carlton Award for Faculty Excellence, and Registrar Paul Gaines received the Carlton Award for Administrative Excellence. Each award includes a \$1,000 check from the ABAC Foundation. The Baldwin Players presented *1776* on May 8-11 for their spring production. Sonny Burt directed the show, Ted Williams handled the music, and Becky McClellan was the dance coordinator. The Players performed a special road show at Parrott on May 26.

The ABAC baseball team of Coach Tom Moody rolled up a record of 22-15 behind Most Valuable Player Johnny Giddens. All home games were played at Eve Park. Coach Wayne Cooper's golf team finished fourth in the state tournament. Coach Norman "Red" Hill's tennis team won the state tournament for the fourth consecutive year, finished second in the Region 17 tournament, and wound up 16th in the nation. ABAC hosted the state tournament for the first time ever. Hill was honored at the national tournament as the outgoing president of the National Tennis Coaches Association. Roger Stokes from the basketball team was named Athlete of the Year at ABAC in a vote by all the coaches.

At the student activities banquet on May 14, Dr. Lou Cooke received the SGA Impact Award. Pacesetter recipients were Evelyn Eve, Bill Andrews, Pearl Dees, Jesse Chambliss, Melita Easters, Mary Emma Henderson, Gary Carlson, Dr. George Powell, and Jan Gore. Helen Strickland received a Pacesetter II award. Brad Howell was elected as the new SGA President. National syndicated speaker Paul Harvey spoke at the dining hall at the Tifton Chamber of Commerce banquet on May 28. Jim Fowler from the television show, *Wild Kingdom*, spoke at the Forestry/Wildlife Club meeting May 29.

Pat Boone was the featured entertainer before 511 patrons at the 1974 Dollars for Scholars event on June 7. During the performance, Boone joked that he needed to get Secretary of State Henry Kissinger to "negotiate a cease fire between ABAC and Middle Georgia." At the \$50 per plate benefit, President Clyde Driggers introduced new President's Club members Paul Fulwood, Jr., Ruth Fulwood Wright, Neil Christman, Theodore Christman, Frank Koran, and Lovick Corn.

Melita Easters from Lenox received the Donaldson Award at the commencement ceremony on June 8. A total of 179 graduates received associate degrees. Golden Stallion Service Awards were presented to Floyd Lawhorn of Tifton and Arthur Walters of Newton at the ceremony. ABAC received a three-year federal grant from the Office of Education worth \$1.4 million in June. Dr. Loyal Norman, Dr. Frank Thomas, and Dr. Tom Milam were the authors of the grant which is "to assist in developing colleges qualifying within definition of the act in strengthening academic, administration and student services programs so they may participate adequately in the higher education community." ABAC was one of only 13 two-year colleges in America to receive the grant.

Dr. George P. Donaldson was re-elected as the president of the ABAC Foundation on June 27. Tyron Spearman will again serve as executive secretary. Newly elected board members are Bob Ragsdale, Gene Hodges, Ruby Lee Spinks, Hulen Jones, and Ruth Wright. Other board members include Neal Boddiford, Bill Bowen, O.D. Carlton, John Henry Davis, Paul Fulwood, Jr., Jordan Short, Dr. Clyde Driggers, John Parkerson, Bob Reinhardt, Bill Conoly, Talmadge Webb, and Charles Williams. Eugene Adams and Ray Jensen moved to honorary status.

After serving as the chair of the humanities division for the past three years, Dr. Ernest Edwards returned to a full-time teaching position on July 1. Edwards was the first recipient of the distinguished teaching award in 1965. President Clyde Driggers conferred upon Edwards the title of official college organist and carillonner. Cecile Bailey and George Dillard are the only two retirees this year.

President Clyde Driggers and his wife, Dot, traveled to Panama, Colombia and the Cayman Islands on July 16-August 8 to talk with education officials in those countries. Dean Tom Cordell has been appointed Acting President while Driggers is away. After returning home, President Driggers had a heart attack on August 8. He is resting at home for the next four to six weeks. *The Agriculturist* finished second in the nationwide competition for the third year in a row. Iowa State won the title, and the University of Georgia finished third. Melita Easters, Kathy Gill, and Helen Strickland represented ABAC at the American Association of Agricultural Colleges Editors Convention in West Lafayette, Ind.

New personnel for the fall quarter include Patsy Hembree, computer operator; Garth Webb, director of admissions, and Newell Dorsey, equipment/facilities supervisor. Construction of the ABAC baseball field continues with help from the National Guard on some weekends. Marshall Guill said the field is ready for sodding and seeding. The fall quarter enrollment is 2,076, two more students than the fall of 1973. Dean of Student Personnel Services Worth Bridges says 1,184 students are living on campus, only 10 under capacity. Dining Hall Director George Graul says over 1,000 students are eating lunch daily, taking advantage of the seven-day a week meal plan, which offers meals for only 85 cents a meal. Dr. Frank McCain said the college now has 10 horses for use in the Horse Production and Management class, the Animal Technology program, and for a Horseback Riding class taught by Tom Moody. Director Sonny Burt and the Baldwin Players presented *Born Yesterday* on November 6-9.

Public Relations Director Tyron Spearman estimated a crowd of 2,000 persons attended the dedication ceremony for the Chapel of All Faiths on November 21. Shirley Cothran, the reigning Miss America, gave the keynote address. Baldwin Alumni Association President Bill Skinner presided with major addresses by former Baldwin Alumni Association President Gene Adams and ABAC President Clyde Driggers. President Emeritus George P. Donaldson, who is also the president of the ABAC Foundation, presented the Chapel to Charles Harris, chair of the

Board of Regents. Don Coates directed the ABAC Band and Chorus, and Dr. Ernest Edwards played the carillon and organ. "It was a great day for ABAC," Driggers said. "I felt a warmth, a tenderness, that is the real ABAC. I want to express my sincere appreciation to all that had a part in helping the Chapel to become a reality." Copies of Driggers' book about the building of the Chapel, *It Took a Miracle*, will be on sale for \$2 on Monday at the bookstore.

Director of Development Bob Ragsdale and Director of Public Relations Tyron Spearman have announced that December 12 will be ABAC Day in the Tifton area. The ABAC Foundation will attempt to raise \$25,000 on that day from Tifton businesses.

1975

Effective January 1, the minimum rate for ABAC student worker pay is \$2 per hour. *Wet Willy* performed in concert on January 16. Georgia Lt. Governor Zell Miller and Cajun humorist Justin Wilson will appear at the annual Georgia Young Farmers Convention at ABAC on January 24-25 which is expecting a crowd of 2,000. The ABAC Tractor Pull team has been invited to the Indy 500 Tractor Pull in Indianapolis, Ind., on January 31-February 2. Nolan Gibbons, director of the ABAC Tractor Pull, and staff member Jimmy Grubbs, who drives the ABAC tractor, will be attending. The Baldwin Players will present *St. Joan* on February 19-22. Dr. Lew Akin is the director, and Sonny Burt is the technical director.

Coach Peter Dees' ABAC basketball team won the Southern Division of the Georgia Junior College Athletic Association and finished second in the state tournament, falling on a last second shot to Emanuel College. The Golden Stallions then lost 92-73 to Calhoun (Ala.) State in the first round of the regional tournament. Kenneth Redding was named the Most Valuable Player in the Southern Division. *The Stallion* was named the top two-year college newspaper in the state for the fifth year in a row at the Georgia College Press Association convention. Kathy Gill is the editor, and Helen Strickland is the advisor. The AET Club National Tractor Pull is set for March 7-9 with an expected crowd of 20,000.

President Clyde Driggers said ABAC must reduce energy consumption by 50 per cent immediately because of budgetary concerns. "We can lick this problem if we have the proper attitude and understanding," Driggers said. "The ABAC Family has met many crises head-on, and we can beat this one too." Driggers said he will disconnect the air conditioning in the President's Home until June 9 and reduce lighting in his office by one-third. He said layoffs will be a last resort.

ABAC hosted the community sunrise service on Easter on March 30 on the banks of Lake Baldwin. WWGS Radio engineered a live broadcast. George Sosebee was named the Distinguished Alumnus award winner by the ABAC Alumni Association at Homecoming on

April 5. Other award winners were Frank Strickland, Master Farmer; Betty Cross Carter, Master Homemaker; and Robert J. Cason, Master Young Farmer. Susan Carr from Tifton won the Miss Homecoming title at the TABAC Beauty Revue. Bobby Rowan was elected president of the ABAC Alumni Association. Bill Lanier (Class of '45), former president of the Georgia Farm Bureau and now Director of the USDA-ASCS Tobacco and Peanut Division, was the guest speaker at the awards luncheon. *Atlanta Constitution* Editor Reg Murphy spoke at a student convocation on April 9. ABAC changed the name of the Farm Power and Recreation Show to the Ruralife Exposition on April 11 for the annual event at the Ag Engineering Building. This event later became the Sunbelt Agricultural Exposition when it moved to Spence Field in 1978.

President Clyde Driggers Passes Away on April 29

President Clyde Driggers died of a massive coronary on April 29. A story in the college yearbook, *TABAC*, said Driggers' casket was brought to the Chapel of All Faiths until the time for the funeral at the First Methodist Church. A memorial service open to students, faculty, staff, administrators, and alumni was held in the Chapel simultaneously with the interment in Wauchula, Fla. Dean Tom Cordell was again called on to serve as acting president.

Dr. Mary LeMar received the Carlton Award for Administrative Excellence, and Charlie Marshall received the Carlton Award for Faculty Excellence at Honors Day on May 6. Evelyn Eve was named the Carlton Award for Staff Excellence winner. University System Chancellor George Simpson said the Regents hope to have a new president in place at ABAC by September 1 in an address to the entire faculty and Staff on May 7. Dr. Vernon Yow is the search committee chair.

Sonny Burt directed the Baldwin Players in *Peter Pan* May 7-10. Residents of Fulwood Hall and House Director Pearl "Ma" Dees won the tobacco-spitting contest at the Student Activities Day on May 13. B.J. Thomas performed at the Student Activities Day Concert. Brad Howell, SGA president, and Kim Willis, SGA secretary, were named Mr. and Miss Baldwin. Marie Worley received the SGA Impact Award. Pacesetters were David Edenfield, Dr. Vernon Yow, Kathy Gill, Tom Moody, Rachel Baldwin, Andrea Savage, Susan Carr, Bobby Boland, Jim Livezey, and Mary Joyce Smith.

Anita Bryant performed before a sellout crowd of over 600 patrons at ABAC on June 6 at the Dollars for Scholars banquet to raise money for student scholarships. She was the first performer in the ABAC Foundation sponsored show in 1972. Kathy Gill received the Donaldson Award at the commencement ceremony on June 7. *The Abraham Baldwin Agriculturist* has been selected for first place in the national competition sponsored by the American Association of Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow. Nancy Clark is the editor, and Kathy Gill is the executive editor.

Coach Tom Moody's Golden Stallions won the 1975 state baseball tournament championship before falling to Middle Georgia in the Region 17 tournament. ABAC won the Southern Division of the Georgia Junior College Athletic Association regular season title with a record of 24-12. ABAC recorded a 29-14 overall record. Pitcher Hodges McLendon from Dawson made the Sports Illustrated *Faces in the Crowd* section by pitching no-hitters in his second and third starts of the season. Coach Wayne Cooper's ABAC golf team finished second in the state tournament behind the stellar play of Mark Allen, who gained medalist honors for the event with rounds of 72 and 73. He was also the medalist in the Region 17 tournament in Jasper, Ala., where ABAC finished second.

Cleve Dean, the arm-wrestling champion of the world from 1978 until 1986, was a member of the Class of 1975 at ABAC. The 6-foot-7, 465-pound Pavo native appeared in the movie, *Over the Top*, with Sylvester Stallone. After an eight-year self-imposed retirement, Dean won the 1994 national championship and two federation world titles in San Francisco and Sweden.

Dr. Frank Thomas began duties as the ABAC Academic Dean on July 1, replacing Dr. Loyal Norman who retired. Dr. Lew Akin will be the new chair of the Division of Humanities, and Dr. George Powell will be the new chair of the Division of Science and Mathematics, effective July 1. Dr. Harold Loyd has been appointed acting chair of the Division of Business. Mary Lee Vitange Payne retired from the business division on July 1 after 30 years of teaching at Tifton High School and ABAC. She was the second faculty member in the business division and served under three ABAC presidents. She was selected as the Outstanding Business Educator of Georgia in 1966 at the state convention of business educators.

Director of Publications Helen Strickland has been appointed to the Georgia Council for the Arts by Governor George Busbee. Caroline Benefield is running the new Media Center on campus. Acting President Tom Cordell has appointed Director of Development Bob Ragsdale as the coordinator of conferences and visiting groups on campus. Dot Driggers, wife of late President J. Clyde Driggers, is moving from the president's home to Knoxville, Tenn., to become the house director at the Alpha Gamma Rho house at the University of Tennessee. Dr. George Conger has donated the money to purchase a new piano for the Chapel of All Faiths. WABE-FM in Atlanta has donated \$15,000 worth of radio equipment to WABR-FM. All students, faculty, and staff are invited to a campus watermelon-cutting on July 21.

At the Fall Faculty Workshop on September 12, the faculty voted to name the Science Annex "Mary Lou Britt Hall" and the chapel "J. Clyde Driggers Hall." ABAC experienced its largest enrollment to date with 2,658 students during the 1975 fall quarter. The enrollment jumped 28 per cent or 582 students from the 1974 enrollment, the largest increase in ABAC history. Dining Hall Director George Graul is serving an average of 700 for breakfast, 1,200 for lunch, and 1,000 for dinner. Thirty-three boys' rooms and 39 girls' rooms have three people to the room.

Registrar Paul Gaines said 52 per cent of the students are in college transfer programs and 47 per cent are in technology programs. Forestry majors increased to 398 students. ABAC is the largest residential two-year college in the state.

Dr. Stanley Anderson Selected as ABAC President

Dr. Stanley Anderson was selected as the ABAC president by the Board of Regents on October 8. A native of Ruyard, Mich., Anderson and his wife, Dottie, will move to Tifton from his position as Dean of the College of Agriculture at Texas A&I University. Anderson received his B.S. and M.S. degrees from Michigan State University in crop science. He earned his Ph.D. in agronomy-economic botany from Iowa State University in 1954. He then joined the faculty at Ohio State University where he reached the rank of professor in 1963. Anderson was the Professor of the Year in Agriculture at Ohio State in 1959.

Anderson joined the Texas A&I administration on September 1, 1967. Under his leadership, academic programs in ag economics, range and natural resources management, wildlife management, and meats science have been added to the existing programs. Anderson has been named a Fellow of the American Society of Agronomy.

In an interview with *Tifton Gazette* Editor Bob Morrell, Anderson said, "I believe in the total program at Abraham Baldwin College, agriculturally as well as all the other areas. I think Abraham Baldwin has a unique background in agriculture which needs to be continued and strengthened." Anderson's first day in office will be on November 17. A very popular and outgoing "First Lady" of ABAC, Dottie Anderson was very active in the community and once taught a belly dancing class for the continuing education program.

Anderson added his personal touch to the beautification of the campus so that it became one of the most picturesque in the University System of Georgia. He led the effort to establish the Baldwin Memorial Gardens, including the Gazebo and reflecting pool in front of the Chapel, and planted many of the original flowers in the Gardens himself.

Jim Stafford appeared in concert at ABAC on October 30. Parents and friends have raised over \$1,000 to be matched by federal funds so the Day Care Center at ABAC can remain open. Baldwin Alumni Association President Bobby Rowan and Development Director Bob Ragsdale shared the ABAC story with eight state legislators on November 11. Sonny Burt directed the Baldwin Players in *Purlie Victorious* November 12-15.

The Georgia Development Authority has approved the new Student Center. Constructed by Alcon Associates from Albany and designed by Thompson, Sanders, and Dupree Architects from Valdosta, the \$1.3 million building is the largest in terms of square footage on the campus. Dean of Student Personnel Services Worth Bridges said the building will open in January.

Comptroller J. Talmadge Webb said all ABAC budgets are frozen because the state budget crunch has forced the Board of Regents to ask ABAC for \$119,225. Webb said only \$84,000 is available. Further budget cuts will be required.

1976

President Stanley Anderson and Comptroller Talmadge Webb met with University System personnel on January 5 and learned the ABAC portion of the statewide budget cut will now be \$131,000. ABAC will remain on an austerity budget for the foreseeable future. The Board of Regents plans to raise spring quarter tuition by 10 per cent, raising the ABAC tuition fee from \$96 to \$106. ABAC opened the new student center in January.

Governor George Busbee (Class of '45) was the guest speaker on January 31 at the Georgia Young Farmers Convention at ABAC. Dean and Coordinator of Continuing Education Tom Cordell has been honored by the Georgia Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers as its Man of the Year.

Registrar Paul Gaines announced that ABAC has its largest winter quarter enrollment in the history of the college with 2,432 students, a 20.9 per cent increase from the 2,011 students in the winter of 1975. Gaines said 1,539 males and 893 females are enrolled. A total of 1,216 students live on campus.

The 1976 *TABAC* received first place honors for the fifth year in a row at the Southern Regional Press Institute. Denese Walker Anthony is the editor. *The Stallion* also won first place for the fifth year in a row. Greg Spicer is the editor. Jerry Dickson directed the Baldwin Players in *The Glass Menagerie* on February 18-21. Coach Peter Dees' Golden Stallions ended their season in the first round of the state tournament with an 89-60 loss to DeKalb South. ABAC wound up 13-13 on the year.

Director of Development and Executive Secretary of the Baldwin Alumni Association Bob Ragsdale said the theme for Homecoming on February 27-28 will be *Times of Your Life*. The Ozark Mountain Daredevils will play at the Homecoming Concert. United States Congressman Ronald "Bo" Ginn (Class of '53) from Millen was selected for the Distinguished Alumnus award at Homecoming by the ABAC Alumni Association. He served the First District in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1973-83. Other award winners were Franklin Sutton, Master Farmer; Lee Manning Lee, Master Homemaker; and Jerald L. Carter, Master Young Farmer. Oldest alumni present were John Fletcher, Anthony Lynn, and Nonnie Clegg Sutton from the Class of 1912. Gail Paulk is the new president of the Baldwin Alumni Association. Nancy Jo Woods from Fairburn was selected as Miss Homecoming at the *TABAC* Beauty Revue.

The ABAC Nationals Tractor Pull attracted over 20,000 fans attending the four sessions on March 5-7. From the profits, the AET Club donated \$17,000 back to the ABAC Foundation restricted to the Division of Agriculture for the largest gift any club has ever made to ABAC. *Cracker Jack*, driven by Jimmy Grubbs, ran 11th in the 7,000 pound-super stock class. Virgil Barrett, Allis-Chalmers District Sales Manager, has passed away. He donated the pulling tractor which became *Cracker Jack* to the AET Club.

The snack bar in the new Student Center has been named *The Golden Stable*. President Stanley Anderson has announced that as of July 1, physical plant personnel will be responsible for picking up bottles and garbage on the campus every morning instead of the security officers. President Stanley Anderson, President Emeritus George P. Donaldson, and Public Relations Director Tyron Spearman represented ABAC at the annual Osborn Day at Possum Poke in Poulan. Former Michigan Governor Chase S. Osborn and his wife, Stellanova, have given over 1,100 acres of land to the Boy Scouts and the ABAC Foundation. The Board of Regents has appointed Blake Ellis and Associates to be the architect for the \$900,000 renovation to the dining hall which will change the atmosphere from a "mess hall" to a warm, comfortable dining area.

Tom Cordell received the Carlton Award for Administrative Excellence at Honors Day on May 4. Helen Strickland was selected for the Carlton Award for Faculty Excellence, and Mary Lewis Walker received the Carlton Award for Staff Excellence. Each received a check for \$1,000. The Golden Stallions of Coach Tom Moody finished third in the state baseball tournament. Third baseman Jorge Lezcano and shortstop Terry Mixon were named to the All-Region 17 team. ABAC played baseball at its on-campus field for the first time this season. Coach Wayne Cooper's ABAC golf team finished 10th in the nation.

Enrollment at ABAC shattered a record when 2,171 students enrolled for the spring quarter, a 14.8 per cent increase over the 1,891 enrolled for the spring of 1975. At Student Activities Day on May 11, one couple representing Branch Hall won the kissing contest by kissing for three and one-half hours. Walter Graham and Nancy Jo Woods were named Mr. and Miss Baldwin. Director of Development Bob Ragsdale received the SGA Impact Award. Pacesetter winners were Larry Lott, Dr. Tom Milam, Maralyn Ridgeway, Vince Martin, Mr. and Mrs. George Graul, Johnny Powell, Lester Simpson, Jeanne Griffin, Lang Printing Company, and Walter Graham. The Atlanta Rhythm Section performed at the concert to end the day. Buddy Burke was elected as the 1976-77 Student Government Association President. Claire Cornwell is the new vice-president.

WABR-FM moved from the Rural Development Center to its new studio in the Student Center during the spring quarter. Greg Spicer will edit *The Stallion*, and Louise Hill will edit *TABAC* for the 1976-77 year. For only the second time since the inception of the Donaldson Award in 1959, there was a tie. As a result, Jeannie Griffin and Denese Walker both received the Donaldson

Award at the spring commencement ceremony on June 9. The New Christy Minstrels performed at Dollars for Scholars on June 11.

Tyron Spearman (Class of '65) resigned his position as Director of Public Relations and Executive Secretary of the ABAC Foundation effective June 30 to become the Coordinator of the Georgia Commodity Commission for Peanuts in Tifton. He was the first public relations director in the history of ABAC when he joined the staff on January 1, 1969. During his time at ABAC, he emceed beauty contests, spoke at hundreds of civic clubs, wrote news releases, hosted a daily ABAC news show on the radio, appeared on television news programs, sang in a quartet, served as the radio play-by-play announcer for ABAC sports, and was the public-address announcer for tractor pulls.

Mabel Hamrick will be the new director of the nursing program on July 1. She has a staff of 10 for the 55 nursing students now enrolled at ABAC. Physical Plant Director Jim Livezey said on July 1 all ABAC vehicles will be checked out through the first ever ABAC motor pool. The new ABAC seal was approved by the Board of Regents on July 7. For the second year in a row *The Abraham Baldwin Agriculturist* has been named the best college agricultural magazine in the nation. Kansas State finished second. The Baldwin Alumni Association sponsored its first district rally on August 14 with a picnic at the river house of Congressman Bo Ginn (Class of '53) in Millen. Enrollment for the 1976 fall quarter dipped to 2,577, a decrease from the record 2,658 students who enrolled in the 1975 fall term. Driggers Hall will be open for meditation each day from 7-9 a.m., 1-2 p.m., and 5-7 p.m. Former ABAC President George King will establish a Children's Classics shelf in the Baldwin Library. ABAC will receive \$400,000 through the Employment Training Act for a Rural Skills Center. The program will train disadvantaged youth in the operation of farm equipment enabling them to secure a job.

James M. MacDonald joined the ABAC staff on November 1 as the Director of Public Relations. He has been the public information director at Clinton (N.Y.) Community College for the past six years. McDonald has a bachelor's degree from the University of Nebraska and a master's degree from the University of Iowa. A President's Reception for Dr. and Mrs. Stanley Anderson and Mr. and Mrs. Jim MacDonald was held in the dining hall November 14.

ABAC now has a women's basketball team coached by Peter Dees, who is also the men's coach. Intramural Director Ron Evans has agreed to coach the team next year. The Fillies are 1-1 on the season. Sonny Burt directed the Baldwin Players in *Godspell* November 17-20. Director of Development Bob Ragsdale, who also serves as executive secretary of the Baldwin Alumni Association, led a group of alumni on a seven-day trip to Russia November 25.

1977

ABAC golfers Jack “Skipper” Torbett from Brunswick and William M. Dobrosky from Fernandina Beach, Florida passed away in a tragic accident in their apartment on January 24 when a gas heater malfunctioned. A representative from the Maas-Rowe Company fixed the carillon in the chapel. He says it’s the best carillon system in the state of Georgia.

President Jimmy Carter lauded the ABAC short courses in the fall issue of *Georgia Agricultural Research* when he talked about returning from the U.S. Navy in the winter of 1953 to return to farming. “I didn’t know anything about farm management,” Carter said. “I went down to Tifton to the short courses on how to build a fence, how to keep farm records, how to grow peanuts, cotton, and corn and how to handle weeds, and every aspect of farm life.”

John Henry Davis was named the Distinguished Alumnus at Homecoming on February 26 by the Baldwin Alumni Association. Other award winners were Alonzo T. Rigsby, Jr., Master Farmer; Bonita Butler Green, Master Homemaker; Bobby J. Rowland, Master Young Farmer; and Charles A. Harris, Honorary Alumnus. Pam Thomas was crowned Miss Homecoming at the TABAC Beauty Revue.

Billed as the largest tractor pull ever held in the state of Georgia, the AET Club hosted the ABAC Nationals on March 4-6 featuring *Cracker Jack*, the ABAC pulling tractor driven by Jimmy Grubbs. He drove *Cracker Jack* to a first-place finish in the 7,000-super stock class and now leads the country in the point standings. Sam McConnell was elected president and Chuck Ellington was selected as vice-president of the Student Government Association on April 21.

President Stanley Anderson requests that anyone asking an outside person or group for funds to support their ABAC endeavor should go through Director of Development Bob Ragsdale. President Anderson said pay raises for next year should average 9.5 per cent. ABAC Distinguished Professor of Humanities Stellanova Osborn and her late husband, Governor Chase S. Osborn, will be honored at Osborn Day at Possum Poke in Poulan on April 24.

Robert M. Stone received the Carlton Award for Staff Excellence at Honors Day on May 4. For the first 16 years of his 30-year career, he was a one-man maintenance crew, working out of a pickup truck. Now he is the Supervisor of Electricians. Wayne Cooper was named the Carlton Award for Faculty Excellence winner, and Comptroller J. Talmadge Webb received the Carlton Award for Administrative Excellence. Sonny Burt directed the Baldwin Players in *Little Mary Sunshine* on May 4-7. Amway Corporation President Richard DeVos spoke to ABAC students, faculty, and staff on May 11. Coach Tom Moody’s Golden Stallions won the Southern Division baseball title with a record of 26-5 overall and 9-1 in conference action. Moody was named Coach of the Year. ABAC was ranked 13th in the nation at one point during the season. Third baseman Jorge Lezcano led the way with a .386 average.

Sonny Burt received the SGA Impact Award at the Student Activities Banquet on May 17. Dottie Anderson, Dr. Lew Akin, Sydney Smith, and Nancy Wimberly were among the Pacesetter recipients. Norman "Red" Hill received a proclamation from Governor George Busbee (Class of '45) for his 200th career victory earlier this year. The Golden Stallions finished ninth in the national tournament.

The Atlanta Ballet will stay at ABAC for a month, beginning June 7. The dancers will conduct seminars in choreography, lighting, costuming, stage management, and stage production. Dr. Lew Akin and Sonny Burt will coordinate the seminars. Ray Stevens, a native of nearby Albany, was the featured performer before 558 patrons at the Dollars for Scholars show on June 10. Charlotte Stallworth from Warner Robins is the new station manager for WABR-FM. In its fifth year, the ABAC Film Forum will feature classics such as *Cimarron* (1931), *State Fair* (1933), and *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1932) this summer.

John Parkerson assumed his duties as president of the ABAC Foundation on July 1. Jim MacDonald is the executive secretary, and Bob Ragsdale is the treasurer. President and Mrs. Stanley Anderson's daughter, Ann, will give a presentation of Middle Eastern dancing on July 15 in the dining hall. She teaches dance and performs professionally under the name of Anastasia. Sonny Burt directed *The Fantastiks* under a tent at the Georgia Agrirama July 19-23. Wasdon Graydon said ABAC is the only two-year college in Georgia to have a summer Upward Bound program for disadvantaged high school students. *The ABAC Agriculturist* has again been named tops in the nationwide competition. Rosemary Jones is the editor. The University of Georgia finished second under the leadership of former ABAC student Kathy Gill. Dr. and Mrs. Fred Reuter square danced with President and Mrs. Carter in the White House on July 27.

Former Valdosta State assistant coach Donnie Veal was named as the new men's basketball coach for the 1977-78 season, replacing Peter Dees. The fall quarter enrollment was 2,471, a decline from the 2,577 students in 1976. The Nigerian government has sent 39 students to ABAC this fall to study agricultural technology. They are staying at the Travelodge Motel. Sonny Burt directed the Baldwin Players in *Star-Spangled Girl* on November 2-5. Spirit Day on November 14 will include a car caravan through Tifton, a bonfire, and the first basketball game of the year against Chipola. The Harlem Globetrotters performed before a standing room only crowd in Gressette Gym on November 28. President Stanley Anderson has announced that the heat in all buildings will be turned off from December 9-January 2 due to budget reductions. Comptroller J. Talmadge Webb said the college will save \$17,000.

1978

President Stanley Anderson and his wife, Dottie, met with First Lady Rosalyn Carter, and her daughter, Amy, at the opening of the Folklife Center at the Library of Congress on January 26.

Other attendees from ABAC were Dr. and Mrs. Frank Thomas, Dr. and Mrs. Tom Milam, Mary Emma Henderson, Helen Strickland, and Syd Blackmarr. Joy Cleveland, a sophomore from Blakely, was selected as Miss Homecoming at the TABAC Beauty Revue on February 14. Forty-four contestants competed in the event, sponsored by the campus yearbook, TABAC, which is an acronym for The Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College. Helen Strickland directed the event, and Dr. Frank Thomas was the emcee. *Harlem Heyday* was the title of a musical performance which wound up Black Awareness Week on February 18.

At Homecoming on February 25, ABAC dedicated the Torbett-Dobrosky Memorial Golf Practice Center in memory of former ABAC golfers Jack "Skipper" Torbett from Brunswick and William M. Dobrosky from Fernandina Beach, Florida. The two students died a tragic death in their off-campus apartment on January 24, 1977, when a gas heater malfunctioned. Charles Oxford, chairman of the Board of Regents, spoke at the ceremony as well as ABAC President Stanley Anderson and golf coach Wayne Cooper. At the Baldwin Alumni Association awards luncheon, the award recipients included William Lanier, Distinguished Alumnus; Joe Perry Carter, Jr., Master Farmer; Elna McClelland Bragdon, Master Homemaker; and Dice Roberts, Sr., Master Young Farmer. Norman Gay was selected as president of the Baldwin Alumni Association. The Alumni Association began a new tradition of honoring faculty and staff members who have completed 20 years or more of service to ABAC. Recipients included Daisy Barnes, Jesse Chambliss, Tom Cordell, Dr. Ernest Edwards, Evelyn Eve, Paul Gaines, Nolan Gibbons, Emory McMillan, George Odum, Doris Sears, Martin Sibbet, Sidney Smith, Julia Smith, Robert Stone, Mary Walker, and Dr. Vernon Yow.

Sonny Burt directed the Baldwin Players in *An Enemy of the People* on March 2-4. A record purse of \$24,100 was awarded to the winners of the ABAC Nationals Tractor Pull on March 3-5. Margie York from Sylvester averaged 24.6 points per game for the ABAC Fillies basketball team during the 1977-78 season. She was selected for the 1978 all-state team. Coach Ron Evans' women's basketball team did not win a game. Evans resigned his post at the end of the spring term. Ulysses Teague averaged 21 points and 11 rebounds for the Stallions basketball team. He wound up as the second leading scorer and fifth leading rebounder in the state. Teague was selected for the all-state and all-conference teams. He has signed with Morris Brown University. Under first year head coach Donnie Veal, the Stallions compiled a record of 9-18.

Carol Lawrence performed before 582 patrons at Dollars for Scholars on March 31. Agriculture Division Chair Frank McCain said the horseback riding program will end after the spring quarter due to a lack of interest. Dr. Frank Thomas received the Carlton Award for Administrative Excellence at Honors Day on May 3. This administrative award was not presented again until 2000 when it was renamed the E. Lanier Carson Leadership Award for College Administrators. John Dell Evans received the Carlton Award for Faculty Excellence, and George Odom received the Carlton Award for Staff Excellence.

Cliff Bailey ran unopposed for the SGA presidency on May 3. Ed Avery will be the student manager for WABR-FM for 1978-79. Lynn Medford from Tifton will serve as *TABAC* editor, and Tim Chason from Lakeland will serve as editor of *The Stallion*. Craig Wells from Tifton will be the *Pegasus* editor.

A tornado did \$6,000 worth of damage to the roof of Gressette Gym on May 8. The tornado also ripped a huge chunk from a tree on Moore Highway. Maintenance Supervisor Nathan Dyer reported the damage. The Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia met at ABAC on May 9-10. Assistant Coordinator of Continuing Education Bob Keith handled the arrangements.

Eli performed at the Student Activities dance on May 12. Events during the day included a kissing contest, three-legged race, tobacco spitting contest, sack race, bat-spin race, marshmallow eating contest, wheelbarrow race, nose-egg pushing contest, Volkswagen stuffing contest, greased pig catching, two-man Frisbee throw over mud, and a tug of war. Branch Hall captured first place for the third consecutive year. New Women's Dorm was the winner of the Female Trophy. House Director Pearl "Ma" Dees was one of those who wound up waist deep in the mud hole.

Baseball Coach Tom Moody said the 1978 Stallions were the best hitting team in the history of ABAC. Moody said the team batting average was .348. Larry Pittman hit .442, Billy Collins hit .429, and Chuck Scarborough hit .383 to lead the way for ABAC, which ended its season with a record of 20-16. The ABAC men's tennis team finished second behind Gainesville in the 1978 state tournament. Andres Flores won the men's singles title in the state tournament. Coach Wayne Cooper's ABAC golfers finished second in the 1978 state tournament. Three golfers were named all-state, Jody Joiner, Rich Bellinger, and Ben Weeks.

Sam McConnell from Webster, Fla., and Cathy Cox from Bainbridge were voted by the students as Mr. and Miss Baldwin on May 24. McConnell is SGA president, and Cox is co-editor of *TABAC*. Mona Beth Parkman received the SGA Impact Award at the student activities banquet on May 25. Pacesetter winners were Walter Simpson, Dianne Cowart, Jeff Summey, Paul Gaines, Gail Wood, Mark Majors, Dr. Gaye Elder, John Fountain, Alan Livingston, Chet Kimmell, Linda Spikes, and Dr. Leon Benefield. On May 26, Dr. George Conger contributed \$15,000 toward the Baldwin Memorial Gardens campus beautification project initiated by President Stanley Anderson. Conger is a 1916 alumnus of the Second District A&M School and president of the Conger Life Insurance Company.

A total of 29 students received their pins at the annual ABAC nurses' pinning ceremony on June 8 in the Chapel of All Faiths. President Stanley Anderson presented 182 students their associate degree diplomas at commencement on June 9. Cathy Cox received the Donaldson Award.

The Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow (ACT) honored *The Agriculturist* and *Pegasus* with national awards at their national convention in Atlanta. Lisa Ray, a sophomore from Fort Valley, won first place for a story in *The Agriculturist* on the Coastal Plain Experiment Station. Ray was also elected ACT national vice president. The literary magazine received first place in the miscellaneous publication category. Kathy Beard was the *Pegasus* editor. Helen Strickland advises both publications.

Director of Public Relations James MacDonald resigned from his position effective June 30. He joined the college staff on November 1, 1976.

Melvin Merrill became the Director of Development at ABAC on July 1, replacing Bob Ragsdale, who took a position at the Rural Development Center. A Penrose, N.C., native, Merrill had been serving in the development office at Berry College for 13 years. Merrill has a bachelor's degree in animal husbandry and biology and a master's degree in business from Berry. Dennis Coelho joined the Arts Experiment Station staff on July 1 as the Folklorist-in-Residence.

President Stanley Anderson and his wife, Dottie, honored the new faculty and staff with a reception in the dining hall on September 14. Jeff Kincaid (Class of '74) joined the faculty as the women's basketball coach and Dr. Jim Burran joined the history faculty. A total of 2,430 students enrolled for the fall quarter, a slight decrease from the 2,471 students in the fall of 1977.

The Sunbelt Agricultural Exposition opened at its new Spence Field site near Moultrie on October 10-12. The Expo began as a series of small equipment shows on the banks of Lake Baldwin at ABAC in 1964. ABAC had a stage featuring student entertainment in front of the air traffic control tower. ABAC students distributed gold stickers with ABAC #1 on them, signifying the claim as "Georgia's Number One Junior College." Helen Strickland designed the ABAC exhibit. The ABAC AET Club helped exhibitors with set-up and take-down, and the Home Economics Club members assisted with the information booths.

Band Director Don Coates has formed the first ABAC Brass Quintet with assistance from Terry Rountree, Jesse Walker, Bob Donnan, and Willie Mark Hill. Dr. Frank McCain, chair of the Division of Agriculture, Home Economics, and Forestry, was initiated into the prestigious AGHON Society as an honorary member on October 21.

1979

American Square Dance Society Hall of Famer Frank Lane will call at a special square dance activity at ABAC on January 18. The Travelin' Stallion and the Stallion Squares will host the event in Thrash Gym. Dr. Fred Reuter will also call a dance or two. Bob Sise, a marketing management major from Thomasville, won the national championship in the category of General

Merchandising in the 1979 Distributive Education Clubs of America competition in Houston, Texas. Lester Simpson and John Overman are the advisors to DECA.

The Stallion was named the top junior college newspaper in the state of Georgia for the ninth consecutive year by the Georgia College Press Association. Tim Chason is the editor, and Helen Strickland is the advisor. Student Editor Craig Wells said the winter edition of the *Pegasus* literary magazine will be released in March.

In what Coach Donnie Veal called “his best night ever,” Jeff Gill scored 27 points to lead the Golden Stallions to an 80-75 basketball win over the North Georgia Tech Thunderbirds on February 3. Franklin Patten added 19, and Viviano Reaves had 15. ABAC wound up the year with a record of 12-16 overall and 9-11 in league play. The Stallions were seeded eighth in the conference tournament at Brewton Parker but did not attend the tournament because ABAC President Stanley Anderson had written a letter to Wendell Whiteside from NJCAA Region XVII on September 18, 1978, that stated that if ABAC was not one of the top four teams, the Stallions would not compete because of budgetary constraints.

In an article in *The Stallion*, Anderson said he had seen two other colleges “completely do away with” their athletic programs. “ABAC is close to the same situation, and I don’t want to lose our athletic program,” Anderson said. In their third year of existence, the ABAC Fillies completed their 1978-79 basketball season with a 0-16 record. Jeff Kincaid (Class of ’74) was the coach.

The ABAC Nationals Tractor Pull was held on March 2-4. Pullers competed for \$25,000 in prize money. The AET Club assisted the National Tractor Pullers Association with the event. Student Union President Mark von Waldner arranged for *Molly Hatchet*, *Stillwater*, and *Starbuck* to present a concert on March 9.

Michael Learned and Anthony Zerbe performed in *Dear Liar* on the Howard Auditorium stage on March 13 as a part of the Tiftarea Concert Association performance season. Learned is best known as Olivia Walton on *The Waltons*. The Southern Regional Press Institute awarded *TABAC* and *The Stallion* with first place awards. ABAC students Tim Malcolm, Tim Raynor, Pat Thrift and Johnny Burge have formed a gospel singing group called *The Spiritual Awakening*.

Suzanne Spinks from Tifton was crowned Miss Homecoming 1979 at the 11th annual *TABAC* Beauty Revue on April 5. Homecoming award winners on April 7 were Dr. Audrey VanLandingham, Distinguished Alumnus; George P. Conger, Distinguished Business Leader; Talmadge Webb, Faculty Service Award; Brenda Morris, Master Homemaker, Melvyn Rowan, Master Farmer, Hugh Matthews, Master Young Farmer; and Pauline Stephens, Honorary Alumnus. Elna Bragdon from Nashville was named president of the ABAC Alumni Association, and Glenn Parkman was named president of the Young Alumni Council.

Nathan R. Dyer received the Carlton Award for Staff Excellence, and Marolyn Howell received the Carlton Award for Faculty Excellence at Honors Day on May 2. Choreographer Andrea Pate said all faculty and staff members are invited to spend "An Evening with the Golddusters" at their annual show on May 3. Melba Cooper, assistant professor of business, was selected for the top statewide award presented annually to a college professor by the Georgia Business Education Association.

ABAC yearbook editor Lynn Medford presented student Pacesetter awards to Randall Morris, Tim Chason, Pat Barron, Mark von Waldner and Karen Wainwright at the annual student activities banquet on May 15. Other Pacesetter winners were former ABAC President George P. Donaldson, Andrea Pate, and C.B. Mathis. John Ellington was sworn in as the SGA president, and Danny Smith was sworn in as the SGA vice-president at the banquet.

Michael D. Chason began his job as the Director of Public Relations on May 15, replacing James MacDonald who resigned from the position on June 30, 1978. Chason is the former sports editor of *The Valdosta Daily Times*. A Lakeland, Ga., native, he has a bachelor's degree in history from Valdosta State College. Sonny Burt directed the Baldwin Players in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Georgia Agrirama on May 19-23. The Golden Stallions' tennis team finished second in the state tournament and 13th in the national tournament.

ABAC President Stanley Anderson said on May 22 that the Donaldson Dining Hall will be available for use the Dollars for Scholars Benefit Banquet and Show on May 25. The dining hall has undergone a \$1.3 million renovation which increased the seating capacity from 500 to 950. "This gives us the largest dining facility south of Atlanta in the state except for the one at Jekyll Island," Anderson said. "The students used to have to line up outside. Now, there'll be no need for that." He said the two small dining rooms inside the renovated dining hall will be called the Georgian Room and the Magnolia Room.

Country music star Barbara Mandrell was the featured performer before 647 guests at the eighth annual Dollars for Scholars Benefit Banquet and Show on May 25. She was voted as the top female vocalist the recent Country Music Association awards show for her song *If Loving You is Wrong, I don't Want to be Right*. Mandrell and her entourage stayed at the Howard Johnson's Motel on Highway 41. Dining Hall Directors George and Aliene Graul put together a fabulous buffet for the event. Comedian Paul Lennon opened the show.

Randall Morris received the Donaldson Award at the commencement ceremony on June 9. He was also named Mr. Baldwin at the student activities banquet. Comptroller J. Talmadge Webb said the college will save as much as \$1,000 a week by utilizing the four-day academic week this summer term. Baseball Coach Tom Moody said Larry Pittman has signed a professional baseball contract with the New York Mets, and Anardy Martinez has signed with the Pittsburgh

Pirates. Associate Professor of Chemistry Sydney Smith retired on July 1 after 23 years at ABAC.

Dr. Stanley Anderson, Dr. Frank McCain, J. Talmadge Webb, Dr. Vernon Yow, Alan McAllister, Harvey Johnson, Charlie Marshall, and Mark Masee from Masee Builders broke ground on the new forestry-wildlife building on August 22.

Tom Cordell Retires After 39-Year Career at ABAC

Dean and Coordinator of Continuing Education Tom Cordell retired on August 31 after a 39-year career. Recognized as the “Man of the Year in Agriculture” by *Progressive Farmer* in 1971, Cordell received the Georgia Adult Education Council Citation in 1972. Cordell created ABAC’s famous agricultural short course program which helped to educate thousands of Georgians including President Jimmy Carter when he was a peanut farmer in Plains. When Carter spoke to the students at ABAC in 2014, he publicly thanked Cordell for the information he received on taking care of a peanut crop. Cordell is the only man to serve as Acting President of ABAC on five different occasions. The ABAC Foundation created the Tom M. Cordell Distinguished Lecture Series in his honor in 1985. On April 4, 1992, ABAC dedicated the Tom M. Cordell Conference Room in the Baldwin Library in his honor. The Tom M. Cordell Conference Center at ABAC’s Georgia Museum of Agriculture was named in his honor on July 23, 2021. Hired in 1940 to build a continuing education program, Cordell had the responsibilities of academic dean added to his duties in 1947. In 1964, he became Dean of the College and Coordinator of the continuing education program. Bob Keith was named Acting Director of Continuing Education.

Dr. Fred Reuter, chair of the Division of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation, called a square dance in Red Square in Moscow on a trip to the Soviet Union and Poland during the summer. “I am one of only three people to call a square dance in Red Square,” he said. *Casablanca* (1942) was one of nine films in this summer’s seventh edition of the ABAC Film Forum. You can view all the movies for a total of \$7.50.

Bookstore Manager Emory Johnson was one of the performers on the ABAC stage during the Sunbelt Agricultural Exposition on October 9-11. The Expo began as a series of small equipment shows on the shore of Lake Baldwin in 1964. It moved to Spence Field near Moultrie in 1978. Other performers were the Travelin’ Stallion square dance team, the ABAC Cloggers, the ABAC band, and the Golddusters’ dance team.

Comptroller J. Talmadge Webb told *The Stallion* on October 23 that ABAC will experience a two per cent budget cut for the year because of a decrease in enrollment. Registrar Paul Gaines said the enrollment declined from 2,430 students in the fall term of 1978 to 2,372 students in the fall quarter of 1979.

Comptroller J. Talmadge Webb said that several hundred dollars' worth of silverware, salt and pepper shakers, and drinking glasses have been taken from the dining hall during the fall quarter. "We don't want to know who took what," Webb said. "If the students will just quietly return anything they have taken from the dining hall, there will be no questions asked."

The ABAC Stallions opened their basketball season with a 73-68 loss to Santa Fe on November 20. Public Relations Director Mike Chason did his first ever ABAC radio play-by-play broadcast on Tifton radio station WWGS. He continued to broadcast several games every year until ABAC dropped basketball after the 2008 season.

Dr. Lew Akin said the WABR-FM radio antenna was attached to the top the Student Center on November 20. The station went off the air at the end of the 1978 fall quarter when the tower had to be removed from the ABAC water tower. He expects broadcasting to resume "any time."

Financial Aid Director Bud Holtzclaw, 38, passed away due to an apparent heart attack on November 23. He joined the ABAC administration in 1975. He had headed up the financial aid operation for the past five years. ABAC President Stanley Anderson hosted area legislators and Acting Chancellor Vernon Crawford for an ABAC Update breakfast in the Georgian Room on November 27. Representatives present were Henry Bostick and Monty Veazey from Tifton, Marcus Collins from Pelham, Robert Patten from Lakeland, and Henry Reaves from Quitman. The second annual Faculty-Staff Dinner and Dance sponsored by the ABAC Music Program was held November 29 in the dining hall. Admission was \$7.50.

Ray Barber, an ABAC biology instructor, wrote a song about ABAC during the fall quarter titled, *ABAC, The Place for You and Me*. One of the lines from the song: "Our campus is real pretty, come and see it you'll agree; another asset of good ol' ABAC is the friendly faculty." Barber and his brothers recorded the song with their company, Gabriel Recording.

1980

Dr. James Burran was named assistant to the academic dean on January 1. Burran joined the ABAC faculty in 1978 as an assistant professor in the Division of Social Science. Registrar Paul Gaines said the enrollment for the 1980 winter quarter is 2,142 students. ABAC President Stanley Anderson said Dr. William Wheeler will take over duties as evening program director in addition to his responsibilities as Director of Special Studies.

After two straight winless seasons and five losses to open this year, the women's basketball team at ABAC recorded a 79-60 win over Middle Georgia on January 18. Nancy Anderson led Coach Jeff Kincaid's Fillies with 15 points and 12 rebounds. She received ample support from Lisa Arrington with 14, Sheila Williams with 13, Donna Ranew with 11 and Becky Thomas and Shari Strickland with 10 apiece. The Fillies wound up 5-13 on the year. With an average of 15.9 points

per game, Anderson was selected for the all-conference team. Coach Donnie Veal's Stallions finished with a 9-19 record and lost in the first round of the state tournament.

Development Director Melvin Merrill announced the kickoff to the *ABAC in the 80s* fundraising campaign with a goal of \$1,000,000. WABR-FM received approval from the FCC to resume full-scale programming on January 18. The station has been off the air for over a year. The 10th annual convention of the Georgia Young Farmers Association met at ABAC on January 25-26. The Baldwin Players under the direction of Sonny Burt performed *The Mousetrap* on February 11-15. Cast members included Lauren Whitfield, Paul Humphrey, Chris Robertson, Darith Russell, Lee Norris, Andy Gibbs, and Kevin Lawton. The roof was completed on the new picnic pavilion at Lake Baldwin on February 12.

The Stallion was named the top two-year college newspaper in the state for the 10th consecutive year on February 22 by the Georgia College Press Association (GCPA). Editor Jim Bennett was elected president of the GCPA at the annual meeting in Athens. Advisor Helen Strickland was honored by more than 25 former editors of the ABAC newspaper and yearbook with the announcement of the formation of the Helen L. Strickland Outstanding Young Alumnus Award to be presented at Homecoming. *Atlanta Journal* writer Melita Easters (Class of '74) made the announcement. The Georgia House of Representatives passed a resolution in her honor, and *Atlanta Constitution* cartoonist Baldy drew a cartoon with Strickland pushing a wheelbarrow full of trophies.

Waylon Jennings performed in Gressette Gym on March 25. He was scheduled to perform on February 26 but cancelled the show at the last moment. In an interview, *Albany Herald* reporter Charles Postell asked Jennings if the rumors were true that he cancelled the show because the stage was too low and the students refused to furnish him with whiskey. Jennings said, "I don't remember. That sounds pretty good." Postell asked him which one of the reported reasons was true. "Either one," Jennings said.

Bud Laird said he came to ABAC from Morrow "to pick bluegrass and get an education." Laird is a member of the Pony Express Bluegrass Band which features Laird on mandolin, Joe Wright from Jasper on guitar, Mark Graves from Marietta on banjo, and Barry Cantrell from Marietta on bass. Arts Experiment Station folklorist-in-residence Dennis Coelho helped to put the group together. Wesley Baker has been named editor of *The Agriculturist*. Helen Strickland is the advisor. Nolan Gibbons coordinated the ABAC Nationals Tractor Pull on March 28-30. Registrar Paul Gaines said 1,963 students enrolled for the spring quarter. The Weltner Hall Annex closed after the winter quarter.

Kellie Smith was crowned Miss Homecoming 1980 on April 2 at the 12th annual TABAC Beauty Revue. ABAC Alumni Association award recipients at Homecoming on April 5 were Emma S. Murrah, Distinguished Alumnus; Robert L. Webster, Sr., Master Farmer; Jane Grogan Gibbs,

Master Homemaker; Jack G. Chandler, Master Young Farmer; and George P. Donaldson and Tom M. Cordell, Honorary Alumni.

The Arts Experiment Station sponsored the first ever Arts Circus on April 12. Arts Experiment Station Director Syd Blackmarr said the purpose of the event is to promote the arts among young children. The Arts Circus later became the much-acclaimed Tifton Love Affair. Doris Sears received the Carlton Award for Staff Excellence, and Melba Cooper received the Carlton Award for Faculty Excellence at Honors Day on May 7.

Famed pianist Roger Williams was the Dollars for Scholars performer before 695 patrons at the annual benefit sponsored by the ABAC Foundation to raise money for student scholarships on May 23.

The Forestry-Wildlife Building opened on September 18. The building was later named for Dr. Vernon Yow, a longtime Professor of Forestry and a former Dean of Men at ABAC. The fall quarter enrollment was 2,450.

Former ABAC President George P. Donaldson passed away in Athens on November 16 at the age of 87. His funeral was held in Statesboro on November 18. Donaldson served as the ABAC president from 1947-61. He joined the college as an instructor of English in 1933. After his retirement from ABAC in 1961, he served as executive secretary of the Georgia Peanut Commission for 12 years. *Progressive Farmer* named him the Man of the Year in Service to Georgia Agriculture in 1955. The ABAC Alumni Association named Donaldson an Honorary Alumnus at Homecoming on April 5. First Baptist Church Pastor Ches Smith led a memorial service for Donaldson in the Chapel of All Faiths at ABAC on November 23. ABAC faculty member Jesse Chambliss and ABAC alumnus Lamar Branch also spoke at the service. “Dr. Pete’ meant so much to ABAC and this community,” ABAC President Stanley Anderson said. “We need to honor him in this special way.”

1981

The statue of the Golden Stallion mascot was stolen from its perch in front of the Student Center on January 17. The statue has been on campus since the early 1960s. This is the fifth time it has been taken since being moved to this Student Center location in 1976. Public Relations Director Mike Chason received an anonymous phone call at his home on January 22 from a quail hunter who said he had seen the statue at the edge of a field near Brighton Road. Chason and Director of Development Melvin Merrill traveled to that location that night and found the statue. Physical Plant personnel returned the statue to the campus on January 23. No suspects or leads in the theft ever developed.

The first ever Discover ABAC: College Exploration Day was held on March 3. Admissions Director Garth Webb said the event attracted over 1,100 prospective students from 100 different high schools.

Denise Brewer from Tifton was crowned Miss Homecoming 1981 at the TABAC Beauty Revue on April 2. Director of Public Relations Mike Chason was the emcee for the first time ever. Former ABAC President George King was honored with a portrait dedication at King Hall on April 4 during Homecoming. Alumni Association award winners were John Strickland (posthumously), Distinguished Alumnus; Andy H. Miller, Master Farmer; Martha Spell Lee, Master Homemaker; and Julian Morgan, Master Young Farmer. Strickland died in a traffic accident near his home in Lanier County on August 25, 1979. He was the husband of ABAC Student Publications Director Helen Strickland and president-elect of the ABAC Alumni Association. Tyron Spearman won the first ever Outstanding Young Alumnus Award.

World renowned drummer Buddy Rich performed at ABAC on April 7. At an awards banquet for the ABAC basketball teams on April 8, Jenni Collins was named Most Valuable Player of the women's team, and Woodrow Clemons was named Most Valuable Player for the men's team. The annual Tractor Pull was held on April 10-12. Jesse Chambliss and Nolan Gibbons coordinated the annual event, which attracted 11,000 spectators. The annual Golddusters Show was held April 23-25 in Howard Auditorium. Andrea Pate is the advisor for the dance team.

At the annual Honors Day ceremony on May 6, Betty Henning received the Carlton Award for Staff Excellence, and Dr. Ron Jones received the Carlton Award for Faculty Excellence. Dollars for Scholars on May 8 featured performer Debby Boone. She enthralled the crowd with her big hit, *You Light up my Life*.

George Walter Bird, III, state president of the Georgia FFA in 1979-80, was selected as president of the ABAC Student Government Association for the 1981-82 year.

A dinner honoring the service of Jesse Chambliss was held in the dining hall on May 22. Chambliss will retire at the end of the spring quarter with 34 years of service. He will be honored with the title of Professor Emeritus of Agricultural Engineering. Osborne Day was held at Possum Poke in Poulan on May 24 to honor Stellanova Osborne, widow of former Michigan Governor Chase Osborne. Possum Poke is owned by the ABAC Foundation.

Admissions Director Garth Webb reported that the females outnumbered the males at ABAC for the first time since 1944 during the 1981 summer term with 425 female students and 424 male students.

ABAC Baseball Player Drafted by Dodgers

ABAC baseball player Ralph Bryant was drafted by the Los Angeles Dodgers in the first round of the 1981 amateur draft. The power-hitter from Fort Gaines made his professional debut with the Dodgers on September 8, 1985. He spent the next three years traveling between the major and minor leagues. Bryant then found a home with the Chunichi Dragons and the Kintetsu Buffaloes in Nippon Professional Baseball in Japan. He was the 1989 Pacific League Most Valuable Player when he hit 49 home runs and tied Sadaharu Oh's career record by blasting three homers in a game on five different occasions. He retired in 1995 with 259 home runs for his career. Bryant was named to the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2015.

ABAC student Cindy Mott from Hahira was named Miss Rodeo Georgia 1981. Dr. Vernon Yow has been selected for induction into the Georgia Foresters Hall of Fame.

For perhaps the first time in history, four members of the same family were enrolled at ABAC during the 1981 fall quarter. The Vano family from Walden, N.Y., sent Lynn, Judy, Barbara, and Rich to the college. ABAC alumnus and former faculty member Baldwin Davis died on September 16. He served the college for 15 years as a faculty member and was named Associate Professor Emeritus of Agriculture upon his retirement on August 5. The fall quarter enrollment was 2,322.

Keith Barr (Class of '72) was named the new head women's basketball coach in 1981, replacing Jeff Kincaid (Class of '74), who resigned after three years to attend dental school. ABAC alumnus William Thomas Greer, Jr., (Class of '62) was named the 17th president of Andrew College on October 22.

In the November 17 edition of *The Stallion*, President Anderson said the fiber glass statue of the Golden Stallion mascot "would remain in storage indefinitely until the students can devise a plan to make sure the Stallion will not be damaged." The Stallion statue was taken from its perch in front of the Student Center several times in 1981 with the last two thefts coming only 10 days apart. *Stallion* Editor Russell Camp suggested that the college get a bronze statue of the Stallion. Thirty-two years later, the college did just that.

President Anderson selected Dr. Lew Akin as the chair for the ABAC Golden Anniversary Celebration committee in November. Anderson said the celebration would last from September 1983 until June 1984 when ABAC would celebrate 50 years as ABAC and 75 years as an institution. Other steering committee members were Lamar Branch, James Burran, Mike Chason, Ronald Faircloth, Marolyn Howell, Rosemary Johnson, Ron Jones, Tyron Spearman, and Joann Thornhill.

Cindy Mott from Hahira, the reigning Miss Rodeo Georgia, competed in the Miss Rodeo America competition in Oklahoma in December.

Development Director Melvin Merrill said the ABAC Foundation had its best year ever in 1981 with total income for the year exceeding \$390,800. The largest single gift ever received by the Foundation was \$153,180 from the Rankin family to endow the Weetie and Homer Rankin Scholarships.

1982

Internationally known theatrical performers Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee performed before a sellout crowd in Howard Auditorium on February 8. Davis is originally from Cogdell. He and Dee have been married for 33 years. Kris Kristofferson performed in Gressette Gym at ABAC on February 17 in a three-hour concert sponsored by the Student Union.

The Stallion won 14 awards in the 17 categories of competition at the annual Georgia Press Institute on February 18-20. Russell Camp is the editor. Program Director Jon Young of WABR-FM said the radio station is increasing its power from 10 watts to 29.5 watts in February. The Golden Fillies' basketball team of Coach Keith Barr lost to South Georgia 71-64 in the first round of the state tournament in Macon on February 25 despite 19 points by Jenni Collins. ABAC wound up with a 10-10 overall record.

The ABAC men's basketball team began NJCAA Region XVII tournament play on the Gressette Gym hardwood on March 4 as the regular season champion with a sparkling 16-1 league record. The Stallions rolled over South Georgia 75-56 on opening night behind 19 points by Eugene London, 17 points by Marshall Taylor, and 15 points by Al Holsey. In the semifinal round on March 5, Coach Donnie Veal's team knocked off archrival Middle Georgia 75-65 when London scored 13 points and Willie Roberts, Ben Pierce and Taylor contributed 12 points each.

On March 6, the Stallions defeated Gainesville 67-66 in a super thriller for the NJCAA Region XVII title, the first state basketball championship for ABAC since 1964. It proved to be the last state basketball title for the Stallions before the program was eliminated in 2008. Taylor, a 5-foot-9 sophomore from Enigma, was named the Most Valuable Player of the tournament. He scored 25 points in the championship game. Holsey added 11 points, and Roberts scored 10. Veal was named Coach of the Year in Region XVII, and Taylor, London, Holsey, and Roberts made the all-region team.

The Stallions then lost to Miami-Dade North Community College 56-54 on March 9 in a national playoff game in Lake City, Fla. Miami-Dade was 29-0 and ranked number one in the nation. Miami-Dade star Yvon Joseph then led his team to the national championship game of the NJCAA Tournament where it lost in overtime to Midland College, led by Spud Webb. The Fabulous Golddusters dance team under the direction of advisor Andrea Pate Willis performed at halftime in Lake City. ABAC rode a 17-game winning streak during the season to a final record

of 25-5. Veal was selected for the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2012, and Taylor and Willis were inducted in 2014.

ABAC student Sherry Morris from Blue Ridge became the first student ever selected for the Georgia Phi Theta Kappa Hall of Honor in 1982. Jenni Collins from Cotton was crowned Miss Homecoming at the 14th annual TABAC Beauty Revue on April 2. She was also the Most Valuable Player for the ABAC women's basketball team in 1981 and 1982. Collins had a career high of 44 points against Brewton-Parker.

Comptroller J. Talmadge Webb told alumni at Homecoming on April 3 that the value of the physical plant at ABAC was \$2 million in 1959 and \$18 million in 1981. Alumni Association award winners included William T. Greer, Distinguished Alumnus; Glenn Parkman, Outstanding Young Alumnus; Mary Grimsley, Master Homemaker; Larry McMillan, Master Young Farmer; Marshall Bennett, Master Farmer; and John Henry Davis, Outstanding Alumnus in Business. O.D. Carlton II and Jesse Chambliss were named Honorary Alumni. Ron Snuggs took over duties as the president of the Association.

Evelyn Manry Tharpe (Class of '36) became the first person to pledge \$500 toward the establishment of an alumni relations director's position at the college. At the annual meeting on April 3, the alumni body voted to approve a plan to find 300 people willing to pledge \$100 a year for three years to fund the position.

"We have an outstanding public relations program here," ABAC President Stanley Anderson said. "But Mr. Chason can't do the total public relations job and the total alumni relations job at the same time. Something has to give. That's why we need the alumni director to pull alumni together so we can truly have a strong alumni association."

Others joining the Magic 300 campaign were Glenn Parkman, Maida Ragan Evans, Elna Bragdon, Carolyn Branch, Shirley and Ben Lowery, J.C. Walters, C.D. Manning, Alumni Association President Tyron Spearman, and Academic Dean Frank Thomas. The third annual Arts Circus sponsored by the Arts Experiment Station was held April 24. Maria from Sesame Street was the star performer. Veterans Affairs Director Joe Turpen is the advisor for a new photography club on campus, the Image Makers.

The SGA campaign to raise \$1,000 for a new stallion statue has paid off. The new statue will be placed in front of the student center on a 10-foot pole to prevent vandalism. The ABAC administration placed the original statue of the golden stallion in the physical plant after it was stolen from its perch on numerous occasions. Cathy Gilmore, a freshman from Monticello, was crowned Miss Rodeo Georgia at the ABAC Rodeo Arena on May 2. She will participate in the Miss Rodeo America competition in December.

Marie Dodd, chair of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, addressed the distinguished and superior honor students of ABAC at the annual Honors Banquet in the dining hall on May 4. Dr. Hal Henderson received the Carlton Award for Teaching Excellence, and Procurement Officer Ray Walker received the Carlton Award for Staff Excellence at the annual Honors Day ceremony on May 5. ABAC benefactor O.D. Carlton, II, from Albany presented both awards at the ceremony.

A retirement party for Professor Vernon Yow was held in the Donaldson Dining Hall on May 6, recognizing him for 32 years of service. He was “roasted” by Harvey Johnson, Ray Jensen, Bobby Rowan, and Jesse Chambliss. At the conclusion of the dinner, Yow presented a check for \$10,000 to the ABAC Foundation.

The ninth annual ABAC Tractor Pull was held May 8-9. Jimmy Grubbs drove “Cracker Jack” to first place in the 7000 Super stock class. Over 2,000 spectators attended in near perfect weather conditions. Patsie Cannon was named the top college business teacher in the state when she received the Teaching Excellence Award from the Beta Delta Chapter of Delta Pi Epsilon. In its third year of existence, the women’s tennis team finished second in the NJCAA Region XVII playoffs and earned ABAC’s first berth ever in the women’s national tournament on May 10-12. Ellen Vickers is the coach of the Fillies.

Louise Mandrell was the featured performer at the 11th annual Dollars for Scholars event on May 28. Dining Hall Director George Graul said he added quail to the Dollars menu for the first time to complement roast beef, chicken, turkey, Cornish game hens, shrimp, oysters, scallops, stuffed pork chops, and crab meat. New members of The President’s Club of the ABAC Foundation were introduced at the banquet including Dr. and Mrs. Tom Brightwell, Ruth Patterson Britt, Dr. and Mrs. John H. Dorminy, III, Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Eastman, Mr. and Mrs. Homer Rankin, Dr. and Mrs. Joseph Turner, and Dr. and Mrs. Vernon Yow.

ABAC President Stanley Anderson announced plans to institute a mandatory meal ticket plan for students who live on campus. “The dining hall is about to go broke,” Anderson told *The Stallion*. “We are going to improve the food and extend the hours. We’re going to make the food appealing, nutritious, and of good variety.” A seven-day, three-meal per day plan will cost \$345 per quarter. A five-day two-meal per day plan will cost \$215. Under the direction of Sonny Burt, the Baldwin Players presented *The Tempest* on June 3-5.

Registrar Paul Gaines retired from his position after 38 years at ABAC. Faculty member Gerald Fletcher retired from the Science-Math Division after 23 years of service. ABAC awarded 436 degrees and certificates during the 1981-82 academic year, more than any other two-year college in Georgia.

Chuck DeVane from Lowndes High School hit .409 for the ABAC baseball team and was selected for the All-Region XVII team. The men's tennis team finished seventh in the national tournament.

Sonia Hancock from Sale City was selected as the editor of *The Stallion*, and Jody Metcalf from Fitzgerald was named as the editor of *Pegasus* for the coming year. David Gamble was elected president of the SGA, and David Denning was elected as the vice-president.

Registrar Jim Burran said 2,215 students enrolled for the fall quarter. Entertainment from the ABAC students at the Sunbelt Expo on October 12-14 at Spence Field near Moultrie will include The Fabulous Golddusters dance team, the choir, jazz band, rock band, bluegrass band, cloggers, and square dancers according to Chrystle Maxwell, who is the entertainment coordinator for the Sunbelt Expo committee. Patrolling outside the tent will be the ABAC Clown Corps and the Golden Stallion mascot. Members of the forestry-wildlife club will compete in log-chopping contests. Members of the Agricultural Equipment Technology club will arrive a week before the Expo begins to assist other exhibitors. Home Economics Club members will operate Expo information booths. The Expo began as a series of small equipment shows on the ABAC campus in 1964. It moved to the Spence Field site in 1978.

Grady Nutt, who was scheduled to perform at the 1983 Dollars for Scholars Benefit Banquet and Show, was recently killed in a plane crash in Alabama. Public Relations Director Mike Chason said the ABAC Foundation is now searching for another performer for the event.

Director of Residence Life Dianne Cowart said that Lewis Hall and Weltner Annex will close on December 9, and that the 49 male students in Weltner Annex and the 45 female students in Lewis will be moved to other dormitories on campus. Cowart said the closings are an effort to "conserve and consolidate."

ABAC Foundation President Ray Jensen announced on December 15 that the Foundation had exceeded its goal by raising \$1,096,428 during the *ABAC in the 80s* campaign. Bill Bowen was the campaign chairman. During the campaign, the Foundation received its largest single gift to date, an endowed scholarship worth \$153,180 from Homer and Lutrelle Rankin. Dorothy Dunn retired at the end of the fall quarter from her position as associate professor of social science after 12 years at ABAC.

1983

Louise Hyers hosted an alumni rally at her home in Athens on January 18. President and Mrs. Stanley Anderson, Media Services Coordinator Mark Alley, and Public Relations Director Mike Chason represented the college. Ron Snuggs (Class of '70) hosted a rally at the Rock Eagle 4-H

Center on February 2, and Norma Spivey (Class of '71) hosted an alumni rally at her home in Stone Mountain on February 7.

The Arts Experiment Station staged the fourth annual Arts Circus near Gressette Gym on April 23. Debbie Poppell from Tifton was crowned Miss Homecoming 1983 at the annual TABAC Beauty Revue on April 8.

The ABAC Alumni Association coordinated the first ever Stallion Stampede 5K race at the Homecoming celebration on April 9. After the race, a ceremony was held at the New Women's Dormitory to officially name it in honor of Iva Mozelle Chandler, a former Dean of Women, associate professor of social studies, and dormitory director at ABAC. At the Homecoming awards luncheon, alumni winners were Marguerite Jones Smallwood, Distinguished Alumnus; Jack C. Drew, Sr., Master Farmer; Sharon Davis Parkman, Master Homemaker; Carol Southerland Williams, Outstanding Young Alumnus; and Roger R. Allen, Master Young Farmer. The Golden Anniversary Committee headed by Dr. Lew Akin unveiled its plans for the year ahead at the awards luncheon. President Stanley Anderson and his wife, Dottie, and Dr. Akin and his wife, Judy, cut a Golden Anniversary cake.

Singing sensation Sylvia and comedians Skiles and Henderson were the guest performers at Dollars for Scholars on May 6. Mary Ellen Dickens from Tifton received the Donaldson Award at the commencement ceremony on June 11.

Charlie Marshall resigned after 14 years as a faculty member in the wildlife program on June 11. President Stanley Anderson said ABAC will save \$20,000 in utility costs by using a four-day work week during the summer. ABAC will operate on a 7:30 a.m. until 6 p.m. basis Monday through Thursday from June 19-September 11. Employees will have 30 minutes for lunch.

Coach Norman "Red" Hill was the proudest man on campus in July when the tennis courts got lights for the first time. "This has been a dream of mine since I came to ABAC 18 years ago," Hill said.

A memorial service for Doris Driggers, the wife of former President Clyde Driggers, was held in the Chapel on August 10. She passed away on August 7. During her husband's tenure as the ABAC President, she organized the Baldwin Woman's Club.

Despite being mounted on a 10-foot pedestal, the Golden Stallion statue was stolen on August 28. The thieves used a hacksaw to cut the Stallions' feet and tail from the mount. Assistant Dean of Students Henry "Bo" Miller said the Stallion will probably not be replaced. He said the students had raised \$1,000 to purchase and paint the Stallion. Security Chief Gene Paulk said the thief was "probably a student with a grudge against the college administration, a professor, or ABAC."

Registrar Jim Burran said that 2,182 students enrolled for the fall quarter, a 1.49 per cent decrease from the 2,215 students enrolled for the 1982 fall term.

On September 14, Dr. J. Gordon Brackett, an Atlanta physician, donated his African collection of exotic animal mounts, including heads, hooves, and skins, to the ABAC Foundation for display in Britt Hall. Valued at over \$250,000, the collection includes two elephant tusks which weigh 110 pounds each. The collection also includes the head of a black rhino, which the Smithsonian Institute reportedly wanted for display, but Brackett did not want to break up the collection. Dr. George Powell, chair of the Division of Science and Mathematics, said the collection will be utilized in ABAC classes and will be available for tours by school groups. Powell made the original contact with Brackett through a mutual acquaintance.

“Dr. Brackett wanted the collection to be used for educational purposes, and he wanted it to be kept together,” Powell said. “We assured him we could do both at ABAC. There were several museums that wanted a part of the collection, but he was kind enough to donate it all to us.”

Powell said the collection is quite valuable because many of the animals are now on the endangered species list. The collection also includes a black bear and a grizzly bear from one of Brackett’s hunting trips to Alaska.

The Golden Anniversary Kickoff party was held in the Donaldson Dining Hall on September 15. Dr. Lew Akin serves as chair of the committee. President Stanley Anderson and his wife, Dottie, and Dr. Akin and his wife, Judy, cut a Golden Anniversary cake to begin the celebration. “It’s going to be a great year for a lot of people,” Akin, chair of the Humanities Division, said.

A lighting ceremony for the new lights at the ABAC Tennis Center was held on October 6 at 7 p.m. The crowds were the largest ever for the ABAC exhibit at the Sunbelt Expo on October 11-13 when the ABAC Cloggers, the ABAC Travelin’ Stallion square dancers, and the Fabulous Golddusters dance team took the stage.

Assistant Dean of Student Affairs Henry “Bo” Miller said two elephant tusks were stolen from the new African Animal exhibit in Britt Hall on October 20. ABAC Security Chief Gene Paulk and Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice Frank Simons assisted Miller in the investigation. The tusks were recovered on a farm about five miles from the campus. The Fabulous Golddusters performed at the National Peanut Festival in Dothan on October 21. United States Secretary of Agriculture John Block had his picture made with the dance team.

President Stanley Anderson served as the host for the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia when they met in the ABAC Student Center for their monthly meeting on November 7-8 in honor of ABAC’s Golden Anniversary. Carolyn Leverett Kelly (Class of ’57) hosted an alumni rally in Bainbridge on November 15. The Baldwin Players staged *To Kill a Mockingbird*

in Howard Auditorium as their fall quarter production. Les Simpson, Jr., from Tifton played Atticus Finch.

1984

ABAC Registrar Jim Burran said that recently released figures showed more students graduated from ABAC during the 1981-82 year than from any other two-year college in the University System. He said ABAC awarded 436 degrees and certificates. Clayton Junior College was next with 294 degrees and certificates.

Presidential hopeful Walter Mondale spoke to a crowd of 300 people at the Georgia Agrirama on February 6. The Baldwin Players presented *1984* on February 14-17. The cast included Allen Tibbetts, Denise Jarrett, Chip Bailey, Miriam Worley, and Daphne Burt. Infirmiry Director Esteen Castagna said over 70 students had come to the health center with flu-like symptoms since the start of the winter quarter.

ABAC won its first women's basketball state championship ever on March 3 when Coach Keith Barr and the Fillies claimed the title with a 62-60 victory over Emmanuel College in Gressette Gym. "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. 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 state 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. 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 Senatobia, Miss., 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. The team was selected for the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2016.

Tracy Fulp from Cecil was crowned Miss Homecoming 1984 on April 6. Alumni Association award-winners at Homecoming on April 7 were Garland Thompson, Distinguished Alumnus; James R. Curry, Jr., Master Farmer; Carolyn Leverett Kelly, Master Homemaker; Charles T. Hall, Jr., Outstanding Young Alumnus; and Gary R. Brock, Master Young Farmer.

Faculty member Wright Crosby helped to coordinate the Golden Anniversary Truck and Tractor Pull at ABAC on April 28-29. Movie star Debbie Reynolds was the featured performer at Dollars for Scholars on May 4. New President's Club members inducted at the banquet by the ABAC Foundation included Dr. and Mrs. Gordon Brackett from Atlanta, Mr. and Mrs. John Prince, III, from Tifton, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Raines from Ashburn, Mr. and Mrs. Bob Reinhardt from Tifton, and Mr. and Mrs. Ford Spinks from Tifton. Development Director Melvin Merrill said the President's Club now includes 52 members who have given or pledged at least \$10,000 to the ABAC Foundation.

Dalton Sirmans from Lakeland and Lisa Legg from Commerce were selected by the students as Mr. and Miss Baldwin for 1983-84. Sirmans, president of the SGA, presented the SGA Impact Award to Registrar Jim Burran at the Student Activities Banquet on May 15. *The Stallion* editor Patty Norris presented Pacesetter awards to John Overman, Vickie Rentz, Patty Norris, Rhonda Zethmayer, Catherine Whitfield, Sidney Brock, Kip Braswell, Kenneth Ivory, Calvin Perry, Dalton Sirmans, and Dr. Homer Day. The Georgia Association of Nursing Students won Club of the Year. Greg Nobles and Les Simpson, Jr., were sworn in as president and vice president for the SGA for 1984-85.

Laura Lynn Davis, a freshman home economics major from Blakely, was crowned Miss Tifton 1984 on May 19. Kenneth Ivory, a sophomore home economics major from Buena Vista, was selected to serve on the search committee for the Chancellor of the University System of Georgia. Ivory served as vice president of the ABAC SGA this year.

ABAC won its first national championship in any sport on May 25 when Coach Norman "Red" Hill and his team captured the National Junior College Athletic Association men's tennis title in Ocala, Fla. The top six players received All-America recognition in singles and doubles. Team members included Carlos Perez, John Luc Dumont, Michael Rice, Pat Breen, Chris Demarta, and Tony Giorgetti. Other members of the team who did not compete in the national tournament were Richard Carr, York Carter, and Reg Holden. Hill was inducted into the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame inaugural class in 2008. The team was inducted into the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2009. The Stallions also won the state title. Hill received the 1984 Max Grubbs trophy for winning National Coach of the Year honors.

“Winning the championship has to be the greatest moment of my life,” Hill told a reporter for *The Stallion* after the victory. “These ABAC players have given everything a human being could possibly give. It was so great for these players to be rewarded for the work they have done.”

Coach Ellen Vickers’ Fillies tennis team also won the state title and finished seventh in the national tournament in 1984. The Fillies became the first ABAC team in any sport to win every match during the regular season. The team included Melanie Bourne, Teresa Tew, Tania Smith, Lynn Wells, Virginia Camara, and Holly Moseley.

Coach Wayne Cooper’s ABAC golf team also won the 1984 state championship and finished fourth in the national tournament. Joey Dixon from Blackshear was named first team All-America by finishing 10th in the national golf tournament. Billy Bulmer from Tifton finished 19th in the national tournament. Hill, Barr, Vickers, and Cooper all won Georgia Coach of the Year honors.

After the golf season, Chad Willis became the first and perhaps the only ABAC golfer to sign a scholarship with Ohio State University. He was the first junior college golfer ever signed by the Buckeyes.

With four teams finishing in the Top 10 in the nation, Representatives Henry Bostick and Hanson Carter sponsored a resolution in the Georgia House of Representatives honoring the ABAC teams on their accomplishments.

A social hour in the dining hall at 3 p.m. on May 31 will wind up the work of the Golden Anniversary Committee. The faculty-staff meeting will follow the time of refreshments. Over 2,000 people saw the ABAC Golden Anniversary Slide Show which was presented 38 times during the year by Dr. Lew Akin, Mike Chason, and Melvin Merrill. Over 50,000 others saw ABAC performing groups in action during the Golden Anniversary Year.

At the end of the spring quarter, James “Sonny” Burt submitted his resignation as the ABAC theatre director and associate professor of speech and drama. He directed and produced over 40 plays with the Baldwin Players from the time he joined the faculty in 1969.

“My work at ABAC has been a tremendous, interesting, and hair-raising 15 years,” Burt said. His final production, *The Night of January 16th*, featured George T. Smith (Class of ’40), Tyron Spearman (Class of ’65), and Georgia Attorney General Michael Bowers in the role of the judge. Bowers was Burt’s high school classmate. The play was originally staged at ABAC in 1939 by

George P. Donaldson, when he was an ABAC faculty member before he became president in 1947.

Associate Professor of Agricultural Engineering Marshall Guill passed away on July 10. He was a faculty member at ABAC for 19 years. Dr. Earl Knebel was named the Chair of the Division of Agriculture, Home Economics and Forestry, effective September 1. He replaced Dr. Frank McCain, who retired in June after 18 years at ABAC. Other retirees in the summer of 1984 included Ann Hammons, Val Blanchard, Homer M. Moore, Jr., Alister Gilbert, Florence Huff, Dan Conoly, and Dr. William T. Brightwell. Pattie Garrett (Class of '76) was selected as the director of the ABAC nursing program.

President Stanley Anderson broke ground on the Baldwin Memorial Gardens in August. Located in front of the Chapel, the Gardens will feature a reflecting pool, perennial flowers, shrubs, and trees. Anderson planted many of the flowers himself. ABAC enrolled 1,979 students for the fall quarter. United States Senator Sam Nunn toured the campus on October 15. His tour guides were SGA President Les Simpson, Jr., Sophomore Class President Leesa Sirmans, and SGA Secretary Vonda Doss.

Food Services Director George Graul retired on December 31. His wife, Aliene, will continue to work with the new food services contractor for one year, and the Grauls' daughter, Mary, will continue to work as the snack bar supervisor.

1985

ARA Services, the largest food contractor in the world, took over management of the Donaldson Dining Hall on January 1. David Gilman is the new Food Services Director.

In a news conference on January 14, President Stanley Anderson announced his retirement effective January 1, 1986. The Rudyard, Michigan native became the sixth president in the history of ABAC in 1975. During Anderson's years as president, the scholarship endowment in the ABAC Foundation grew from \$25,000 to \$450,000. Registrar and Assistant Academic Dean Jim Burran was appointed as the chair of the presidential search committee.

Valerie Nettles from Tifton was crowned Miss Homecoming 1985 in the TABAC Beauty Revue on April 12. It was the first pageant she ever entered. Award winners at the 1985 Homecoming celebration on April 13 were Dr. Wanda Grogan, Distinguished Alumnus; Don Laing, Master Young Farmer; James H. Moore, Jr. (posthumous), Master Farmer; Carolyn McKenzie, Outstanding Young Alumnus, Carolyn Hill Branch, Master Homemaker, and Dr. Stanley

Anderson, Honorary Alumnus. Yvonne Harrison Crawford won the Homecoming Bake-Off for the second year in a row. Garland Thompson was named president of the Alumni Association. The 1935 ABAC football team held a reunion at Homecoming. Attendees included Wilbur Blount, Clayt Hurst, Billy Pullen, Harrison Rainwater, Grayson Jones, and M.T. Riner. A win over the University of Tampa's freshman squad was the highlight of the year in 1935. Jim Threatte spoke on his memories of Coach Orion Mitchell during the reunion. Also, on April 13, Georgia Supreme Court Justice George T. Smith (Class of '40) spoke at the Freedom Shrine dedication in Bowen Hall. The Freedom Shrine is a unique exhibit of 28 authentic reproductions of famous American documents from the Mayflower Compact to the World War II Instrument of Surrender in the Pacific.

Farm Manager Robert Lindsey (Class of '84) received the Carlton Staff Award for Excellence, and Dr. J.P. Rowe (Class of '58) received the Carlton Faculty award for Excellence at the Honors Day ceremony on May 1.

TV star Gloria Loring sang to a sellout crowd of 750 persons who paid \$75 each at Dollars for Scholars on May 17. All seats were sold by April 29, the earliest sellout in the history of the event. At a press conference in Howard Auditorium prior to the show, fans of the daytime drama, *Days of Our Lives*, packed the building. The Fabulous Golddusters dance team performed in 61 different shows during the 1984-85 year in front of 20,425 persons. That number included 9,525 high school students. Andrea Pate Willis is the advisor for the group.

Dr. Leon Benefield Receives SGA Impact Award

At the Student Activities Banquet on May 21, Dr. Leon Benefield received the SGA Impact Award from SGA President Les Simpson, Jr. TABAC Editor Robert Jordon presented Pacesetter awards to President Stanley Anderson, Doris Sears, Mark Alley, John Dell Evans, Rhonwyn Fulcher, Fred Kendrick, Mike Touchton, Tony Giorgetti, Les Simpson, Jr., and Sherrie Bloodworth. Les Simpson, Jr., and Vonda Doss were voted on by the students as Mr. and Miss Baldwin. Vonda Doss received the Club of the Year trophy on behalf of the Student Home Economics Association. Kay Dukes directed the Baldwin Players in *The Good Doctor* on May 28-30. Vonda Doss from Tifton received the Donaldson Award at the commencement ceremony on June 8.

The ABAC men's tennis team, women's tennis team, and golf team all won state championships in 1985. Coach Norman Hill's Stallions finished fifth in the national tournament. John Jonsson from Sweden won the national championship at number two singles. Hill was named the International Tennis Association Coach of the Year. Coach Ellen Vickers' Fillies' tennis team

finished 11th in the nation, and Coach Wayne Cooper's golfers finished eighth in the nation. Joey Dixon was an All-America selection for the second year in a row. He is headed to Georgia Tech on a golf scholarship.

President Stanley Anderson announced in June that the ABAC Alumni Association had over \$63,000 in pledges and contributions so he gave the okay to begin the search for the college's first fulltime alumni director.

Secretary to the President Doris Sears retired on June 30. She started her ABAC career in 1952 and served as the secretary for four ABAC presidents, a record which will probably never be broken. Vivian Pearman, formerly the secretary in the academic dean's office, was selected as the new president's secretary. Evelyn Eve, a staff member in the Registrar's Office, also retired on June 30. She joined the ABAC staff on September 1, 1957.

Tennis Coach Norman Hill signed his son, Skip, and Golf Coach Wayne Cooper signed his son, Chris, to play for the Golden Stallions this year. The conference room in the AET building was dedicated in honor of the late Marshall Guill, an AET faculty member for 18 years before he passed away in 1984. Comptroller J. Talmadge Webb announced that a portion of Herring Hall is now being rented to the Tift County Board of Health/Diversified Enterprises.

ABAC enrolled 1,803 students for the fall quarter, a decrease from the 1,979 students enrolled in 1984. Nancy Clark (Class of '75) began her duties as the first fulltime Director of Alumni Relations in the history of ABAC on September 23. A fundraising campaign called *The Magic 300* helped to raise funds for Clark's salary. Supporters pledged \$100 a year for three years to support the position. As an ABAC student, Clark served as the editor of *The Agriculturist* and the *ABAC Puller*.

Tom M. Cordell Distinguished Lecture Series Begins

ABAC initiated the Tom M. Cordell Distinguished Lecture Series in Cordell's honor on October 1. Cordell served 39 years as the head of the continuing education program at ABAC. He was recognized as the "Man of the Year" by *Progressive Farmer* in 1971. Cordell received the Georgia Adult Education Citation in 1972. When he retired in 1979, he received congratulatory telegrams from President Jimmy Carter and Georgia Governor George Busbee. The first speaker in the Cordell Lecture Series in Howard Auditorium was internationally known geneticist Dr. Glenn Burton from the Coastal Plain Experiment Station who spoke on *Feeding a Hungry World*. Other speakers in the series included former U.S. Attorney General Griffin Bell in 1987, Atlanta Mayor Andrew Young in 1988, Chick-Fil-A founder Truett Cathy in 1989, author Ferrol Sams in 1990, author Clyde Edgerton in 1993, Atlanta Opera Artistic Director William Fred

Scott in 1995, author Janice Daugharty in 1996, Human Development Consultant William Parker in 1997, BellSouth Senior Vice President Carl Swearingen in 1999 and many others.

On October 30-November 1, Dr. Hal Henderson (Class of '62) and Dr. Gary Roberts (Class of '62), two professors in the Division of Social Science, organized an historic symposium titled *Georgia Governors in an Age of Change: From Ellis Arnall to George Busbee*. Former Georgia governors on stage in the Donaldson Dining Hall on one night of the symposium were Carl Sanders, Lester Maddox, Ernest Vandiver, and Herman Talmadge. Former governors Ellis Arnall, George Busbee, and Jimmy Carter send video-taped speeches. Governor Joe Frank Harris delivered the opening speech live on WTIF Radio through an amplifier on the Howard Auditorium stage when his plane could not land in Tifton due to inclement weather. A video chronicling the life of the late Marvin Griffin was also presented. Georgia Secretary of State Max Cleland also addressed the audience. Ric Allen, political editor from the *Atlanta Constitution*, was the moderator. The event was taped by Georgia Public Television. Henderson and Roberts used their research to write a book on the symposium which was published by the University of Georgia Press.

Under the direction of Haller Laughlin, the Baldwin Players staged *The Drunkard* during the fall term. A farewell reception was held for President and Mrs. Stanley Anderson on Dec. 1 in the Donaldson Dining Hall. The Andersons moved to their retirement home in Sun City Center, Florida when he retired on December 31.

1986

Academic Dean Frank Thomas served as interim president at ABAC from January 1-March 31. The Baldwin Players performed *Gigi* in Howard Auditorium during the winter quarter. ABAC students formed a Skateboard Club by converting the old tennis courts near the south parking lot into a skateboard complex with three street ramps and a large half-pipe ramp.

Discover ABAC Day attracted 800 high school students on February 18 from 100 high schools in Georgia, Florida, Alabama, and South Carolina. The Jazz Band, the Sound Sensations Show Choir, the ABAC Cloggers, the Fabulous Golddusters dance team, the Travelin' Stallion Square Dancers, and the ABAC Rock Band, Overload, provided the entertainment. Extra added attractions for the visitors included a mini-rodeo, a mini-tractor pull, a Baldwin Players' production, and a fashion show.

Dr. Wayne Curtis Selected as ABAC President

Dr. Wayne Curtis became president of Abraham Baldwin on April 1. An Alabama native, Curtis earned a bachelor's and a master's degree at Auburn University and a doctoral degree from Mississippi State University. Curtis was a First Lieutenant in the United States Army where he served from 1964-66. He is now a Lt. Colonel in the U.S. Army Reserve. He and his wife, Seretha, and their three children became the last occupants of the President's home on Lake Baldwin during his presidency. Dr. Clyde Driggers, Dr. Stanley Anderson, and their families also lived in the house during their presidencies. The ABAC president's home later became the office for the College Advancement operation including the ABAC Foundation and the ABAC Alumni Association. When Dr. Harold J. Loyd was selected as president in 1989, he already had a home in the community.

Building on his background as the former Dean of the College of Business at Troy State University, Curtis commissioned an Image Study to determine how ABAC was perceived by faculty, staff, students, employers, high school counselors and area citizens. From this study, Curtis launched an aggressive marketing and promotional campaign which included new brochures, a direct mail campaign based upon interest surveys purchased from a list of SAT and ACT test-takers, and ABAC's first toll-free telephone number for admissions. Through this new marketing approach, the college was referred to as Abraham Baldwin in much of the literature. Advertisements emphasized that the college had agriculture and many more majors.

After the Image Study was completed, Curtis appointed a campus-wide committee to develop a Strategic Plan for ABAC to determine the goals and objectives of the College. These goals and objectives were written down, prioritized, and a means for achieving them developed.

Curtis originated the idea of a new Enrichment Program to attract young people to the campus during the summer. He also emphasized evening and off-campus programs. The ABAC Incentive Program was also developed during the Curtis presidency. When the program was initiated, it received widespread publicity with stories in *USA Today* and the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. Over 600 students received help from this program. The program provided free tuition donated by the ABAC Foundation for one course for individuals who had not attended college within the past five years and had no more than 40 college quarter hours. Participants in the program must also have been out of high school for at least five years. Curtis initiated much change at ABAC, laying the groundwork for future enrollment growth.

On April 10, the Fabulous Golddusters' dance team took its recruitment show on the road for performances at Pineland Academy and Colquitt County High School in Moultrie and Pelham High School in Pelham. On April 17, the Golddusters performed for three different high schools in three different towns. Under the direction of Andrea Willis, the dance troupe performed at Lanier County High School in Lakeland, Irwin County High School in Ocilla, and Berrien High School in Nashville.

Kendra Brock, a freshman fashion merchandising major from Marietta, was crowned as Miss Homecoming at the 18th annual TABAC Beauty Revue on April 18. Award winners at the Homecoming luncheon were J.D. Patton, Distinguished Alumnus; Kathy E. Gill, Outstanding Young Alumnus; Armond Morris, Master Farmer; Yvonne Harrison Crawford, Master Homemaker; Al Curry, Jr., Master Young Farmer, and John Hunt, Outstanding Business Leader. Dr. Vernon Yow and Mike Chason were named Honorary Alumni of ABAC.

At the Honors Day ceremony on May 7, Dr. Gary Roberts received the Carlton Award for Faculty Excellence, and Jimmy Grubbs received the Carlton Award for Staff Excellence. Pacesetter winners selected by the TABAC staff at the student activities banquet on May 20 were David Cline, Ann Gibson, Chet Szymanski, Tracy Skinner, Andy Martin, Kris Perkins, Dr. Wayne Curtis, Lee Lacey, Leroy Bynum, and Pam Wiley. Eddie Seagle received the SGA Impact Award, and Delta Epsilon Chi was named Club of the Year. Lee Lacey was named Mr. Baldwin, and Linda Nichols was named Miss Baldwin.

ABAC Sets Record with Four State Championships

ABAC set a Georgia Junior College Athletic Association record with four state championships during the 1986 spring sports campaign. ABAC won titles in baseball, golf, men's tennis, and women's tennis. State Representative Henry Bostick sponsored a commendation for the Stallions and the Fillies in the state legislature for the accomplishment.

Coach Tom Moody's Stallions won the state baseball championship in 1986 on one of the most incredible plays in ABAC baseball history. ABAC piled up six runs in the top of the ninth inning in the championship game to take a 9-8 lead only to see number one-ranked Middle Georgia hit a pinch-hit home run with one man on base in the bottom of the ninth. In his excitement, the pinch hitter passed his teammate on the base paths and touched home plate before him. That move constituted the final out of the game and negated the two runs. Stallions win! "He was so excited that between third base and home plate, he passed the base runner," Moody said. "I didn't see it because I had gone to the mound to console my pitcher. Fortunately, the umpires had the courage to call it, and they did. It's hard to describe how I felt. I couldn't believe it. We had a good team that year." All-Tournament team selections included Luis Morales, Jesus Rivera, Joel Owens, and Roger Daniel. Rivera was named Most Valuable Player of the state tournament, and Moody was named Coach of the Year. ABAC finished second behind Florida champion Brevard in the Southeast Regional. Rivera, Morales, Daniel, Zebe Hamilton, Greg Hurdle, Phil Barton, and Jason Cain were named to the District All-Tournament Team. The Stallions had a final record of 31-16.

Coach Wayne Cooper's ABAC golf team won the state championship and finished third in the 1986 national tournament. Jon Worrell was the medalist for the state tournament. Billy Edwards and Mike Elliot were selected for the All-America team, and Worrell was named as an

Honorable Mention selection. Worrell and Jesus Rivera from the baseball team were nominated for the Junior College Player of the Year by the Georgia Sports Hall of Fame.

Coach Norman “Red” Hill led the Stallions’ tennis team to its 15th state title. Led by Jon Ola Johnson, the Stallions advanced to their 21st consecutive national tournament where they finished ninth. Coach Ellen Vickers and the ABAC women’s tennis team won the state title and wound up 15th in the national tournament. Angie Poppell won the state title at number one singles. Hill and Vickers were nominated for Junior College Coach of the Year by the Georgia Sports Hall of Fame.

Coach Donnie Veal and the ABAC men’s basketball team compiled a record of 15-13 and advanced to the second round of the state playoffs before losing to Dekalb 66-64 on a last second shot. Tim Wyatt and Frank Davis were named to the All-Tournament Team, and both were named All-State performers for the second year in a row. Veal called Wyatt “the best all-around player I have had in my nine years at ABAC.” ABAC discontinued its women’s basketball program after the 1986 season, citing low participation and problems recruiting quality athletes who were being recruited by senior colleges and universities trying to meet Title IX requirements. Coach Keith Barr’s team lost to South Georgia 72-64 in the first round of the state playoffs and wound up with a 13-13 record.

Ray Stevens Performs at Dollars for Scholars

Albany native Ray Stevens performed at the annual Dollars for Scholars Benefit Banquet and Show on May 23 before 810 patrons, the largest audience in the history of the event which began in 1972. Stevens also performed at the event in 1977.

Trudi Feldman was the editor of the 50th and final edition of the *TABAC* in 1986. Students were not interested in funding the publication the next year, and it never returned. Editor Kris Perkins led *The Stallion* to three first place general category wins in the Georgia College Press Association competition. He also became the first ABAC student to serve as president of the GCPA. Three other *Stallion* editors served as GCPA president while attending the University of Georgia: David Wansley in 1971, Melita Easters Hayes in 1974, and Jeannie Griffin in 1977.

Allison Mae Miller from Tifton was presented the Donaldson Award at the commencement ceremony on June 7. She is the daughter of Henry “Bo” Miller, assistant dean of student affairs. Kaycee Brown from Tifton was selected as the 1986-87 editor of *The Stallion*.

On the night of September 13, one or more persons cut their way into the ABAC deer pen and killed a deer using a bow and arrow and crippled two others. Assistant Professor of Wildlife Dick Payne said a reward of \$4,000 was offered for information leading to the arrest and conviction of those responsible. The perpetrators were never found.

ABAC enrolled 1,770 students for the fall quarter, a decrease from the 1,803 students enrolled for the fall of 1985. ABAC held Sunday Afternoon Open House for the entire community on September 21. Former Academic Dean Loyal Norman and his wife, Dorothy, were killed in an automobile accident on September 23. Norman was the ABAC Academic Dean from September 1, 1965 until he retired in December of 1975.

Frank Simons is the new director of the ABAC Regional Police Academy, replacing Ed Byers who will teach in the Division of Social Science. Dr. J.P. Rowe is the new acting chair of the Division of Science and Mathematics, replacing Dr. George Powell who is returning to a teaching position. Joy Conger is the acting director of the nursing program, replacing Pattie Garrett who is returning to a teaching position.

President Wayne Curtis and Alumni Director Nancy Coleman attended alumni rallies in Macon, Moultrie, Athens, and Savannah during the fall term. University System of Georgia Chancellor Dean Propst visited the ABAC campus on October 21. Louis J. Willie was the guest speaker at the Tom M. Cordell Distinguished Lecture Series on October 29. NBC News reporter Kenley Jones did a national news story at ABAC on the decline in the number of students majoring in agriculture on November 10. Curtis instituted a new op-ed column opportunity for ABAC on November 12 called *Viewpoint*. The columns from ABAC administrators, faculty, and staff on a variety of topics ran in *The Tifton Gazette* and four area weekly papers. Dr. Haller Laughlin directed the Baldwin Players in *She Stoops to Conquer* on November 12-15. Dr. Tom Milam, chair of the Division of Social Science, retired on December 31. He began his ABAC career in 1968.

1987

Dr. Ernest Edwards performed the music of Chopin, Brahms, Listz, and Mendelssohn at his faculty concert on January 11 in Howard Auditorium. A retirement dinner for Dr. Tom Milam, the longtime chair of the Division of Social Science, was held on January 23. Sandra Giles was named the Georgia Phi Theta Kappa Chapter Member of the Year at the state convention on February 7. She also received the art award and was named to the Georgia Hall of Honor. Nine hundred prospective students attended the seventh annual Discover ABAC Day on February 17. Former Attorney General Griffin Bell was the featured speaker for the Tom M. Cordell Distinguished Lecture Series on February 19. Dr. Haller Laughlin directed the Baldwin Players' production of *Where's Charley?* on February 25-28.

Monica Weaver from Moultrie was selected as Miss Homecoming 1987 at the TABAC Beauty Revue on April 10. State Senator Harold Ragan was named the Distinguished Alumnus winner at Homecoming on April 11. Other Alumni Association award winners were Richard D. Coleman, who received the first ever J. Lamar Branch Award; Joseph A. Haley, II, Outstanding Business Leader; Jerald Carter, Master Farmer; Helen Brown Sasser, Master Homemaker; Dr. Norma Green Spivey, Outstanding Young Alumnus; Joe Kyle Veal, Master Young Farmer; and Dr. J.G. Woodroof, Honorary Alumnus. A portrait dedication ceremony was held at Tift Hall for former President Frank Branch and Coach Bruce Gressette. Faculty and staff members honored for 20 years of service at the Homecoming luncheon were Merle Baker, Dr. Libby Campbell, Dr. Rosemary Johnson, Dr. Frank Thomas, Ray Walker, Ellen Vickers, Dr. Virginia Widstrom, Lester Simpson, Jimmy Grubbs, and Robert Cromer. Retirees honored included Dr. Tom Milam, Dr. Frank Thomas, Emory McMillan, and Lester Simpson. The Swingin' Medallions played for the Homecoming dance.

Zell Miller Speaks at Honors Day Banquet

Lieutenant Governor Zell Miller was the featured speaker at the Honors Day banquet on May 5. Sandra Crawford from Chula was recognized as the Academic Recognition Day student in the Georgia General Assembly for ABAC at Honors Day on May 6. The 1985 valedictorian at Tift County High School, Crawford compiled a perfect 4.0 grade point average at ABAC. Her parents, Johnny and Yvonne, are both ABAC alumni (Class of '61). Dr. Charlotte Pfeiffer, Penny Chestnut, Marie Worley, Garth Webb, Angie McDaniel, Stacy Miller, Tonja Houston, Jennifer Anderson, Michael Buckler, Sandra Crawford, Kaycee Brown, and Howard Still received Pacesetter awards from TABAC Editor Janine Marchant at the Student Activities Banquet on May 19. Baptist Student Union was Club of the Year. Assistant Dean of Student Affairs Henry "Bo" Miller received the SGA Impact Award. He joined the ABAC staff on September 1, 1971.

Mel Tillis was the featured performer before 713 patrons at Dollars for Scholars on May 22. He replaced Roger Miller one month prior to the event when Miller developed back problems and cancelled all his shows for six weeks. Tillis never left his tour bus a single time until he stepped on stage for the show in the Donaldson Dining Hall. New ABAC Foundation President's Club members recognized at the banquet were Dr. and Mrs. Curtis Branch, Rosalyn Ray Donaldson, Dennis R. Durden, Betty A. Gleaton, Mr. and Mrs. J. Frank McGill, Mr. and Mrs. Robert C. Walker, and Mr. and Mrs. Hubert P. Whiddon.

The ABAC basketball season ended on February 24 when Coach Donnie Veal's Stallions lost to Emmanuel in the first round of the state tournament. Coach Norman "Red" Hill's men's tennis team won the state championship and advanced to national tournament play where the Golden Stallions finished sixth. "I'm as proud of these boys as I can be," Hill said. "This was the

strongest tournament, the most talent I have seen in my 23 years of coaching. To play as hard as they did and finish sixth was just great.” ABAC’s Stefan Kulti lost in the finals at #5 singles and made the All-America team along with Johan Strandeus and Rikard Allgurin, who lost in the #1 doubles’ finals.

Coach Wayne Cooper’s ABAC golfers won the state title behind the play of low medalist Mike Elliott, a sophomore from Leominster, Mass. The Golden Stallions finished seventh in the national tournament behind Jon Worrell who finished in a tie for second in the individual standings with an eight-under-par 280 for the four rounds. Worrell, a sophomore from Douglas, recorded the lowest score ever by a Golden Stallion in the national tournament when he shot 67 in the third round. He was named First Team All-America. “Jon has accepted a full scholarship to the University of Georgia, and it looks like he could be their number one player his first year there,” Cooper said. Other ABAC team members were Matt Mixon, Chris Cooper, and John Anderson. ABAC competed in the national golf tournament for the 17th straight year.

Coach Ellen Vickers’ Fillies’ tennis team finished second in the state tournament and 11th in the national tournament. Angie Poppell won the state title at #1 singles and was selected as the most valuable player of the state tournament. ABAC dropped women’s tennis after the season. Women’s softball will replace tennis. Ellen Vickers, a three-time winner of the Coach of the Year award in the state for women’s tennis, will be the softball coach.

Business Division Chair Harold Loyd and Professor of Agricultural Economics Ron Jones prepared an economic impact study which showed ABAC had an annual economic impact of \$18.5 million on Tift County. “I was really somewhat surprised at the results,” ABAC President Wayne Curtis said. “I knew the college had a big impact, but I didn’t realize the magnitude of that impact. I think the study showed the tremendous repercussions which would occur in the economy if ABAC was not located in Tift County.”

ABAC President Wayne Curtis spoke at three different churches, Springfield Baptist, Mt. Zion Baptist, and Allen Temple A.M.E. He also spoke at the Brooks County High School graduation ceremony. Public Relations Director Mike Chason was the guest speaker at the Echols County High School graduation ceremony. Friends honored Academic Dean Frank Thomas with a retirement dinner on June 5 at the Elks Lodge. Assistant Comptroller Emory McMillan was honored for 36 years at ABAC with a retirement dinner on June 12. “I never thought of it as a job,” the 65-year-old McMillan said. “It has always been a delight. Seeing the young people, hearing them laugh, and just being around them has kept me young.” Susan Oliver heads up the Summer Enrichment Program, with camps and classes for kids of all ages. The Natural Resources Conservation Workshop expects 300 campers in June. Band and football camps will fill up the month of August.

Dr. James Burran Named Academic Dean

Dr. James Burran was selected for the Academic Dean's position, effective July 1, upon the retirement of Dr. Frank Thomas. Burran was named assistant to the academic dean on January 1, 1980. He later became the ABAC registrar. Burran joined the ABAC faculty in 1978 as an assistant professor in the Division of Social Science. Also effective on July 1, Dr. Leon Benefield will become chair of the Division of Science and Mathematics, Dr. Ronald Faircloth will become chair of the Division of Social Science, Joy Conger will become Director of Nursing, and Bill Wilkinson will be the new assistant comptroller. Dr. Homer Day has been selected for the position of Federal Grants Coordinator in addition to his duties as Director of Financial Aid. He has just completed a year at Georgia Southern College as a part of the Regents Administrative Development Program. Garth Webb has been promoted to Registrar and Director of Admissions. Webb reported that summer term enrollment is up for the first time since 1980. A total of 655 students took summer classes, up from 604 in the summer of 1986.

For the third year in a row, the nursing students at ABAC scored a 100 per cent pass rate on the state licensure examination. Construction on the new pool near Gressette Gym is now underway. New recruiting brochures are hot off the press as a part of a marketing campaign which will also include television and radio advertising, and the production of a campus recruitment video. Comptroller J. Talmadge Webb reported on September 25 that the loan on Branch Hall is completely paid off.

A total of 1,723 students enrolled at ABAC for the fall quarter, marking the lowest enrollment at the college since the 1969 enrollment of 1,648. Mary Price from Tifton will serve as editor of *Pegasus* this year. Faculty member George Scott will be writing feature stories for the public relations office this quarter. Exhibits from all disciplines will highlight ABAC Day at the Town and Country Mall in Tifton on October 17. The Baldwin Players presented *The Miss Firecracker Contest* on November 11-14. Kay Dukes now directs the Players. Humanities Division Chair Lew Akin directed the music program fall concert on November 19. Titled *Celebration! An Evening with Abraham Baldwin*, the production was written by Dr. Gary Roberts, who will portray Abraham Baldwin. The program salutes the 200th anniversary of the United States Constitution. Don Coates directs the Concert Band, and Henry Thomas directs the Concert Choir.

Four horses owned by students were stabled at the Veterinary Technology building in the fall, marking a return of horses to the campus for the first time in seven years. From the early 1970s to the early 1980s, ABAC had about 50 horses on campus. Most were owned by the college and were used in PED 140, Horseback Riding. It was one of the most popular physical education classes. The program ended because of the cost to ABAC, and students stabled their horses with area landowners. Plans call for the construction of additional stables on the campus.

Dr. Vernon Yow, at one time the Dean of Men and a longtime professor in the forestry program, passed away on December 19. Yow received his forestry degree from Yale University. He joined the ABAC faculty in 1950 and started the forestry program in 1954. He was inducted into the Georgia Foresters Hall of Fame in 1981. Yow received the Carlton Award as ABAC's top faculty member in 1973. The Yow Forestry-Wildlife Building was named in his honor in 1988. The ABAC Foundation has approved funding for up to 75 ABAC Incentive Grants for the winter quarter. Faculty and staff members can fund one of the grants by contributing \$126 to the ABAC Foundation. Payroll deduction is available.

1988

At the ABAC Alumni Association board meeting on January 8, President Wayne Curtis announced that Peach State Radio, the public radio network in Georgia, was coming to ABAC. He said that the radio tower was supposed to be placed on University of Georgia property but due to a surveyor's error, the site was placed in an ABAC pasture. The error was not discovered until the site had been approved by the Federal Communications Commission and the Federal Aviation Administration. He said that because the site had already been printed on navigation maps, the FAA decided the tower must be constructed on that site.

In return for the tower being placed on the ABAC property, ABAC gained a 2500-watt public radio station on campus. The frequency is 91.1 FM, and it will be called WABR. The 10-watt student radio station will continue to operate under the new call letters of WPLH. Tom Call will scale back his teaching duties in the Division of Agriculture to become the director of the public radio station, which is to begin broadcasting on March 1.

Bill Wilkinson assumed his duties as the ABAC comptroller on February 1. He replaced J. Talmadge Webb, who retired with 32 years of service to the college in the comptroller's position.

Missy Ball from Tifton was crowned Miss Abraham Baldwin 1988 on February 18 at the annual TABAC Beauty Revue sponsored by the campus yearbook. *TABAC* is the acronym for The Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College.

On February 27, *The Stallion* was named the top two-year college newspaper in Georgia by the Georgia College Press Association. The paper has now been named Georgia's best in 14 of the past 18 years. Toi Hatchell from Tifton is serving as the 1987-88 editor of the publication. Helen Strickland has been the advisor to the publication since 1968.

ABAC Ambassadors Program Established

With assistance from Director of Admissions Garth Webb and Director of Public Relations Mike Chason, President Curtis established the ABAC Ambassadors' leadership program during the winter quarter of 1988. The first six Ambassadors were Mildred Alexander from Blakely, Scott Chandler from Niceville, Fla., Toby Carmichael from Tifton, James Nash from Blakely, Laura Beth Tucker from Ocilla, and Pam Wood from Thomson. Admissions counselor Bruce Applewhite was the primary advisor to the group. Tucker later became president of the ABAC Alumni Association.

Women's slow pitch softball joined the ABAC intercollegiate sports lineup during the 1988 winter quarter. Ellen Vickers was the first coach. The team began its season with a 1-15 record but wound up winning the NJCAA Region XVII title and finished eighth in the national tournament.

Governor Joe Frank Harris honored Dr. Vincent Keese, professor of art, as one of the recipients of the 1988 Governor's Awards in the Arts. ABAC opened a new Olympic-size swimming pool on the west side of Gressette Gym on April 11. The old pool was filled in and covered by dirt and fresh sod. It was located on the north side of Thrash Gym.

The Yow Forestry-Wildlife Building was named in honor of former Dean of Men and Professor of Forestry Vernon Yow at Homecoming on April 23. Yow established the ABAC forestry program in 1954. ABAC celebrated its 80th birthday with an open house for the community in the dining hall on April 24. Former ABAC presidents J.G. Woodroof and Stanley Anderson joined President Wayne Curtis to cut a ceremonial cake. Alumni Director Nancy Clark organized the event.

Rowell Daniels from Tifton and Missy Ball from Eldorado were named Mr. and Miss Baldwin at the student activities banquet. Daniels served as the SGA president during the year, and Ball won the TABAC Beauty Revue. Gary Branch from Chula won the election for SGA president for the 1988-89 year, and Melody Miller from Tifton was elected SGA vice-president.

The ABAC Foundation received the largest bequest from any faculty or staff member in the history of the institution on May 16 when executrix Mary Lee Payne and attorney Hugh Gordon announced that \$75,000 from the estate of former faculty member Katherine Rountree Christian will be set aside to establish the Katherine Rountree Christian Science Scholarships. Christian was an assistant professor of biology at ABAC from 1950-68. Development Director Melvin Merrill said the gift was the second largest single gift in the history of the Foundation, topped only by the \$153,180 contribution from Homer and Weetie Rankin in 1981.

Laura Beth Tucker, a business major from Ocilla, received the Donaldson Award at the spring commencement ceremony on June 11. Juanita Willis from Tifton received her associate degree in business at the age of 73. She graduated from Henry Clay High School in Lexington, Ky., in

1933. She is perhaps the oldest graduate in the history of ABAC. She passed away in 2015 at the age of 100. Faculty member Andrea Pate Willis received the Abraham Baldwin Award for Teaching Excellence at the ceremony.

ABAC will operate on a four-day week from June 13 through August 31. The entire college will be closed on Fridays. ABAC will be open on a Monday through Thursday basis from 7:30 a.m. until 6 p.m. Employees will be allowed 30 minutes for lunch. ABAC can save as much as \$15,000 in utility costs by closing on Fridays.

Floyd Wright has been selected as the assistant comptroller for ABAC, according to an announcement by Comptroller William Wilkinson on June 28.

Dr. Wayne Curtis resigned as the ABAC president, effective June 30, to become president of the First National Bank in Brundidge, Ala. Although enrollment didn't increase during his presidency, it went up significantly after he left the president's office because of the strategies he put into place.

Dr. James A. Burran, Vice President and Dean of Academic Affairs, served the college as Acting President from July 1, 1988, through September 30, 1989. Under his leadership, the momentum began during Curtis' tenure continued. Enrollment went up, and two new programs, Turfgrass Equipment Management and Golf Course Management, were introduced. During his tenure as Acting President, Burran also continued to strengthen the link between the college and the community. Burran was a key figure in the ABAC administration until he became President of Dalton State College in 1995.

Dr. Earl Knebel retired on July 1 as the chair of the ABAC Division of Agriculture and Forest Resources, a position he had held since 1984. Dr. Ron Jones, professor of agricultural economics, replaced Knebel as the chair of the division. Jones joined the ABAC faculty in 1967.

Chet Kimmell was appointed as the director of the physical plant on July 1. He began his ABAC career in 1973 and had served as acting director of the physical plant for the past six months since the retirement of Jim Livezey. Dr. Mary Emma Henderson retired as the Baldwin Library head librarian on August 1. Her employment at ABAC began in 1967 when Academic Dean Loyal Norman hired her as a cataloging librarian. She commuted from Ocilla for 21 years.

ABAC Coach Tom Moody signed Jay Roberts from Ocilla to a baseball scholarship with the Stallions. Roberts hit .388 with four home runs for the Irwin County High School Indians. He later served for many years in the Georgia House of Representatives.

Enrichment Program Director Susan Oliver said 23 different conference groups involving 1,800 persons were on the ABAC campus during the summer. She scheduled 42 youth classes for 400

students. High school football camps included teams from Tift County, Colquitt County, Ware County, Central of Macon, Cairo, Aquinus, Tiftarea Academy, and Flint River Academy.

Dr. Gary Roberts was appointed as the chair of the Division of Social Science on September 1. He replaced Dr. Ronald Faircloth, who returned to a full-time faculty member's position within the division.

During the 1988 fall quarter, ABAC enrolled 1,895 students, an enrollment jump over the 1,723 students enrolled in 1987. There were 968 females and 927 males. It marked only the third time in the history of the college that females outnumbered the males during a fall quarter. Both other instances were in the height of World War II when there were 77 females and 70 males in 1943 and 88 females and 85 males in 1944. During the 1981 summer term, there were 425 females and 424 males.

Nancy Scott, an assistant professor of business, will serve as the coordinator of a new initiative called the South Georgia Research and Development Center. Funded by a special initiative grant from the University System of Georgia, the Center includes representatives from ABAC, Albany State, Bainbridge, Darton, Georgia Southwestern, South Georgia, Waycross, and Valdosta State. Scott said the major goal of the program is to provide applied research and service programs to small businesses, minority businesses, agribusinesses, local governments, and other public agencies.

Harriett Mayo was named head librarian at ABAC on November 1. She joined the staff in 1974. University System of Georgia Chancellor H. Dean Propst gave his charge to the ABAC presidential search committee on November 4. Dr. Lew Akin is serving as chair of the committee which will seek a replacement for Dr. Wayne Curtis, who resigned June 30.

Student Center Named for J. Lamar Branch

A dedication ceremony was held on November 6 to officially name the student center building in honor of J. Lamar Branch (Class of '37), who was at one time the State Director of Vocational Education programs in Georgia. Branch was the student body president before his ABAC graduation in 1937. In 1949, he became the executive secretary of the Baldwin Alumni Association, a volunteer position he held until ABAC filled the post with a staff member in 1969. Branch served as president of the Baldwin Alumni Association in 1938-39 and 1954-55. He and former president George P. Donaldson conceived the idea for the Greater Baldwin Foundation in 1954. Branch served as president of the ABAC Foundation in 1983-85. He passed away on March 5, 1988. The naming of the student center in his honor was approved by the ABAC Alumni Association on February 10, 1983, and by the faculty and staff of ABAC on March 1, 1984. Nikki Womack from Tifton was crowned Ms. Abraham Baldwin 1989 at the TABAC Beauty Revue on November 10.

1989

Naomi Chapman Woodroof, wife of Dr. J.G. Woodroof, the first president of ABAC, passed away in Griffin on January 4. Truett Cathy, founder of Chick Fil A, spoke at the Tom M. Cordell Distinguished Lecture Series on January 12. ABAC students loved the fact that he rode his motorcycle to Tifton for the event. Cathy was one of the most popular Cordell speakers in the history of the event.

Pegasus literary magazine received a national first place with special merit award from *The American Scholastic Journalist*. Farron Fowler is the editor, and Andrea Savage is the advisor. The ABAC student newspaper received the top award for excellence among two-year colleges from the Georgia College Press Association on February 21. *The Stallion* claimed the prize for the 15th time in the past 19 years. Tanya Booth from Homerville is the editor of the paper. She was elected as the president of the GCPA. Six ABAC students have now been elected GCPA president over the past 19 years. They include David Wansley, Melita Easters, Jeannie Griffin, Kris Perkins, and Trudy Feldman. Newspaper advisor Helen Strickland received the prestigious Neely Young Award at the convention from the Georgia Press Education Foundation.

Humanities Division faculty member George Scott coordinated a symposium titled *Fields of Praise: A Woman's Harvest* on February 16-17 at the Rural Development Center. Writers and scholars explored stereotypes of rural women in literature and the status of women's literature and social changes bearing on rural experience. Coach Donnie Veal's Golden Stallions lost to Emmanuel College 108-100 in the championship game of the state basketball tournament in Cleveland. ABAC wound up with a record of 18-11. New members of the ABAC Foundation President's Club honored at a dinner on March 13 were Dr. and Mrs. James Burran of Tifton, Mr. and Mrs. Barnwell Calhoun of Tifton, Mr. and Mrs. Randolph Britton of Tifton, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Haley of Tifton, Mr. and Mrs. J.R. Odom of Sylvester, Mrs. Mary Lee Payne of Tifton, Mrs. Helen Sasser of Doerun, and Mr. and Mrs. Hoyt Vance of Tifton. Members of the President's Club pledge or contribute at least \$10,000 to the ABAC Foundation. The President's Club now has 80 members.

Dr. Charlotte Pfeiffer was named to the National Phi Theta Kappa Hall of Honor at the national Phi Theta Kappa convention in Atlanta on April 1. The Fabulous Golddusters dance team under the direction of Andrea Pate Willis performed for 1,100 high school students at the RVI Youth Enrichment Camp at St. Simons Island on April 7. They also performed for over 2,000 members of the Good Sam Club Campers Association at Spence Field in Moultrie on April 13. Acting President Jim Burran is hosting the superintendent and high school principal from every school system that is contiguous to Tift County this spring. Billy Mock, the Colquitt County Superintendent and an ABAC alumnus, will visit on April 21.

Conger Hall Named for Second District A&M Alumnus

At Homecoming on April 28, a building dedication ceremony was held to name the Business-Humanities Building in honor of Second District A&M School alumnus George D. Conger, who was a longtime benefactor of ABAC. Conger was the founder of the Conger Life Insurance Company in Miami. Born in Tifton in 1898, Conger entered the Second District A&M School on September 15, 1912 and graduated as a member of the Class of 1916. He continued his education at the University of Georgia and Emory University before receiving his Doctor of Medicine degree from the University of Tennessee Medical School in Memphis in 1925. For over 46 years, he practiced medicine and owned his own insurance company. Honored as the first recipient of the ABAC Alumni Association's Distinguished Business Leader Award in 1979, Conger was one of the first members of the ABAC Foundation President's Club. He also received a Golden Achievement Award, presented to those persons who have pledged or contributed more than \$100,000 to the ABAC Foundation. Development Director Melvin Merrill said Conger contributed over \$117,000 to the Foundation from 1965 until his death on August 10, 1981.

Alumni Association award-winners at Homecoming on April 28 were Roy L. Strange, Distinguished Alumnus; Darvin Eason, J. Lamar Branch Award; Alex Kemp, Outstanding Business Leader; William L. Brim, Master Farmer; Phyllis Green Norfleet, Master Homemaker; Melita Easters, Outstanding Young Alumnus; Joseph B. Griffith, Master Young Farmer; and Dr. Wayne Curtis, Evelyn Eve, and George Odom, Honorary Alumni. Honored for 20 years of service were faculty/staff members Dorothy Kendrick, Don Massey, George Powell, Helen Strickland, Margie Ivey, Emory Giles, and Sara Willis.

At Honors Day on May 2, Richard L. Payne received the Carlton Award for Faculty Excellence. Coach Norman "Red" Hill recorded his 600th victory on May 3 when the Golden Stallions' tennis team defeated Valdosta State. Hill's record at ABAC is now 600 wins and only 123 losses. Arts Experiment Station Director Syd Blackmarr spoke at the monthly meeting of the Board of Regents in Atlanta on May 9 on the success of the arts program in South Georgia. It was the first time in 15 years that a two-year college had made a presentation to the full Board of Regents.

Shirley Jones of *The Partridge Family* fame and the Jacksonville River City Brass Band performed for 592 patrons at the annual Dollars for Scholars Benefit Banquet and Show on May 20. Acting President James Burran received the SGA Impact Award and a Pacesetter at the Student Activities Banquet on May 23. Other Pacesetter recipients were Dorothy Kendrick, Barbara Lane, Pam Garcia, Jerri Kaye Hobbs, Brian Griner, Melody Miller, and Scott Chandler. Rosalyn Donaldson received a Pacesetter II award. A special award went to Marie Worley, who is retiring on June 30 after 17 years as the senior secretary in the Student Affairs/Housing office.

Christopher C. Thompson is the new SGA president, and Monica Schwalls is the new vice-president.

Lagloire Wins National Championship for ABAC

Jean Francois Lagloire from Agde, France won the national championship at #1 singles for the Golden Stallions at the NJCAA national men's tennis tournament. He also teamed with Enrique Ruiz from Bogata, Colombia to win the #1 doubles' title. Lagloire was ranked number one in the nation for the entire season. He was selected for the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2012. Coach Norman "Red" Hill's team won the state championship and finished fourth in the national tournament. Coach Ellen Vickers' Golden Fillies' softball team won the state championship for the second year in a row and finished fifth in the NJCAA national tournament. Coach Wayne Cooper's ABAC golf team won the state title and finished seventh in the NJCAA national tournament. Liam White was named Second Team All-America, and Chris King was named Honorable Mention All-America.

Melody Miller, a pre-engineering major from Tifton, was selected as the Donaldson Award recipient at the spring commencement ceremony on June 10. She is the daughter of Assistant Dean of Student Affairs Bo Miller, and his wife, Bobbi. Dr. Joe Day retired as a professor of mathematics at ABAC after the spring quarter. He began his ABAC career in 1965. Other retirees are Dr. Dean Kingrey, Jimmy Griner, Health Center Director Esteen Castagna, and Dr. Ernest Edwards. Edwards began his ABAC career in 1955 as a part-time instructor in English and as director of the Glee Club. He became a full-time instructor in 1957. In 1965, he was the first recipient of the Distinguished Professor Award. Enrichment Program Director Susan Oliver said 2,700 people will visit the campus this summer for a variety of different programs.

Except for selected offices, ABAC's summer hours will be from June 11-September 1 from 7:30 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday and from 7:30-11:30 a.m. on Fridays. Dr. Lew Akin and the ABAC presidential search and screening committee presented the names of Dr. Fred Hill from Dekalb College, Dr. Harold Loyd from Abraham Baldwin, and Dr. James Williams from Auburn University-Montgomery to Chancellor Dean Propst when he visited the ABAC campus on June 22.

Wesley Jones was selected as the new comptroller on July 1. He has been the assistant comptroller at Middle Georgia College since 1983. Dr. Mary LeMar, chair of the Business Division from 1962-75, passed away on July 24 at the age of 81. Diane Kilgore has been named as the Director of the South Georgia Research and Development Center at ABAC, replacing Nancy Scott, who is returning to a full-time teaching position.

Loyd Selected as ABAC President

Enrollment for the fall quarter jumped to 2,138, quite an increase from the 1,895 students in the fall of 1988. Dr. Harold J. Loyd was named President of ABAC, effective October 1. This was the first time since George P. Donaldson's selection in 1947 that someone from within the ranks of the faculty was selected to serve as president. The ABAC faculty and staff were quite enthusiastic about the selection. Employees in the newsroom at the *Tifton Gazette* broke out in applause upon hearing the announcement. University System Chancellor Dean Propst said, "All along, the best person for the job was already here at the institution. Dr. Loyd will bring to the position a solid grasp of the workings of Abraham Baldwin and a keen understanding of the issues facing the college and the community."

A Missouri native, Loyd received his undergraduate degree from Southwest Missouri State and his graduate and doctorate degrees from the University of Missouri. Loyd joined the ABAC faculty in 1971 and was named Chairman of the Division of Business Administration in 1975. He also served as the Coordinator of Evening and Off-Campus Courses from 1986 until he took over as president. Loyd brought an enthusiasm and a "love for ABAC" that few presidents could match.

Loyd's wife, Rowena, works in the ABAC Computer Center. ABAC won four national intercollegiate sports championships during Loyd's tenure, three in women's slow pitch softball and another in men's tennis. The college also added two new programs of study and even offered turfgrass classes at Sea Island on the Georgia coast.

Under his leadership, the marketing strategy for the college continued and broadened. Enrollment continued to increase for 22 consecutive quarters until the summer of 1993. Loyd believed that ABAC's customers--the students--were the V.I.P.'s on campus, and he believed in the special spirit that exists at Abraham Baldwin. He continued to promote that special spirit and the friendliness that exists between the faculty, staff, and students.

During his time as president, Loyd established a Job Placement Center within the office of Counseling and Testing. Two external degree programs were approved for the ABAC location in Moultrie, and four-year degrees and graduate degrees were offered for the first time on the ABAC campus by nearby universities. Under his direction, the Strategic Vision for the college was updated, and Loyd accepted the challenge to communicate the vision of the college as embodied in the plan to all aspects of the college and to all of those to whom it serves. Many new faculty, staff, and administrative positions were established.

Loyd also gave new life to the ABAC Foundation as he spent many hours talking to friends and alumni of the college about opportunities to set up scholarships. Membership in the Foundation's President's Club climbed at a rapid rate. During his tenure, Loyd authorized two additional staff members in the admissions office to serve as recruiters in north Georgia and additional funds for a part time recruiter in South Georgia. Under his leadership, ABAC gained two new majors,

hospitality management and poultry technology. The college also offered courses in golf and grounds management at Sea Island on the Georgia coast. It was called ABAC on the Island. Upon taking office, Loyd immediately set up a series of *Open Door at the President's Office* opportunities for faculty, staff, and students.

ABAC students Mark Pressley from Thomaston and Dost Mohammad from Panjgur, Pakistan finished third in the National Collegiate Fence Building Contest at the Sunbelt Expo in October. Dr. Jerry Davis was their advisor. ABAC Ambassadors for the 1989-90 academic year are Traci Stephenson from Tifton, Leslie Pannell from Tifton, Jerri Kaye Hobbs from Tifton, Monika Lindsey from Tifton, Linda Anderson from Stone Mountain, Darlene Johnson from Tifton, Leigh Tucker from Tifton, Amy Willis from Ty Ty, Edward Carter from Lake Park, and Keisha Wright from Blakely. Bruce Applewhite is the advisor. A video team from First Team Images in Americus will be on campus October 26 to shoot footage for the Abraham Baldwin recruitment video. ABAC is one of the sponsors for the new Tifton Monopoly game.

Kay Weeks directed the Baldwin Players in *Our Town* November 8-11. On November 9, the faculty approved the naming of the conference room in Conger Hall after Dr. Mary M. LeMar. She was named first Chair of the newly created Division of Business Administration in September of 1962 when she joined the ABAC faculty as a professor. Under her leadership, the division grew from three faculty members to 12 faculty members and developed the framework for the divisional curriculum. She served as chair until June 30, 1975, when her health forced her to retire. LeMar achieved a level of notoriety early in her life when she became the first woman in the United States ever to buy her own motor company in 1937, the LeMar Motor Company. She passed away on July 24, 1989, at the age of 81.

Beth Tyson, a biology major from Tifton, was crowned Miss Abraham Baldwin 1990 at the ABAC Beauty Revue on November 9. In 1990, she also won the Miss Tifton Pageant. President and Mrs. Harold Loyd hosted Christmas at Tift Hall on December 2 for all ABAC personnel. Alumni Director Nancy Coleman (Class of '75) received the prestigious Distinguished Service Award for Alumni Affairs from the Georgia Education Advancement Council on December 8 at the annual GEAC meeting at Jekyll Island. Instructor of Choral Music Wayne Jones performed in *Eight Songs for a Mad King* in Carnegie Hall on December 9. Jones joined the ABAC faculty this fall.

1990

Community receptions for ABAC President Harold Loyd are scheduled in Ashburn on January 16, Moultrie on January 21, and Adel on January 29. The Abraham Baldwin eight-minute recruitment video is now available at the admissions office. Registrar and Director of Admissions Garth Webb said each fall quarter applicant for the next two years will receive a

video. Public Relations Director Mike Chason coordinated the development of the video. Jerri Kaye Hobbs from Tifton has been selected as the ABAC representative for the fourth annual Academic Recognition Day ceremony in the Georgia General Assembly.

Veronica Biggins, Executive Vice President of the C&S Bank in Atlanta, was the guest speaker for Black Awareness Week on February 14. David Smart won the Mr. ABAC contest on February 20. The Baldwin Players staged *Arsenic and Old Lace* in Howard Auditorium on February 21-24. *The Stallion* was named the top two-year college newspaper in the state for the 16th time in the last 20 years by the Georgia College Press Association. John Laster is the editor, and Helen Strickland is the advisor. On March 1, Coach Norman Hill's ABAC men's tennis team defeated the University of Georgia in Athens. UGA was playing without its ace, Al Parker, on that day. The Bulldogs went on to win the NCAA national championship.

Lynn Youngblood, an agriculture major from Ashburn, was crowned the 1990 North American Limousin Queen at the National Western Stock Show in Denver. Renowned author Ferrol Sams spoke at the Tom M. Cordell Distinguished Lecture Series on April 5.

Alumni Association award winners at Homecoming on April 7 included Rufus Adams, Distinguished Alumnus; Roger Byrd, Outstanding Young Alumnus; Stanley Coley, Outstanding Agricultural Leader; Dice Roberts, Master Farmer; J. Richard Wansley, Master Young Farmer; Jimmy Allen, Outstanding Business Leader; Angela Noble Gordy, Helen Brown Sasser Award; and Emory McMillan and Robert Stone, Honorary Alumni. McMillan was the assistant comptroller at ABAC for 36 years, and Stone worked at the physical plant for 35 years. ABAC's 1990 retirees honored at the luncheon included Dr. Ernest Edwards, George Evans, Dot Kendrick, Marie Worley, Esteen Castagna, Addie Lee Wilcox, Ruby Atkinson, Autrie Johnson, and Gladys Johnson. Betty Cox and Dr. J.P. Rowe were honored for 30 years of service. A Chapel of All Faiths Re-dedication ceremony was held on April 7 to commemorate 15 years since the Chapel opened.

The Georgia Humanities Council awarded ABAC a \$7,786 grant for *A Sense of Place: A Symposium on Georgia Authors*. Dr. Charlotte Pfeiffer is the project coordinator. Ferrol Sams spoke on April 5 followed by Dr. Thomas McHaney from Georgia College on April 12, Anne Rivers Siddons on May 17, and Harry Crews on April 26. At Honors Day on May 2, Tom Call received the Carlton Award for Faculty Excellence, and Margie Applewhite received the first ever Roy Jackson Award for Staff Excellence.

Lagloire Wins Second Straight National Title for ABAC

Jean Francois Lagloire from ABAC became the only man to win the NJCAA national tennis championship at number one singles two years in a row at the national tournament at Tyler Community College in May. Lagloire also won the national title in 1989. He was named first

team All-America. Lagloire was named to the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2012. The Stallions of Coach Norman “Red” Hill finished second in the nation in the team competition.

Coach Ellen Vickers’ women’s intercollegiate slow-pitch softball team finished third in the 1990 national tournament after winning the Fillies’ third straight state tournament. ABAC received the President’s Sportsmanship Award from NJCAA Region 17 for the ninth year in a row. Coach Wayne Cooper’s golf team won the state title and finished 12th in the national tournament. Coach Donnie Veal’s basketball team finished 15-12, and Coach Tom Moody’s baseball team wound up 5-36.

ABAC opened a new 10-stall stable behind the rodeo arena in the spring term for students who want to bring their horses to campus. A small fee of \$50 per quarter will be charged for each horse. Admissions Counselor Bruce Applewhite worked with the ABAC 4-H Club to make this project a reality.

Wesley Langdale, a forestry management major from Lake Park, took office as the new president of the Student Government Association at the student activities banquet on May 22. Jimmy Grubbs received the SGA Impact Award from SGA President Monica Schwalls. Pacesetter Award winners were Dr. Caroline Helms, Ronald Goodman, Monica Schwalls, Tom Call, Pam Leonard, Linda Anderson, Jean Francois Lagloire, Bette Turner, and Leigh Tucker. Jeff Adams and Linda Anderson were voted Mr. and Miss Baldwin by the student body. Kathy Mattea performed for 615 patrons at the annual Dollars for Scholars Benefit Banquet and Show on May 25. With a smile on her face, she said it was the first time she had performed in a place “that didn’t have sawdust and broken beer bottles on the floor.”

A new recruitment video on the Division of Agriculture and Forest Resources is now available from the admissions office. President Harold Loyd said all use of tobacco products in the Donaldson Dining Hall will be prohibited beginning June 1. John Laster received the Donaldson Award at the annual commencement ceremony on June 9. President Harold Loyd received an Honorary State FFA Degree in Covington on June 15. Benita Faircloth began her duties as the ABAC registrar on July 1. She is the second female registrar in the history of ABAC. The first was Eva Mae Howard. Richard Strickland also began duties on July 1 as Director of Evening and Off-Campus Programs, moving from his previous post as Director of the ABAC Police Academy. University System Chancellor H. Dean Propst authorized the use of the vice-president designation for the first time ever at two-year colleges in the System on July 2. Dr. James A. Burran is now the Vice President and Dean of Academic Affairs, and Dr. Worth Bridges is the Vice President and Dean of Student Affairs.

The ABAC Foundation launched a three-year capital campaign in July with a goal of \$1.5 million called “ABAC 2000: An Investment in Academic Excellence” in July. The Development and Alumni office has relocated to the former President’s Home. Gaines Hall will be renovated

for the nursing program. The old hog wire and wood fencing at the rodeo arena has been taken down. A new arena with metal fencing in the works.

Dr. Homer Day assumed the role of Director of College Services on August 1. He will be responsible for Human Resources, Continuing Education, Arts Experiment Station, federal programs, institutional research, admissions, and enrollment services. Kay Freeland is the new Director of Financial Aid, effective August 1.

ABAC Opens New Baldwin Library

Baldwin Library Director Harriett Mayo organized *Operation Tote-Em* on August 7-9 to carry the books from the old library to the new library. ABAC administrators, faculty, staff, and students formed a long line and passed the books to the new facility. It was quite a sight. Mayo said 53,000 books were moved in three days. Dr. Jim Burran appeared on the scene on the last night in a fluorescent blue Packard to add some frivolity to a long, tiring three days.

Dr. Gary Roberts' new book, *Death Comes for the Chief Justice*, is now available in the ABAC bookstore. Financial Aid Director Kay Freeland said that ABAC awards more financial aid than any other two-year college in Georgia, \$2,252,097 last year. The 1990 fall quarter enrollment was 2,498, a significant increase over the 2,138 students enrolled in the fall of 1989. The enrollment has now increased for the past 12 consecutive quarters. The enrollment figure marked the third highest in the history of ABAC.

ABAC is an official sponsor for the Sunbelt Agricultural Exposition, which will be held October 18-20, Thursday through Saturday, instead of the usual Tuesday through Thursday format. Performing under the green-and-gold tent will be the jazz band, the show choir, the cloggers, and the Golddusters. Georgia State University President John Palms spoke at the Tom M. Cordell Distinguished Lecture Series on October 23. Carla Willis, an accounting major from Tifton, was crowned Miss ABAC 1991 on October 25. Coach Donnie Veal's Stallions played the Soviet National basketball team on November 7.

Under the direction of Kay Weeks, the Baldwin Players performed *Witness for the Prosecution* on November 7-10. ABAC faculty members George and Nancy Scott had parts in the production. Dr. H. Dean Propst, Chancellor of the University System of Georgia, was the featured speaker at the dedication for the new Baldwin Library on November 15. Dr. J.G. Woodroof and Dr. Stanley Anderson, both former presidents of ABAC, also spoke.

1991

Nationally acclaimed artist Robert Clements donated a 6x10-foot wooden sculpture titled *Horse and Acrobats* to ABAC for the new Baldwin Library. Clements said “I thought the horse would be an important symbol of agricultural concerns. The acrobats on the horse are learning to perform a new feat, which parallels the challenges students meet and overcome.”

ABAC alumni award winners at Homecoming on April 6 included Jimmy Allen, Distinguished Alumnus; Sandra Kemp, Master Homemaker; Jimmy Hill, Outstanding Agricultural Leader; Thomas Coleman, Master Young Farmer; and David Carlson, Master Farmer. Dr. Ernest Edwards was honored at an alumni Glee Club reunion concert during the Homecoming weekend. Roy Strange from Moultrie was selected as the chair, and George Turk from Commerce was selected as vice-chair of the first ever ABAC Ag Alumni Council at Homecoming. Alumni Director Nancy Coleman said the Council was formed to represent the needs of over 7,000 ABAC alumni in agriculture, home economics, forestry, wildlife, and veterinary medicine. Former campus physician E.L. Evans was recognized with a portrait dedication at the E.L. Evans Health Center. His daughter, Eileen Trawick, presented the portrait to the college. Jimmy Hill from Grayson was elected president of the Alumni Association.

Dr. Leona Mott won the Abraham Baldwin Award for Teaching Excellence at Honors Day on May 1. Verlin Scott received the Roy Jackson Award for Staff Excellence. Donnie Fowler, a computer science major from Tifton, was named the Academic Recognition Day Student at ABAC.

ABAC Softball Team Wins National Championship

The 1991 ABAC softball team of Coach Ellen Vickers won its fourth straight state tournament title and then its first ever national championship with a 9-3 win in the title game over Lake City (Fla.), the two-time defending national champions, on May 4. “It’s the best feeling in the world,” Vickers said. “This is a dream come true.” Vickers was named the 1991 National Junior College Athletic Association National Coach of the Year. She was also Coach of the Year in Region XVII.

The 12 members of the team included Patty Beasley, Kelly Britsky, Kelly Burch, Dawn Lingo, Pam Purcell, Edy Leverette, Daphne Covington, April Crane, Wendi Ward, Lacy Whatley, Leeanne Yeager, and Amy White. Lingo, White, and Whatley were named to the NJCAA 1991 All-America team, the first All-America selections in the history of ABAC softball. The championship was the second national title in the history of ABAC, preceded only by the 1984 men’s tennis team. The team compiled a record of 43-7 and became the first team from Georgia to win the softball crown. The team was selected for the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2010.

Tom Moody (Class of ’58) stepped down as the ABAC baseball coach in June after 24 years at the helm. His 1991 Stallions finished 14-25. He will remain on the staff as the ABAC golf

coach. During his days as an ABAC student, Moody played shortstop and second base before transferring to Georgia Southern. Moody's Golden Stallions won the conference tournament championship in 1975 and 1986. He was named to the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2016. Craig Young replaced him as the Stallions' diamond boss. Young is a Georgia Southwestern College graduate where he was twice named the Most Valuable Player and team captain for the Hurricanes. Coach Donnie Veal's basketball team finished 11-16.

Wayne Cooper (Class of '62) resigned his duties as the ABAC golf coach after the 1991 season and became chair of the Department of Health, Physical Education and Recreation. Under Cooper's leadership, the Stallions won the state golf title in 1991 for the 21st time in 22 seasons. Freshman Michael Bassett was the medalist for the state tournament. He was followed in the standings by Kevin Belflower and Chris Purvis. The Stallions wound up 12th in the national golf tournament. Cooper was named to the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2016. The men's tennis team under the leadership of Coach Norman "Red" Hill won its 17th straight state tournament and finished fifth in the 1991 national tournament, marking the 26th consecutive appearance for the Stallions in the tournament.

Marie Osmond was the featured performer before 613 patrons at Dollars for Scholars on May 17. She coaxed ABAC President Harold Loyd onto the Donaldson Dining Hall stage where she sang a song to him. Farm Manager Robert Lindsey received the 1991 SGA Impact Award from SGA President James Burroughs at the student activities banquet on May 21. A business major from Tifton, Burroughs moved into the president's post when Wesley Langdale resigned from the position during the spring quarter. Burroughs was also named the Distinguished Ambassador of the Year and won the 1991 Mr. ABAC contest. At the banquet, Angela DeBruhl became the first elected female president of the ABAC Student Government Association. The 27-year-old mother of four is a nursing major from Chula. Pacesetter winners were Dr. J.P. Rowe (Class of '58), George Scott, Janet Mallard, and Dr. Ron Faircloth. Pacesetter II winners were Tom Moody (Class of '58) and Penny Chesnut (Class of '74). Farm Manager Robert Lindsey won the SGA Impact Award.

Deborah Isaza, a human relations major from Tifton, received the Donaldson Award at the spring commencement ceremony on June 8. President Harold Loyd read the Robert Frost poem, *The Road Not Taken*, as a part of his remarks at the ceremony. Loyd keeps a ladder-back chair that once belonged to Frost in his office.

Jones, Campbell Develop ABAC Alma Mater

Director of Choral Music Wayne Jones and Dr. J.L. Campbell, professor of English, developed the music and words to a new ABAC alma mater which was sung at the graduation ceremony for the first time.

On the wiregrass plains of Georgia stands a place that we revere. Holding in our hearts the memories that will e're by ours to share. The green of fields in the sun is there, as the golden harvest drawn. For our future bright our hearts' delight, we raise our voice in song. Green and gold the standards flashing out a vision fresh and pure. Lift your voice in praise for fellowship and pride for ever more.

Summer term enrollment was 1,125 students, an ABAC record. Dealing with state budget cuts was a major concern for President Harold Loyd in the summer of 1991. "I'd rather have high enrollment with budget cuts than low enrollment with budget cuts," Loyd said.

Loyd said enrollment at ABAC increased by 39 percent from 1985 to 1990 while the number of full-time faculty and staff declined by 1.5 percent. To free up faculty to teach more classes, Academic Dean Jim Burran resorted to using staff and administrators as instructors for the freshman orientation classes in the fall quarter.

"We have the development director, the alumni director, the public relations director, the comptroller, even the chief of security teaching these classes," Burran said. "It not only provides instructors for these classes, but it gives the administrators closer contact with the students."

The 1991 fall quarter enrollment was 2,667, breaking the record of 2,658 students set in the fall term of 1975. Dr. Jeff Gibbs assumed his duties as chair of the business division on September 1. During the year, Dr. Hal Henderson penned a biography of former Georgia Governor Ellis Arnall titled *The Politics of Change in Georgia: A Political Biography of Ellis Arnall*.

Arts Experiment Station Director Syd Blackmarr received the first ever Selina Roberts Ottum Award at the annual convention of the National Assembly for Local Arts Agencies. The Arts Station is celebrating its 15th anniversary.

Tom M. Cordell, creator of the continuing education program at ABAC, passed away on December 11 at the age of 78. ABAC President George King hired Cordell, then the principal of Morven High School, in 1940 to begin a continuing education program for ABAC. For the next 39 years, he worked tirelessly to promote the program. The Tom M. Cordell Distinguished Lecture Series and the Cordell Conference Room in the Baldwin Library are named in his honor. The Tom M. Cordell Conference Center at ABAC's Georgia Museum of Agriculture was named in Cordell's honor on July 23, 2021.

1992

Beth Lee, a freshman business major from Tifton, was crowned Ms. Abraham Baldwin 1992 on January 9. In February, *The Stallion* was named the top two-year college newspaper in the state

by the Georgia College Press Association. Amy Sanders from Jesup was the 1991-92 editor of the newspaper.

On February 27, the ABAC faculty and staff voted to name the conference room in the Carlton Center the Tom M. Cordell Conference Room to honor the memory of the former dean of continuing education.

W. Edward Moore, Sr., received the Distinguished Alumnus Award from the ABAC Alumni Association at Homecoming on April 4. Other award winners were J. Randolph Nichols, Outstanding Business Leader; Linnie Weeks Stansell (posthumously), Master Homemaker; Cathy Cox, Outstanding Young Alumnus; G. Teel Warbington and Scott Vann, Master Young Farmer; and Clovis and Clarice Turk, Honorary Alumni. President Harold Loyd, alumnus Quay Threatte Allen, and Professor Emeritus Ernest Edwards unveiled a portrait of Edwards which will hang in the music building.

Sculptress Ruth Asawa was the featured speaker at the Tom M. Cordell Distinguished Lecture Series on April 7. Lena Brandenburg, an animal science major from Stone Mountain, was crowned Miss Rodeo Georgia in May. In December, she traveled to Las Vegas to compete in the Miss Rodeo America event. President Harold Loyd said Wesley Jones' title has now been changed from comptroller to vice president for fiscal affairs. Jones joined the ABAC administration as comptroller on July 1, 1989.

Wright Marchant received the Roy Jackson Award for Staff Excellence and Don Massey received the Carlton Award for Faculty Excellence at Honors Day on May 6. Sabrina Golden was selected as the Academic Recognition Day student for ABAC. Georgia Labor Commissioner Al Scott spoke at the Tom M. Cordell Distinguished Lecture Series on May 12. *The Lettermen* performed at the annual Dollars for Scholars event on May 22. Development Director Melvin Merrill said over 600 tickets at \$100 each were sold for the event. Vice President for Fiscal Affairs Wesley Jones said Bryan Golden has been hired as the new director of public safety, replacing Robert Seacrest, who recently submitted his resignation.

Ann Adkins received the Student Government Association Impact Award at the Student Leadership Banquet on May 26. Pacesetter recipients were Donald Silvels, Samantha Alexander, Chip Prosser, Shirley Luke, Mary Peoples and Cliff Bowden. President Harold Loyd and Andrew Savage were selected for Pacesetter II honors. Chip Prosser from Mansfield and Susan Kent from Fitzgerald were selected by the student body as Mr. and Ms. ABAC. Matt Yawn from Savannah was named the WPLH radio station manager for the coming year, and Sharon Crawford from Warner Robins was selected as the *Pegasus* editor. Chip Prosser was named the new editor of *The Stallion*.

Wendell Robinson, a 34-year-old nursing major from Adel, was elected as the first African-American president of the Student Government Association. “This is not my student government,” Robinson said. “It is everyone’s student government. If a legitimate concern is brought to me, it will be addressed. I won’t take my job lightly, and I am not afraid of controversy.”

The Golden Stallions of first year head coach Tom Moody won the state golf championship for the 22nd time in the past 23 years. Michael Bassett was the medalist in the state tourney for the second straight year. ABAC finished 13th in the national tournament. Bassett tied for 12th in the individual competition and was a Second Team All-America selection. Coach Norman “Red” Hill’s Stallions’ tennis team finished fifth in the national tournament for the second straight year after winning the state title for the 18th consecutive year. Antonio Robles won the national championship at #2 singles and was a First Team All-America selection. Coach Ellen Vickers’ women’s softball team won their fifth consecutive state title and finished second in the national tournament. The Fillies set a school record for most wins in a season with an overall mark of 53-9. Cindy Shore was the Most Valuable Player at the state tournament for ABAC. Coach Donnie Veal’s basketball team finished 14-12. Coach Craig Young’s baseball team wound up 20-34.

Lacy Whatley, a mechanical engineering major from Chula, was selected as the Donaldson Award recipient at the spring commencement ceremony on June 13. Whatley was a National Junior College Athletic Association first team All-America selection in softball in both 1991 and 1992. She led the Fillies to the national championship in 1991 and to second place in the national tournament in 1992. Whatley compiled a .486 batting average to lead the Fillies to a school record of 53-9 in 1992. She is the career leader for ABAC in runs scored with 161, in hits with 201, in triples with 15, and in at-bats with 392. During her sophomore, junior, and senior seasons at Tift County High School, she led the Lady Devils to three consecutive state softball titles. She compiled a 3.84 grade point average at ABAC. Whatley was selected for the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2017.

Juanita Willis completed the requirements for the joint bachelor’s degree in business between ABAC and Georgia Southwestern at the age of 77. Willis passed away in 2015 at the age of 100. Jane Tanner (Class of ’77) was named the new director of continuing education after the retirement of Bob Keith. Diane Kilgore was named the new enrichment program coordinator, filling Tanner’s previous position. Kilgore was the director of the South Georgia Research and Development Center at ABAC before it was phased out due to budget cutbacks in 1991.

Registrar Benita Faircloth said the college reached an all-time enrollment high of 2,851 students in the 1992 fall quarter, marking the 20th consecutive quarter of an enrollment increase over the previous year.

ABAC students swelled the crowd to over 5,000 people on September 23 when Bill and Hillary Clinton and Al and Tipper Gore brought their presidential campaign to the Georgia Agrirama.

Home to a Rodeo Club since 1968, ABAC formed an intercollegiate rodeo team during the fall term of 1992. Admissions Counselor Bruce Applewhite served as the advisor to the team, which competed against 17 other colleges and universities in the Ozark Region, which covers Louisiana to Michigan. Members of the first rodeo team at ABAC included Brande Faircloth, John Frank, Jimmy Wood, Jim Ward, Tiffany Barrow, Angel Eason, Ryan Farris, Rodney Rucker, and Jody Fletcher.

On October 30, Moultrie National Bank President John Clark presented the keys to the J.C. Penney building in Moultrie to Ray Jensen, chair of the finance and investment committee of the ABAC Foundation. Valued at over \$100,000, the 13,659 square-foot building at 31 East Central Avenue on the square in downtown Moultrie is to be renovated and used for ABAC classes in Moultrie. ABAC began offering course at the Moultrie Library in 1987.

Dan Bryant from Climax is the new president of the ABAC Ambassadors. Other Ambassadors are Lisa Simmons from Lenox, Melissa Redeker from Tifton, Tricia Pierce from Nashville, Robin Holland from Tifton, and Brandie Starr from Arcadia, Fla.

President Harold Loyd received the Honorary American FFA Degree at the 65th annual FFA Convention in Kansas City in November. Dr. J.G. Woodroof, ABAC's first president, was inducted into the Agriculture Hall of Fame at the University of Georgia. Amy Swanson, an education major from Fitzgerald, was crowned Ms. Abraham Baldwin 1993 on November 10. Over 550 people attended the event in the Donaldson Dining Hall. Under the direction of Amy Atchely, the Baldwin Players staged *See How They Run* on November 11-14. Noted poet Nikki Giovanni spoke to ABAC students in the Cordell Conference Room of the Baldwin Library on November 19. ARA Dining Services Manager Kevin Humphreys has introduced a wok bar and a waffle bar in the dining hall. ABAC students will get a discount at the new six-screen movie theatre which is soon to open in the parking lot of the Tifton Mall.

1993

Patsy Hembree (Class of '74) has been named director of the ABAC Computer Center. Hembree has been an ABAC employee since 1974. Public Relations Director Mike Chason was named chair of the Chancellor's Public Relations Administrative Committee of the University System of Georgia. Ryan Beard from Royston was named Mr. ABAC 1993 in the fourth annual contest on March 3. Floyd Wright, assistant comptroller since 1988, was selected as Vice President for Fiscal Affairs. The Georgia College Press Association recognized Helen Strickland at its 1993 awards luncheon for her 25th year of advising the ABAC student newspaper. *The Stallion* was

named Georgia's best two-year college newspaper 20 times during that 25-year period. The Fabulous Golddusters dance team of sponsor/choreographer Andrea Pate Willis performed before 1,600 students on March 1 in Pembroke and Hinesville.

ABAC Alumni Association award winners at the Homecoming celebration on April 3 were Dr. Johnny Crawford, Distinguished Alumnus; Gail Darby Thompson, Master Homemaker; Ronnie Rollins, Outstanding Business Leader; Randall and Howard Morris, Master Young Farmer; Gary Farmer, J. Lamar Branch Award; Kim Allen Boling, Outstanding Young Alumnus. Betty Claxton, Florence Baxter, and J. Talmadge Webb received Honorary Alumnus status. The theme for Homecoming was "Proud of ABAC...Proud of America." A special dinner was held for those ABAC students who attended classes at Spence Field in Moultrie in the 1940s. Louise Hill took over the reins of president of the Alumni Association. Senator Sam Nunn visited the campus on April 5.

The 10th annual Love Affair fine arts festival on May 1 was named a Cultural Olympiad event, the only event outside of Atlanta with this designation by the Atlanta Olympic Games Committee. ARA Dining Services Manager Kevin Humphreys was charged with the fatal shooting of Lee Strickland in an incident which occurred at approximately 2:15 a.m. on May 2 behind the Donaldson Dining Hall. A Tifton jury later determined that Humphreys acted in self-defense. He resigned his position and was replaced by Roy Biggers, Jr.

Dr. George Powell became the only two-time winner of the ABAC Teaching Excellence Award at Honors Day on May 5. He also won in 1970. Donnie Stone received the Roy Jackson Award for Staff Excellence. Brunswick College President Dorothy Lord spoke at the Honors Day luncheon. Maxine Taylor, a nursing major from Fitzgerald, was named the J.G. Woodroof Scholar. Renowned author Clyde Edgerton spoke at the Tom M. Cordell Distinguished Lecture Series on May 6, culminating a "Humor in Literature" series funded by a \$3,000 Georgia Humanities Council grant. Dr. Oscar Patton and Dr. Caroline Helms coordinated the series. At the spring meeting, the faculty and staff of ABAC voted to name the ABAC Tennis Center after Coach Norman Hill and the intramural field after Newell Dorsey.

Dr. Gary Roberts and George Scott directed a symposium titled "Many Spirits Dancing: A Celebration of Native American Art and Culture" at ABAC on May 17-19. The symposium on Native American art, culture, and literature was made possible by a \$6,607 grant from the Georgia Humanities Council. Years of Service award winners at ABAC were: 30 years—Betty Claxton; 20 years—Dr. Leon Benefield, Eddie Byers, Dianne Cowart, Wasdon Graydon, Emory Johnson, Chet Kimmell, Barbara Lane, Billy Joe Laster, and Joann Sumner; 15 years—Dr. James Burran, Debbie Lawrence, Nita Lynch, Wright Marchant, Melvin Merrill, Johnnie Moses, Dr. Leona Mott, Janice Sauls, Eddie Seagle, Frank Sumner, Paul Tompkins, and Michael Williams; 10 years—Arlene Bailey, Bobbie Baldree, Charles Griffin, Richard Payne, Lyn Smith, Duane

Weeks, and Shelton Wilcox; 5 years—Merle Bass, Sally Burran, Sandra Lowery, Joan McDaniel, Paul Miller, Barbara Snyder, Ray Wells, and Floyd Wright.

Pianist Roger Williams made his second appearance as the Dollars for Scholars performer on May 21 before 538 patrons in the dining hall. His first appearance was in 1980 before 695 patrons at the annual ABAC Foundation show to raise money for student scholarships. Pacesetters selected by the campus newspaper at the student activities banquet on May 25 included Dr. Earl Bennett, Dan Bryant, Dave Christenson, Nancy Coleman, Geneva Day, Marolyn Mixon, Angie Murray, Stan Parker, and Lisa Simmons. Dianne Cowart received a Pacesetter II award, and Helen Strickland received a Superior Pacesetter award. Janet Weaver received the SGA Impact Award. Dan Bryant, an environmental horticulture major from Climax, received the Distinguished Ambassador award after serving as president of the Ambassadors in 1992-93. Tricia Pierce also received the Distinguished Ambassador Award, marking the first time in history with two recipients.

ABAC students voted Chip Prosser and Samantha Alexander as Mr. and Ms. Baldwin. Prosser became the first person in the history of ABAC to receive the award two years in a row. Ernie Hair, a secondary education major from Tifton, was elected president of the SGA for the 1993-94 academic year. Rusty Cravey, a physical education major from Tifton, was selected as SGA vice-president.

The ABAC baseball team won the 1993 state championship, and Coach Craig Young was named the Coach of the Year. Perry Shiver of the Stallions was named the Most Valuable Player of the tournament. It was the first tournament appearance for the Stallions since 1986. The Golden Stallions then lost their first two games in the district playoffs in Macon to finish with a 27-27 record. The ABAC golf team under the direction of Coach Tom Moody also won the state title for the 23rd time in the last 24 years. Moody was named Coach of the Year. Chris Newsham from ABAC was the medalist of the state tourney. Mark James and Boo Weekley of ABAC tied for fourth place. Weekley went on to have a very successful career on the PGA Tour. He was named to the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2010. The Stallion golfers finished 11th in the 1993 national tournament.

Coach Norman “Red” Hill and the ABAC men’s tennis team won the state championship for the 11th consecutive year and finished fourth in the national tournament. The Stallions have now won the state title 22 times in 27 years under Hill’s direction. Hill became the winningest tennis coach in Georgia on April 3 when the Stallions defeated Brunswick 5-4 to elevate his record to 707-156, one better than former University of Georgia Coach Dan McGill, who retired after 34 seasons with the Bulldogs with a record of 706-183. Hill took over the ABAC tennis program in 1967 and has guided the Stallions to 28 straight trips to the national tournament, the top mark in the country. Coach Ellen Vickers’ Fillies’ softball team finished second in the state after winning

the state title five consecutive times. ABAC compiled a 49-12 record behind the efforts of Quan Thomas and Lee Davis, who were named to the All-America team. The Fillies lost their first two games in the national tournament. Coach Donnie Veal's basketball team had a record of 12-19 and lost in the quarterfinal round of the state tournament which was held at Gressette Gym.

For the first time in the 16-year history of the Georgia Collegiate Softball Championship, a two-year college claimed the title in 1993 when "Sarge's Crew" from ABAC beat West Georgia in the championship. Brian Barrett from Dacula was named the tournament's Most Valuable Player. Intramural Director Newell "Sarge" Dorsey coached the team and received a National Intramural Recreational Sports Association Regional Award of Merit. ABAC faculty and staff voted in the spring of 1993 to name the intramural fields on campus after Dorsey when he passes away. "Sarge's Crew" was selected for the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2014. ABAC Athletics Director Wayne Cooper announced that ABAC will again have a women's tennis team beginning in the fall of 1993. Alan Kramer was named head coach of the women's tennis team, which is now being added back to the intercollegiate sports lineup after being dropped in 1987. Alton Hudgins (Class of '75) was named Intramural Director, replacing Newell "Sarge" Dorsey, who retired.

On June 2, the Golden Stallion statue had its legs sawed off, and it was tossed into the reflecting pool at the Baldwin Memorial Gardens. Samantha Alexander from Georgetown received the Donaldson Award at the spring commencement ceremony on June 1. Former Agriculture Division Chair Frank McCain passed away on June 18 at the age of 71.

Development Director Melvin Merrill said the 1992-93 year was the best ever for the ABAC Foundation. In the third year of the three-year ABAC 2000 capital campaign, gifts totaled \$394,829, an increase of 27.24 percent from the previous year. Dr. Donna Miller (Class of '66) joined the ABAC administrative ranks on July 1 as Director of Institutional Research. President Harold Loyd said ABAC graduated more students than any other two-year college in the University System of Georgia over the past decade. Since July 1, 1982, ABAC conferred degrees on 3,688 students.

Academic Affairs Vice President Jim Burran said ABAC's first honors program will begin this fall quarter. "The object of the honors program at Abraham Baldwin is to provide an enhanced collegiate experience for academically advanced students," Burran said. The honors courses will be spread over two academic years and will consist of six honors topic seminars and six core curriculum courses. Larry Reese, the incoming Student Union President, passed away after an accident on August 19 at Jekyll Island. Ninety ABAC Incentive Grants are available for ABAC students during the 1993 fall term, 60 in Tifton and 30 in Moultrie. The funds for the grants are provided by the ABAC Foundation and cover the cost of one five-hour class for Georgia

residents who have been out of high school for at least five years and have not taken more than 40 hours of college credit courses.

ABAC Ambassadors for the fall quarter are Brandie Starr, Tricia Pierce, Debra McLean, Cynthia Reeves, Joy Carter, Kelly Thompson, Tim Wilkes, and Craig Clark. Bruce Applewhite and Mike Chason are the advisors. A traffic light has been placed at the corner of Moore Highway and Davis Road. The 1993 fall quarter enrollment declined slightly to 2,773 from the all-time high of 2,851 in the fall term of 1992. Ann McDuffie, an art history major from Irwinville, was crowned Ms. Abraham Baldwin 1994 on November 9. The Baldwin Players presented *Rumors* on November 10-13. Agriculture and Forest Resources Chairman received the National FFA Organization's Honorary American FFA Degree on November 12 at the national convention. Television commentator Tony Brown spoke to ABAC students on November 17 in the dining hall.

1994

Dr. Eric Bolen spoke at the Tom M. Cordell Distinguished Lecture Series on January 27. Thomas and Nancy Coleman and their son, Clark, were named the Outstanding Young Farm Family of the year by the Georgia Young Farmers Association at their annual convention on January 28. Dr. Gary Roberts and George Scott coordinated the seminar, *Many Spirits Dancing II: An Exploration of Native American Culture, History, and Literature* on February 8 through April 12.

Pegasus received first place with special merit from the American Scholastic Press Association. *The Stallion* was named the top two-year college newspaper in Georgia for the 21st time in 24 years on February 19. Renee Garrett from Ashburn serves as editor, and Helen Strickland is the advisor. After a six-year layoff, women's tennis returned to the ABAC intercollegiate sports lineup on February 20. Coach Alan Kramer's team lost to Georgia College 9-0. Amy Burt directed the Baldwin Players in *Southern Voices, Southern Stories* on February 23-26. A total of 1,163 visitors attended the Open Campus Day on February 24.

New President's Club members inducted at the annual ABAC Foundation President's Club Dinner on February 25 were Mr. and Mrs. William I. Bowen, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Randy Cowart, Dr. and Mrs. Gordon Davis, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Eve, Mr. and Mrs. Harold G. Harper, Sr., Mr. and Mrs. Norman Hill, Mr. and Mrs. Vernon Ingram, Mr. and Mrs. William Keith, Mr. and Mrs. Guy D. Pfeiffer, Mrs. James L. Shepard, and Mr. and Mrs., Jordan P. Short, IV. ABAC President Harold Loyd and ABAC Foundation President Jack Perry thanked the new members on a night when the Foundation celebrated a successful end to the ABAC 2000 fundraising campaign. Development Director Melvin Merrill said the grand total from all sources was \$2,597,845.53. "Thanks to the generosity of nearly 3,000 donors, the campaign goal was



reached,” Loyd said. “It is our sincere hope that this level of support for the college will continue for it is only with your support that we can achieve our goal of academic excellence and service to ABAC students.”

An ABAC Foundation fundraising campaign to renovate the former J.C. Penney’s building in Moultrie to house ABAC classes was a great success, raising over \$220,000. The college began offering classes in Moultrie in 1987 at Moultrie Tech and the Moultrie Library. Longtime history professor and Moultrie Coordinator Merle Baker was instrumental in helping to secure funding for the new building as well as Director of Development Melvin Merrill. The new building increased enrollment in Moultrie significantly. It is called ABAC on the Square.

The 200-acre teaching facility known as the ABAC Farm was dedicated in honor of Dr. J.G. Woodroof at a Homecoming ceremony on April 9. Woodroof was the first president of ABAC in 1933. According to Board of Regents policy, the farm cannot be named for Woodroof until after his death. He is 94. “This is a fitting tribute to a man who has dedicated his life to agriculture and the pursuit of excellence in agricultural research,” ABAC President Harold Loyd said.

Alumni Association award winners at Homecoming were Gaylord Coan, Distinguished Alumnus; George N. Turk, J. Lamar Branch Award; John R. Bassett, Outstanding Business Leader; Robert E. McLendon, Master Farmer; Louise Calhoun Woodham, Helen Brown Sasser Award; John J. Ellington, Outstanding Young Alumnus; D. Glenn Heard, Master Young Farmer; and Vera Smith Bailey and DeNean Stafford, Jr., Honorary Alumni. Georgia’s first intercollegiate rodeo, the Peach State Stampede, was a part of the Homecoming activities. ABAC’s intercollegiate rodeo team competed against Michigan State, University of Tennessee at Martin, Southern Arkansas and others. A dinner honoring former basketball coach Benny Dees attracted a large crowd of former hoopsters.

National Public Radio host Fiona Ritchie spoke at the Tom M. Cordell Distinguished Lecture Series on April 28. The Baldwin Players under the direction of Amy Atchley presented two one-act plays on May 2-4 in Howard Auditorium. Elizabeth Rankin, Chrystal Laddson, and Amzie Vick starred in *Laundry and Bourbon*, and Clem Hill, Rusty Cravey, and Shawn Garrett were featured in *Lone Star*. Professor of History Hal Henderson received the Georgia Author’s Award from the Georgia Association of College Stores for his book, *The Politics of Change in Georgia, A Political Biography of Ellis Arnall*.

Audrey Luke, a business major from Fitzgerald, was selected as the J.G. Woodroof Scholar at the Honors Day ceremony on May 4. The 1992 valedictorian for Fitzgerald High School compiled a perfect 4.0 grade point average at ABAC. Vivian Pearman, administrative assistant in the president’s office, was selected for the Roy Jackson Award for Staff Excellence at the ceremony. She began her ABAC career in 1966. Marolyn Mixon was named as the winner of



the Carlton Award for Faculty Excellence. She also won the award in 1979. Georgia Governor Zell Miller was the guest speaker at the ceremony and at the Honors Day luncheon.

The hilarious Golden Stallion Hind Quarter awards were presented at the *Spring Fever Reliever* cookout for faculty and staff on May 6 at the pavilion at Lake Baldwin. Black dye has been placed in the water in the ABAC reflecting pool so that it will better reflect the Chapel and the Gazebo. ABAC staff member Jimmy Felton talked with a Callaway Gardens expert who recommended the dye. Anyone who catches fish out of the pool should not eat them.

Wasdon Graydon, Jr., Director of Student Support Services and the Minority Advising Program, was named the Arts Citizen of the Year by the Tifton-Tift County Arts Council.

At the spring quarter faculty-staff meeting on May 19, a total of 37 individuals received service awards. Twenty-year recipients were Don Coates, Dr. Eddie Griggs, Patsy Hembree, Harriett Mayo, Marolyn Mixon, Garth Webb, and Andrea Willis. Fifteen-year recipients were Brenda Keller, Mike Chason, Dr. Charlotte Pfeiffer, Chrystle Ross, Kay Weeks, and Hazel Purvis. Ten-year recipients were Dr. Sue Hammons-Bryner, Teresa Williams, Dr. Larry McGruder, Karen Spivey, Lee Prophet, and Shirley Wilson. Five-year recipients were Kim Pittcock, Barbara Morris, Lyn Thornhill, Bernice Corbin, Yeuk Li, John Green, Tim Dorminey, Clyde Jordan, Janet Weaver, Jean Hightower, Robert Bryant, Mary Ellen Dickens, Wayne Jones, Cindy Jones, Ruth Richardson, Albert Scarborough, Bettie Frye, and Tammy Groover. Retirees honored included James E. Cattell, 18 years; Wright Crosby, 26 years; Dr. Ron Jones, 27 years; Dr. George Powell, 26 years; Frank Sumner, 16 years; JoAnne Thornhill, 18 years; and Ellen Vickers, 27 years.

Brenda Lee performed for 546 guests who paid \$100 per ticket at the annual Dollars for Scholars event in the dining hall on May 20. She sang all her hits including *Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree*. ARA Food Services Director Roy Biggers said the menu included Steamship Round of Beef, Santa Fe Chicken, fried shrimp, Heath Bar Crunch Pie, Kahula Torts, and Banana Split Pie.

The ABAC student body voted Rusty Cravey, a drama/physical education major from Tifton, and Nancy Wheeler, an agriculture major from Alma, as Mr. and Miss Baldwin 1994. Math instructor Kyle Martin received the SGA Impact Award from SGA President Ernie Hair at the student activities banquet on May 24. The Student Georgia Association of Educators was named the top student organization on campus. Sheila Webb, a nursing major from Tifton, won the SGA presidential election, and Marsha Clayton, a nursing major from Nashville, won the election for SGA vice-president. Pacesetter award winners from *The Stallion* included Tara Joyner, Alton Hudgins, Lyn Thornhill, Cale Watkins, Jerome Westley, Tammy Groover, and Amy Swanson. Pam Leonard and Herb Pilcher received Pacesetter II awards.



Cynthia Reeves from Tifton received the Distinguished Ambassador Award on May 26. Other Ambassadors included President Brandi Starr, Tim Wilkes, Debra McLean, Kelly Thompson, Craig Clark, Joy Carter, and Trisha Pierce. Physics Professor James Weeks gained statewide recognition during the spring term for his renowned block breaking demonstration. He positioned himself on a bed of nails while another person breaks cinder blocks on his chest with a sledgehammer. TV show *Inside Edition* wanted to cover the demonstration but Weeks declined.

Coach Ellen Vickers' Golden Fillies' softball team completed its regular season with a phenomenal 52-2 record. The Fillies went 24-0 in conference play. The season included an unprecedented 42-game winning streak. Top performers included Andy Moore, Beth Suber, Lee Davis, Teresa Cromer, Mia Gomez and pitcher Allison Hooks. ABAC won the Region XVII tournament and finished fourth in the national tournament in Lake City, Fla. The Fillies' had a final record of 58-4, the top record in the history of ABAC softball. Moore, Davis, Cromer, and Hooks made the NJCAA All-America team.

Vickers retired from ABAC after the spring quarter with an ABAC softball coaching record of 299-83. Her softball team won the national championship in 1991. During her career, she also coached the cheerleading, tennis, and softball teams. Vickers was selected for the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2009. She was Coach of the Year in Region XVII after her teams won state softball titles in 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, and 1994. Vickers was also Region XVII Coach of the Year in women's tennis when the Fillies won state titles in 1984, 1985, and 1986.

In his first year as coach of the women's tennis team, Alan Kramer guided the Fillies to the Region XVII title behind the stellar play of Stephanie Gallais, Most Valuable Player of the conference tournament. Women's tennis was reinstated at ABAC after a six-year absence. Kramer was named Coach of the Year for Region XVII. The Fillies finished 10th in the national tournament, and Gallais was named to the ITA All America team. The Golden Stallions' tennis team of Coach Norman "Red" Hill finished second in the Region XVII tournament, falling to Brunswick 4-3. It was only the third time in the past 29 years that the ABAC men's team had not won the title. In the national tournament, the Stallions knocked off Brunswick 4-0 to finish third in the nation. ABAC All-America selections were Gildas Villard, Craig Green, Johnny McHarg, Brennen Hicks, Henrik Lindqvist, and Andreas Lennartsson. Coach Donnie Veal's basketball team recorded a 11-16 season.

With a record of 26-25, Coach Craig Young's ABAC baseball team did not make the 1994 conference tournament. Coach Tom Moody's golf team won the state title and finished eighth in the national tournament in Scottsdale, Ariz. Casey Willis tied for 20th in the individual rankings and was named to the NJCAA All America team.



Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College

Renee Garrett, a journalism major from Ashburn, received the Donaldson Award at the spring commencement ceremony on June 11. Registrar Su-Zan Harper said 145 graduates participated. ABAC hosted the Bike Ride Across Georgia on June 14-15. Over 1,000 bicyclists camped out in Gressette Gym and near Howard Auditorium. Fran Kinchen, administrative secretary in the academic dean's office, has been selected the state president of the Georgia Division of Professional Secretaries International. She is the first African-American female to serve over 29 chapters and 925 members of the organization. ABAC's first president, Dr. J.G. Woodroof, hosted ABAC President Harold Loyd and Public Relations Director Mike Chason when they spoke to the Griffin Kiwanis Club on July 27.

Dr. Larry Allen was named chair of the Division of Agriculture and Forest Resources effective August 22. Allen received his bachelor's degree from Louisiana Tech University, his master's degree from the University of Arkansas, and his doctorate in agricultural education from Louisiana State University. Tom Call has served as acting chair since Dr. Ron Jones retired June 1. Chancellor Stephen Portch spoke at ABAC on August 26.

ABAC student Ernie Hair from Fitzgerald was named state president of the Student Georgia Association of Educators. Elizabeth Rankin from Tifton is the editor for *The Stallion* for 1994-95. George Wilson is the new station manager for WPLH. Jerry Lanier has been hired as a part-time coach for the intercollegiate rodeo team.

WALB-TV staged its *Town and Country* show live from ABAC on September 9. Dr. Larry McGruder represented all the faculty in the University System of Georgia on October 12 when he brought greetings at the inauguration of Chancellor Stephen Portch. McGruder served on the search committee for the Chancellor. Governor Zell Miller spoke to students, faculty, and staff at ABAC on the afternoon of November 1. African-American artist Benny Andrews spoke that night at the Tom M. Cordell Distinguished Lecture Series. The Baldwin Players performed *Greater Tuna* on November 9-12. Glover Womack, a pre-veterinary medicine major from Americus, was crowned Miss ABAC 1995 on November 15.

The enrollment for the fall term was 2,751, a slight decrease from the 2,773 students enrolled during the 1993 fall quarter. Director of College Services Homer Day said the admissions and human resources offices will move from Tift Hall to join the public safety office in Weltner Hall beginning with the 1995 spring quarter. ABAC personnel joined with Colquitt County alumni and friends on November 10 for a *Day in Moultrie* to assist in raising the \$200,000 needed to match the Board of Regents' promise of \$200,000 to renovate the former J.C. Penney building on the square in Moultrie to an ABAC classroom building. Development Director Melvin Merrill said the campaign has also included direct mail, phone solicitation, and direct appeal.

Public Relations Director Mike Chason received the top award for college public relations professionals in Georgia on December 1 when he received the Communications Award at the



annual Georgia Education Advancement Council (GEAC) conference. Chason was the 1991 president of GEAC and served on the board of directors for six years. He also served as the chair of the Chancellor's Administrative Committee on Public Relations in 1993.

Librarian Harriett Mayo said the Baldwin Library had the third highest gate count of the 15 two-year colleges in the University System of Georgia for the 1993-94 academic year. "In 1989-90 before we moved to our new building, our gate count was the third lowest," Mayo said. "A typical week in the fall ran about 864 and now our count for a typical week during fall quarter is 5,114." ABAC faculty member George Scott passed away on December 6. He was the husband of business division faculty member Nancy Scott. A faculty member in the Division of Humanities since 1972, Scott at one time wrote feature stories for the public relations office. On another occasion, he was the advisor to *The Stallion*. The George Scott Day Celebration of the Arts was named in his honor in 1996. ABAC faculty member Don Dechert passed away on December 10. He was an associate professor of English who joined the ABAC faculty in 1976.

1995

Memorial services were held in the Chapel of All Faiths for Dr. Don Dechert on January 17 and George Scott on January 24. Both men were ABAC faculty members. Development Director Melvin Merrill said the \$200,000 goal for the ABAC on the Square campaign has been met. Faculty member Jeannie Doss was featured in a WALB-TV news segment on the name change of home economics to family and consumer sciences. For the 22nd time in 25 years, the ABAC student newspaper was selected as the best among two-year colleges in Georgia by the Georgia College Press Association in January. Elizabeth Rankin from Tifton was the 1994-95 editor of *The Stallion*.

Dr. James Burran, Vice President and Dean of Academic Affairs at ABAC, was named as the president of Dalton College at the University System of Georgia Board of Regents' meeting on February 8. Burran joined the ABAC faculty in 1978 as an assistant professor of history. He served as assistant to the academic dean, registrar, and assistant academic dean before moving to his current position. He also served as acting president of ABAC in 1988-89. Burran will assume his new position on May 15. "I have mixed emotions," the 44-year-old Burran said. "Dalton represents a great opportunity but ABAC has been a part of my life for the past 16 years." Dr. Homer Day, Director of College Services, will serve as interim academic dean.

Steven Meeks, a biological and agricultural engineering major from Ty Ty, was selected as Mr. ABAC on March 9. He is a former Georgia State FFA President.

Alumni Association award winners at Homecoming on April 8 were Jimmy Grubbs, Distinguished Alumnus; Robert L. Miles, J. Lamar Branch Award; Robert M. Dutton,



Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College

Outstanding Business Leader; A. Burnell Gaskins, Master Farmer; Sherrie Bloodworth Sumner, Outstanding Young Alumnus; and Helen Strickland, Honorary Alumnus. The first ever Outstanding Educator award was presented to Jane Grogan Gibbs, and the first ever Outstanding Health Care Professional Award went to Dr. Phillip L. Roberts. ABAC President Harold Loyd presented Allen Hasty (Class of '16) with a coffee mug for being the oldest alumnus at Homecoming. Hasty is 99 years old. Eighth District Congressman Saxby Chambliss spoke at the annual Forum on Agriculture at Homecoming. ABAC's intercollegiate rodeo team competed in the Peach State Stampede during Homecoming against 11 other colleges and universities. Bruce Applewhite is the staff advisor for the team.

At the Honors Day ceremony on May 3, Lynn Thornhill received the W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence, and Betty Cox received the Roy Jackson Award for Staff Excellence. Jessica Merriman Russell was selected as the J.G. Woodroof Scholar as the top academic student at ABAC. Chancellor Stephen Portch was the speaker at the Honors Day ceremony and luncheon. The Baldwin Players presented *Professor Zucchini's Traveling Tales* on May 2-4. Amy Burt is the director for this play tailored specifically for children.

Coach Greg Tanner's ABAC Fillies' softball team captured the state championship on April 29 and the national championship on May 6 at the Hamilton Complex in Tifton. ABAC beat Meridian 5-4 in an extra inning championship game. Members of the team included Heather Beck, Sonia Bell, Lana Conner, Teresa Cromer, Amanda Gibbs, Mia Gomez, Tonya Greene, Allison Hooks, Amy Johnson, Amy Norton, Tiffany Perry, Christa Timms, and Buffi Whitley. ABAC compiled a record of 52-9 and was selected for the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2011. Tanner was named the National Coach of the Year. He left ABAC after the season to take an administrative job with the Coffee County School System. He was elected to the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2012.

Coach Norman "Red" Hill and the ABAC men's tennis team won the state championship to earn the Stallions their 30th consecutive trip to the national tournament where they finished third in the nation. Coach Alan Kramer's women's tennis team won the state title for the second year in a row on the way to a sixth-place finish in the national tournament. Kramer broke his leg on a visit to the Grand Canyon during the trip. Coach Tom Moody's golf team won the state title for the fourth year in a row under his leadership and wound up 11th in the national tournament. Tanner, Hill, Kramer, and Moody were all named Coach of the Year in the state, and Tanner was named National Coach of the Year. ABAC dropped its golf program at the end of the 1995 season and added women's volleyball, which will begin play in the fall under the direction of Coach Alton Hudgins. Coach Donnie Veal's basketball team finished 14-15. Coach Craig Young's baseball team wound up 29-25.



The Capitol Steps comedy group provided the entertainment at the annual Dollars for Scholars Benefit Banquet and Show before 525 patrons in the dining hall on May 19. Developmental Studies Division faculty member Tamara Rellis received the SGA Impact award at the student activities banquet on May 24. Stuart Hasty from Rebecca and Ramona Hall from Tifton were selected as Mr. and Ms. Baldwin 1995. Pacesetters included Dr. Sue Hammons-Bryner, Sheila Webb Hair, Wasdon Graydon, Greg Tanner, Ramona Hall, Christy Burnam, and Karan Mason. Ramona Hall also won the Student Government Association election for president for 1995-96. Adrienne Brooks from Cartersville was selected as SGA vice-president. Women's Link honored President Harold Loyd with the Ariadne Award which honors a person "who has done the most to promote a favorable campus climate for women." Baptist Student Union was named Club of the Year.

Shealyn Alicia Allman from Moultrie received the Donaldson Award at the commencement ceremony on June 10. ABAC hosted the WALB-TV *Town and Country* show live at the Baldwin Memorial Gardens on June 16. Dr. Oscar Patton was selected as the new chair of the humanities division, effective July 1. Donna Campbell is the new softball coach, replacing Greg Tanner, who coached for one year and won the national championship.

Dr. Bettie Horne became the first female central administrator in the history of ABAC on August 15 when she was named Vice President and Dean of Academic Affairs. Horne was previously the director of instructional services at Lander University. She earned a doctorate degree in linguistics from the University of South Carolina and a master's degree in English from Austin Peay State University. Dr. Tim Wise was named as Vice President and Dean of Student Affairs in September, replacing Dr. Worth Bridges who held the position for 28 years before his retirement on June 30. Assistant Dean of Student Affairs Henry "Bo" Miller also retired June 30 after 24 years in that position. Dr. Maggie Martin is the new Director of Counseling, replacing Dr. Rosemary Johnson, who held the position for 29 years before her retirement on August 31. Vonda Doss (Class of '85) is the new coordinator of the enrichment program. Tom Call has been selected as Interim Registrar after the resignation of Su-Zan Harper.

The 1995 fall quarter enrollment was 2,592, a decrease from the 2,751 students enrolled during the fall of 1994. Because of disease and age, the water oaks on the railroad side of Moore Highway will be removed this fall, eliminating the beautiful canopy which lined both sides of the highway for many years. The trees will be replaced with new oaks. The first women's intercollegiate volleyball team in the history of ABAC began play in September. The first home match in the history of women's volleyball took place on October 17 in Gressette Gym when the Fillies beat Middle Georgia. Coach Alton Hudgins led the Fillies to an undefeated home record and a second-place finish in the state tournament.

Amy Atchley directed the Baldwin Players in *The Good Doctor* on November 8-11. Lori Bodiford, a physical therapy major from Tifton, was crowned Miss ABAC 1996 on November 14. William Fred Scott from the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra spoke at the Tom M. Cordell Distinguished Lecture Series on November 16. Dr. Frank Thomas, former academic dean at ABAC, was elected president of the Georgia Cattlemen's Association. His wife, Judy, was elected president of the Georgia Cattle Women's Association. Thomas retired from ABAC in 1987. It marks the first time that a husband and wife have ever been presidents of the two associations.

1996

The ABAC newspaper claimed the top prize in the Georgia College Press Association contest on January 27 for the 23rd time in the past 26 years. Dusty Vassey from Irwinville is the editor. Tom Call, an associate professor of agronomy, has been selected as the new ABAC registrar, and Merle Baker is the new director of evening and off-campus programs, replacing Richard Strickland who accepted a position at Moultrie Tech in November. Director Amy Atchley and the Baldwin Players presented *Dearly Departed* on February 21-24. Dr. Oscar Patton, chairman of the Division of Humanities, taught in Russia in a faculty exchange program with Syktyvkar State University from March 20-July 1.

Dr. J.W. Reynolds from Ashburn donated his collection of Academy Award-winning Best Picture films to the ABAC Humanities Division. The films cover every Best Picture from 1928 to 1996. "Everybody in my family had kind of lost interest in these movies," Reynolds said. "When I got in touch with Dr. Oscar Patton, he was very interested. I am glad somebody will be able to use them." Admissions Director Garth Webb said Open Campus Day on February 22 attracted a record 1,252 visitors.

At the winter quarter faculty meeting on February 29, the faculty voted to name the area just outside the President's Dining Room as the Orene Allen Greene Gardens. Greene attended the Georgia State College for Men in 1931. The faculty also voted to name the pavilion at Lake Baldwin the Rowan Pavilion, in memory of Mr. and Mrs. James Alvin Rowan. Mr. Rowan attended the Second District A&M School.

President Harold Loyd designated March 7 as Caroline Helms Day at ABAC because of her hard work as the director of the self-study and the successful visit of the SACS reaffirmation team. The Harlem Globetrotters performed in Gressette Gym on March 28. Rodeo Coach Jerry Lanier guided the ABAC Rodeo Team in the third annual Peach State Stampede on March 29-31. ABAC is ranked fifth in the Ozark Region. Brad Etheridge, an animal science major from Williston, Fla., was selected as Mr. ABAC in the annual contest on April 9. President Harold



Loyd will serve as president of the Georgia Association of Colleges (GAC) for the next year. He is the first ABAC president of the GAC.

Alumni Association award winners at Homecoming on April 13 were Jack Legg, Distinguished Alumnus; Ben Strickland, Master Farmer; Marion Legg Mahaffey, Master Homemaker; Butch Davis, Outstanding Business Leader, Dr. Scott NeSmith, J. Lamar Branch Award; Laura Tucker, Outstanding Young Alumnus; Dr. Hal Henderson, Outstanding Educator; and Edna Branch, Honorary Alumnus. University System Chancellor Stephen Portch was the guest speaker at the Forum on Agriculture sponsored by the Ag Alumni Council. The Orene Allen Greene Memorial Garden was dedicated on the south side of the Donaldson Dining Hall in honor of Ginger Wheeler's mother. Ginger is the wife of Dr. Bill Wheeler, former chair of the Division of Developmental Studies.

Arts Experiment Station Director Syd Blackmarr said the 13th annual Love Affair Fine Arts Festival will take place in Fulwood Park April 20-May 4. The Love Affair began on the ABAC campus as a children's festival. Dr. Bobbie Robinson has been selected as the Regents' Distinguished Teacher of the Year at ABAC. Vice President for Academic Affairs Bettie Horne said Robinson will enjoy a decreased teaching load by one-third to develop a Writing Center.

South Georgia author Janice Daugharty was the featured speaker at the Tom M. Cordell Distinguished Lectures Series on April 25. The Baldwin Players staged *Words, Words, Words* and *The Actor's Nightmare* on April 30-May 2. Dr. Amy Atchley is the director. Amy Denise Welsh from Tifton was selected as the J.G. Woodroof Scholar at the Honors Day ceremony on May 1. Dr. Ray Barber received the W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence, and Sara Willis received the Roy Jackson Award for Staff Excellence. University of Georgia President Charles Knapp was the speaker at the Honors Luncheon. Helen Reddy performed before 636 patrons at the Dollars for Scholars Benefit Banquet and Show on May 10.

Fillies Win Softball National Championship

Coach Donna Campbell continued the ABAC run of success on the softball field when the Fillies won their second straight national championship on May 11 in her first year as the ABAC head coach. Players on the team included Tiffany McMillian, Paula Simmons, Sonya Chambliss, Deanna Roberson, Christa Timms, Tiffany Perry, Michelle Jackson, Ingram Perry, Kim Schell, Karla Santiago, Amy Johnson, Buffi Whitley, Anna Stripling, Alana Loper, and Dana Kay Eunice. The Fillies compiled a record of 44-12. In the championship round, ABAC lost to Meridian (Miss.) 9-5 in the first game but bounced back for an 8-1 win in the finale at the Hamilton Complex in Tifton. Deanna Roberson was named the most valuable player of the tournament when she hit .529 and went three for five with four runs batted in during the



championship games. She made the all-tournament team along with Amy Johnson, Michelle Jackson, Paula Moore, and Sonya Poole. The team was selected for the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2012. It was the final year for slow pitch softball as Campbell led the Fillies into the fast pitch era of softball in 1997. ABAC won three national titles in slow pitch softball in 1991, 1995, and 1996.

Coach Norman "Red" Hill and the men's tennis team won the state championship and finished second in the national tournament, which marked ABAC's 31st consecutive trip to the national tournament. This is the fifth time that the Stallions have finished second in the nation. Coach Alan Kramer's women's tennis team won the state title for the third straight year and recorded a fifth-place finish in the national tournament, marking the highest finish ever for the Fillies. Coach Craig Young's baseball team wound up 21-28 overall. Coach Donnie Veal's ABAC basketball team wound up 16-15 overall and lost in the first round of the state tournament.

Steven Meeks and Lori Bodiford were announced as Mr. and Miss Baldwin at the student activities banquet on May 23. C.J. Reeve, an agricultural management/marketing major from Valrico, Fla., was elected as the president of the SGA. Joe Ezzard, an agricultural technology major from Eatonton, was elected vice-president. Dr. Tim Wise and Dr. Doug Waid received the SGA Impact Award. Pacesetter recipients included Angie Thompson, Donna Campbell, Dave Jones, Sherrie Young, Margo Harris, and Emory Giles. Marolyn Mixon received a Pacesetter II award from Dusty Vassey, editor of *The Stallion*. The Student Georgia Association of Educators was named Club of the Year. Dr. Larry Allen and Dianne Cowart received special recognition, Allen for his leadership in the Division of Agriculture and Forest Resources and Cowart for her long career at ABAC which will end when she retires after 23 years on June 30. Allen put together the second annual Ag Day for the students on May 23 which featured unique events such as pulpwood toss, crosscut sawing, canoe races, egg toss, and trying to put out a lit cigar with a water gun.

Retirees representing 159 years of service departed ABAC after the spring quarter. They included Dianne Cowart, Betty Cox, Dr. Eddie Griggs, Dr. Vincent Keese, Tom Moody, and Dr. Leona Mott. Margo Harris from Sparks was the Donaldson Award winner at the commencement ceremony on June 8. ABAC sponsored the Ag Showcase on June 29 at the Rural Development Center with the University of Georgia and Fort Valley State University. Dr. Larry Allen coordinated the ABAC exhibit. Two Olympic athletes and their coaches are staying at ABAC to prepare for their appearances in the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta. The Olympic Torch Run will pass through Tifton on July 11. The ABAC Continuing Education Office has moved to the bottom floor of the Baldwin Library after spending many years at the Rural Development Center.



Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College

Don Coates and the ABAC Jazz Ensemble performed at the Montreux Jazz Festival in Montreux, Switzerland on July 5. The group also toured Germany and France and performed at Euro Disney near Paris. The jazz band completed its summer tour by performing at the Olympic Games in Atlanta. ABAC now has its own home page on the internet at <http://stallion.abac.peachnet.edu>.

For the fourth consecutive year, the ABAC Foundation set a record for total income. Development Director Melvin Merrill said the total income for 1995-96 was \$858,778, exceeding the three quarters of a million-dollar mark for the second year in a row. Harriett Mayo, director of the Baldwin Library, has been named the librarian at Dalton College. Mayo joined the ABAC staff in 1974 and became the Head Librarian on November 1, 1988. Brenda Sellers has been named interim director of the library. Dr. Caroline Helms is the new social science division chair, replacing Dr. Gary Roberts, who is returning to a fulltime teaching position.

Renovation on the ABAC building on the square in Moultrie got underway this summer. President Harold Loyd said construction should be complete in time for ABAC to offer classes in the building for the 1997 winter quarter. Standard Construction Company of Valdosta submitted the low bid of \$440,179 to complete the first floor and exterior of the building. The second floor will be renovated at a later date. The ABAC Foundation raised approximately \$212,000 for the project from alumni and friends in Colquitt County. President Loyd said state funds will cover the remainder of the project. Dr. Ronald Faircloth and Donald Massey retired at the end of the summer term.

ABAC enrolled 2,553 students for the 1996 fall quarter, a slight decrease from the 2,592 students enrolled for the 1995 fall term. The college initiated two new programs in the Division of Agriculture and Forest Resources during the fall term, poultry technology and hospitality management. Evening Program Director Merle Baker said 840 students are enrolled in the evening program. Ralenda Thornton from Hoboken has been re-elected as president of the ABAC Ambassadors. Other Ambassadors are Rebecca Akins, Christie Bragdon, Rebecca Callaway, Tracy Chason, Chad Cottle, Barbi Grogan, Tim Meeks, Jennifer Moorman, Travis Tedder, Darby Thompson, and Stephanie Wood.

Vice President and Dean of Student Affairs Tim Wise said the J. Lamar Branch Student Center will become a smoke free and tobacco free facility on September 9. "Non-smokers have complained that they cannot enjoy eating in the Center because of the smoke," Wise said. "Our students have also complained that they are unable to watch the TV or enjoy the game room because of the excessive smoke." Lewis Hall, a former dormitory which re-opened as a Coffee House in recent years, has been made available to students, including smokers, to gather.



Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College

Daniel Goethe from Gothenburg, Sweden will be the editor of *The Stallion* for the 1996-97 year. He is the first international student in the 32-year history of the newspaper to be named editor. Tamilla Kadymova from Baku, Azerbaijan is the editor of *Pegasus*. The new Job Placement Center opened October 9. Dr. Charlotte Pfeiffer and Dr. Gaye Elder were selected for the prestigious Governor's Teaching Fellows program of the University System of Georgia.

Dr. Bobbie Robinson from the Humanities Division was named the 1996 Board of Regents Distinguished Teacher of the Year. Fifty-nine family members and friends of the J. Alvin Rowan family attended a picnic and dedication ceremony for the Rowan Pavilion at Lake Baldwin on October 5. The Rowan family contributed \$10,000 from the estate of their parents, J. Alvin and Lois Rowan, to renovate the pavilion. Bobby Rowan served as moderator.

Chrystle Ross, coordinator of the academic computer system, said 400 active student e-mail accounts have been established on campus. Ross said plans are to extend e-mail capabilities to all computer labs beginning with the winter quarter. This is the first time ABAC students have had access to e-mail.

The Stafford Fine Arts Series premiered on Nov. 3 in the dining hall when a 40-voice mixed ensemble of ABAC students joined the Tifton Choral Society, the Valdosta State University choirs, and the Valdosta Symphony Orchestra for a performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. The series is funded by Mr. and Mrs. DeNean Stafford, Jr. Coach Alton Hudgins' Golden Fillies finished second to Middle Georgia in the state volleyball tournament on November 7 in Gressette Gym. It marked the second straight year that the Fillies have finished in second place.

On November 12, Anesia Young, a psychology major from Fitzgerald, was crowned Ms. Abraham Baldwin 1997. Other titles she had already won included Miss Ben Hill Forestry, Miss South Georgia Charisma, Miss Georgia Peach and Miss Georgia Sweet Potato. She later won the Miss Tifton, Miss World Universal, and Ms. Georgia United States crowns. Amy Burt directed the Baldwin Players in *My Three Angels* on November 13-16. Eddie Seagle received the Honorary American FFA Degree on November 15 in Kansas City at the FFA National Convention. President Harold Loyd accompanied the ABAC Rodeo Team to the Missouri Valley College Regional Rodeo in Chillicothe, Mo., on November 15-17. Development Director Melvin Merrill received the Distinguished Service Award in Educational Fundraising from the Georgia Education Advancement Council on November 21. Every seventh grader in Tift County visited the ABAC campus on November 25. Vonda Fenn coordinated the visit. Sixty-nine ABAC faculty, staff, and administrators visited every home room at Tift County High School on December 12 to discuss opportunities in higher education.

1997

Betty Claxton retired from her business professor's position on January 1. Her initial employment date at ABAC was September 1, 1963. ABAC alumnus John Hunt was sworn in on January 7 as a member of the University System of Georgia Board of Regents by Governor Zell Miller. Three members of the 1937 ABAC state championship basketball team were honored at halftime of the Golden Stallions' game on January 16. Dorsey Brooks, Wallace Childs, and Jason Chastain played on the ABAC team 60 years ago which won the state title by defeating Georgia Military 25-24. The ABAC gym burned during the Thanksgiving Holidays of 1936 so all the home games were played in the Tifton High School gym. Because the football uniforms were in the gym, the football team of 1936 was the last time that ABAC had a football team. The state basketball tournament was played in Milledgeville and because of a lack of funds, the ABAC team stayed at the new Milledgeville jail. The Gordon team, because of a lack of funds, stayed at the mental institution. The state title game featured the center jump after every made basket.

ABAC alumnus Helen Brown Sasser passed away on February 4. She was 87. Sasser was the first female to register for classes when the college changed its name from the Georgia State College for Men to ABAC in 1933. After receiving her home economics degree from UGA, she returned to ABAC as a dietician for four years. Students said she filled them up with biscuits and cane syrup. The syrup was so tasty it had its own name, *Old George*. The ABAC Alumni Association changed the name of the Master Homemaker Award to the Helen Brown Sasser Award in her honor in 1999. She won the award herself in 1987.

For the 24th time in 27 years, *The Stallion* received the top award from the Georgia College Press Association. Daniel Goethe from Gothenburg, Sweden is the editor. The American Scholastic Association awarded *Pegasus* first place in its national award competition. Andrea Savage and Dr. Herbert Shippey are the advisors to the literary magazine. Coach Donnie Veal's ABAC basketball team finished 10-16 overall. Betty Claxton retired in March after 33 years as a faculty member in the business division. She taught 401 different classes and 8,987 students.

ABAC on the Square opened with a ribbon-cutting and open house on March 16. Cutting the ribbon were Colquitt County Commission Chair Franklin Sutton (Class of '49), ABAC President Harold Loyd, Southwest Georgia Bank President John Clark, Moultrie Mayor Bill McIntosh, State Senator Harold Ragan (Class of '49), Moultrie attorney Jack Short, and Assistant Vice Chancellor for Construction and Design Lee Richey. ABAC Ambassadors Barbara Grogan and Darby Thompson, both from Moultrie, held the ribbon. Classes were held at the ABAC on the



Square building in downtown Moultrie for the first time ever when the spring quarter began on April 2. Evening and Off-Campus Programs Director Merle Baker said evening classes will be available this spring, and day classes will be on the fall quarter schedule. Only the first floor of the building is open. Once funds become available, the mezzanine and second floor will be renovated. ABAC began offering classes at the Moultrie Library in 1987.

The ABAC Rodeo Club hosted the fourth annual Peach State Stampede Rodeo on April 3-5. The ABAC intercollegiate rodeo team, coached by Jerry Lanier, is ranked fifth in the Ozark Region of the National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association. The ABAC team is in its fifth year of competition.

United States Senator Paul Coverdell was the featured speaker at the Homecoming luncheon on April 5. Alumni Association award winners were Ford Spinks, Distinguished Alumnus; Dr. C. Jack Hearn, J. Lamar Branch Award; Dr. Charles P. Griner, Outstanding Educator; Jaimie Allen, Master Farmer; Dr. Chris Gibbs, Outstanding Young Alumnus; and Dr. Rosemary Johnson, Dr. Leona Reddick Mott, and Dr. Frank Thomas, Honorary Alumnus Award. Writer Beverly Hall Lawrence was the featured speaker at the Tom M. Cordell Distinguished Lecture Series on April 10.

Coach Donna Campbell guided the Fillies to the state championship in their first year of fast-pitch softball. She was named Coach of the Year in Region XVII. ABAC lost in Eastern Regional tournament action in North Carolina. After the season, Campbell was named to the United States Slow Pitch Association Hall of Fame. The men's tennis team of Coach Norman "Red" Hill won the Region XVII title behind the play of Conrad Hurter, the most valuable player of the tournament. The Stallions finished second in the national tournament for the second consecutive year. Coach Alan Kramer's women's tennis team won the state title and finished fifth in the national tournament. Coach Donnie Veal's basketball team had a record of 10-16.

The baseball Stallions of Coach Craig Young rolled up a 35-16 regular season record and finished third in the state tournament. That's the most wins ever for an ABAC baseball team. Young resigned after the season to take the head coaching job at Middle Georgia. In six years with the Stallions, he had a record of 168-155. Steve Janousek was hired as the new baseball coach. Janousek played on two national championship teams at Middle Georgia. He was the Wheeler County High School head coach from 1987-94 before assuming the Toombs County High School head coaching job for three years. He led Toombs County to the Class A state championship in 1996.

Tracy Lynn Chason, a dietetics major from Tifton, was selected as the J.G. Woodroof Scholar at the Honors Day ceremony on May 7. She compiled a perfect 4.0 grade point average. Chason is the daughter of Public Relations Director Mike Chason and his wife, Kris. Dr. Ed Seagle



received the W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence, and Patsy Hembree received the Roy Jackson Award for Staff Excellence at the ceremony. Assistant Secretary of State for the State of Georgia Cathy Cox (Class of '78) was the guest speaker at the Honors Luncheon following the ceremony.

At 2 p.m. on May 7, a ceremony was held on the south side of the library building to name the entire structure in honor of ABAC benefactor O.D. Carlton, II, from Albany. A cloth was placed over the letters on the south side of the building, and Carlton's daughter, Corinne Martin, and granddaughter, Colleen Sullivan, pulled long ropes to unveil the lettering for the Carlton Center. Carlton has been a member of the ABAC Foundation since 1974 and has supported the college since 1966. He is chairman of the board of the Carlton Company, the Caterpillar dealership in Albany.

Rebecca Callaway from Tifton assumed her duties as the SGA President at the student activities banquet on May 13. John White will serve as SGA Vice President. Dr. Larry Allen received the SGA Impact Award at the banquet. C.J. Reeve was voted Miss Baldwin, and John White was voted Mr. Baldwin. The Student Georgia Association of Educators was named Club of the Year. Pacesetter award winners were Helen Beard, Nita Lynch, C.J. Reeve, Esther Hanson, Angi Fulp, Farrah Hegwood, Luther Woodall, and Dr. Tim Wise. Andrea Savage received a special award for 23 years of service as the advisor to *Pegasus*. She will retire in August. President Harold Loyd received the most donations in his name and was the lucky winner of the Kiss-The-Pig contest.

Development Director Melvin Merrill received the Tifton-Tift County Arts Citizen of the Year award. Wasdon Graydon was a previous ABAC recipient of the award in 1994. A professional company of 17 musicians presented the music of Henry Mancini in a tribute titled *Oh, Henry!* at the annual Dollars for Scholars Benefit Banquet and Show before 530 patrons on May 23. Pianist Mac Frampton and trumpet player Cecil Welch were the key figures in the orchestra. ABAC retirees honored at a reception in the dining hall on May 27 were Dr. William Wheeler, Betty Claxton, Jerry Hobbs, Dr. Ronald Faircloth, Pat Gilliland, Sandra Hunt, Donald Massey, Andrea Savage, and Robert Lindsey.

Ralenda Thornton, an agribusiness major from Hoboken, received the Donaldson Award at the spring commencement ceremony on June 14. She served as an ABAC Ambassador for three years. She served as president of the Ambassadors for two of those years, winning the Distinguished Ambassador Award, the Leadership Award for Ambassador President for two years, and the Service Award for Ambassadors for two years.

In his keynote address at the annual fall faculty-staff workshop on September 17, ABAC President Harold Loyd said, "the good ship ABAC is setting sail on another year of academic

excellence.” Loyd said this will be the last year that ABAC operates under the quarter system. The semester system begins for the entire University System of Georgia in August 1998. ABAC enrolled 2,633 students for the 1997 fall term, an increase over the 2,553 students enrolled during the fall of 1996.

Elizabeth Stone and Aaron Sagers were named as co-editors of *The Stallion* for the coming year. Dr. Ed Seagle was selected as the recipient of the 1997 Regents Distinguished Professor for Teaching and Learning award. He has taught horticulture at ABAC for 20 years. Dr. Bobbie Robinson from ABAC won the award in 1996. Betty McCorvey was named as the first assistant director of development in ABAC history. Her position is funded by the ABAC Foundation.

Foundation Scholars selected by the ABAC Foundation for the 1997 fall quarter included Leanne Stalvey and Heather Powell from Berrien High School, Kelli Bass from Colquitt County, Leslie Walker from Cook High; Karly Branch, Sam Utley, and Jennifer Thompson from Tift County High; Amy Belflower and Chad Griffin from Tiftarea Academy; Kenneth Murphree, Jr., and Harold Hobby from Turner County High; Justin Joiner from Irwin County; and Holly Davis from Worth County High. For the 10th straight year, the ABAC Foundation offered a scholarship covering all tuition and fees to the top five graduates from Berrien, Colquitt, Cook, Ben Hill, Irwin, Tift, Turner, and Worth counties. The top three students from each school who accept the invitations receive the scholarships.

ABAC alumnus Thomas Coleman (Class of '75) was honored as Georgia's Farmer of the Year at the annual Sunbelt Expo on October 14. Other ABAC alumni who have received this honor include Tim McMillan in 1990, Alan Verner in 1994, and Armond Morris in 1996. Coleman is married to ABAC alumni director Nancy Coleman. Dr. William Parker was the guest speaker at the Tom M. Cordell Distinguished Lecture Series on October 16.

A portion of the ceiling on the third floor of the J. Lamar Branch Student Center collapsed on October 25, resulting in water pouring down into the studio of WPLH. Roofers had been re-roofing the building for some time. The Baptist Student Union and the Rodeo Club sponsored a Cowboy Church Revival at the Rodeo Arena on October 27-28. BSU Advisor Penny Chestnut said attendance was 170 the first night and 120 the second night.

Coach Alton Hudgins' Golden Fillies' volleyball team lost to Middle Georgia in the first round of the conference tournament. Barbi Hopkins, Rumiko Hara, and Casey Long were named to the all-region team. Long led the Fillies in aces, kills, and blocks.

The ABAC Concert Choir, the Valdosta State Choir, the Tifton Choral Society, and the Valdosta State Symphony Orchestra presented Brahms' German Requiem on November 9 as a part of the Stafford Fine Arts Series. The Baldwin Players performed *Twelfth Night* on November 12-15 in



Howard Auditorium. Key roles were played by Jennifer Moorman, Sandra Powell, Aaron Sagers, Jonathan Halstead, Matt Cook, Matt Senkbeil, Katharina Tiwald, and Matt Courtoy. Amy Burt is the director. ABAC students Tim Meeks and Travis Tedder will represent ABAC with the college's first ever exhibit at the National FFA Convention in Kansas City. Meeks is receiving his American FFA Degree at the convention.

Yana Bakshevskaya, a business major from Novosibirsk, Russia, became the first truly international student to be crowned Ms. ABAC 1998 on November 13. She was an exchange student when she graduated from Tift County High School and decided to pursue her college education at ABAC. Her only other pageant experience came when she finished second in the Miss Siberia contest. Beth Doellefeld, an art major from Duluth, participated in the Miss Rodeo America competition in Las Vegas on November 29. She won the Miss Rodeo Georgia crown in May. President Harold Loyd hosted his quarterly *Cracker Barrel* session on December 1 in the Baldwin Library. At the sessions, he discussed any ABAC topic with any faculty or staff member who wanted to talk.

1998

ABAC opened the Multicultural Awareness Center on January 28. Wasdon Graydon, Jr., who also directs the ABAC minority advising program, is the director. Beginning in 1998 and continuing through 2000, the Center began instituting a series of Mandala Movement workshops with instruction by Dr. William C. Parker. Parker is the former Vice Chancellor for Minority Affairs at the University of Kentucky. Graydon said the purpose of the workshops is to create a prolonged, institutionally based effort that substantiates and sustains an environment that is continually sensitive to all people. Youth Connection Coordinator Vonda Fenn assists in the coordination of the workshops.

For the 25th time since 1971, *The Stallion* was named the best two-year college newspaper in the state by the Georgia College Press Association in February. Elizabeth Stone and Aaron Sagers, both from Tifton, are the co-editors of the paper. State Representative Austin Scott presented a special resolution to Strickland, Stone, and Sagers honoring the paper and its staff on the accomplishment. State Representative Jay Shaw (Class of '68) initiated the resolution. Rebecca Callaway from Tifton was elected as the president of the Georgia College Press Institute. Chad Crews won the 1998 Mr. ABAC contest on March 10.

In March, Vera Conger Smith Bailey from Tifton gave the ABAC Foundation her 147-acre farm as the basis for the Vera Conger and Carlton Smith Charitable Remainder Annuity Trust. ABAC



Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College

President Harold Loyd said the Trust was funded at \$360,000. It was the second largest trust ever received by the Foundation. Bailey's first connection to the college came in 1929, a week after she graduated from Tifton High School. She took a phonics class at the Georgia State College for Men to prepare for her teaching career. After completing the class, Bailey took the Georgia State Teachers' Exam, passed it, and taught for 41 years.

The ABAC Alumni Association sponsored a 90th birthday party for ABAC at the 1998 Homecoming Weekend on April 3-4. Activities included the Big Band Dinner and Dance featuring the Dave Mercer Band, the Peach State Stampede Rodeo, and the Birthday Bash Dinner featuring U.S. Congressman Sanford Bishop. Alumni Director Nancy Coleman coordinated a candle-lighting ceremony during the dinner on April 4 which highlighted the past nine decades of ABAC and the decade to come. Representing the decades were A.C. Tift, Jr., grandson of Henry Harding Tift (1908-18); Jim and Mary Threatte (1918-28); Gene Adams (1928-38); Rebecca McNeill (1938-48); Jack Legg (1948-58); Jimmy Hill (1958-68); Richard Bass (1968-78); John Ellington (1978-88); Rebecca Callaway (1988-98), and possible future student Clark Coleman (1998-2008).

In its sixth year as a member of the National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association, the ABAC Rodeo team competed against teams from Michigan State, Tennessee-Martin, West Alabama, Southern Arkansas, and Mississippi State at the Peach State Stampede. Buddy Johnson is in his first year as the coach of the team. The ABAC Alumni Association commissioned an ABAC afghan which sold for \$55 each at Homecoming.

Homecoming award winners were Newt Hudson, Distinguished Alumnus; Mary Alice Hasty Bolton, Outstanding Educator; Patty Garrett Clark, Outstanding Health Care Professional; William I. Bowen, Jr., Outstanding Young Alumnus; Carolyn Willis Grant, Outstanding Business Leader; R. Harry Thompson, J. Lamar Branch Award; Alan S. Verner, Master Farmer; and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson, Roy R. Jackson, Sr., and E. Ray Jensen, Honorary Alumni. For the first time ever, the Alumni Association presented the Family Legacy Award to the J. Curtis Branch family who had a total of 35 members of their family attend ABAC.

The Agricultural Engineering Technology building at ABAC was named for Professor of Agricultural Engineering Emeritus Jesse George Chambliss, Jr., at Homecoming on April 4. Chambliss began his teaching career at ABAC in January 1944. He taught until 1946 and then resumed his ABAC teaching duties in June 1948 until his retirement in 1981. He received the Carlton Award for Teaching Excellence in 1966, the Pacesetter Award in 1974, and the SGA Impact Award in 1981. The ABAC Alumni Association named him an Honorary Alumnus in 1982.



Coach Norman “Red” Hill coached in his 1,000th tennis match at ABAC on April 28 when the Stallions defeated Georgia Southwestern. In his 33 years at ABAC, Hill’s teams have won a national championship, 25 state titles, and more than 800 matches. This year’s team finished second in the state tournament and third in the national tournament. Women’s tennis coach Alan Kramer became the youngest coach ever to receive the Wilson Intercollegiate Tennis Association National Coach of the Year award. Kramer’s Fillies have won five consecutive state titles and finished sixth in this year’s national tournament. He has a record of 77-32 at ABAC. In his first year, Coach Steve Janousek guided the ABAC baseball team to a record of 28-21. Coach Donnie Veal’s basketball Stallions were 10-15. Coach Donna Campbell’s fast pitch Fillies won the state championship and the District C championship before losing in the national tournament qualifier. ABAC finished 39-18.

Patricia D. Giddens, a nursing major from Adel, was selected as the J.G. Woodroof Scholar at the Honors Day ceremony on May 6. Dr. Bobbie Robinson received the W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence, and John Tanner received the Roy Jackson Award for Staff Excellence at the ceremony. In May, ABAC benefactor O.D. Carlton, II, from Albany purchased and placed in the Baldwin Library a beautiful English sideboard, side chairs, lamps and an Oriental rug at the west end of the building’s second floor. Two-time Grammy Award Winner Jack Jones provided the entertainment at the 27th annual Dollars for Scholars Benefit Banquet and Show before 530 patrons on May 15. Tickets cost \$100 each.

Dr. Chrystle Ross and Janice Sauls received the SGA Impact Award at the student leadership banquet on May 19. Pacesetter awards went to Dr. Doug Waid, Rebecca Callaway, Jana Truluck, Andy Jones, Brian Dowdy, Neha Patel, Fabiana Souza, and Dr. Amy Burt. Janet Weaver received a Pacesetter II award, and Helen Strickland received a special Pacesetter Award in honor of her 30th year at ABAC. State Representative Austin Scott presented a resolution to Strickland, Aaron Sagers, and Elizabeth Stone which honored *The Stallion* for winning the top Georgia College Press Association award for the 25th time since 1971. Amanda Ransom will serve as the new SGA President, and Kellie Richards will be the SGA vice president. Jerry Stone and Rebecca Callaway were selected as Mr. and Ms. Baldwin in a campus-wide vote.

Dr. Amy Burt was the director for the Baldwin Players’ production of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* on May 27-30 in Howard Auditorium. Retirees honored at a reception in the dining hall on June 4 included Dr. Virginia Widstrom (32 years), Dr. Lew Akin (31 years), Dr. Emory Giles (29 years), Betty Mealor (21 years), Mary Clark (21 years), Annie Johnson (23 years), Pauline Chaney (21 years), Johnnie Moses (20 years), and Sue Sirmans (22 years).

Tim Meeks, an agribusiness major from Ty Ty, and Barbara Grogan, a family and consumer sciences major from Norman Park, received the Donaldson Award at the spring commencement

ceremony on June 13. It marked only the third time in the history of ABAC that the award was presented to two students. Two recipients were also selected in 1972 and 1976.

The University System of Georgia annual report indicated that ABAC exceeded all other two-year colleges in the state in the number of continuing education participants and programs offered. Diane Kilgore, Director of the Public Service and Business Outreach Center, said 16,572 persons participated in 1,503 programs during the year.

Academic Affairs Vice President Bettie Horne said that Brenda Sellers will become Director of the Baldwin Library on July 1. Sellers had been serving as interim director following the resignation of Harriett Mayo in 1996. Sellers joined the staff in 1972. Beginning July 1, Aramark will take over custodial services at ABAC as well as continuing to provide food service for the campus.

ABAC President Harold Loyd announced in July that prospective students can now find out more about ABAC on the internet at <http://www.abac.peachnet.edu>. ABAC's new web site contains information about the conversion from quarters to the semester system. The ABAC public relations office has developed a new recruiting video for the Division of Agriculture and Forest Resources. Development Director Melvin Merrill said the ABAC Foundation had its best year ever in 1997-98 with total income of \$964,095.

Dr. Ray Barber was named as the chair of the division of science and mathematics, replacing Dr. Leon Benefield, who is returning to full time classroom instruction. Benefield had served as the chair of the division for 11 years. ABAC welcomed two new administrators at the start of the 1998 fall term, Bernice Hughes in her role as director of student life, and Jenelle Louder as director of financial aid and veterans' affairs. Division of Nursing Chair Joy Conger said nursing classes will be offered at night for the first time during the 1998 fall semester. The Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia has approved funds in the amount of \$360,000 to complete the upper floor and mezzanine at the ABAC on the Square building.

President Harold Loyd announced plans for ABAC on the Island, a collaborative program between ABAC and Coastal Georgia to teach classes in a golf and grounds management degree on the Georgia coast beginning in the 1999 fall term.

ABAC and the University System of Georgia switched to the semester system from the quarter system in the fall term of 1998, triggering a System-wide enrollment decline. The ABAC enrollment dropped from 2,633 students during the 1997 fall quarter to 2,502 students during the 1998 fall semester. The first fall semester in the history of ABAC began on August 20. ABAC joined the South Georgia Regional Educational Consortium (SGREC) during the 1998 fall semester. The SGREC offers learning support and freshman level general education courses on



Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College

the campus of Valdosta State from ABAC, Bainbridge College, South Georgia College, and Waycross College. ABAC is the institution of record. Thirty-six students enrolled in the program. Since Conger Hall was closed during the 1998 fall semester for renovation, students attended classes in Conger Commons, a series of mobile classrooms placed in the area between Fulwood, Branch, and Mitchell halls.

Glenn Heard (Class of '79) was named the Lancaster/Sunbelt Expo Southeastern Farmer of the Year for Georgia for the competition at the Sunbelt Expo on October 20. Four of the eight previous winners of the award were ABAC alumni. Cathy Cox (Class of '78) became the first female Secretary of State in the history of Georgia in the election on November 3.

The Golden Fillies women's volleyball team of Coach Alton Hudgins won the NJCAA Region XVII title over Middle Georgia on November 3 in Gressette Gym. Marty Moats was named Player of the Year. Katie Hudgins, Ali Martin, and Moats were named to the all-region team. Casey Long, Elaine Crawford, and Catherine Daniels were named to the all-region tournament team. The Fillies lost to Brevard in the District 10 tournament. ABAC dropped volleyball as an intercollegiate sport after this fourth and final season because only two teams in Georgia competed, ABAC and Middle Georgia. Women's basketball will replace volleyball in the fall of 2000.

Rodeo Club President Chris Groskreutz has led the intercollegiate rodeo team to a third-place ranking in the Ozark Region. He competes in steer wrestling and bull riding. Buddy Johnson is the rodeo team coach.

Dr. J.G. Woodroof, the first president of ABAC, passed away on November 6 at the age of 98. He became the first president of ABAC in 1933 when the college changed its name from the Georgia State College for Men to Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College. He was president for only one year. The 200-acre teaching facility known as the ABAC Farm was dedicated in honor of Woodroof at a Homecoming ceremony on April 9, 1994. According to Board of Regents policy, the farm could not be named for Woodroof until after his death. "This is a fitting tribute to a man who has dedicated his life to agriculture and the pursuit of excellence in agricultural research," ABAC President Harold Loyd said at that time.

New Baldwin Players' Director John Galyean said his troupe will present *The Diviners* November 12-15. On November 12, Crystal Hunter from Ocilla was crowned Ms. Abraham Baldwin 1999. Hunter was born without a right hand but said the "inconvenience" does not hold her back in any way. Bowen Hall and Gressette Gym both had their first elevators installed in November.

1999

Syd Blackmarr, the creator and director of the Arts Experiment Station, retired on January 1. She was the first director of the Station when it was established in 1976. During her career, she organized seven community arts councils, organized the South Georgia Arts Alliance, gained the support of six county governments and cities for the Grass Roots arts development, brought together 29 small communities into a multi-art, arts-in-education enrichment program, helped with the restoration of two historical theatres and one museum/gallery in the area, and started the Tifton Love Affair. She won a 1980 Pacesetter Award, the Governor's Award in the Arts in 1981, the Tifton Sertoma Club's 1990 Service to Mankind Award, the Tift County Chamber of Commerce 1997 Athena Award, and the first NEA/NALAA Selina Roberts Ottum Award in 1991.

Carl Swearingen was the speaker for the Tom M. Cordell Distinguished Lecture Series on January 21. Comptroller Floyd Wright notified ABAC employees on January 21 that voicemail is now available on the ABAC phone system. Public Service and Business Outreach Center Director Diane Kilgore received the Lamar Branch Award at the Tifton-Tift County Chamber of Commerce banquet on January 26. The Georgia College Press Association awarded its 1999 top prize for publishing excellence among two-year colleges to *The Stallion* in February. Elizabeth Stone from Tifton was the 1998-99 editor of the newspaper. Helen Strickland was the advisor. She was also the advisor when the paper won its first general excellence award in 1971. James Adair from Snellville was selected as Mr. ABAC 1999 on March 9.

ABAC intercollegiate rodeo team member Matthew Loignon attracts lots of attention when he saddles up Big Red and rides the 1,100-pound bull around the ABAC campus. Big Red was a huge hit in the Cattle Drive through downtown Tifton on March 13 which preceded this year's Peach State Stampede Intercollegiate Rodeo on March 18-20. Nora Kizer Bell was the speaker for the Cordell Lecture Series on March 17.

At the Honors Day ceremony on April 6, Suzanne Evans, an English major from Tifton, was named the J.G. Woodroof Scholar. Faculty/staff award winners were Michael J. Curry, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence; and Mike Williams, Roy R. Jackson Award for Staff Excellence. Nick McClellan (Class of '84) and Jeff McClellan (Class of '83) were the deejays for the Spring Formal on April 7. Golden Alumni of ABAC unveiled a granite marker at Homecoming on April 9 near Weltner Hall at the former site of the beloved Log Cabin, the student center for almost 30 years before it was razed in 1962 because of termite damage.

Alumni Association award winners at Homecoming on April 10 included Robert B. Moss, Distinguished Alumnus; E. Ferg Cowen and Gary C. Tankersley, J. Lamar Branch Award; Terry



Tatum Wilkins, Helen Brown Sasser Award; Dr. Glen A. Barden, Outstanding Health Care Professional; Marolyn Mixon, Outstanding Educator; Richard Morrison, Master Farmer; Rick Bostelman, Outstanding Business Leader; and Bill Bowen and Norman Hill, Honorary Alumni. The name of the Master Homemaker Award was changed to the Helen Brown Sasser Award to honor the first female student to register at ABAC when the college changed its name from the Georgia State College for Men in 1933. Sasser also won the Master Homemaker Award in 1987. The Coleman family received the Family Legacy Award. Bob Dutton was elected president of the Alumni Association.

State Representative Jay Shaw (Class of '68) presented a Georgia House of Representatives resolution to Norman "Red" Hill at a dinner on April 10 in honor of his many accomplishments as the ABAC tennis coach since 1965. A color rendering of the proposed Red Hill Athletic Complex was unveiled at the end of the evening.

ABAC's new improvisational comedy troupe, *The Rest of the Gang*, made its debut in Howard Auditorium on April 9-10. Baldwin Players' Director John Galyean advises the troupe. Amanda Lord, a family and consumer sciences major from Jakin, was sworn in as president of the Student Government Association at the student activities banquet on April 20. She will replace Kellie Richards, a liberal arts major from Fitzgerald, who was named SGA President during the spring semester. Richards received the Pivot Award at the banquet. Andrea Day, a business information technology major from Sparks, was elected SGA vice-president.

Dr. Tim Wise, vice president and dean of student affairs, received the statewide Ernie Jones Award for Outstanding SGA Advisor at the banquet. James Tate and Rebecca Akins were announced as Mr. and Miss Baldwin 1999 at the banquet after results were tallied in a campus wide vote. Richard Payne and Jimmy Grubbs received the SGA Impact Award. Branford Marsalis performed at the Stafford Fine Arts Series on April 27 as a part of George Scott Day.

The speaker for the spring commencement ceremony on May 8 was Georgia Secretary of State Cathy Cox (Class of '78), the first female Secretary of State in the history of Georgia. Jeff Harris, Jr., a pre-medicine major from Chula, received the Donaldson Award at the ceremony. The spring term enrollment was 2,337.

Coach Donnie Veal was named Co-Coach of the Year in NJCAA Region XVII after leading the basketball Stallions to a 20-12 season and a third-place finish in the region tournament. He shared the honors with Georgia Perimeter's Alfred Barney (Class of '77).

Stallions Win National Tennis Title in Last Match for Coach 'Red' Hill

Coach Norman "Red" Hill won another national championship in men's tennis for ABAC when his team captured the 1999 national crown on Hill's last day at ABAC before retirement. Members of the team were Richard Crabtree from England, Gildardo Lobo from Venezuela,



Nathan Lundy from England, Eric Von Hellens from Australia, Glenn Allsop from Australia, Rajeev Rajapakse from Sri Lanka, and Richard Evans from England. The team was selected for the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2013. Hill announced at the start of the 1998-99 academic year that he was retiring after the season. His players were aware of that fact and wanted him to step into retirement in a grand style. "I knew we had a chance to win it but I knew playing Tyler in Tyler, Texas was going to be hard," Hill said. "It was just one of the most fantastic things that ever happened to me. To go out that way, the kids really played hard for the school and for me." Hill said the regular season leading up to the national tournament was not a smooth ride. In fact, Evans, playing at number one singles, decided to give up on the Stallions and return to England during the spring break. "Then he called me and asked me if he could come back," Hill said. "I told him he had to start at number seven and play his way back up the ladder. Eric played really well at number one after Richard left." Evans did return and in a storybook ending, captured the most valuable player trophy at the national tournament. Hill remembers the volume of the Tyler crowd. "Sarge (Newell Dorsey) and I started rubbing empty tennis cans across the chain link fence every time we got a point to try to make some noise of our own," Hill said.

Good strategy. The Stallions won the championship, lifted Hill on their shoulders, and they all went to Outback Steakhouse to celebrate. When they got back to Tifton, members of the faculty, staff, and student body celebrated with the champions when their van pulled up in front of Tift Hall on May 21. Hill carried the Stallions to the national tournament for a record 34 consecutive years. He wound up with an overall record of 848 wins and 183 losses. He retired as the winningest men's college tennis coach in America.

Coach Alan Kramer led the 1999 ABAC women's tennis team to a sixth straight NJCAA Region XVII title and second place in the national tournament. Kramer called the team "the most talented women's tennis team in the history of ABAC" when the team members were inducted into the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2015. The second-place finish was the highest ever for a women's tennis team at ABAC. Leading the way was Milena Stanoytcheva from Bulgaria. She won the national championship at number one singles, won Region XVII Tournament MVP honors, and was named first team All-America. Other team members were Annamaria Hodi from Hungary, Luciana Tamburini from Brazil, Nicola Sharp from Zimbabwe, Louise Holmvik from Sweden, and Georgians Amy Hopkins, Sabrina Harper, Casie Hodges, and Jodie Rayl. Coach Steve Janousek's baseball team finished 28-28. Coach Donna Campbell's softball team wound up 30-25.

Ricky Van Shelton performed before 571 patrons at the Dollars for Scholars Benefit Banquet and Show in the dining hall on May 21. ABAC retirees in 1999 included Ed Byers (26 years), Dr. Libby Campbell (33 years), Wayne Cooper (30 years), Jeanie Doss (23 years), Norman Hill (34 years), Helen Strickland (31 years), Joann Sumner (26 years), and Sarah Willis (30 years). Strickland returned to work part time with the ABAC public relations office in the design and layout of campus publications until September 30, 2003. Under Strickland's direction, *The*



Stallion won the top award in the Georgia College Press Association competition 26 times in 31 years.

Five ABAC faculty members began a month-long visit to Japan on June 24 as a part of a Fulbright-Hays seminar on *Tradition and Transformation in Japan*. Dr. Charlotte Pfeiffer wrote the grant and led the excursion. Bertha Daniel, Tim Carter, Nancy Scott, and Don Coates also made the trip.

Dr. Earl Bennett, professor of mathematics, was selected as the recipient of the 1998-99 Regents' Distinguished Professor for Teaching and Learning award. Dr. Lionel Sinn replaced Wayne Cooper as the ABAC athletics director and chair of the division of health, physical education, and recreation upon Cooper's retirement. Jeff Kutac is the new men's tennis coach. Jeff Lemons joined the staff as the new director of the Arts Experiment Station on July 1.

The United States Department of Education has approved a five-year grant of \$1,213,012 so that ABAC can participate in Gear Up, a partnership program designed to prepare low income students in the Irwin County school system for college work. President Harold Loyd and Board of Regents' member John Hunt (Class of '58) used sledgehammers to batter the outside walls of the old AET building on August 18 in a ceremonial demolition of the building which is coming down to make way for the new environmental horticulture building. Thanks to a federal grant worth \$320,000 a year for five years, ABAC will enroll up to 50 students per year in the College Assistance Migrant Program.

Enrollment rebounded during the 1999 fall term to 2,609 as students across the state adjusted to the semester system. Ambassadors selected for the new academic year include James Adair, Jennifer Birchmore, Adam Burnsed, Erin Emery, Hal Darsey, Ashli Metts, Floyd Moon, Carl Stalvey, Erin Unger, Kellie Day, and Kellie DeMott. ABAC began offering classes in golf course management on Sea Island as a part of a new endeavor titled *ABAC on the Island*. Dr. Ed Seagle coordinated the classes.

ABAC students responded in a magnificent way on September 14 when evacuees from Hurricane Floyd poured into Gressette Gym. Thanks to the efforts of ABAC, shelter was provided for over 500 persons. ABAC students, faculty, and staff worked long hours to accommodate the evacuees. "It was a wild night," SGA President Amanda Lord said. "I have never been prouder of the students here. It was a wonderful experience."

Some students brought the mattresses off their beds to the gym for the visitors. Others purchased supplies, coordinated donations, cared for children, and helped to overcome language barriers. The dining hall responded with food for all involved. The Police Academy sent all its officers to help all night long. "The long hours put in by our volunteers demonstrates that ABAC is a very special place with very special people," Vice President for Student Affairs Tim Wise said.



William R. Boone was the guest speaker at the Cordell Lecture Series on October 7. A ribbon-cutting and open house was held on October 17 to unveil the completed second floor and mezzanine area at ABAC on the Square in Moultrie. Biology instructor Beth Thornton received the 1999-2000 Regents' Distinguished Professor for Teaching and Learning Award. The grand opening of the ABAC building at the Sunbelt Expo was held on October 19. Lanier Carson of Kelley Manufacturing provided the funds through the ABAC Foundation to construct the building. ABAC had operated under a green-and-gold tent since 1980. In 1978 and 1979, ABAC students performed on a stage near the main entrance to the Expo site.

President Harold Loyd presented the Master Plan for the ABAC campus to the Board of Regents in November. On November 16, Janie Cannon was crowned Ms. Abraham Baldwin 2000. The first fall semester commencement ceremony in the history of ABAC took place on December 18 in Gressette Gym. There was no guest speaker. Rowena Loyd, wife of ABAC President Harold Loyd, retired from her position with the Computer Center on December 31. Like much of the country, ABAC prepared for possible Y2K problems as the clock struck midnight on December 31.

2000

President Harold Loyd and several building supervisors spent a part of New Year's Day on campus, checking on possible malfunctions because of Y2K. The Computer Center staff was particularly vigilant. No significant problems were discovered.

Wanda Golden (Class of '86) was appointed chair of the nursing division on January 1. She replaced Joy Conger (Class of '76), who had served as chair of the division for the past 12 years. Public Service and Business Outreach Center Program Coordinator Angie Palmer received the J. Lamar Branch Award at the Tifton-Tift County Chamber of Commerce banquet on January 18. The Georgia College Press Association and the Southern Regional Press Institute selected *The Stallion* as the best newspaper in Georgia in the two-year college category in February. Janet Heard from Vienna is the editor, and Dr. Eric Cash is the new advisor. Cash replaced longtime advisor Helen Strickland when she retired in 1999.

Longtime ABAC benefactor O.D. Carlton, II, passed away on February 10 at the age of 89. The Carlton Center on the campus was named in his honor in 1997. ABAC Foundation Executive Vice President Melvin Merrill said, "At the time of his death, he was our single largest donor with support spanning over 30 years. Mr. Carlton never sought the limelight but his willingness to give to whatever ABAC needed pushed him there." Carlton was a member of the ABAC Foundation Board of Directors from 1972 until he passed away. For years, Carlton funded the Carlton Scholarships, the Honors Day luncheon, and the Carlton Awards of Excellence for the faculty, staff, and administrators at ABAC. He was the founder and CEO of the Carlton

Company, which sells and services Caterpillar construction equipment, a business he started in 1939.

Associate Professor Emeritus of Agriculture Martin Sibbet (Class of '49) passed away on February 13. He was a faculty member at ABAC in soils and horticulture from 1952-83.

Coach Donnie Veal led the basketball Stallions to a runner-up finish in the state tournament in Cochran on March 4 in his final season as coach before his retirement. ABAC wound up 13-14 on the season. Athletics Director Lionel Sinn said Robert Moore, formerly an assistant at Columbus State, has been selected as the new men's basketball coach. Tifton native Julie Conner has been selected as the head coach of the women's basketball team, which will resume play in the fall. Women's basketball was discontinued after the 1985 season and is being revived this year.

Carl Stalvey, an agricultural engineering major from Ray City, was named Mr. ABAC 2000 at the event on March 7 sponsored annually by the Family and Consumer Sciences Club. ABAC students herded a small herd of cows through Tifton on March 18 as a prelude to the annual Peach State Stampede Rodeo on March 23-25 at the ABAC rodeo arena. Intercollegiate rodeo teams competing against Coach Buddy Johnson's ABAC team included Michigan State, West Alabama, Mississippi State, Auburn, Murray State, and Southwest Missouri State

ABAC Alumni Association award recipients at Homecoming on March 31 included Cathy Cox, Distinguished Alumnus; Palmer Maples, Jr., J. Lamar Branch Award; Jimmy Dorsett, Outstanding Business Leader; Suzanne Wright Click, Outstanding Educator; Chip Dorminy, Master Farmer; Dr. Larry Daugherty, Outstanding Health Care Professional; June Talley Branch, Helen Brown Sasser Award; Sam Sims, Outstanding Young Alumnus; J Alvin Rowan Family, Family Legacy Award; and Lanier Carson, Dr. Ralph Kickliter, and Ruby Lee Spinks, Honorary Alumni. A dinner honoring Helen Strickland on her many accomplishments as the advisor to the ABAC student publications was held on April 1 in the dining hall. Jane Grogan Gibbs (Class of '52) was elected president of the ABAC Alumni Association.

Marolyn Mixon (Class of '59), an associate professor in the Division of Social Science, was selected to receive the Board of Regents' Teaching Excellence Award for two-year colleges in Georgia. At Honors Day on April 4, award winners included Dr. Larry McGruder, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence; Charles Griffin, Roy Jackson Award for Staff Excellence; Bertha Daniel, Excellence in Advising; and Dr. Larry Allen, E. Lanier Carson Leadership Award for administrators. Jodie Rayl from Fitzgerald was named the J.G. Woodroof Scholar at the ceremony.

Wayne Jones and Jimmy Grubbs received the SGA Impact Award at the student leadership banquet on April 18. Pacesetters announced at the banquet included James Turner, Ruslan Hristov, Denise Purvis, Luciana Tamburini, Clark Johnson, Niki Knox, Anita Williams, Geoff

Clement, Marolyn Mixon, and Sheila Hughes. Superior Pacesetters went to Janet Heard, Bo Moore, and Margaret Brogdon. In student balloting, Matthew Howell was named Mr. Baldwin, and Holly Hill and Jennifer Birchmore tied for the honor of Ms. Baldwin. The AET Club was named Club of the Year.

Coach Donna Campbell's Fillies won the 2000 state softball title before falling in the national tournament. The Fillies compiled a record of 37-23. During her five years as head coach, Campbell has won a slow pitch national championship and three state fast pitch titles. Coach Steve Janousek's baseball team registered a 31-20 record and finished fourth in the state tournament.

Milena Stanoycheva from Bulgaria became the first female tennis player in the history of ABAC to win back-to-back national championships at number one singles at the NJCAA women's national tennis tournament. She has signed a scholarship offer from Clemson University. Stanoycheva was selected for posthumous induction into the inaugural ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame class in 2008. The Fillies of Coach Alan Kramer won their seventh consecutive state title and wound up fourth in the national tournament. Men's tennis coach Jeff Kutac led the Stallions to a runner-up finish in the state tournament and a sixth-place finish in the national tournament. When Kutac resigned from his position after the season, Kramer was selected as the men's coach, and Margaret Treadway was named the new women's tennis coach. Treadway played for the Fillies in 1995, earning All-America honors.

Business instructor Jo Ann Brannen taught ABAC's first on-line class, Fundamentals of Computer Applications, during the spring term. The spring semester enrollment was 2,327. Jodi Rayl from Fitzgerald was selected as the Donaldson Award winner at the spring commencement ceremony on May 13. State Representative Roger Byrd (Class of '74) was the guest speaker. Dollars for Scholars was held on May 19 before an audience of 560 patrons with Lee Greenwood as the featured performer. Everyone in the dining hall rose to their feet when he sang his biggest hit, *God Bless The USA*. For the second time, ABAC hosted over 2,000 bike riders in the Bike Ride Across Georgia (BRAG) on June 18. The riders slept in or near Gressette Gym and ate in the dining hall.

Angie Palmer was named as the new director of the evening and off-campus program on July 1, replacing Merle Baker who retired on June 30 after 31 years at ABAC. Palmer has been program coordinator in the public service and business outreach center since 1998. Jim Folds was named as the plant operations director, replacing Chet Kimmell, who retired on June 30 after 26 years at ABAC. Athletics Director Lionel Sinn resigned from his post effective June 30. Andrea Willis was named interim chair for the Division of Health, Physical Education and Recreation, and Alan Kramer was named interim athletics director. Dr. Erin O'Neill has been named chair of the humanities division. Dr. Oscar Patton will return to a teaching position. The



Sportsmanship Award for the State of Georgia Softball Intramural Association has been named in honor of Newell “Sarge” Dorsey, former intramural director at ABAC.

The ABAC Foundation posted its third consecutive record year with total income of \$2,625,580. The Foundation received its largest gift in history from the estate of Maurice D. Gortatowsky (Class of ’30) from Albany in the amount of \$1.2 million. “As well as being an alumnus, Mr. Gortatowsky was a true friend of the college,” ABAC President Harold Loyd said. “We hope to place this gift in several endowment funds that will benefit students for years to come.” Carolyn Hill Branch (Class of ’57) was selected as the Foundation president beginning July 1.

President Harold Loyd Retires on July 31

President Harold Loyd and his wife, Rowena, moved back to their home state of Missouri when he retired from his position as the ABAC president on July 31. Loyd joined the ABAC business division faculty on September 1, 1971. His tenure as the ABAC president began on October 1, 1989. Prior to being named president, he served as the business division chair and evening and off-campus programs coordinator. Loyd and George P. Donaldson are the only ABAC presidents who started their careers as ABAC faculty members. Other retirees included Merle Baker (31 years), Rosalyn Donaldson (35 years), John Evans (35 years), Dr. Hal Henderson (30 years), Marolyn Mixon (26 years), and Dr. Gary Roberts (31 years).

Dr. Homer Day began serving as Interim President on August 1. Day joined the college administration in 1972 and held a variety of leadership positions including Director of College Services and Coordinator of Federal Programs and as the Director of Financial Aid. He had also served as Interim Vice President and Dean of Academic Affairs. Day became the first African American to lead the institution in either the role of president or interim president. “I plan to take the foundation established by Dr. Loyd and use it as a catalyst to carry the institution where the faculty, staff, and other support elements want it to go,” Day said. “Plus, I want to capitalize on any opportunities that may arise.” Day received his B.S. degree in General Science from Savannah State College, his M.S. degree in Guidance and Counseling from Fort Valley State College, and his Ed.D in Higher Education Administration and Supervision from Auburn University.

Public Service and Business Outreach Center Director Diane Kilgore said the University System of Georgia reported that ABAC’s continuing education program has exceeded every two-year college in the state in participants and number of programs offered. B.J. Reaves Smith is the new director of food services for ARAMARK at ABAC. She replaces Roy Biggers, who directed the food service operation for seven and one-half years. ABAC, Fort Valley State, and UGA hosted an Ag Showcase for 645 high school students interested in agriculture on September 14 in Gressette Gym.



Former ABAC tennis coach Norman “Red” Hill was inducted in the Georgia Southwestern Hall of Fame. He retired in 1999 as the winningest men’s college tennis coach in America. He was named National Coach of the Year three times. His teams recorded 849 tennis wins under his leadership. He won two national championships, 1984 and 1999. He became only the fourth person inducted into the NJCAA Men’s Tennis Hall of Fame in 1993 and received the Achievement in Sports Award from the Georgia Sports Hall of Fame. Hill was an all-state baseball and tennis player at Georgia Southwestern in 1956-57.

A total of 2,630 students enrolled for the 2000 fall term. University System of Georgia Chancellor Stephen Portch charged the ABAC Presidential Search and Advisory Committee on September 21 with the task of finding candidates for the position of president at ABAC. Dr. Chrystle Ross (Class of ’77), professor of business information technology, is the chair of the committee. Kay Powell has been named the new director of ABAC on the Square. The Baldwin Players presented *Killer’s Head* and *Endgame* on November 9-11. Dr. John Galyean directs the Players. Ruth Campbell Williams spoke at the Tom M. Cordell Distinguished Lecture Series on November 13.

Mary Jane Snow, a freshman psychology major from Tifton, was crowned Ms. ABAC 2001 on November 14. Judge John Ellington (Class of ’80) was the speaker for the fall commencement ceremony on December 16. Eighty-five graduates participated.

2001

Spring semester brought an enrollment of 2,450 students to ABAC. Bo Moore from Tifton was named the president of the Georgia College Press Association at its February convention. Moore is the 2000-01 editor of *The Stallion*. The newspaper finished third in the General Excellence competition. *Pegasus* won the 2000 First Place with Special Merit Award in the American Scholastic Press Association annual magazine competition. Dr. Herbert Shippey is the advisor, and Rebecca Canady is the editor. Polly Kalinova is the new assistant director for the ABAC Arts Station. The Stafford Fine Arts Series on February 5 featured *Chicago City Limits*. Derek Wheeler, a business major from Alma, was selected as Mr. ABAC on February 6. Bertha Daniel has been named Director of College Services, effective July 1.

Alumni Director Nancy Coleman was named the Woman of the Year in Service to Georgia Agriculture during the Women in Agriculture conference at Callaway Gardens on March 23. R.A. “Rusty” Griffin, Jr., was named the Distinguished Alumnus by the ABAC Alumni Association at Homecoming on April 7. Other award recipients were J. Daniel Bledsoe, Master Farmer; Joy Barbara Dutton, Helen Brown Sasser Award; Charles F. Coker, J. Lamar Branch Award; Dr. James T. “Jay” Phillips, Outstanding Young Alumnus; and Dr. W. Worth Bridges, Dr. Homer A. Day, and Dr. Joseph J. Day, Jr., Honorary Alumni. The Milford Brown family received the Family Legacy Award.



At the Honors Day ceremony on April 10, Mary H. Spurlock, a business information technology major from Moultrie, was named the J.G. Woodroof Scholar. Faculty-staff award winners were Nancy Scott, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence; Teresa Williams, Roy R. Jackson Award for Staff Excellence; Wasdon Graydon, E. Lanier Carson Award for administrators; and Lorie Felton, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Excellence in Advising Award.

Bo Chesser, a forest resources major from Nahunta, and Ashli Metts, an animal science major from Alapaha, were selected as Mr. and Miss Baldwin in a campus wide vote. Chesser was treasurer of the SGA, and Metts was president of the Ambassadors. The results were announced at the student leadership banquet on April 16. Dr. Larry Allen received the SGA Impact Award. Pacesetter winners included Jay Berryman, Rebecca Canaday, Shelley Dominy, Scotty Funderburk, Phyllis Kester, Pam Leonard, Katrina Mack McCrae, Dr. Larry McGruder, Shawn McRae, Lisa Redfield, Jason Smith, and Mary Spurlock. Randy Carter received a Superior Pacesetter. The Forestry-Wildlife Club won Club of the Year. Honored at the annual retirement reception on April 23 were Patsy G. Williams, 30 years; Dr. Leon Benefield, 27 years; Paul Tompkins, 23 years; Latrelle Cheek, 21 years; David Cowart, 20 years; and Dick Payne, 18 years.

Luiza Biktyakova, a freshman physical education major from Uzbekistan, won the national championship at #2 singles for the 2001 ABAC women's tennis team. She finished the year 24-0 and was named to the NJCAA All-America team. Biktyakova teamed with Natalie Drabova for a 24-1 record playing doubles. They won the national title at #1 doubles. Coach Margaret Treadway's Fillies won the state championship and finished fifth in the nation in the team competition. Biktyakova was named to the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2017.

Coach Donna Campbell's Fillies won the 2001 state softball title and finished fifth in the national tournament. The Fillies were 33-21 overall and 18-1 in conference play. Freshman pitcher Jackie Moore from Columbus rolled up a 21-9 record with 142 strikeouts and an earned run average of 1.63.

"Jackie was one of those players who was totally selfless to the core," Campbell said. "She was a hard worker on and off the field, and she loved ABAC softball. What made Jackie so special was her ability to keep her emotions under control. Her physical attributes and her work ethic made her a great college pitcher but what separated her from the rest was her tenacious competitiveness, her humbleness, and her cool demeanor."

Coach Alan Kramer's Stallions finished second in the state tennis tournament and seventh in the national tournament. The baseball Stallions of Coach Steve Janousek finished third in the state tournament. Christy Ward from the softball team was named an Academic All-America selection.



The speaker at the spring graduation ceremony on May 12 was Michael L. Thurmond, Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Labor. Laura Knowles, a family and consumer sciences major from McRae, received the Donaldson Award. A total of 145 graduates participated. Ronnie Milsap was the featured entertainer at Dollars for Scholars on May 18 when 603 persons enjoyed the ABAC Foundation-sponsored event in the Donaldson Dining Hall. The event was a complete sellout for only the fourth time in the history of the event. The area code for Tifton is scheduled to change from 912 to 229 on August 1.

Dr. Homer Day retired from ABAC on June 30 when his time as Interim President ended. He and his wife, Caroline, continued to live in Tifton. Day joined the ABAC staff in 1972 as the assistant director of financial aid. During his tenure, he served as Director of the Cooperative Education Program, Director of the Career Planning and Placement Center, Director of Financial Aid and Veterans Services, Assistant to the Academic Dean, Interim Vice President and Dean of Academic Affairs, and Director of College Services and Coordinator of Federal Programs. Day decided to spend his last working day at ABAC assisting Farm Manager Garvie Nichols on the J.G. Woodroof Farm.

Michael F. Vollmer became the ninth president in the history of ABAC on July 1. A 51-year-old Pennsylvania native who graduated from Greensboro (N.C.) College, Vollmer received his law degree from John Marshall Law School in Atlanta. He and his wife, Lennie, brought a lot of energy to ABAC. "Although I have had the privilege of being involved in a number of special initiatives, I can honestly say that I have never been so excited or as anxious about an opportunity as the one at ABAC," Vollmer said.

Vollmer had served in state government for the previous 20 years. He was the first executive director of the HOPE Scholarship Program and the first executive director of the Pre-Kindergarten Program. Prior to taking over the ABAC presidency, Vollmer served as the Director of the Office of Educational Accountability for the State of Georgia. He has served as interim president at Clayton State and Middle Georgia.

Vollmer engaged the ABAC Foundation in an ambitious project to bring new student housing to the campus. The \$32 million ABAC Place apartments now stand tall on the west side of the ABAC campus as a result of Vollmer's persistence. Under Vollmer's leadership, ABAC's enrollment climbed to over 3,000 students for the first time ever during the 2002 fall term, and then skyrocketed to 3,407 students during the 2003 fall semester. Upon Vollmer's invitation, Valdosta State, Georgia Southwestern, and Macon State began offering junior and senior level classes on the ABAC campus. ABAC on the Square in Moultrie experienced its largest enrollment ever with over 400 students during the 2004 spring term.

Vollmer was a true visionary. He mapped out plans for new buildings at the college, including a new Agricultural Sciences building, a new Health Sciences building, and the Pedestrian Mall.



Vollmer's first year as president was a very active one. The college opened the new \$2.3 million, 18,050 square foot Environmental Horticulture Building on August 15. The Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia also agreed to put Tift, Lewis, and Herring halls on the renovation list for a \$10 million renovation project at some point in the future.

ABAC has been allotted \$50,000 from the Governor's Discretionary Fund to light the baseball field. Hopefully, lights will be in place by spring of 2002. Stallion Field has never had lights. Dr. Chrystle Ross has been appointed to a new cabinet level position, Interim Director of the new Office of Information Technology. Vice President and Dean of Student Affairs Tim Wise has submitted his resignation. Registrar Tom Call was named Interim Vice President of Student and Enrollment Services beginning November 15. Director of Retention Services Beth Saxon was named Interim Registrar.

A record total of 2,857 students enrolled for the 2001 fall semester. The previous high was 2,851 during the 1992 fall quarter. A total of 710 students live in the ABAC residence halls, 468 males and 242 females. The campus community came together for a prayer service in the Chapel of All Faiths at noon on September 11 when the tragic events of that horrible day in American history unfolded. The next edition of *The Stallion* was filled with letters and thoughts about the tragedy from students, faculty, staff, and administrators.

Luiza Biktyakova won the Junior College Women's Singles Championship at the Intercollegiate Tennis Association National Small College Tournament in Dallas in October. She became the first ABAC female tennis player to win the tournament. ABAC President Mike Vollmer initiated a *Take Pride in ABAC* campaign which involved faculty, staff, administrators, and students picking up trash across the campus. Golden Trash Awards went to three ABAC students, Edward Palmer, Jason Hatten, and Michael Appling, who found \$20 bills in Stallion Water bottles. The ABAC Ambassadors began a Half-court for \$100 contest at each home basketball game for the Golden Fillies and Golden Stallions. Fans who made a shot from halfcourt won \$100. Public Relations Director Mike Chason received the prestigious Hixson Award from the Tifton Kiwanis Club.

Baldwin Players' Director John Galyean staged *Medea* in Conger Hall 319 on November 1-3 for the fall production. Joanie Padgett, a music education major from Fitzgerald, was crowned Miss ABAC 2002 on November 6. Rebecca Paul, President/Chief Executive Officer of the Georgia Lottery Corporation, was the fall commencement speaker on December 15. Bo Moore, a journalism major from Tifton, received the Donaldson Award. A total of 110 graduates participated.

2002



Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College

Andrea Willis has been named Chair of the Division of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation, and Alan Kramer has been named Director of Athletics, effective January 1. Kramer will report directly to President Mike Vollmer. Darby Thompson (Class of '98) joined the ABAC faculty on January 1 as an instructor of family and consumer sciences.

The ABAC Foundation received the \$1 million Forest Lakes Golf Club as a gift from Tifton ophthalmologist Larry Moorman and his wife, Debra, in January. The college will operate the golf course as a public course but will also use it as a teaching laboratory for students in a variety of majors. "Through the Moormans' generous gift, we will be able to provide our students with the very best in real world experiences," ABAC President Mike Vollmer said. "It's one thing to talk about how to manage a golf course. It's quite another to actually go to that course and put theory into practice." Former ABAC Golf Coach Wayne Cooper will manage day-to-day operations of the course. The 2002 spring semester enrollment was 2,656, the highest in ABAC history for the spring term.

The Stallion was named the General Excellence award winner in the two-year college category for the Georgia College Press Association annual competition. Dr. Eric Cash serves as newspaper advisor. In February, *The Stallion* finished first in the Southern Regional Press Institute competition. Nathan Johnson from Tifton serves as the 2001-02 editor of the paper. Evening and Off-Campus Programs Director Angie Palmer and Public Relations Director Mike Chason have produced a new ABAC video, *It's Never Too Late to Go to College*. The video is filled with testimonies from former ABAC students. Vice President and Dean of Academic Affairs Bettie Horne has resigned and will join the staff of the University System of Georgia on May 1. Horne has been a member of the ABAC administration since July 1, 1995. Dr. Caroline Helms, Chair of the Division of Social Science, was appointed as Interim Vice President of Academic Affairs

On March 2, the Fillies' basketball team won the NJCAA Region XVII title for only the second women's state basketball championship in the history of ABAC. The first came in 1984. In the tournament at Atlanta Metropolitan College, Coach Julie Conner's Fillies defeated Georgia Perimeter 61-59, Middle Georgia 48-44, and then beat Atlanta Metro 76-72 in overtime in the title game. Chelsie Miller was named the tournament's Most Valuable Player, and Jasmin Lee was named to the All-Tournament team. The Fillies lost the national tournament playoff game on March 9 to Louisburg (N.C.) in Gressette Gym to end their season with a 16-16 record. It is the only women's national tournament basketball game involving the Fillies ever played on the ABAC campus. Coach Robert Moore's men's basketball team compiled a record of 21-10 and lost in the first round of the state tournament. Rashad Williams and Eric Williams were named to the all-region first team.

Nathan Johnson won the 12th annual Mr. ABAC contest on March 14. The Baldwin Players presented *Sylvia* on March 14-16 in Conger 319. President Vollmer pushed hard for bachelor's



degrees to be offered on the ABAC campus by other colleges and universities. As a result, Valdosta State offered the junior, senior, and graduate level classes necessary to obtain an undergraduate and graduate degree in education, Macon State offered the junior and senior level classes necessary to obtain a B.S. in information technology, and Georgia Southwestern offered all classes necessary to obtain a bachelor's degree in either accounting or management. Albany State also offered the classes necessary to obtain a master's degree in business administration on the ABAC campus. Gwyn Hyman Rubio, author of *Icy Sparks*, was the guest speaker at the Tom M. Cordell Distinguished Lecture Series on April 4. Dr. Chrystle Ross announced that the ABAC website address will now be www.abac.edu.

ABAC broke ground on the \$7.1 million Ag Sciences building on April 6 at Homecoming. ABAC Alumni Association Homecoming award winners were Florida Commission of Agriculture Charles H. Bronson, Distinguished Alumnus; Tyron Spearman, J. Lamar Branch Award; Danny and Beverly Sterling, Outstanding Business Leader Award; Dr. Michael D. Moye, Outstanding Educator; Allen Whitehead, Master Farmer; Dr. Keith Phillippi, Outstanding Health Care Professional; Helen Sears Joiner, Helen Brown Sasser Award; Joy Carter, Outstanding Young Alumnus; J.B. Miles, Jr., Family Legacy Award; and Merle Baker, Bob Reinhardt, and Dr. Leon Benefield, Honorary Alumni. Vivian Pearman was honored for 33 years of service to ABAC.

At the Honors Day Ceremony on April 10, Leslie Ann Parrish, an animal science major from Savannah, was named the J.G. Woodroof Scholar. Faculty/staff award winners were Geoff Clement, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence; Van McGriff, Roy R. Jackson Award for Staff Excellence; Mike Chason, E. Lanier Carson Award for administrators; and Rebecca Arnold, Excellence in Advising Award.

Events at the annual George Scott Day on April 18 included poetry readings, a writers' conference, and performances by ABAC's Sabor Latino Dancers. Scott is a former humanities division faculty member. Retirees honored at the annual reception on April 23 were Nancy Scott, Dr. Charlotte Pfeiffer, Garth Webb, and Vivian Pearman. Carl Harrell from Columbus and Dalla Nascimento from Americus were selected as Mr. and Ms. Baldwin by the student body at the student activities banquet on April 24. Pacesetters included Dr. Larry Allen, Dr. Eric Cash, Rocio Cardenas, Bo Chesser, Julie Conner, Herb Hendrix, Fran Kinchen, Robert Moore, Dr. Mac Rainey, Jessica Thompson, and Floyd Vogel. President Mike Vollmer received a Superior Pacesetter. Dr. Jeff Seela received the Impact Award. Candice Clark was named SGA president, and Jeannie Hutchinson was selected SGA vice-president. The Student Georgia Association of Educators was named Club of the Year.

Coach Alan Kramer's men's tennis team won the state championship and finished second in the national tournament. Gaston Verna was the MVP of the state tournament, and Kramer was named Coach of the Year. The women's tennis team of Coach Alton Hudgins won its ninth

straight state title and finished sixth in the national tournament. Luiza Bitzyakova was the state tournament MVP, and Hudgins was named Coach of the Year. Coach Steve Janousek's baseball team had a record of 27-26 and lost in the first round of the 2002 state tournament.

The women's softball team of Coach Donna Campbell won the state championship for the third straight year and wound up ninth in the nation with a record of 31-25. Sophomore pitcher Jackie Moore was the MVP of the state tournament. Moore struck out 219 batters on the way to a 20-12 record and a microscopic 0.67 earned run average.

"When I went to the mound, I never had a particular routine or process," Moore said in a 2016 interview. "I have always been one to take life moment by moment, pitch by pitch. I try to live in the moment and make adjustments when necessary."

At the 2002 national tournament, Moore pitched a perfect game, the only one of her storied career that began when she rolled up a 43-24 record at Jordan High School in Columbus. "That was a very cool experience to pitch a perfect game, particularly since I had never had one before," Moore said. "My grandfather was there to see me."

After becoming the winningest pitcher in ABAC history, Moore signed with the University of West Florida. She dazzled the NCAA Division II Gulf South Conference foes with a record of 20-4 as a junior and again with a 20-13 mark as a senior for the Argonauts. "I will never forget the camaraderie and all the friends I made at ABAC," Moore said. "Most importantly, I'm so blessed to have had a chance to play for and be coached by Donna Campbell. She is an amazing person who I respect and appreciate so much. She coached selflessly and knew how to balance athletics and academics." Moore was selected as a member of the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2016.

The spring commencement ceremony on May 11 featured Anna Marie Brown, a graduate in early childhood education from Ashburn, as the guest speaker. Tiffany Chaney, an early childhood education major from Fitzgerald, received the Donaldson Award. Chaney was president of the Ambassadors in 2001-02. ABAC had its first Maymester from May 6-24. Students could take a maximum of six credit hours. President Mike Vollmer announced that ABAC had a \$41 million economic impact on Tift and surrounding counties during the last fiscal year. That's the second largest behind Georgia Perimeter of all two-year colleges in Georgia.

Lorrie Morgan was the featured entertainer at Dollars for ABAC Scholars on May 31. Development Director Melvin Merrill said the event was a complete sellout. All 600 seats were sold at \$125 each. Other Dollars for Scholars sellouts were Roger Williams in 1980, Gloria Loring in 1985, Ray Stevens in 1986, and Ronnie Milsap in 2001. The Brass Quintet and the Dixieland Band from ABAC performed at the inauguration for Chancellor Thomas Meredith in Atlanta on June 11. Don Coates directed both groups.



Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College

Dr. Chrystle Ross was selected as the first Director of the Office of Information Technology and Services on July 1. Fran Kinchen was named Secretary to the President on July 1 after the retirement of Vivian Pearman (Class of '85). Kinchen had been the administrative assistant in the academic dean's office.

The college had a "concrete cracking" to signal the beginning of the construction of the \$1.5 million Pedestrian Mall project on August 5. John Hunt (Class of '59), a member of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, led the way with a sledgehammer as he pounded the old concrete benches in front of Conger Hall. On August 27, ABAC held a ceremony to announce the opening of the \$1 million Red Hill Athletic Center in honor of legendary tennis coach Norman "Red" Hill. ABAC faculty members performing at the inaugural presentation of the new First Tuesday Concert Series on September 3 included Don Coates, Wayne Jones, Dr. Susan Roe, Becky Rodgers, Eugene Wyles, and Sheri Wyles Grabrowski.

ABAC President Mike Vollmer and Athletics Director Alan Kramer announced a new agreement between ABAC and Coca Cola that will be worth \$318,640 over the next 10 years. A big portion of that will be \$20,000 per year in scholarship funds. ABAC celebrated its 3000th student with a ceremony on the front steps of Tift Hall on September 12. Mande Smith from Oakfield was the 3000th student at ABAC this fall, marking the first time the ABAC enrollment has spilled over 3,000. The official fall enrollment was 3,033. At a fun ceremony on the Tift Hall front steps, Smith received an ABAC umbrella and sweatshirt. "I want to thank anyone who had any part in recruiting students to set this record," ABAC President Mike Vollmer said. "Two straight years of record highs is both gratifying and rewarding, and we will continue to meet the needs of more and more students throughout Georgia."

Brett Tucker is the new president of the ABAC Ambassadors. He follows in his mother Laura's footsteps since she was a member of the first group of Ambassadors in 1988. Other Ambassadors are Joel McKie, Laura Bland, Deisi Del Toro, Mary Beth DeMott, Amanda Hayes, Kevin Mitchell, Matthew North, Erick Palacios, Jennifer Raynor, C.J. Robinson, Judy Shiflet, and Trisha Stephens.

Author Janisse Ray was the speaker at the Tom M. Cordell Distinguished Lecture Series on September 23. Dr. Gail Dillard was named the new Director of Evening and Off-Campus Programs on October 1. For the first time in 18 years, the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia met at ABAC on October 8-9 on the bottom floor of the Carlton Center for their monthly meeting. ABAC alumni John and Julie Hunt hosted a dinner for the Regents and guests at their home on October 8. ABAC President Mike Vollmer made a presentation to the Regents about ABAC. He was assisted by Dr. Chrystle Ross who instructed each Regent on the use of a Personal Digital Assistant (PDA). Dormitory Drive closed forever on October 10 to make way for the Pedestrian Mall.



ABAC alumnus Armond Morris (Class of '64) received the Georgia Farmer of the Year and the Southeast Farmer of the Year Award at the annual Sunbelt Agricultural Exposition at Spence Field near Moultrie on October 15. He is only the second Georgia winner ever to receive the top award in the Southeast. James Lee Adams was the first in 2000. ABAC student Joel McKie was selected as Southern Region Vice President for the National FFA organization at the nationwide conference on October 30-November 2.

Robert Brooks won the 34th annual Lew Akin Speech Showcase on November 4. The Baldwin Players of Dr. John Galyean presented *The Birthday Party* on November 7-9 in Conger 319. On November 12, Allison Lea Day from Ocilla was selected from 43 contestants as Ms. Abraham Baldwin 2003. A ribbon cutting was held November 18 for the new One-Stop Shop in the J. Lamar Branch Student Center which includes personnel from admissions, registrar, and the business office. The fall commencement speaker on December 17 was Regent John Hunt (Class of '58). A total of 105 graduates participated. Reba Nelson from Tifton and Lisa Owens from Wales, United Kingdom received the Donaldson Award.

2003

Director of College Services Bertha Daniel (Class of '74) received the prestigious Athena Award at the Tifton-Tift County Chamber of Commerce dinner on January 9. Chancellor Thomas Meredith spoke at the banquet. Tom Call has been selected as the Vice President for Student Enrollment Services. He began his ABAC career as a faculty member in the Division of Agriculture and Forest Resources in 1981. He has also served as director of ABAC's public radio station, WABR, and registrar. ABAC President Mike Vollmer accompanied the ABAC Public Safety office on the 10 p.m. to 4 a.m. shift on January 30. "I enjoyed the experience and appreciate even more the valuable performance of these officers," Vollmer said.

Wayne Jones has been named Director of the Arts Connection. The ABAC student newspaper claimed the top prize among two-year colleges in both the Georgia College Press Association and the Southern Regional Press Institute competitions in February. Kristin MacKenzie from Fitzgerald is the 2002-03 editor of *The Stallion*, and Dr. Eric Cash is in his fourth year as the advisor. The Golden Stallions' baseball team hosted St. Catherine on February 28 in the first night game ever at Stallion Field. Bookstore Manager Emory Johnson was on the play-by-play microphone on WKAA for the historic event. Both the ABAC baseball field and softball field now have lights for the first time ever. The Baldwin Players presented *Quazimodo!* on February 27-March 1 in Conger 319.

Director of Human Resources Hubert Wood retired on March 1 after a 28-year career at ABAC. ABAC hosted the state basketball tournament for men and women on March 5-8. The Stallions last hosted the men's tournament in 1982, and the Fillies last hosted the women's tournament in 1984. In her third year, Fillies' Coach Julie Conner was named Coach of the Year in the league



after guiding her team to a regular season record of 20-6. The Fillies lost in the semifinal round of the state tournament to finish 21-7, the most wins in the history of women's basketball at ABAC. The Stallions of Coach Robert Moore lost in the first round of the tournament to finish 10-20. Rodeo Coach Doug Hicks led his charges against Auburn, Murray State, West Alabama, the University of Georgia and other universities on March 6-8 at the 10th annual Peach State Stampede Rodeo.

David Brady from Thomasville was selected Mr. ABAC at the 13th annual contest on March 11. ABAC alumnus and Board of Regents' member John Hunt (Class of '59) passed away at 1 a.m. on March 19. Dignitaries from across the state attended the funeral at the First Methodist Church on March 21. "We have lost a true friend of ABAC," ABAC President Mike Vollmer said. "He meant so much to this institution and to the University System." John's wife, Julie (Class of '65), was selected by Governor Sonny Perdue to fill her husband's unexpired term with the Regents.

ABAC experienced its largest spring term enrollment to date with 2,296 students. With the war continuing in Iraq, ABAC students have requested a time of reflection, meditation, and prayer from 9-10 a.m. on Monday through Friday in the Chapel. Elton Baldy won the 34th annual Lew Akin Speech Showcase on March 26.

The college opened the first phase of the Pedestrian Mall at Homecoming on April 5. ABAC Alumni Association award winners at Homecoming were John Hunt (posthumously), Distinguished Alumnus; Dr. David Bridges, J. Lamar Branch Award; Tim Chason, Outstanding Business Leader; Dr. Mary Ann Robinson Potter, Outstanding Educator; Scott Hart, Jr., Master Farmer; Dr. Greg Anderson, Outstanding Health Care Professional; Stephen T. Rakestraw, Outstanding Young Alumnus; Dudley Hudson Family, Family Legacy Award; and Dr. Lew Akin, Benny Dees, and Bettie Turner, Honorary Alumni.

Faculty and staff award winners at Honors Day on April 9 were Cathy Rogers, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence; Fran Kinchen, Roy R. Jackson Award for Staff Excellence; Bernice Hughes, E. Lanier Carson Award for administrators; and Pattie Clark, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Excellence in Advising Award. Jeanine Dorminey, a mathematics major from Tifton and a member of the Fillies' basketball team, was named the J.G. Woodroof Scholar.

Sam Freeman from Lagrange was elected president, and Brian Elrick from Pembroke was elected vice-president of the Student Government Association for 2003-2004. Pippa Mpunzwana, a fashion merchandising major from Harare, Zimbabwe, was selected by the students as Ms. Baldwin, and Brett Tucker from Ocilla was selected as Mr. Baldwin at the student activities banquet on April 9. Tom Call received the SGA Impact Award. Pacesetter recipients included Alan Kramer, Marsha Anderson, Amy Willis, Shirley Wilson, Cathy Rogers,



Dr. John Dunn, Emory Johnson, Sean McRae, Dr. Erin Campbell, Tom Call, Judy Shiflet, Amanda Richards, and Candice Clark. Bernice Hughes received a Superior Pacesetter. The Cattlemen's Association was named Club of the Year. Retirees honored at the annual reception on April 17 were Dr. Jerry Davis (16 years), Hubert Wood (28 years), Emory Johnson (30 years), and Dennis Bush (31 years).

On April 19, Coach Alton Hudgins' Fillies' tennis team won its 10th straight state title. Ingrid Ebersperger was the Most Valuable Player of the tournament. The Fillies finished fifth in the national tournament. Coach Alan Kramer's Golden Stallions tied for the state championship with Georgia Perimeter and then tied for second with Georgia Perimeter in the national tournament. Coach Donna Campbell's softball team wound up 29-23 overall and finished second in the state tournament. The baseball team of Coach Steve Janousek finished 20-25.

Jeanine Dorminey from Tifton was named the Donaldson Award winner at spring commencement on May 8. She was also the speaker at the ceremony. Larry Gatlin and the Gatlin Brothers performed at Dollars for Scholars before 552 patrons on May 9 in the dining hall.

The Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia approved on May 21 the largest residence hall construction project in the history of public two-year colleges in the state of Georgia by giving the go-ahead for \$32 million in residence hall construction at ABAC.

Funded by bonds issued by the Tift County Development Authority and supported by the ABAC Foundation, the project also represents the second largest building project in the history of Tift County, topped only by a \$35 million Tift Regional Medical Center renovation. "These residence halls will change the face of ABAC forever," ABAC President Mike Vollmer said. "I have to give all the credit to ABAC Foundation Chair Butch Davis, Foundation Trustees Dale Pflug and Pait Willis, Development Director Melvin Merrill, and many other hard-working members of the Foundation who gave some unbelievable hours putting this mammoth project together."

Place Properties will develop 835 new rooms on the campus with construction assistance provided by Alcon Associates from Albany and Jones Construction from Tifton. Most of the units will be four-bedroom, two-bath with a full kitchen and living area. Each student will have a private room complete with Internet, phone, and cable television access. An 8,500 square foot clubhouse will be in the center of the complex and will feature a kitchen, an exercise room, recreation and television space, a study lounge, a computer lab, a large meeting room, and management offices. The clubhouse will be directly linked to ABAC's new Pedestrian Mall, a 12-foot wide brick walkway which extends through the center of the campus.

Vollmer said construction will begin as soon as the tax-exempt bonds are sold. In fact, the college hopes to have 200 beds available for the spring term which begins on January 12, 2004.



The remainder of the rooms are scheduled to be ready for the 2004 fall semester. A per month lease price has yet to be determined but Vollmer said approximately \$345 a month for a 12-month lease would be “somewhere in the ballpark.” The rent will include cable, water, and electricity. Vollmer drove a bulldozer to push over a small tree to break ground for ABAC Place in a ceremony in front of Chandler Hall on June 23. “This is not only the largest project of its kind at a two-year college in Georgia, but the largest project of its kind at a two-year college in the United States,” Vollmer said.

A total of 1,567 students enrolled for the summer term, the highest number in history. The college also began instituting a Maymester, a short session where students could pick up one or two classes in a very condensed schedule. These students counted toward the summer term enrollment.

Former Valdosta State assistant coach Todd Sheppard was named the men’s basketball coach at ABAC in July. He replaced Robert Moore, who became the head coach at Tift County High School. Moore compiled a three-year record of 45-45. Evening and Off-Campus Programs Director Gail Dillard said ABAC will offer three evening classes in Nashville and one in Sylvester during the fall term. Director of Business Services Cam Reagin said students can pay their fees on-line for the first time this fall semester. “We live in a world of ever-increasing technological advances,” ABAC President Mike Vollmer said. “This new system of paying fees is something that students are definitely going to appreciate.”

President Mike Vollmer held his annual first day of class press conference for the fall semester on August 18 on the roof of the Baldwin Library with the ABAC Place construction project stretching out in the background behind him. ABAC experienced its highest enrollment to date with 3,407 students during the 2003 fall term. ABAC received two federal grants worth \$500,00 for the Upward Bound Classic program and the Upward Bound Tiftarea program.

President Mike Vollmer was on the floor for the faculty team at the Moonlight Mania basketball event on September 29 in Gressette Gym. Author Anthony Grooms spoke at the Tom M. Cordell Distinguished Lecture Series on September 30. Phase Two of the Pedestrian Mall opened on October 14 when University System Chancellor Thomas Meredith, Representative Austin Scott, Representative Jay Roberts, and Regent Julie Hunt planted a tree beside the Mall.

President Vollmer instigated the idea for a new campus sign system and helped to secure funding for two electronic signs on Moore Highway and Davis Road which were turned on for the first time on November 5.

Pippa Mpunzwana was selected as Ms. ABAC 2004 on November 11. Congressman Sanford Bishop and Mpunzwana were the featured speakers for the fall commencement ceremony on December 16. Mpunzwana was also selected as the recipient of the Donaldson Award.

2004

The first phase of the \$32 million ABAC Place complex opened on a rainy January 9. The first residents and their parents pushed shopping carts full of their belongings through the rain with big smiles on their faces. The spring semester enrollment was 3,157.

President Vollmer drove a backhoe to start the demolition of Chandler Hall on January 27. Earlier on the same day Chancellor Thomas Meredith cut the ribbon to officially open the new \$7.1 million Agricultural Sciences Building.

On February 18, ABAC celebrated its 400th student during any one semester at ABAC on the Square in Moultrie. Stephanie Withrow was that student. The event was coordinated by ABAC on the Square Director Kay Powell. Coach Julie Conner's Golden Fillies compiled a 14-18 record on the basketball court. Latasha Gibson was selected for All-Conference, All-Tournament, and Honorable Mention All-America. LaVeasey Carter from Tifton became the first All-America selection in Coach Steve Janousek's tenure as the ABAC baseball coach. Carter hit .412 for the Golden Stallions and stole 44 bases. He was named NJCAA Second Team All-America.

The college kicked off Phase Three of the Pedestrian Mall project at Homecoming on April 3. At the ABAC Alumni Association awards luncheon, Eunice Mixon was named the Distinguished Alumnus. Other award recipients were Patrick Atwater, Outstanding Business Leader; Dr. Delano R. Braziel, Outstanding Educator; W. Ernie Ford, Master Farmer; Dr. William R. Boone, Outstanding Health Care Professional; Donna Marshall Blalock, Helen Brown Sasser Award; Brian Law, Outstanding Young Alumnus; and Dr. and Mrs. Larry Moorman, Dale Pflug, and Andrea Savage, Honorary Alumni. The J.E. McGill family received the Family Legacy Award. Alumni Director Nancy Coleman also received a special Dedicated Service Award from the Alumni Association Board of Directors. During the Golden Alumni luncheon, John Drake presented ABAC with a model of The Log, a structure that served as the social hub of ABAC from 1932 until 1962. Drake's daughter, Becky Drake Carlson (Class of '75), asked her father to build the model.

At the Honors Day Ceremony on April 7, Jennifer Raynor, a nursing major from Fitzgerald, was named the J.G. Woodroof Scholar. Faculty and staff award winners were Joy Shurley, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence; Duane Weeks, Roy R. Jackson Award for Staff Excellence; Kay Powell, E. Lanier Carson Award for administrators; and Sue Wilson, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Excellence in Advising Award. Colby Wright won the 36th annual Lew Akin Speech Showcase. Akin served as Chair of the Division of Humanities at ABAC from 1975-91. Retirees honored at the annual reception on April 20 included Verlin Scott, Charles Turner, Ray Miller, Hazel Purvis, Nate Varnadoe, and Ray Wells.



Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College

The spring commencement speaker on May 11 was Joel McKie (Class of '04), National FFA organization vice-president for the southern region in 2002. Trisha Stephens from Tifton was selected as the Donaldson Award winner. She served as president of the ABAC Ambassadors during the 2003-04 academic year. John Berry was the featured entertainer at Dollars for Scholars on May 14. ABAC alumna Jennifer Moorman also sang at the show. Coach Alan Kramer's Golden Stallions won the state championship and finished fourth in the national tournament. ABAC had finished second in the national tournament for the past two years. ABAC won the national championship in 1984 and 1999. Milena Stanoycheva, who won the national title at #1 singles for the Golden Fillies' tennis team in 1999 and 2000, was killed on May 15 when a private plane that she and her fiancée were riding in crashed in the Grand Canyon National Park. Stanoycheva was an inaugural member of the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2008.

The faculty, staff, and students of ABAC surprised President Mike Vollmer with a party in his honor on June 17 in the Donaldson Dining Hall. Since he became president on July 1, 2001, Vollmer has been involved in a whirlwind of activity including the opening of the \$1 million Red Hill Athletic Center, cracking the concrete on the \$1.5 million Pedestrian Mall, bulldozing a tree to open construction on the \$32 million ABAC Place apartments, opening the \$7.1 million Ag Sciences Building, securing funding for the \$6.2 million Health Sciences Building, and getting ABAC placed on the list for a \$10 million renovation of Tift, Lewis, and Herring Halls. The dining hall sound system pumped out *Hail to the Chief* as Vollmer entered the building. He received a High Five t-shirt complete with his signature suspenders and an oversized \$100 bill with his face in the center section. Other happenings of the Vollmer era include the donation of the \$1 million Forest Lakes Golf Course to the college, a \$500,000 Goizueta Foundation Grant, the securing of \$200,000 from the Board of Regents to initiate a new campus master plan, the \$1.2 million renovation of Howard Auditorium, the renovation of the Chapel, the gift of a Steinway piano, the introduction of a one-stop shop in the student center, the use of Personal Digital Assistants on campus, the upcoming new phone system, and two campus electronic signs. Vollmer is serving as chair of the Tifton-Tift County Chamber of Commerce and has recently been elected to serve on the Georgia Humanities Council. He was appointed to serve on the Governor's HOPE Scholarship task force and hosted the Board of Regents on the ABAC campus for the first time in 20 years. A good time was had by all.

Sasaki Associates will be on campus June 22-23 to begin working on the new campus master plan. Public Relations Director Mike Chason is their campus contact. Dr. Amy Willis coordinated the setup of the technology of the Georgia Statewide Academic Medical System (GSAMS) when the Georgia Supreme Court heard a case live on television from Bowen Hall in June. Anthony Fitzgerald has been named Chair of the Division of Social Science. Angie Palmer resigned effective July 9 her post as admissions director to become Chief Operating Officer of Health Systems Management. She joined the ABAC staff in 1998 as a program



coordinator in public service. She became evening and off-campus programs director in 2000 and admissions director in 2002. The first three signs of the new campus outdoor sign system were installed July 14.

Former Georgia Governor George Busbee passed away on July 16. He was a member of the ABAC Class of 1944. Busbee made history when he became the first Georgia governor to serve consecutive terms from 1975-1983. Previously, governors could only serve only one term. ABAC cut the ribbon on a classroom in Sylvester on July 20. One credit class and several continuing education classes will be offered there during the fall term. ABAC privatized its physical plant on August 1 by contracting with Sodexo. The company took over all grounds maintenance, custodial work, and physical plant duties.

Beth Saxon was named the admissions director and registrar. The fall semester enrollment was 3,362, a slight decrease from the 3,407 enrolled in fall term 2003. The “glass-breaking” for the new \$7.2 million Health Sciences Building was held on September 1. The “glass-breaking” involved Tift Regional Medical Center CEO Bill Richardson using a backhoe to crash through a window at the Moore Building, which was demolished along with Creswell Hall to make way for the new Health Sciences Building.

Mike Vollmer’s last day as president of ABAC was on September 14. He resigned his position to become Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education on September 15. He will always be remembered as a president who accomplished a great deal in a relatively short time.

Vice President for Student and Enrollment Services Tom Call was named Interim President of ABAC, beginning September 15. He joined ABAC as an instructor in the Division of Agriculture and Forest Resources in 1981. He was promoted to Assistant Professor in 1985 and became an Associate Professor in 1993. Call served as Acting Chair of the division during the summer of 1994. He entered the administrative ranks as the Interim ABAC Registrar in 1995 and was appointed to the registrar’s position in 1996. In 2001, he became the Interim Vice President for Student and Enrollment Services. He was selected for the vice-president’s position in 2003.

The official grand opening for ABAC Place was held on September 23, with a speech by Chancellor Thomas Meredith. At the ceremony, Meredith dedicated the John Hunt Town Center in honor of ABAC alumnus and Board of Regents member John Hunt (Class of ’59), who passed away in 2003. Hunt’s wife, Julie, also an ABAC alumnus (Class of ’65), took his place on the Board of Regents.

Interim President Tom Call spoke at the dedication ceremony for the Steinway Grand Piano donated by the Stafford Foundation on September 21. Author Cynthia Shearer spoke at the Tom M. Cordell Distinguished Lecture Series on September 28. Interim President Tom Call was the



featured speaker at the Sunbelt Expo Exhibitors' Luncheon on October 19. ABAC was the featured exhibitor at the 2004 Expo and was honored for developing the farm show on its campus in 1964.

The new phone system went into effect at ABAC on November 16. Dr. Chrystle Ross, Executive Director of the Office of Information Technology, was the key person in the changeover from regular phone lines to Voice Over Internet Protocol.

Interim President Tom Call officially requested State College status for ABAC in November, paving the way for the college to offer four-year degrees of its own in Diversified Agriculture and Turfgrass and Golf Course Management. The University System gave ABAC approval to continue to develop its plans for State College status in April of 2005 but did not give the official sanction for State College status until May 16, 2006.

Fulwood Hall, Mitchell Hall, and Branch Hall were razed in the fall of 2004. Jessica Jones, an early childhood education major from Lenox, was crowned Ms. ABAC 2005 on November 16. Nancy Lott, an honor graduate in nursing, was the featured speaker for the fall commencement ceremony on December 18. Mieko Camp, a biology major from Ocilla, received the Donaldson Award.

2005

Creswell Hall and the Moore Building were razed in January to make way for the Health Sciences Building. Construction is underway on phases three and four of the Pedestrian Mall. The spring term enrollment was 3,106. A Board of Regents' study showed that ABAC had an overall \$110 million annual impact on South Georgia. Former United States Congressman and ABAC alumnus Ronald "Bo" Ginn (Class of '53) passed away on January 6 at the age of 70. Ginn was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives from the First District from 1972-83. Former ABAC President Mike Vollmer received the prestigious Stafford Award at the Tifton-Tift County Chamber of Commerce annual banquet on January 24.

ABAC Band Director Eugene Wyles has been inducted into the Georgia Band Directors Hall of Fame. Wyles was the Director of Bands at Worth County High School for 31 years. He has directed the ABAC band for 15 years. Tracy Dyal is the new manager of the ABAC Bookstore. She replaces Emory Johnson who is retiring in June after 32 years of service. JCI Construction began moving dirt on the site of the Health Sciences Building in February. Larius Johnson, a journalism major from Tifton, served as the first African-American editor of *The Stallion*, in 2004-05. The paper was named the best in the state among two-year colleges by the Georgia College Press Association in January. Dr. Eric Cash is the advisor.



Sasaki Associates is mapping out a new master plan for ABAC. Former ABAC Humanities Division Chair Ralph Kickliter passed away in February. He was a professor of Humanities and the accompanist for the ABAC Glee Club from 1948 to 1968. Adrian Salter retired from the ABAC Physical Plant after 30 years of service in February. Elton Baldy, a sophomore agricultural education major from Norman Park, won the Mr. ABAC 2005 title at the 15th annual contest on February 17. Dr. John Galyean directed the Baldwin Players' improv comedy troupe, *Said & Done*, in *Radioactive Beavers* on February 24-26.

Coach Julie Conner's Golden Fillies lost to Middle Georgia 68-52 in the semifinal round of the state tournament to end their season with a record of 7-23. Coach Todd Sheppard's Golden Stallions lost 74-64 to Truett-McConnell in the first round of the state tournament to finish 17-14. ABAC Baseball Coach Steve Janousek achieved his 200th win on March 10. With a 15-16 record so far this year, Janousek now has a record of 203-187 since he took over the reins of the Golden Stallions in 1997. The Stallions wound up 22-29 on the year and did not make the state tournament. Coach Donna Campbell's Golden Fillies lost in the state softball tournament to finish their season with a record of 36-24. Coach Alton Hudgins' Golden Fillies won the state tennis title, and he was named Coach of the Year. Florencia Torres was named MVP of the state tournament. The Fillies finished in a tie for 10th in the national tennis tournament. Coach Alan Kramer's seventh-ranked Golden Stallions did not play in the state or national tennis tournaments because the NJCAA placed them on probation because more than two members of the squad received out-of-nation waivers. The NJCAA allows only two scholarships for international players and deemed the waivers were scholarships. Kramer and Interim President Tom Call appealed the decision to no avail. Kramer said 27 international waivers were awarded for the 2004 fall term, and only 13 went to athletes. He said the waivers are not run through the athletics' program. Jimmy Ballenger was introduced as ABAC's first soccer coach on May 2. The Golden Fillies' first soccer season will be in 2006.

Executive Director of Information Technology Services Chrystle Ross said ABAC will be moving away from using Social Security numbers on all student identification cards beginning immediately. Dan Pennington was named the Distinguished Alumnus by the ABAC Alumni Association at Homecoming on April 2. Other award recipients were Lawton E. Bassett, III, Outstanding Business Leader; Dr. Rose Turner Bacon, Outstanding Educator; Ricky R. Sparkman, Master Farmer; Dr. Gregory G. Goggans, Outstanding Health Care Professional; Betty West Carlson, Helen Brown Sasser Award; Dr. Steve J. Brannen, J. Lamar Branch Award; and former President Mike Vollmer, Honorary Alumnus. The Grady M. Thompson, Sr., family received the Family Legacy Award. The 11th annual Peach State Stampede Rodeo was a part of the Homecoming festivities.

Ellis Washington, III, a political science major from Tifton, won the election for Student Government Association president. He was sworn in at the Student Leadership event on April 7. Lee Henthorn won the race for SGA vice president. Barbara Wood received the SGA Impact



Award at the event. Pacesetters included Bianca Murphy, Bertha Daniel, Kaedy Cawthon, Stephane Hightower, Jewrell Rivers, Darby Sewell, Tim Harris, Dr. Earl Bennett, Winnie Moore, Dr. Doug Waid, Wayne Jones, Brenda Sellers, and Troy Spicer. Penny Chesnut received a Superior Pacesetter. Catrina Kennedy was selected as Miss Baldwin, and Ellis Washington, III, was named Mr. Baldwin. AET was named Club of the Year. Ernesto Ortiz-Ariza was named the Distinguished Ambassador for the year.

At Honors Day on April 13, Kaedy Cawthon, an Early Childhood Education major from Jackson, was named the J.G. Woodroof Scholar. Faculty and staff award winners at Honors Day were Dr. Kay Weeks, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence; Pathelyn Smith, Roy R. Jackson Award for Staff Excellence; Diane Kilgore, E. Lanier Carson Award for administrators; and Joy Shurley, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Excellence in Advising Award. Anna Daniel won the Lew Akin Speech Showcase.

ABAC student Kaedy Cawthon was the speaker for the spring commencement ceremony on May 10. Cawthon was president of the ABAC Ambassadors in 2004-05. Andrew Morgan, an agriculture education major from Daisy, received the Donaldson Award. The Temptations performed at Dollars for Scholars on May 20. Sodexho replaced Aramark as the ABAC food services provider on July 1. The University System of Georgia has decreed that SAT and ACT test scores are no longer required for admission to public two-year colleges in Georgia beginning with the 2005 fall semester. Victoria Horst is the new Director of the Baldwin Library. She replaces Brenda Sellers, who is retiring after 33 years with the library.

For the first time since 1978, the Natural Resources Conservation Workshop (NRCW) was not held at ABAC this summer because ABAC has student apartments instead of dormitories. The Workshop was held at Middle Georgia College. ABAC sent a recruitment team to Cochran on College Night which wowed the campers and hopefully persuaded many to attend ABAC. Kurt Hoffman now directs the dining hall operation for Sodexho. Interim President Tom Call and Javier Gonzales, Coordinator for the High School Equivalency Program (HEP) and the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP), visited the University of Monterrey in Mexico to examine the Georgia Project's Summer Institute. Chief of Police Bryan Golden has been selected as the president of the Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police. Dr. Rodney Bennett, Vice President and Associate Provost for Student Affairs and Dean of Students at the University of Georgia, was the guest speaker at the first Freshman Convocation in recent history on August 26.

The college experienced another all-time enrollment record during the 2005 fall term with 3,423 students from 149 Georgia counties, 16 other states, and 17 countries. Interim President Tom Call held his first-day-of-class press conference in front of the Health Sciences building construction site. For the second year in a row, all 835 rooms at ABAC Place are full. A total of 860 students are living on campus. Call said ABAC could have had at least 100 more students

had the ABAC Place apartments not filled up. “We are looking into building additional housing on the campus due to the demand by students,” Call said.

Interim President Tom Call led the way in September for the annual *House Calls* where administrators, faculty, staff, and students knock on every day in ABAC Place to check on how students are doing. Call and University of Georgia Assistant Dean David Bridges welcomed visitors to ABAC and UGA on a September Sunday afternoon as Tift County celebrated its 100th anniversary with tours of ABAC and the Experiment Station. Institutional Research Director Donna Miller said the Division of Agriculture and Forest Resources has regained the top spot in student numbers with 805 students followed by the Division of Nursing with 744 students. In 2004, nursing led the way with over 800 students. The ABAC Music Program provided the entertainment at the ABAC Place Gazebo on October 13 for the annual fall picnic and concert.

Public Relations Director Mike Chason received the Legion of Honor award from the Tifton Kiwanis Club for 25 years of membership on October 28. In her first pageant ever, Melissa Maher, an animal science major from Snellville, was selected over 55 other contestants as Ms. ABAC 2006 on November 8. She is president of the ABAC Rodeo Club and a barrel racer on the ABAC intercollegiate rodeo team. Renovations are to be completed on the Donaldson Dining Hall by mid-November. Sodexo took over the ABAC food service operation on July 1, and the renovations began soon after. “It was long overdue,” Dining Hall Director Kurt Hoffman said. “The old layout was dated but with the renovation and modernization of the facilities, we can keep up with the changing trends and tastes of the students.”

ABAC brought back golf to the athletics’ program this fall after a 10-year absence. Herb Hendrix is the coach. The basketball teams presented Dr. Larry Allen with the *Above and Beyond Award* at the annual Moonlight Mania game for his support of ABAC basketball through the years. Allen, who is retiring in December, was particularly effective in getting a group of students titled *The Rowdies* to cheer on the hoopsters. The Baldwin Players of Dr. John Galyean presented *The Diary of Adam and Eve* by Mark Twain on November 10-12 in Conger 319.

Pedro Perez, an engineering major from Moultrie, received the \$2,500 Hispanic College Fund Scholarship from the Ford Motor Company. He participated in the 12th annual awards gala and leadership development program in Washington D.C. and met the CEO of Ford Motor Company. ABAC recognized the accomplishments of the late Tom Milam during a ceremony on November 28 in Bowen Hall. Milam's wife, Jean, and his son, John, attended the ceremony, in which the office area of the Division of Social Science was named the Thomas R. Milam Suite. Milam's portrait will hang in the suite, and a plaque is on the door. Milam served as Social Science division chair and federal programs coordinator from 1968-86.



On November 30, University System of Georgia Interim Chancellor Corliss Cummings charged the ABAC Presidential Search and Screening Committee with the task of finding ABAC a new president. ABAC alumnus William Bowen, Jr., will chair the committee. Interim President Tom Call issued a charge to the college's 100th birthday celebration committee on December 1. Public Relations Director Mike Chason will serve as chair. Interim President Tom Call announced that beginning December 12, the official ABAC operating hours will become 8 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday and from 8 a.m. until 3 p.m. on Friday. He said the new hours will allow ABAC to become more efficient in meeting the needs of our students. State Senator Joseph Carter was the guest speaker for the fall commencement ceremony for 135 graduates on December 17.

2006

The spring term enrollment was 3,152, a slight increase over the 3,106 students enrolled in the spring of 2005. The Master Plan for ABAC was approved by the Board of Regents after a presentation by Interim President Tom Call and Master Plan Committee Chair Mike Chason in Atlanta on January 10. The plan called for extensive changes to the physical face of the campus including a new Perimeter Road and moving the Physical Plant facility.

Teresa Coarsey was named the Distinguished Alumnus by the ABAC Alumni Association at Homecoming on April 8. Other award recipients were Dixie Sutton Lightfoot, Outstanding Business Leader; Sherry Hutchinson Waldrop, Outstanding Educator; James Emory Tate, Master Farmer; Dr. C. Gary Lodge, Outstanding Health Care Professional; Lorene Manning Carter, Helen Brown Sasser Award; Dr. J. Curtis Branch, Jr., J. Lamar Branch Award; Darby Thompson Sewell, Outstanding Young Alumnus; and Thomas B. Call and Dr. Larry D. Allen, Honorary Alumni. The Render Hill Parkman family received the Family Legacy Award.

At Honors Day on April 12, Michael Maw, an agronomy and agricultural communications major from Tifton, was named the J.G. Woodroof Scholar. Faculty and staff award winners were Dr. Herbert Shippey, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence; Janice Payne, Roy R. Jackson Award for Staff Excellence; Bertha Daniel, E. Lanier Carson Award for administrators; and Dr. Luke Vassiliou, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Excellence in Advising Award. Jason Chapman was elected president of the Student Government Association for the 2006-07 year.

Coach Julie Conner's Golden Fillies rolled up a 24-9 record and lost in the championship game of the state tournament. Behind All-Region players Tamara Petersen and Turelle Jones, the team amassed the most wins in the history of women's basketball at ABAC. The ABAC women's tennis team finished in a tie for 12th place at the NJCAA national tournament in Tucson. Whitney Lightfoot received the NJCAA Arthur Ashe Sportsmanship and Leadership Award.



Coach Steve Janousek's ABAC baseball team finished sixth in the regular season standings and then lost in the first round of the state playoffs.

Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue was the guest speaker at the spring commencement ceremony on May 9. Maleria Brown, a journalism major from Sycamore, was the Donaldson Award recipient.

Bridges Selected as President of ABAC

After months of searching and interviews, the Board of Regents named Dr. David C. Bridges as ABAC's 10th president on May 11. Bridges became the first alumnus ever to serve as president. The Parrott native was a member of the Class of 1978. He received his undergraduate and graduate degrees from Auburn University and his Ph.D. from Texas A&M University. He spoke to an enthusiastic ABAC crowd on the front steps of Tift Hall on the afternoon of May 11. His wife, Kim, is also an ABAC alumnus. In fact, they met in Rosalyn Donaldson's English class on the ABAC campus.

Trisha Yearwood performed for 1,748 patrons at the largest Dollars for ABAC Scholars event in history on May 12. Yearwood's father, Jack, was a 1952 ABAC graduate. Assistant Development Director Betty McCorvey coordinated the event. She said the event at the UGA Tifton Campus Conference Center raised \$90,145 for student scholarships, the most in the history of Dollars for Scholars.

"Trisha really connected with the audience, the community, and the school," McCorvey said. "She acknowledged her ties to ABAC since her father was an ABAC alumnus, and her sister, Beth, lived in Tifton. I know the audience loved it when Trisha brought Beth on stage."

President-Elect Bridges and Interim President Call returned to the front porch of Tift Hall on May 17 for a celebration party when ABAC was named a State College by the Board of Regents. The announcement came at 2:03 p.m. on May 16 at the Regents' meeting in Atlanta. Interim President Call was in Atlanta for the historic announcement.

Pattie Garrett Clark (Class of '76) passed away on June 5. She was a former Chair for the Division of Nursing and a faculty member in the nursing program at ABAC for 26 years.

Tom Call walked out of the president's office into retirement on June 30. He became the longest serving interim president in ABAC's history. He and his wife, Judy, continued to live in Tifton for several years before moving to Athens.

Dr. David Bridges' first official day on the job was July 1. He became the first ABAC president to be formally inaugurated in an impressive ceremony on August 25 in Gressette Gym. The ceremony attracted presidents and representatives from 17 other colleges and universities. Bridges called it "a day I will never forget."



During his first year as president, Bridges evaluated every area of the college and set the stage for many changes. He announced a record enrollment at his first day of class press conference on August 21 of 3,574 students from 10 states, 11 countries, and 153 Georgia counties. He kicked a soccer ball into the net at the E.B. Hamilton Complex on August 26 to signal the opening of the first ever women's intercollegiate soccer season at ABAC. Under the direction of Coach Jimmy Ballenger, the Fillies recorded a record of 9-5-1.

ABAC Opens Health Sciences Building

President David Bridges was the keynote speaker when ABAC opened the \$7.2 million Health Sciences building on September 20. Tift Regional Medical Center provided \$1 million toward the construction of the building which involved a public-private partnership with the ABAC Foundation. For the first time, the WALB-TV news team from Albany broadcast its evening newscast live on the ABAC campus on October 5.

There's no question that two-time International Tennis Association Player of the Year Paul Fitzgerald left his mark on the tennis program at ABAC. The gregarious Irishman from Cork also left fragments from his two front teeth on a certain light pole in Fort Myers, Fla., on Friday, October 13th.

"While playing doubles late that Friday afternoon, Paul chased an overhead and ran face first into a light pole off the court," Coach Alan Kramer remembered. "He was out for a minute, and you couldn't hear a sound across that whole tennis complex. The ambulance came, and we got him to the hospital. All the time we were there in the hospital he was begging the nurse to release him so he could play for the ITA singles' championship on Saturday. Her boyfriend was a hockey player so she told Paul she would see what she could do. The doctor did release him but told Paul he wouldn't feel like playing. Boy was he wrong."

Without even warming up, Fitzgerald played in the 8 a.m. match on October 14th and upset the top seed in a three-hour and seven-minute match to win the title. "I have never seen anything like it," Kramer said. "He had a bloody towel that he used after every point. He said his dad was a boxer in Ireland, so he was used to the blood. I guess it was as close to a UFC cage match as you could get in tennis."

"At first I didn't think there would be any way that I could play," Fitzgerald told a newspaper reporter later that day. "I started to feel better a couple of hours after getting to the hospital. When he said I was okay to play, I thought I might as well give it a shot."

"Paul inspired others that day in Fort Myers," Kramer said. "From then on, he was a legend as the word traveled fast about the unbelievable situation. You would not believe how many followers he had at random tennis matches the next couple of years."

On October 23, Bridges and ABAC Foundation Board of Trustees Chair Ruth Raines pushed a plunger to set off a small charge of dynamite to signal the groundbreaking on the ABAC Lakeside student housing project on the north shore of Lake Baldwin.

On November 30, the groundbreaking ceremony for the soccer field/intramural fields' project was held. A helicopter loaded with soccer balls flew over the ABAC intramural field and Public Relations Administrative Associate Pam Leonard pushed out the balls to signal the beginning of the groundbreaking on the \$1 million first phase of the project.

John Ellington (Class of '80), Judge for the Court of Appeals of the State of Georgia, served as the fall commencement speaker on December 14. Michael Maw, an agronomy and agricultural communications major from Tifton, was selected as the recipient of the Donaldson Award.

2007

ABAC opened the 2007 spring semester with 3,146 students, six students less than the previous spring. However, the summer term numbers showed 1,403 students, up 11 students over the summer of 2006, to set the stage for the 2007 fall semester which yielded the largest enrollment in ABAC history, 3,665 students.

John Clemens has been hired as the Vice President of Fiscal Affairs at ABAC. He replaces Cam Reagin, who held the position on an interim basis after the retirement of Floyd Wright last spring. Clemens has 32 years of business office experience at Clemson University. ABAC Concert Band Director Gene Wyles passed away on January 31. He worked with the music program at ABAC for 16 years after a 31-year career as the band director at Worth County High School. Myungsook Song Stoudenmire was the featured performer at the Stafford Series Concert in Howard Auditorium on February 19.

Under the direction of Coach Todd Sheppard, the men's basketball team at ABAC rolled up a magnificent 27-5 record during the 2006-2007 season. Led by first team all-conference performers Leon Buchanan and Brandon Shingles, the team was ranked as high as ninth in the national poll during the season. The Stallions lost in the state title game to Georgia Perimeter 103-85, after losing to the Jaguars twice during the regular season. Sheppard was named Coach of the Year in the league and was also named the coach for a group of two-year college all-stars as a part of the NCAA Final Four event in Atlanta on April 1. A group of ABAC students called "The Rowdies" supported the team throughout the year by painting their faces green and gold and turning out in force for the home games and the road game at Cochran against Middle Georgia. Their favorite entrance was to beat loudly on the north doors of Gressette Gym while the Stallions were warming up. Then they entered the arena with two students cracking their bullwhips. It was quite a sight, especially for the opposing team.



Coach Julie Conner's basketball Fillies wound up with a 20-8 overall record and lost in the semifinal round of the state tournament to Darton 64-52. Turrelle Jones was named first team all-conference. The Fillies have accumulated 103 victories in Conner's seven years as the head coach. Bob Gressette (Class of '57), son of legendary ABAC Coach Bruce Gressette, presented copies of his new book, *A History of ABAC Stallion Basketball: 1933-1956*, to the college in February.

ABAC alumnus George T. Smith (Class of '40) received the University System of Georgia Board of Regents' Hall of Fame Award on March 3. Smith is the only Georgian to win contested elections to all three branches of state government, legislative, executive and judicial. He is a former Speaker of the House, Lieutenant Governor, and Supreme Court Justice.

The atrium in the Health Sciences Building was dedicated to the memory of former Division of Nursing Chair Pattie Garrett Clark (Class of '76) in a ceremony on March 15. ABAC alumnus Cathy Cox (Class of '78) was named president of Young Harris College in March. She was the first female Secretary of State in the history of Georgia. Fran Kinchen retired from her position as the Secretary to the President on March 30. She had served in the position since July 1, 2002. Prior to that time, she had served as the Secretary to the Academic Dean. Pam Leonard, Administrative Secretary in the Public Relations Office, replaced Kinchen.

ABAC kicked off its 100th birthday celebration at the Homecoming luncheon on March 31 with a parade of students holding lighted birthday cakes and a short play which told the story of the bidding ceremony for the A&M School. Alumni Director Nancy Coleman coordinated the event. The play was written by Dr. Gary Roberts. Alumni Association award winners at Homecoming were Julie Ewing Hunt, Distinguished Alumnus; Keith Rucker, J. Lamar Branch Award; Glenn P. Willis, Jr., Outstanding Business Leader; Joan Griffin Marshall, Outstanding Educator; Brian Ponder, Master Farmer; Patricia Sirmans Puckett, Outstanding Health Care Professional; Kathy Butler Murray, Helen Brown Sasser Award; J.R. Gibbs, Sr., family, Family Legacy Award; and Dr. Ron Jones and Henry "Bo" Miller, Honorary Alumni. George T. Smith was presented with the first ever Distinguished Service Award which honors those alumni who have been true public servants to the citizens of the state of Georgia.

At Honors Day on April 11, Casey Allison, a business administration major from Dahlonga, was named the J.G. Woodroof Scholar. Faculty/staff award winners were Beth Thornton, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence; Pam Leonard, Roy R. Jackson Award for Staff Excellence; Dr. Bobbie Robinson, E. Lanier Carson Award for administrators; and Kay Powell, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Excellence in Advising Award.

ABAC alumnus Thomas “Boo” Weekley (Class of ’93) won the Verizon Heritage golf tournament at Hilton Head Island on April 16 for his first PGA victory. He won \$972,000. He played for Coach Tom Moody at ABAC.

“Boo was a good golfer and had a lot of athletic ability,” Moody said. “I knew he had the potential to do well but sometimes it takes more than ability to play professionally. I’m very happy for him. He was a country boy, and his parents were hard working people who supported their son.”

ABAC held a remembrance service for those who lost their lives in the Virginia Tech tragedy in the Chapel of All Faiths on April 18. Miles Drummond, an English major from Tifton, and Jill Dunn, a veterinary medicine major from Tifton, were voted Mr. and Ms. Baldwin 2007. The results were announced at the student leadership banquet on April 19.

Coach Alan Kramer’s women’s tennis team won its 14th straight state title on the way to an 11th place finish in the national tournament. Kramer was named Coach of the Year in the state and then was selected NJCAA National Women’s Coach of the Year for the second time in his 14-year career at ABAC. He also received the honor in 1998. Kedi Magakgala from ABAC was the Region XVII tournament’s Most Valuable Player. Kramer’s men’s tennis team wound up sixth in the national tournament after winning the NJCAA Region XVII tournament behind the heroics of Most Valuable Player Paul Fitzgerald, who was later named NJCAA National Rookie of the Year. Fitzgerald and Derick Danziger were named to the All-America team. Coach Herb Hendrix’s golf team finished second in the state tournament. The ABAC golfers were ranked seventh in the nation. Coach Steve Janousek’s baseball Stallions wound up 24-34.

ABAC baseball player Ty Wright was named to the 2007 NJCAA first team All-America squad. He was also named Player of the Year in NJCAA Region XVII. Wright hit .407 with 49 runs scored. He also had 83 hits, 19 doubles, eight home runs and 48 runs batted in. The sophomore biology major from Montrose hit .314 in his freshman campaign. Wright hit two grand slams in a 16-12 ABAC win over George Wallace Community College. “I was seeing the ball really good that year,” Wright said in a 2016 interview. “I felt a lot more comfortable at the plate, and Coach J had more confidence in me as one of the leaders of that team.”

Wright was planning to play college football after graduating from West Laurens High School where he was a two-time all-region football pick and was selected all-state his senior year. But after clobbering 10 home runs and recording a .522 batting average to set all-time records his senior year on the diamond, Wright decided baseball would be his ticket to a college education. He was all-region on two occasions and all-state in baseball as well.

“ABAC was the last place I tried out, and I decided to go there,” Wright said. “Academically it was a lot tougher than some schools. I was a biology major, and my science classes were more



difficult there than anywhere else I went.” Janousek lauded Wright for making a name for himself in the classroom as well with a 3.33 grade point average.

After his ABAC career was over, Wright walked on at Georgia Southern where he earned “Faces in the Crowd” recognition from *Sports Illustrated* for hitting for the cycle in four consecutive innings against Wofford. He singled in the first inning, slammed a two-run home run off the scoreboard in the second inning, belted a triple in the third inning, and slapped a two-run double in the fourth inning. Wright spent two years at Georgia Southern and was a second team All-America selection. He earned a spot in the San Diego Padres organization for two years before a knee injury ended his playing days. Wright was named to the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2016.

ABAC alumnus George T. Smith (Class of '40) was the guest speaker at the spring commencement ceremony on May 4. Smith is the only person in the history of Georgia to win contested elections to all three branches of state government. Casey Allison, a business administration major from Dahlonega, received the Donaldson Award.

Director of Institutional Research and Planning Donna Miller won the Becky Mann Volunteer of the Year award from the City of Tifton. Amy Grant performed at the Dollars for ABAC Scholars Benefit Banquet and Show at the UGA Tifton Campus Conference Center on June 15. Sponsored by the ABAC Foundation, it was the last concert of its kind in the longtime Dollars for Scholars format. Dollars for Scholars began in 1972 with Anita Bryant as the first performer in an effort to raise funds to build the Chapel of All Faiths.

ABAC Vacates Tift Hall as Renovation Begins

On June 19, the president’s office moved out of Tift Hall for the first time in the history of ABAC so the building can undergo a complete rehabilitation process. The president’s office, public relations office and fiscal affairs office relocated to Evans Hall, the former health center. Ashley Williamson joined the staff as the Public Relations Assistant on June 19. Tift Hall was closed on July 25 when Procurement became the last office to move out of the building. Tift, Lewis, and Herring are now awaiting rehabilitation.

Dr. Niles Reddick was selected as the vice president for academic affairs at ABAC on July 1. He replaced Dr. Caroline Helms who retired after a 33-year career at ABAC. Helms joined the ABAC faculty in 1974 as a temporary assistant professor in the Division of Social Science. President Bridges named Reddick to the President’s Cabinet along with Dr. Gail Dillard, vice president for student affairs; John Clemens, vice president for fiscal affairs, and Dr. Chrystle Ross, Chief Information Officer.



On July 1, ABAC took over management of the ABAC Place apartments from Place Properties. Director of Residence Life Bernice Hughes and her staff now direct all housing on the campus, including the new ABAC Lakeside complex.

The ABAC Jazz Band toured Europe in July and played at the opening of the Tour de France bike race in London. Don Coates directed the band and coordinated the trip.

Classes opened for the 2007 fall term on August 20 with the all-time enrollment record of 3,665 students from 154 Georgia counties, nine countries and 14 states. President David Bridges said in his first day of class press conference that the college also had a record number of students living on campus, almost 1,300 with the opening of ABAC Lakeside.

The dedication ceremony for the new soccer field was held on August 28 when the Fillies cut the ribbon on a gorgeous new field on the ABAC campus. The team then defeated Georgia Military College 3-0 in the first home game ever for women's soccer at ABAC. ABAC finished the year with a record of 9-6-1.

One hundred green-and-gold balloons fell from the ceiling of the Grand Lobby of ABAC Lakeside on September 10 when President David Bridges pulled the rope at the grand opening of the \$17 million complex which features rooms for 489 students. Ruth Raines, chair of the ABAC Foundation, spoke on behalf of the Foundation, which helped to provide the funding for the project.

The 100th birthday celebration continued throughout the fall semester with a special ceremony at the ABAC Sunbelt Expo exhibit on October 17. As an extra added attraction to the celebration, ABAC was named the 10th best community college in the nation in a poll by the Washington Monthly Magazine. The turfgrass management associate degree program was rated seventh in the nation in another poll by *Turfnet Magazine*, and the new turfgrass bachelor's degree program was rated 26th in the nation without a single class being taught.

President David Bridges announced his Second Century Project in a Town Hall meeting in the Health Sciences Building on November 13. He outlined a plan for the college to grow and prosper in its second century of service and established a goal for ABAC to become "Georgia's State College of Choice." Mike Chason and Ali Csinos were the emcees for the first ever students' iMovie Festival on November 8 in Howard Auditorium. Ashley Brown was selected as Miss ABAC 2008 on November 20.

Sodexo custodial supervisor Jack Larry passed away on December 5 from injuries he received when a student's vehicle collided with his maintenance cart on November 27. Larry's funeral was held in Gressette Gym on December 10. He joined the ABAC staff on January 12, 1987. Men's basketball coach Todd Sheppard was the fall commencement speaker for 102 graduates on December 13. "You can always control how hard you work and how you prepare for the

challenge,” Sheppard, whose team rolled up a 27-5 record during the 2006-07 campaign said. Former food services director George Graul passed away on December 27 at the age of 85.

2008

Dr. Tim Marshall, chair of the Division of Agriculture and Forest Resources, cut the ribbon on January 7 to signal the first day of class for the new bachelor’s degrees in diversified agriculture and turfgrass and golf course management. Forty students are now enrolled in junior and senior level classes at ABAC. Dr. Renata Elad taught the first class which was Food and Agricultural Marketing. ABAC offered junior and senior level classes for the first time since the college was named the Georgia State College for Men from 1929-33.

Enrollment leaped to 3,230 students for the 2008 spring semester. Dr. Rosemary Johnson, counseling director for 29 years, passed away on January 13. Evelyn Eve, assistant to the registrar at ABAC for 28 years, passed away on January 31. *The Stallion* was named the best two-year college newspaper in the state by the Georgia College Press Association. Kristina Story is managing editor, and Dr. Eric Cash is the advisor.

The final days leading up to the Centennial Celebration of ABAC passed in a blur. Mike Chason, chair of the 100th birthday celebration committee, met with the group for the final time on January 8. Through the assistance of committee members and particularly the help of Public Relations Assistant Ashley Williamson and Executive Assistant to the President Pam Leonard, the details were hammered into place.

Professor Emeritus of History Gary Roberts spoke on his new book, *Doc Holliday: The Life and the Legend* on January 29 in the Magnolia Room of the dining hall. The Stallion Day recruiting event on February 7 attracted a record crowd of 1,620 prospective students, 285 parents, and 18 high school counselors.

Sodexo employee John Tanner was digging up a dead tree with a back-hoe on the front of campus in February when he saw a bottle in the dirt. Miraculously, he recovered the bottle intact and took it to Public Relations Director Mike Chason in Evans Hall. Inside were two pieces of tablet paper dated March 1, 1922 and headlined 1922 Sophomore Class. Underneath were the individually handwritten names of 38 students. The students had apparently dropped the glass Heinz Ketchup bottle into the hole before the tree was planted on that date. The bottle and the story behind it are now on display in The History Room in Tift Hall.

President Bridges made special arrangements for an entire ABAC contingent to travel to Atlanta on February 14 to meet with legislators at the state capitol. Senator Joseph Carter headed an effort to have ABAC recognized in the State Senate that morning, and Representatives Austin Scott and Jay Roberts arranged for a recognition ceremony in the State House later the same

morning. Bridges and George T. Smith both spoke at the two ceremonies. They were surrounded by legislators who were ABAC alumni.

The entire ABAC group then went to Governor Sonny Perdue's office for a group photo. Those representing ABAC included President David Bridges, Vice President for Academic Affairs Niles Reddick, Vice President for Student Affairs Gail Dillard, Vice President for Fiscal Affairs John Clemens, Chief Information Officer Chrystle Ross, ABAC Alumni Association President Joy Carter, ABAC Ambassadors President Ashton Harper, First Lady Kim Bridges, Chief Advancement Officer Melvin Merrill, Director of Grants and Development Betty McCorvey, Public Relations Assistant Ashley Williamson, and Public Relations Director Mike Chason.

It was a great day for ABAC under the Gold Dome! The event served as a prelude for a terrific week of the Centennial Celebration on February 18-22.

The Celebration Week began on February 18 with a breakfast in the Donaldson Dining Hall for the entire faculty and staff. It continued at noon on that day with the slicing of a birthday cake in Moultrie for all students at ABAC on the Square. Kay Powell, Director of ABAC on the Square, arranged for an impressive ceremony.

More birthday cakes were needed on February 19 when ABAC students were served cake in the dining hall. Also on that day, Bridges spoke to the ABAC Foundation Board of Trustees at their quarterly meeting and did a live WTIF radio show with Chason. The students enjoyed a Centennial Celebration parade around campus arranged by Dean of Students Bernice Hughes. Singer Corey Smith entertained over 1,200 spectators in the John Hunt Auditorium of the UGA Tifton Campus Conference Center that evening.

On February 20, the big moment arrived with a brilliant blue sky on a perfect 70-degree day. Exactly 100 years earlier, a total of 27 students had walked up the steps of Tift Hall for their first day of class at the Second District A&M School.

One century later, ABAC had a breakfast for retired faculty and staff, a presentation in Howard Auditorium featuring a fantastic documentary on the college's first 100 years by Cindy Barber from Media Services, a tribute to the college from George T. Smith, a speech by President Bridges which addressed the first century and the century to come, recognition of former presidents at the Presidential Plaza Dedication, and free rides on a hot air balloon. Mike Vollmer was the only former president to return but he was joined by former interim presidents Dr. Frank Thomas, Tom Call, and Dr. Homer Day.

ABAC alumnus Steven Meeks (Class of '96) read a resolution in Howard Auditorium commending ABAC on its 100th birthday from United States Senators Saxby Chambliss and Johnny Isakson. Meeks works for Chambliss in his Atlanta office. A resolution was also received from United States Congressman Jim Marshall which was read on the floor of the U.S.



House of Representatives. ABAC was also honored by resolutions from the City of Tifton and the Tift County Board of Commissioners.

On the evening of February 20, Don Coates, Dr. Susan Roe, and Woody Leonard directed the ABAC Concert Band, Concert Choir, Jazz Band, Jazz Choir and Dixie Stallions Dixieland Band in a wonderful concert featuring “100 Years of Musical Memories” in Gressette Gym. Following the concert, an awesome fireworks display took place over Lake Baldwin in front of the ABAC Lakeside complex. Fireworks watchers were even treated to an eclipse of the moon after the fireworks had faded away.

Jim Threatte (Class of '32) passed away on February 20 at the age of 97. He and his wife, Mary, won the Distinguished Alumnus Award from the ABAC Alumni Association in 1988.

On February 21, President Bridges and Chason addressed the Tifton-Tift County Chamber of Commerce luncheon on the 100th birthday celebration. Alumni Director Nancy Coleman and Athletics Director Alan Kramer coordinated a dinner for the first ever ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame. Chason conceived the idea for the Hall of Fame as a part of the 100th birthday celebration in a planning session with Ashley Williamson in November 2007.

Six legends from the ABAC athletics program were recognized and presented crystal stallions between games of the ABAC-South Georgia Tech basketball matchups in Gressette Gym on February 21. Named to the first Hall of Fame were Orion Mitchell, Bruce Gressette, Thomas Cheney, Phillip Simpson, Norman “Red” Hill, and Milena Stanoytcheva. Mitchell, Gressette, Cheney, and Stanoytcheva were named to the Hall posthumously. The state runner-up team from 1958 was also recognized at halftime of the men’s game that evening.

On February 22, the Centennial Celebration Week ended on the front steps of Tift Hall where ABAC student Sam Webb explained how ABAC students constructed ABAC’s very own time capsule. Agriculture and Forest Resources Division faculty members John Franklin and Ray Lundy directed the design and construction of the capsule. The time capsule will be placed in the remodeled Tift Hall. The capsule is to be opened on February 20, 2108. The event ended when faculty members, staff members, administrators, and students gathered on the steps of Tift Hall to release 100 balloons into the gray South Georgia sky as a salute to the next 100 years of ABAC.

Sam Goodman was named first team All-Conference for the basketball Stallions who finished with a record of 17-14. In his five years as the coach, Coach Todd Sheppard’s Stallions are 93-64. Coach Julie Conner’s Fillies slid to a record of 11-19 this season. Both teams lost in the quarterfinals of the conference tournament.

ABAC took a step toward the future on March 28-30 when a design team from the University of Georgia College of Environment and Design came to Tifton for the weekend to come up with a



new design for the front of campus to include the three historic buildings of Tift, Lewis, and Herring halls. All three of the 100-year-old buildings are now vacant and awaiting rehabilitation.

The Centennial Celebration continued on Homecoming weekend on April 3-5 when Alumni Relations Director Nancy Coleman directed a jam-packed schedule which featured ABAC alumni from different decades adding candles to a gigantic birthday cake during a luncheon in Gressette Gym. The evening hours featured “Jukebox Saturday Night” and fireworks over Lake Baldwin. Former interim president Jim Burran returned for the Homecoming luncheon. Scott Purvis (Class of '86) was named the new president of the alumni association.

Copies of the *100 Years of ABAC Memories* book were sold for the first time at Homecoming. The book was edited by Mike Chason and designed by Ashley Williamson. President Bridges and ABAC Alumni Association President Joy Carter sealed the 100th birthday time capsule during the Homecoming luncheon in Gressette Gym.

ABAC Alumni Association award winners on April 5 were Tom McCall, Distinguished Alumnus; Amber Davis Collins, Outstanding Young Alumnus; Ted Cowan, Master Farmer; Sandra Flynt McKinney, Helen Brown Sasser Award; Anthony L. Williams, J. Lamar Branch Award; Dr. Charles Speakman, Outstanding Health Care Professional; Dorsey Brooks, Outstanding Educator; H. Frank Sauls, Jr., Outstanding Business Leader; William Turner family, Family Legacy Award; and Dianne Cowart, George Graul, Ailene Graul, and Dr. Charlotte Pfeiffer, Honorary Alumni.

At the Honors Day Ceremony on April 16, Christina Ann Norton, an art major from Tifton, was named the J.G. Woodroof Scholar. Faculty/staff award winners were Lorie Felton, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence; Jimmy Felton, Roy R. Jackson Award for Staff Excellence; Andrea Willis, E. Lanier Carson Award for administrators; and Tammy Dennis, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Excellence in Advising Award.

For the first time ever, two members of the junior class were elected by the student body to lead the SGA when Nate Carney was elected president, and Dan Pennington was elected vice-president. Matthew Harrell from Tifton and Taylor Hand from Tifton were selected by the students as Mr. and Ms. Baldwin. They were recognized at the student leadership banquet on April 16.

Retirees honored at the annual reception on April 17 were Dr. Sue Hammons-Bryner (24 years), Paul Miller (20 years), Beth Saxon (15 years), and Alice Ray (15 years).

ABAC Alumnus Makes Finals of American Idol

ABAC alumni were in the news in the spring of 2008 when Michael Johns, known as Michael Lee when he was an ABAC student and a member of the tennis team in 1998, finished as one of



the finalists in the nationwide “American Idol” competition. After hearing the news, former ABAC tennis coach Norman “Red” Hill remarked that Lee (Johns) was a lot better at singing than he was at playing tennis. Another alumnus, Thomas “Boo” Weekley (Class of ’93), won \$990,000 when he captured the title in the PGA Verizon Heritage golf tournament at Hilton Head, S.C., for the second year in a row.

B.H. Claxton (Class of ’47) from Hazlehurst completed a \$100,000 endowment to the ABAC Foundation to fund the B.H. and Lanell Claxton Scholarship. “I got money for school by helping my father farm,” Claxton said. “I earned \$300, and he told me it was for school, not for pleasure. ABAC was \$49.95 a quarter at that time.”

U.S. Senator Saxby Chambliss from Moultrie was the spring commencement speaker on May 2. He congratulated ABAC on its very successful first 100 years. Taylor Hand, a journalism major from Tifton, received the Donaldson Award.

President Bridges and his wife, Kim, accepted the Arts Citizen of the Year award for ABAC from the Tift County Arts Council at the 2008 Love Affair festival on May 2. The Love Affair had its roots as the Arts Circus on the ABAC campus in an endeavor started by Syd Blackmarr, the first director of Arts Experiment Station at ABAC. Donna Webb was named Director of Enrollment Services on May 5. The ABAC Cattleman’s Association won the prestigious Chapter of the Year award for the state of Georgia in 2008. Dr. Mary Ellen Hicks is the advisor for the chapter.

Lalewicz Wins National Championship for ABAC

Coach Alan Kramer and the Fillies’ tennis team won their 15th consecutive state title behind the outstanding play of Monika Lalewicz, who went on to win the national championship at #1 singles. The Fillies finished fourth in the national tournament. Lalewicz, a freshman from Mississauga, Canada was named the NJCAA Player of the Year. She was selected for the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2015.

The Stallions’ Paul Fitzgerald was named men’s NJCAA Player of the Year. Fitzgerald, a native of Cork, Ireland, led the Stallions to a third-place finish in the national tournament. Fitzgerald was named the Most Valuable Player of the Region XVII tournament for the second straight year when he led the Stallions to back-to-back state championships. He finished third in singles in the national tournament and earned a scholarship to Armstrong State University where he was a member of the 2009 NCAA Division II national championship team. Fitzgerald was selected as a member of the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2016.

The 2008 ABAC baseball team wound up 28-28, and the 2008 softball team was 27-22. Governor Sonny Perdue announced in May that ABAC would receive \$6 million in funding in



the 2008-09 state budget toward the rehabilitation of the three original buildings on the front of campus.

Jessica Kalina from Williamson, Colton Farrow from Pitts, and Tanner Newhouse from Bonaire were named as the first three recipients of the Presidential Scholarships at ABAC in May. Under the direction of Dr. Susan Roe, the ABAC Chamber Singers and the Jazz Choir performed in New York City. ABAC and Georgia Southwestern State University announced a joint agreement in Americus on May 30 to offer junior and senior level classes in a bachelor's degree in Resource Management at ABAC. Southwestern also offers junior and senior level classes in Management, Accounting, and Early Childhood Education at ABAC. A total of 1,217 students enrolled for the 2008 summer term.

ABAC began the 2008-09 academic year on July 1 with the news of a statewide five per cent budget cut, amounting to almost \$900,000 for the College. ABAC's first response to the cut was leaving vacant positions unfilled. Two of those unfilled spots belonged to the two basketball coaches since Todd Sheppard has resigned to go into the business world, and Julie Conner has resigned to take the head girls' basketball job at Tift County High School. Sheppard was the men's coach for five years, and Conner was the women's coach for eight years. President Bridges announced on July 14 that ABAC was dropping both its men's and women's basketball programs.

"The final decision and its timing were made because of three reasons," Bridges said. "Eliminating two of the eight intercollegiate athletic programs provided much needed financial relief for the remaining programs, without coaches we couldn't run a program, and by not filling the two positions we could maintain the flexibility to fill higher priority academic positions and meet forthcoming budget cuts."

That left ABAC with six intercollegiate sports including soccer, softball and tennis for women, and baseball, golf, and tennis for the men.

ABAC alumna Cathy Cox (Class of '78) was inaugurated as president of Young Harris College on July 26. Cox, the first female to serve as Georgia's Secretary of State, was one of Dr. Bridges' ABAC classmates. Nancy Coleman (Class of '75) retired after 23 years of service as the only fulltime Director of Alumni Relations in the history of ABAC on July 31. Keith Barber was named Chief Development Officer at ABAC on August 1.

The 2008 fall term enrollment showed 3,600 students, the beginning of a gradual fall semester enrollment decline which continued until the fall semester of 2013.

Karla Heath-Sands and the Reflections provided the entertainment for the first Evening for ABAC on September 18. College Advancement Officer Melvin Merrill said the event previously known as Dollars for ABAC Scholars had changed its scope "to provide greater

benefit to the scholarship program at ABAC.” Dollars for Scholars had a 36-year run at ABAC, featuring such top name entertainment as Trisha Yearwood, Roy Clark, Ray Stevens, Debbie Reynolds, and many more.

A study commissioned by the Board of Regents showed that ABAC had a total economic impact of over \$237 million on Tifton and the surrounding area during 2007. Dr. Jeff Gibbs helped to develop the report. Dr. Bridges said the economic impact figure more than doubled since 2001.

Ashley Williamson headed a design team to design new logos and a new stallion mascot logo for the college. Alumnus Thomas “Boo” Weekley (Class of ’93), a professional golfer on the PGA Tour, helped lead the United States to victory in the Ryder Cup matches. He later donated \$30,000 to the college through the Play Golf America University.

Tanya Rafferty was selected for the first four-year scholarship in the history of ABAC beginning with the 2008 fall term. She received a Regents’ Foundation Scholarship for four years. Rafferty was later selected as one of two students to be featured in a video at the annual Board of Regents Gala on March 28, 2009.

ABAC Police Chief Bryan Golden announced a new emergency messaging system called Connect-Ed, which was tested for the first time on October 22. The College used the system several times during the year to reach students when severe weather threatened the campus.

ABAC was selected for a Rapid Process Improvement project by the Governor’s Office of Customer Service in the fall of 2008. The nine-month project to benefit students in the enrollment and financial aid process was headed up on the campus by Dr. Chrystle Ross and Diane Kilgore.

Katrina Duncan-Marshalleck scored a record 26 goals for the Fillies’ soccer team, which finished with a best ever record of 13-6 in the 2008 season. Duncan-Marshalleck was selected for the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2017. Keegan Westberry was crowned Ms. ABAC 2009 on November 11. A new design on the ABAC web site went live for the first time on December 1.

Wasdon Graydon, ABAC’s Director of Sponsored Programs and the Minority Advising Program, was the fall graduation speaker. Graydon (Class of ‘70) closed out the 100th birthday celebration year. Graydon was one of the first African-American students to attend ABAC. Lum Roberts and Duane Weeks from Sodexo put up new pole banners on the campus with the new “Georgia’s State College of Choice” logo in late December.

2009

Director of Enrollment Services Donna Webb reported that ABAC had its highest spring semester enrollment ever with 3,234 students during the 2009 spring term.



Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College

Director of Institutional Research Donna Miller (Class of '66) passed away unexpectedly on January 4. She had served in her Director of Institutional Research position since July 1, 1993.

The second annual ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame event was held on February 13 when Ellen Vickers, Newell "Sarge" Dorsey, Cook Holliday, P.W. Bryan, Jr., Dorsey Brooks, and the national championship men's tennis team of 1984 were inducted in an impressive ceremony in the Grand Lobby of ABAC Lakeside. The inductees were then recognized on the tennis court during an ABAC tennis match.

President Bridges announced that ABAC's academic curriculum will now be divided into six schools of study including Agriculture and Natural Resources, Nursing and Health Sciences, Human Sciences, Liberal Arts, Science and Mathematics, and Business effective April 1. Deans selected for the schools included Dr. Tim Marshall, Agriculture and Natural Resources; Wanda Golden, Nursing and Health Sciences; Dr. Darby Sewell, Human Sciences; Dr. Bobbie Robinson, Liberal Arts; Dr. Ray Barber, Science and Mathematics; and Dr. Jeff Gibbs, Business.

The ABAC student newspaper, *The Stallion*, was again named the best in the state of Georgia by the Georgia College Press Association in February. Dr. Eric Cash serves as the advisor for the newspaper.

Junior Chapman was selected as Mr. ABAC at the 18th annual competition. Governor Sonny Perdue named ABAC Police Chief Bryan Golden to the Georgia Peace Officers Standards and Training Council. Michael Arena from Fitzgerald was selected as the first Presidential Scholar for 2009-10.

Alumni were honored at the newly-titled Celebrate ABAC weekend on March 5-7. Award winners included Christa G. Steinkamp, Outstanding Young Alumnus; Debbie R. Phillips, Helen Brown Sasser Award; Dr. Peggy Ozias-Akins, J. Lamar Branch Award; Jack C. Drew, Jr., Outstanding Business Leader; Patrick Atwater, Jr., Outstanding Educator; Dick Byne, Master Farmer; Gene Ragan, Distinguished Alumnus; Andrea Willis and Melvin Merrill, Honorary Alumni, and the John and Clara Hollis Davis family, Family Legacy Award. The weekend replaced the traditional Homecoming weekend, which was usually in April.

Dr. Eddie Seagle took eight ABAC students to China on March 12-27 to present a program on golf course planning, construction and maintenance at the Nansha Golf Club and Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou, Peoples Republic of China. All the students were enrolled in the new bachelor's degree in turfgrass and golf course management. Seagle was presented a Customer Service Award from Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue on May 28 for his role in the expedition.

Under a brilliant blue sky, ABAC unveiled its bachelor's degree in Rural Studies on March 23. President David Bridges and Vice President Niles Reddick talked about the degree in front of a

backdrop of a cotton wagon and two mules on loan from the Georgia Agrirama. The ceremony was held on the Pedestrian Mall between the Carlton Center and Conger Hall.

In March, ABAC received a \$76,425 Fulbright-Hays Grant from the U.S. Department of Education. Fifteen educators learned more about the people and culture of Brazil on June 4-July 3. ABAC faculty making the trip included Dr. Jeff Gibbs, Lorie Felton, Alan Kramer, Dr. Brian Ray, and Saj Rashti. Rashti coordinated the grant application.

Tifton ophthalmologist Larry Moorman and his wife, Debra, donated the clubhouse at Forest Lakes Golf Club to the ABAC Foundation in March to complete the gift they started in 2002 with the donation of the nine-hole Forest Lakes Golf Club.

At Honors Day on April 15, Hector Olguin, an engineering major from Ty Ty, received the J.G. Woodroof Scholar award. Faculty/staff award winners were Geoff Clement, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence; Shirley Wilson, Roy R. Jackson Sr., Award for Staff Excellence; Dr. Jeff Gibbs, E. Lanier Carson Award Leadership Award; and Dr. Jewrell Rivers, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Excellence in Advising Award.

Coach Alan Kramer's Fillies won their 16th consecutive NJCAA Region XVII women's tennis title at the Red Hill Athletic Center on April 25. The Stallions also captured the Region XVII crown behind the play of MVP Rasid Winklaar. ABAC's Monika Lalewicz from Mississauga, Canada was the MVP for the women for the second year in a row. Lalewicz finished second in the national tournament at #1 singles and received National Player of the Year honors for the second consecutive year. She was trying to become the first women's player at ABAC to win back-to-back national titles since Milena Stanoytcheva in 1999-2000. Matt Holland from Cochran won the national championship at #6 singles for the Stallions. The Stallions finished third in the team standings. Coach Steve Janousek's ABAC baseball team did not qualify for the state tournament with a record of 20-33. Coach Herb Hendrix and the ABAC golf team wound up third in the state golf tournament.

At the Student Leadership Banquet on April 29, Pacesetter recipients from *The Stallion* included Dr. Niles Reddick, Otis Smith, Pam Leonard, Kim Ascani, Dr. Don Parks, Midge Galentine-Steis, Dr. Eddie Seagle, Jimmy Felton, Debra McCrary, Dr. Larry McGruder, Dan Pennington, Keith Lee, and Andy Smith. ABAC President David Bridges received a Superior Pacesetter Award. SGA President Nate Carney presented the SGA Impact Award to Dustin Bass and passed the SGA gavel to new SGA President Kati Andrews. Tom Lanier from Dalton received the Distinguished Ambassador Award for the year.

Bachelor's degrees were awarded at ABAC for the first time at the graduation ceremony on May 7. Edwin Glover, Richard Irvin, Garrett Jones, and Joshua Lanier were the first bachelor's degree recipients. ABAC alumnus Jim Sparks (Class of '83) was the guest speaker at the ceremony. Keith Lee, a political science major from Cartersville, won the Donaldson Award.

Andrea Pate Willis retired on June 1 after 35 years as a faculty member and division chair at ABAC. She was perhaps best known as the director for the Fabulous Golddusters precision dance team for 26 years. The Golddusters performed all over Georgia, Florida, and Alabama on behalf of the college. They got their start by performing at halftime of ABAC basketball games. Under the leadership of Willis, the Golddusters danced annually at the Sunbelt Agricultural Exposition, at high school student recruitment shows, and at community festivals. She was named to the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2014.

In July, ABAC received a \$411,354 grant from the United States Department of Education for the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP). This program assists freshman students from migrant farm worker families. The 2008-09 year represented the 10th year of CAMP at ABAC. Federal funding for the Classic and Tiftarea Upward Bound programs at ABAC was also announced in the amount of \$572,934. The Upward Bound program has been funded at ABAC every year since 1977.

Diane Kilgore, Director of the Public Service and Business Outreach Center, was selected as the quarterly recipient of the 2009 Governor's Commendation for Excellence in Customer Service.

At a Town Hall meeting for all faculty and staff on July 28, President Bridges announced that because of state budget reductions, all employees would have to take six furlough days without pay during the year. A total of 1,291 students enrolled for the 2009 summer term. The Donaldson Dining Hall opened a new food service area on the north side of the building featuring Pizza Hut and Sub-Connection.

ABAC alumnae Jodie Rayl Snow (Class of 2000) was the guest speaker for the annual freshman convocation on August 14 in Gressette Gym. Dr. Brian Ray was named as the director of the ABAC Honors Program. The campus took precautions against a nationwide H1N1 (Swine Flu) outbreak. Fortunately, very few ABAC students were affected.

The fall semester 2009 enrollment included 3,326 students from 17 states, 11 countries, and 152 Georgia counties.

The ABAC Alumni Association embarked on a new endeavor called the Alumni Connecting to Involved and Outstanding New Students (ACTIONS) team. Members included Gary Lee, Mike Davis, Beth Bland, Scott Carlson, Bobby Barber, Jr., George Granade, Steve Spooner, Frankie Hall, Brett Tucker, Chuck Scarborough, Kevin Morgan, Laura Beth Tucker, Barbara Grogan, Jodie Snow, Andrea Willis, Amber Davis Collins, and Kim Bridges. Their purpose is to attract academically talented and engaged students to ABAC.

Amy Howell was selected as the Director of Institutional Research and Planning on August 10. Dining Hall Director Kurt Hoffman passed away on August 19. President Bridges taught an Introduction to Biofuels class during the 2009 fall semester, his first stint back in the classroom



since being selected as the ABAC President. Students in the new Rural Studies bachelor's degree program began taking classes for the first time on August 17.

ABAC kicked off the Historic Front of Campus renovation project on September 8 with a ceremony on the front steps of Tift Hall. Greenline Architecture and J.T. Turner Construction, both from Savannah, will handle the renovation of Tift, Lewis, and Herring halls. Members of the faculty, staff, and administration gathered for a picture wearing gold plastic hard hats with the ABAC logo on them. Director of Capital Planning Melvin Merrill serves as the ABAC liaison to the architects and the construction company.

Rebecca Hamilton, Nicholas Urquart, Rebecca Cofer, and Derek Sutton joined the staff as the first ever Student Development Specialists in the Enrollment Services office. Their purpose is to serve as mentors for ABAC students from the beginning of their college careers all the way through graduation.

Chancellor Erroll B. Davis presented President Bridges with the Gold Outstanding Customer Service Leadership Award from the University System of Georgia on September 15. The award recognizes a leader who has made significant impact on customer service within the state. A new State of Georgia Employee Satisfaction Research Report showed that ABAC employees gave the institution top marks in regard to quality of the workplace and employee satisfaction. In a comparison with five other state agencies, ABAC earned the highest score.

ABAC students in the Rural Studies program traveled to Telfair County on September 22 to begin a semester-long project relating to tourism possibilities for the county. Alma Young became the first fulltime webmaster in the history of ABAC when the college closed the ABAC Information Center on ABAC Circle, and her duties were changed to maintaining the ABAC web site.

Javier Gonzalez, Director of HEP/CAMP, and Dr. Billy Reynolds, Interim Head of the Department of Literature and Language, were selected for the University System of Georgia Executive Leadership Institute. Keith Barber was named the Vice President of External Affairs and Advancement and became a member of the President's Cabinet.

A construction fence went up around the three original buildings, Tift, Lewis, and Herring, on October 8 to signal the beginning of the renovation of Tift, Lewis, and Herring halls. Governor Sonny Perdue visited ABAC for a meeting in the Health Sciences Building on October 13. Katrina Duncan-Marshalleck wound up with 23 goals in the 2009 season to finish her ABAC career with a school record 49 goals during her time with the Fillies' soccer team. She was named to the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2017. Coach Jimmy Ballenger's team had a record of 10-7-1 and lost in the first round of the state playoffs. President David Bridges received the Honorary American FFA degree from the National FFA Organization in Indianapolis, Ind.

ABAC was one of the hosts for a speech by Dr. Harry Kroto, the 1996 Nobel Prize winner in Chemistry, on November 6. AT&T Georgia presented ABAC with a \$48,297 grant to expand the use of video instruction and communications at ABAC.

Javier Gonzalez, Director of the CAMP and HEP programs, was the guest speaker for the fall commencement ceremony. Sara Ervin, a Rural Studies major from Commerce, received the Donaldson Award. Alumnus Dan Miller returned to the campus as director of dining services for Sodexo. University System Chancellor Erroll Davis visited the campus on December 7. He said ABAC had developed a “statewide brand.”

ABAC student Dorminey McCrae was selected for the National Association of Police Organization’s “Top Cop” award for his heroism in a Tifton grocery store robbery. Dottie Anderson, wife of former ABAC President Stanley Anderson, passed away on December 11 at the age of 85. Former ABAC Registrar Paul Gaines passed away on Christmas Day at the age of 89. He was employed by ABAC from 1946 until 1982 and taught classes at Spence Field in Moultrie for servicemen returning from WWII.

2010

President David Bridges announced on January 14 that at the request of the Office of Planning and Budget and the Governor’s Office, that he will begin working with legislators, local elected officials, and members of the Georgia Agrirama Development Authority to move management and operations of the Georgia Museum of Agriculture (Agrirama) to ABAC.

For the first time in many years, it snowed on the ABAC campus on February 12. Many ABAC students said they had never seen snow. They threw snowballs and built snowmen. The new ABAC Stallion mascot, “Thunder,” has his debut at the Stallion Day event for prospective students on February 13. Cain Thurmond from Jefferson was selected Mr. ABAC on February 18. Savannah Brown from Wray was chosen as Ms. ABAC on February 25. Both students are members of the ABAC Ambassadors.

A total of 3,044 students enrolled at ABAC for the 2010 spring semester.

For the third year in a row, *The Stallion*, the ABAC student newspaper, was named the best in Georgia at the Georgia College Press Association competition. Amelia Gutierrez and Jacob McWhorter were the managing editors during the two semesters reviewed. The Southern Regional Press Institute also named the ABAC newspaper the best in Georgia. Dr. Eric Cash served as faculty advisor. Director of Human Resources Bertha Williams (Class of ’74) and Student Support Services Director Wasdon Graydon (Class of ’70) both retired on March 1. Williams began her ABAC career on September 1, 1991, and Graydon’s career at ABAC began



on September 1, 1973. Graydon was one of the first African-American students at the college when he enrolled in 1968.

The Celebrate ABAC Alumni Weekend on March 5-6 included the alumni awards ceremony where the winners were Dr. Paul Newberne and Dr. James Newberne, Distinguished Alumni; Ann Hammons and Dr. Eddie Seagle, Honorary Alumni; Nancy Coleman, Helen Brown Sasser Award; Dr. Jay Phillips, Outstanding Health Care Professional; Louis Perry, Jr., J. Lamar Branch Award; Beth Bland, Outstanding Young Alumnus; Rodney McDonald, Outstanding Business Leader; John Harrell, Master Farmer; and T. Lynn Barber, Outstanding Educator.

Selections for the third annual ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame were Thomas “Boo” Weekley, a member of the PGA Tour; former ABAC basketball player Joseph Grist; tennis booster Harley Klepfer; former ABAC golfer Jim Sparks; and the 1991 women’s softball team, which was the first women’s team at ABAC to win a national championship. The induction lunch and ceremony were held in a tent beside the softball field on March 6 as a part of the Celebrate ABAC Alumni Weekend activities. Ashley Williamson and Shirley Wilson coordinated the event.

On March 5, the Continuing Education Program had a 70th birthday party to commemorate the founding of the program by Dean Tom Cordell in 1940. Current Director Diane Kilgore and former directors Bob Keith and Jane Tanner were on hand to cut the cake. The ABAC Jazz Band and the Jazz Choir performed at the Evening for ABAC scholarship fundraiser, sponsored by the ABAC Foundation, which was the culminating event of the Celebrate ABAC Weekend on March 6.

The Board of Regents approved a new Associate of Fine Arts in Music degree from the School of Liberal Arts on March 10. It is the only degree of its kind in the University System. ABAC students held a budget cuts protest rally in Howard Auditorium on March 11 to protest the proposed budget cuts to the ABAC state budget by legislators. As it turned out, the cuts were not as severe as anticipated, perhaps because of rallies such as this one across the state.

Dr. Niles Reddick, Vice-President for Academic Affairs, released his first novel in March 2010, titled *Lead Me Home*. He is also the author of a short story collection, titled *Road Kill Art and Other Oddities*. Diane Kilgore, Director of the Public Service and Business Outreach Center, retired from ABAC on March 31.

At Honors Day on April 14, David L. Chapman, an agricultural education major from Jasper, was named the J.G. Woodroof Scholar. Faculty/staff award winners were Melanie Partlow, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence; Judy Perry, Roy R. Jackson Award for Staff Excellence; Dr. Chrystle Ross, E. Lanier Carson Award for administrators; and Dr. Shelley Fandel, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Excellence in Advising Award.



Recipients of Presidential Scholarships at Honors Day for a third year of study were Colton Farrow from Pitts; Jessica Kalina from Williamson; and Tanner Newhouse from Bonaire.

Recipients of Presidential Scholarships for a second year of study were Andrea Sweeney from Eatonton; Michael Arena from Fitzgerald; and Kayla Davenport from Hazlehurst.

Kramer Selected for NJCAA Women's Tennis Hall of Fame

Coach Alan Kramer's Fillies won the NJCAA Region XVII women's title for the 17th consecutive year at the Red Hill Athletics Center on April 17. Kramer's Stallions also won the region title behind the heroics of MVP Rasid Winklaar, who was named the International Tennis Association Region IV Player of the Year. Winklaar was also the state tournament MVP in 2009. ABAC assistant coach Dale White was named Region IV Assistant Coach of the Year. Kramer was named the statewide Coach of the Year for men and women. Kramer was also named to the NJCAA Women's Tennis Hall of Fame during the national women's tennis tournament in Tucson, Ariz. The Fillies finished 17th in the national tournament, and the Stallions finished eighth in the national men's tennis tournament.

Coach Steve Janousek's ABAC baseball team lost in the first round of the state tournament. The Golden Stallions compiled a season record of 21-33. The ABAC golf team of Coach Herb Hendrix finished second in the state tournament. The Fillies' softball team of Coach Donna Campbell had a season record of 10-28 and did not qualify for the state tournament.

The Ag Business Club at ABAC was named the National Outstanding Student Chapter by the National Agri-Marketing Association for 2009-10. Dustin Bass is the club advisor. Jazmin Thomas from Perry was elected president of the Student Government Association during the spring election. Bernard Green was named the Distinguished Ambassador for the year. ABAC finished second in the Hispanic College Quiz Bowl competition in Chicago. Team members were Karina Guerrero, Leandra Gonzales, Katia Arevalo, Juan Rico, Gabby Ramirez, and Felipe Pedraza.

Vice President for Student Affairs Gail Dillard announced in April that Greek fraternities Kappa Sigma and Alpha Gamma Rho had been approved to establish colonies on the ABAC campus. They are the first Greek organizations at ABAC. Cain Thurmond from Jefferson is president of Alpha Gamma Rho, and Brent Wagner from Roswell is president of Kappa Sigma.

The School of Business held a memorial service in the Chapel for former faculty members Betty Claxton and Paul Miller on May 5. Claxton was a faculty member from August 1, 1963, to January 1, 1997. Miller was a faculty member from August 1, 1988, to June 1, 2008.

Dr. Greg Anderson (Class of '78), a Tifton urologist, was the guest speaker at the spring commencement ceremony on May 7. Anderson was an ABAC classmate of President David Bridges. David L. Chapman, an agricultural education major from Jasper, received the



Donaldson Award at the ceremony. The ABAC Jazz Ensemble was selected to perform on May 22 at the Jazz Education Network International Conference in St. Louis, Mo. Don Coates is the director.

Sara Beth Pelham from Bainbridge was selected as the recipient of the Presidential Scholarship for the upcoming year. ABAC students Savannah Brown from Wray, Jessica Gandy from Lenox, and Randi Walden from Stockbridge were selected for the Women's Leadership in Public Service Institute in Tallulah Falls. Deidra Jackson was named as the ABAC Comptroller on June 7.

The 2010-11 state budget signed by Governor Sonny Perdue on June 8 contained \$4.75 million toward the rehabilitation of the ABAC Front Campus. ABAC received an allocation of \$6 million in the FY 2009 budget to begin work on the mammoth project, which will restore Tift Hall, Lewis Hall, and Herring Hall, the three original buildings on campus.

The new ABAC Bass Fishing Club won first and second place in a tournament at Lake Eufaula on June 26. Matt O'Dillon and Jake Holloway fished for ABAC. Pulitzer-Prize nominated author Janice Daugharty joined the campus on July 1 as ABAC's first Writer-in-Residence. She is the author of *Earl in the Yellow Shirt*, which was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize in Fiction in 1997. Other books by Daugharty include *PawPaw Patch* and *Dark of the Moon*.

ABAC Takes Over Operation of Georgia Museum of Agriculture

ABAC took over the operation of the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village on July 1. The change of control from the Georgia Agrirama Development Authority to ABAC has been in the works since Jan. 14 when the Office of Planning and Budget and the Governor's Office requested that President Bridges work with legislators, local elected officials, and members of the Authority to move management and operations to ABAC.

Georgia lawmakers passed House Bill 1090 on April 12 which paved the way to move all assets of the Museum to the University System of Georgia (USG). The bill was introduced by Representatives Austin Scott (153rd) and Jay Roberts (154th) with the support of other area representatives. The legislation was carried in the Senate by Senator John Crosby (13th District) and Senator John Bulloch (11th District).

The USG Board of Regents voted on May 12 to facilitate the transfer of assets, including land and buildings, from the Georgia Agrirama Development Authority to the USG. Governor Sonny Perdue signed the bill on May 20. Paul Willis, Director of College Enrichment, led the transition team for ABAC and was named as the director of the Museum.

On July 1, Vice President for External Affairs and Advancement Keith Barber announced that the ABAC Foundation had received a gift of \$1 million from the estate of Herbert and Meade



Bynum. Herbert Bynum was a 1946 ABAC alumnus who was originally from Blakely but lived most of his life in Tampa, Fla., in the egg production business. Barber said the gift will be used as a student enhancement endowment for the Rural Studies program. It will be called “The Herbert and Meade Bynum Endowment for Student Enrichment in Rural Studies.”

Dr. Ray Barber, Dean of the School of Science and Mathematics, announced on July 15 that ABAC will receive a \$600,000 National Science Foundation grant to attract students interested in careers in the science and mathematics fields. Students who receive the scholarships through the grant will be a part of the new Achievement through Student Support and Experiential Training in Sciences (ASSETS) program. The Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) scholarships will be awarded over a five-year period beginning Aug. 1.

ABAC softball player Alyssa Simmons from Lenox was named as an NJCAA Distinguished Academic All-America selection in July. ABAC golfers Kenneth Bragg of Peachtree City and Winston Gibbs from Hartwell were also named NJCAA Academic All-America selections.

Vice President for External Affairs and Advancement Keith Barber was appointed to a one-year term on the Board of Directors for the National Agricultural Alumni and Development Association. ABAC faculty member Dustin Bass and ABAC student Jonathon Cassidy spent the summer of 2010 at Perrotis College in Thessaloniki, Greece in a study abroad program.

ABAC Economic Impact of \$251,799,738 on South Georgia

A study commissioned by the University System showed that ABAC had an economic impact of \$251,799,738 on Tifton and the surrounding area. Dr. Jeff Gibbs, Dean of the School of Business, assisted with the data interpretation. The figure represents the highest economic impact in the history of the college.

Assistant Director of Housing Chris Kinsey and four members of the Student Financial Services team, Dr. Chrystle Ross, Gay Ann Hodge, Krystle Williams, and Stefane Whiddon, were named this quarter’s recipients of the 2010 Governor’s Commendation for Excellence in Customer Service. Dr. Aercio Cunha, a Fulbright Scholar from Brazil, will teach business classes and rural studies classes at ABAC during the 2010-11 year. Richard Spancake was named the new Director of Human Resources.

ABAC received a National Science Foundation grant worth \$204,435 to bring cutting edge technology to the J.G. Woodroof Farm. Dr. Renata Elad, professor of agricultural economics, is the primary contact for the grant. Former ABAC Comptroller J. Talmadge Webb passed away on August 6. He served as the college’s chief business officer from 1958 through 1988. Former ABAC Ambassador Joel McKie (Class of ’04) was the guest speaker at the annual freshman convocation.



Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College

Javier Gonzalez is serving a term as president of the National HEP/CAMP association. He directs both programs at ABAC. Vice President for Academic Affairs Niles Reddick announced that ABAC will add a new major to the Rural Studies curriculum, titled Writing and Communication. It joins Business and Economic Development, Rural Arts and Culture, and Social and Community Affairs as Rural Studies majors.

Athletics Director Alan Kramer was named the 2009-10 Junior and Community Colleges Southeast Region Under Armour Athletic Director of the Year by the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics. He is a past recipient of the ITA/Wilson National Intercollegiate Women's Tennis Coach of the Year in 1998 and 2007 and has been named the NJCAA Region XVII Coach of the Year 19 times.

ABAC alumnus George T. Smith passed away on August 23 at the age of 93. A member of the Class of 1940, he is the only person in the history of Georgia to win contested elections to all three branches of state government. He was a former Speaker of the House of Representatives, Lieutenant Governor, and Presiding Justice of the Georgia Supreme Court.

Vice President for Fiscal Affairs John Clemens and Physical Plant Director Andy Bihl honored Charles Turner for 40 years of service to ABAC at his retirement party on September 10.

President Bridges announced that the 2010 ABAC freshman class had the highest grade point average of any freshman class in the history of the college with a cumulative GPA of 2.97 on a 4.0 scale. ABAC enrolled 3,284 students during the fall term. Public Relations Director Mike Chason received a Legion of Honor award from the Tifton Kiwanis Club on September 28 for 30 years of service.

ABAC's very first Family Weekend event was a tremendous success on October 1-2 at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village. The Georgia Intellectual Capital Partnership Program awarded ABAC a \$234,000 grant to assist with the nursing program. Longtime Tifton resident Roger Dill began a two-year term as chair of the ABAC Foundation Board of Trustees on October 1.

Performers at the ABAC building at the Sunbelt Expo on October 19-21 were the Bluegrass Band, the Jazz Choir, and the Thundering Herd Pep Band. ABAC signed an articulation agreement with the University of Florida to ensure a smooth transition for students who begin their careers at ABAC and transfer to the university. The ABAC women's soccer team defeated South Georgia 2-1 on October 26 in the first ever state playoff game on the ABAC soccer field. ABAC wound up its season with a 4-0 loss to Georgia Perimeter in the second round but still rolled up a 15-7 record, the most wins in Fillies' soccer history.

ABAC students held a Campout for the Homeless on the ABAC Lakeside lawn on November 12. They spent the night in cardboard box "homes" and raised money for the Atlanta Children's



Center. An exhibit at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture spotlighted the carvings collection of C.L. Morehead (Class of '48). Each piece in the collection was carved by Randy Anthony from Fitzgerald. Public Relations Director Mike Chason was honored by the Georgia Education Advancement Council on November 18 with a Lifetime Achievement Award at the annual GEAC meeting at St. Simons Island.

Public Relations Assistant Ashley Williamson championed a campaign for ABAC to have its own license plate. After over a year's worth of work, the first license plates were distributed in November. William H. "Dink" NeSmith, Jr., a member of the Board of Regents, was the fall commencement speaker on December 10. Cody Seagraves, a forest resources major from Hull, received the Donaldson award.

For the first time ever, President Bridges and his wife, Kim, hosted their annual holiday open house at the National Peanut Museum at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture. The University System awarded ABAC and Tift County High School the Near Peer Service Learning Program grant to increase access and readiness for the college experience for students at TCHS. Dr. Darby Sewell, Dean of the School of Human Sciences, is the ABAC contact person for the program.

Dr. Eric Cash, faculty advisor for the award-winning ABAC student newspaper, passed away on December 18. Under Cash's leadership, *The Stallion* was named the top paper in the state in its category in 2007, 2008, and 2009.

2011

ABAC opened the spring term by cancelling the first scheduled day of classes on January 10 because of inclement weather, which resulted in iced over roads in the area. Classes began on January 11 with an enrollment of 3,063 students, a slight increase over the 3,044 students enrolled in the spring of 2010. ABAC alumnus Sonny Skinner (Class of '80) received the Senior PGA Professional Player of the Year award on January 27 in Orlando, Fla. He became the first player in PGA of America history to win both the PGA Professional Player of the Year award (2008) and the Senior PGA Professional Player of the Year award. Skinner is the PGA teaching professional at the River Pointe Golf Club in Albany.

Matthew Keen, a rural studies major from Nashville, won the \$3,000 top award for the William Zimmer Prize in Art Criticism. Dr. Chrystle Ross, Chief Information Officer, announced a new website portal titled "myABAC" which is designed to make web access easier for ABAC students.

President David Bridges and Dr. Rod Brown helped forestry and wildlife industry officials saw a log in half as a symbolic start to the announcement of a new bachelor's degree in Natural



Resource Management with majors in Forestry and Wildlife Management on February 10 in the lobby of the Agricultural Sciences building.

Laurel Higginbotham from Baxley was crowned Ms. ABAC 2011 on February 23. ABAC alumnus Whitney Conner from Rochelle was selected as the 2011 National Watermelon Association queen.

ABAC Alumni Association award winners at the Celebrate ABAC alumni brunch on March 5 were Mack Crawford of Zebulon, Distinguished Alumnus; Jodi Rayl Snow from Belle Glade, Fla., Outstanding Young Alumnus; Terry Clark from Moultrie, Master Farmer; Dr. Jerry W. Johnson from Griffin, J. Lamar Branch Award; Suellen Coleman Perry from Moultrie, Outstanding Educator; Mark Mobley from Moultrie, Outstanding Business Leader; Dr. Jay Williams from Albany, Outstanding Health Care Professional; and Alan Kramer from Tifton and Tommy Irvin from Habersham County, Honorary Alumni. The Ollie E. McMillan family from Berrien County received the Family Legacy Award.

Gee Haw, Whoa Back Rodeo Returns to ABAC

Due to popular demand, the ABAC Alumni Association brought back a Gee Haw, Whoa Back rodeo to the Celebrate ABAC Weekend on March 4-5. Grand Ole Opry member Mike Snider headlined the Evening for ABAC Foundation scholarship fundraiser at the Museum on March 4.

The School of Science and Mathematics partnered with Georgia Tech through the Regents' Engineering Program to better facilitate students who begin their engineering degree at ABAC and then transfer to Georgia Tech. President David Bridges placed the 100th Birthday Time Capsule in a compartment in the history room of the renovated Tift Hall on March 8. The capsule was sealed on April 5, 2008 at the 100th birthday celebration at Homecoming.

Dr. Gail Dillard now directs all activities at ABAC on the Square in Moultrie, replacing Kay Powell who expressed a desire to return to the classroom. Dillard was previously the Vice President for Student Affairs. Academic Affairs Vice President Niles Reddick now handles those duties.

Melanie Partlow, assistant professor of mathematics and Quality Enhancement Plan Director at ABAC, received the 2011 Regents' Teaching Excellence award at the seventh annual Regents' Awards for Excellence in Education Celebration in Atlanta on March 26. The AET Club debuted a new Agco Allis 9650 pulling tractor on March 19. The club also completed renovations to the original ABAC pulling tractor, *Cracker Jack*. Ken Newkirk retired on March 31 after 35 years of service directing the Upward Bound Program. Bernard Green from Tifton was selected as Mr. ABAC at the annual contest on March 31.



Inductees into the Athletics Hall of Fame included the 1995 national championship women's softball team, Kyle Farnsworth, Benny Dees, Harley Stewart, and A.B. Malloy. The ceremony was held in the ABAC Lakeside Lobby on April 2. Alan Kramer, Ashley Williamson, and Shirley Wilson coordinated the event. On the same day, a new scoreboard for the ABAC Fillies' softball team was dedicated in a ceremony which honored donors A.B. Malloy, the Spurlin family, and the ABAC Fillies softball alumnae.

Kevin Vantrees, a freshman from Douglasville, was elected SGA president in the spring election. Faculty member Dustin Bass received the Impact Award, and Director of Student Activities Kris Liebegott received the SGA President's Award at the student leadership banquet on April 6. Brooke Justice from Tifton received the Distinguished Ambassador Award for the year.

Michael Arena from Fitzgerald was selected as the top academic student at ABAC during the Honors Day ceremony on April 13 when he was named the J.G. Woodroof Scholar. Faculty-staff award winners were Donna Hatcher, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence; Dr. Amy Willis, Roy R. Jackson, Sr., Award for Staff Excellence; Dr. Ray Barber, E. Lanier Carson Award for administrators; and Dr. Mary Ellen Hicks, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Excellence in Advising Award. Retirement plaques were presented to Stephanie Holcombe, Ken Newkirk, Jerry Edwards, Dr. Larry McGruder, and Mike Chason.

Most Valuable Player Chanel Cunningham led the Fillies to their 18th consecutive Region XVII state tennis championship on April 22. The Stallions also won the men's title. Alan Kramer was named Coach of the Year for both women's and men's tennis in the state. The Fillies finished fifth in the national tournament, and the Stallions wound up eighth in the national tournament. Hernan Hatem and Danilo Faria were named First Team All-America for the Stallions. The ABAC baseball team did not make the playoffs with a season record of 19-34. Les Evans was named Second Team All-Conference when he hit .346 with 13 doubles. Right fielder Jacob Stinson and first baseman Jeremy Rosier were named to the Conference Gold Glove Team. The ABAC golf team of Coach Herb Hendrix finished second in the state tournament behind Coastal Georgia. ABAC golfer Terry English was the low medalist for the state tournament, qualifying him for the national tournament. The ABAC softball team of Coach Donna Campbell finished fifth in the state tournament. The Fillies wound up with a record of 22-27.

Dustin Bass, instructor of agricultural business, was named the National Outstanding Advisor by the National Agri-Business Association in Kansas City. The ABAC Cattlemen's Club won the College Aggies Online Scholarship Competition of the Animal Agriculture Alliance. The ABAC English Department in the School of Liberal Arts won the Diana Hacker Outstanding Programs in English award at the 2011 Conference on College Composition and Communication ceremony.



Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College

Governor Nathan Deal was the guest speaker at the spring commencement ceremony on May 6. Cain Thurmond from Jefferson received the Donaldson Award. Thirty-one students received bachelor's degrees, the largest number ever to receive bachelor's degrees at an ABAC commencement.

Kristen Ray from Alma was one of six students nationwide selected to serve on the Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America Leadership Training Team. Ben Bennett from Valdosta received the Presidential Scholarship for 2011-12. He is the state FFA president. Dr. Darby Sewell, Dean of the School of Human Sciences, graduated from the University System of Georgia Executive Leadership Institute.

The ABAC Chamber Singers performed at Lincoln Center in New York City on May 30. Dr. Susan Roe directs the group. Mike Chason retired as the Director of Public Relations at ABAC on May 31, 2011. He began his ABAC career on May 15, 1979. Ashley Williamson was named Interim Director of Public Relations. Chason returned to the college to work in a part time capacity with the public relations office on July 1.

Governor Nathan Deal's signature on the state budget allows ABAC to continue work on the historic front of campus project with \$3.25 million in the budget to further the rehabilitation of Tift Hall, Lewis Hall, and Herring Hall. ABAC unveiled a Bachelor of Science degree with a major in Biology in a press conference on June 9 in Evans Hall. Dr. Ray Barber, Dean of the School of Science and Mathematics, made the announcement.

The Natural Resources Conservation Workshop celebrated its 50th anniversary with its annual camp at ABAC on June 5-9. President David Bridges attended the camp when he was a high school student in his first visit ever to ABAC. Dr. Chrystle Ross retired on June 15 from her position of Chief Information Officer. She served the college in a variety of roles since her first day on the job on September 10, 1979.

Fireworks lit up the skies over the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village on July 2 for the annual Independence Day Celebration at the site. Country music artist Kevin Sport headlined a concert that evening. It was the 35th anniversary of the founding of the museum, known originally as the Agrirama. A 400-pound cake made to resemble the Museum's steam train was designed to feed over 600 people.

Four athletes at ABAC were selected for NJCAA Exemplary Academic Achievement Awards. They included Alexander Byrd from Byron on the baseball team, Case Gard from Lakeland, Fla., on the golf team, Charles Griffin, Jr., from Tifton on the men's tennis team, and Darylanne Thompson from Perry on the softball team.

The U.S. Department of Education named ABAC as one of America's Most Affordable Colleges in July. Tuition and fees for the 2009-10 year at ABAC were \$2,696, well below the national



average of \$6,397. Shawn Thomas was named the new Director of Student Financial Services on July 5. Dr. Jeff Newberry was selected to serve as the new faculty advisor to the student newspaper, *The Stallion*. He also advises the ABAC literary magazine, *Pegasus*.

Beth Bland Oleson (Class of '99) was the guest speaker at the annual Freshman Convocation, which was moved to a Sunday afternoon for the first time on August 14. The State Traditional Arts Research Archive is now on loan to ABAC and makes available to the community over 3,000 items including photos, videos, sound recordings, books, and research field notes.

Dr. Brian Ray spent the summer in London as a co-site director for the USG European Council for its England Summer Study Abroad Program. Dr. Bobbie Robinson and Dr. John Farrar were selected for the USG Executive Leadership Institute. Van McGriff retired after 26 years at ABAC. Tarrah Mirus became the ABAC Registrar on September 1.

ABAC enrolled 3,248 students for the 2011 fall semester. Former President Jimmy Carter cut the ribbon for an exhibit on his life at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village on October 8. The visit by Carter and his wife, Rosalynn, was the first time that a former U.S. President had ever been on the ABAC campus.

Melissa Johnson set the ABAC record for goals scored in a soccer season with 31 and was named the National Junior College Athletic Association Player of the Week. She was named All-State First Team. Demi Greenan was named All-State Second Team. The Fillies of Coach Jimmy Ballenger lost in the first round of the state playoffs and wound up with a record of 9-8. Attila Szekes was named the new general manager of Sodexo and Plant Operations at ABAC.

ABAC set the American record for the largest game of hide-and-seek on November 9 with 419 students participating. Dr. Niles Reddick was honored by the College of Arts and Sciences at Valdosta State University as an Outstanding Alumnus in the area of Philosophy.

Melvin Merrill received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Georgia Education Advancement Council at its annual meeting at the Brasstown Valley Resort on November 17. Merrill joined the ABAC administration on July 1, 1978, as Director of Development. He is now Director of Capital Planning.

AT&T Georgia presented ABAC with \$2,500 to be used for the scholarship program. An ABAC team of Rural Studies students finished second in the USG Social Business and Microcredit Forum. Professor Muhammad Yunus, a former Nobel Prize recipient, judged the competition. Former ABAC President Stanley Anderson passed away on November 26. He served as president from 1975 through 1985.

Dr. Zsuzanna Boegre, a Fulbright Scholar from Hungary, will teach classes at ABAC during the fall and spring terms. Medal of Honor recipient and retired Major General of the Marine Corps

James Livingston was the fall commencement speaker on December 9. William Rogers from Brunswick received the Donaldson Award.

Sigma Alpha will become the first sorority on the ABAC campus on January 20, 2012. ABAC student Randi Walden received a Wine and Spirits Wholesalers scholarship worth \$2,776. Marie Davis was named the interim director of the Baldwin Library.

2012

ABAC enrolled 3,002 students for the 2012 spring semester. The Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village kicked off the new year with an exhibit titled *Tea for Three*, featuring the works of Mary Ann Cox, Dr. Vincent Keesee (longtime ABAC faculty member), and Anthony Scheffler.

Ashley Williamson Mock (married C.J. Mock on November 12, 2011) was named Director of Public Relations on February 1. Mock had been serving as Interim Director of Public Relations since the retirement of Mike Chason on June 1, 2011. Prior to that time, she had been the Public Relations Assistant since June 19, 2007.

Keaton Griner, a sophomore Family and Consumer Sciences major from Moultrie, followed in her mother's footsteps and won the Ms. ABAC title on February 23. Griner's mother, Monika, won the title in 1987. Ironically, Mike Chason was the emcee for both events.

A play written by ABAC alumna Melita Easters (Class of '74) served as the annual Evening for ABAC scholarship fundraiser on March 2. The one-woman show titled *Mrs. John Marsh—The World Knew Her as Margaret Mitchell* told the story of the reclusive author's life before and after she became a publishing sensation with her novel, *Gone With The Wind*.

ABAC Alumni Association award winners at the "Celebrate ABAC" ceremony on March 3 included Cook Holliday of Monroe, Distinguished Alumnus; Nancy Gurley Jenkins of Moultrie, Helen Brown Sasser Award; Barbara Grogan of Americus, Outstanding Young Alumnus; Von G. Peavy of Moultrie, J. Lamar Branch Award; Dr. Mary Ellen Hicks of Sycamore, Outstanding Educator; John Redding of Monroe, Outstanding Business Leader; and Garth Webb from Tifton, Honorary Alumnus. The Johnie Clark family from Colquitt County received the Family Legacy Award.

The *Peanuts, Mules, and Presidents* exhibit at the Museum Gallery received an excellence in planning award from the Georgia Association of Museums and Galleries.

Inductees for the 2012 Athletics Hall of Fame on March 3 were Greg Tanner, coach of the 1995 national championship softball team; longtime men's basketball coach Donnie Veal, who led the Stallions to the state championship in 1982; tennis star Jean Francoise Lagloire, who won

consecutive national championships at number one singles; William E. Batton, captain of the 1950 men's basketball team; and the players on the 1996 national championship softball team, coached by Donna Campbell.

ABAC instituted a Near Peer program with Colquitt County High School (CCHS) which allowed five ABAC students to serve as mentors to CCHS students. Natalie Sconiers, Hannah Saunders, Tevores Sumlin, Carrie Carnes, and Candace Jackson were selected for the program. The ABAC Bass Fishing team took first place in a tournament at Logan Martin Lake (Ala.). Matt O'Dillon and Jake Holloway led the way for ABAC.

ABAC took its college experience on the road on March 27 for a special student recruitment event at the Georgia National Fairgrounds in Perry. Zebb Luster, a senior Diversified Agriculture major from Ft. Myers, Fla., won the Mr. ABAC title on March 29.

Award recipients at the Honors Day ceremony on April 11 were Dr. Sandra Giles, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence; Nancy Brannen, Roy R. Jackson, Sr., Award for Staff Excellence; Alan Kramer, E. Lanier Carson Leadership Award for College Administrators; and Amanda Urquhart, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Excellence in Advising Award. Brenda Doss received the J.G. Woodroof Scholar award presented to the top academic student at ABAC.

Dr. Jeff Gibbs, Dr. Ray Barber, and Joy Shurley retired at the end of the spring term with a combined 77 years of service to ABAC.

The ABAC women's tennis team won its 19th consecutive state championship on April 21. Chanel Cunningham was named the MVP of the tournament. She was named the ITA Region IV Sophomore Player of the Year. The Stallions also won the state title, upsetting Georgia Perimeter, which was ranked third in the nation. Oliver Snaider was named the ITA National Rookie of the Year Alan Kramer was named Coach of the Year in the state for both men's and women's tennis. Dale White was named the ITA Region IV Assistant Coach of the Year. The Stallions finished seventh in the national tournament, and the Fillies wound up 11th in national play.

The ABAC golf team won the 2012 state championship. Top golfers for ABAC were Jared Davis and Billy Edwards. Other team members were Davis Edwards, Terry English, and Marshall Matulia. Coach Herb Hendrix was named Coach of the Year. ABAC finished 12th in the national tournament in Plymouth, Ind. Billy Edwards and Jared Davis both shot 308 for the four-day tournament. Billy Edwards shot 73 on the first day of the tournament. The ABAC softball team finished third in the state tournament. Coach Donna Campbell's team wound up with a record of 19-27. Campbell recorded her 500th career win during the season. Bobbie Jo Royals made the All-Region First Team, and Shelby Reed was selected All-Region Second



Team. The baseball Stallions of Coach Steve Janousek finished ninth in the state with a record of 18-35.

Jacob Tompkins from the tennis team, Kelby Barber from the baseball team, and Aleisha Edenfield from the softball team received NJCAA Academic Student-Athlete awards.

Dr. John Farrar and Dr. Bobbie Robinson graduated from the University System of Georgia Executive Leadership Institute. The ABAC student newspaper presented Pacesetter Awards on April 25 to Bernice Hughes, Laquincia Brown, Penny Chesnut, Savannah Carter, Dr. Erin Campbell, Woody Leonard, Stephen Aaron, Austin Flanders and Dr. Chase Hagood. A Superior Pacesetter award went to Huong Pham.

Dr. Chris Kinsey received the SGA President's Award, and Judy Perry received the SGA Impact Award at the Student Leadership Banquet on April 25. Stephen Aaron was sworn in as the President of the SGA for 2012-13. Georgia Commissioner of Agriculture Gary Black was the speaker for the spring commencement ceremony on May 4. Randi Walden, a Diversified Agriculture major from Stockbridge, received the Donaldson Award.

Personnel in the offices of the President, Public Relations, Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Vice President for Planning and Operations moved back to Tift Hall on May 14. The building had been vacated in 2007 to prepare for renovation. President David Bridges announced that former public relations director Mike Chason had been granted emeritus status by the University System of Georgia on June 1. ABAC enrolled 1,051 students for the 2012 summer term.

Jodie Rayl Snow (Class of 2000) began duties on June 11 as the Chief Operating Officer of the ABAC Foundation. As a student, she was the recipient of the J.G. Woodroof Scholar award and the George P. Donaldson award. Dr. Joseph Brown was named as a Governor's Teaching Fellow. Brown is an assistant professor of English in the School of Liberal Arts.

Vice President for External Affairs and Advancement and Chief Development Officer Keith Barber left ABAC to become the Vice Chancellor for Development for the Institute of Agriculture and the University of Tennessee Foundation on July 1. President David Bridges named Paul Willis the Vice President for External Affairs and Chief of Staff, effective July 1. Lindsey Roberts (Class of '09) joined the staff as Public Relations Assistant on July 1.

Mark "Dill" Driscoll and his wife, Susan, were named Deans of the ABAC School of Business on July 1. Marketing pioneers whose work spans 80 countries and five continents, the Driscolls have started many companies including the global marketing agency, "ignition."

As a part of the Tift Hall renovation, information panels detailing the history of ABAC were installed on July 26-27 by Murphy & Orr Exhibits from Atlanta. Dr. Lisa Lishman and Mike



Chason headed up the project. Lishman, curator at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture, spent many hours examining the ABAC archives in the Baldwin Library. She gathered information and memorabilia for the information panels on display in The History Room in Tift Hall.

Lishman and Chason examined pictures, checked facts, and proofread the panels for the Tift Hall lobby, The History Room, the Arts Alcove and the President's Alcove on the second floor of Tift Hall, and eight Student Life panels on the first floor. Chason also researched and prepared information for small panels attached to each presidential portrait in the Presidential Gallery on Tift Hall's second floor. Chason edited and Lishman designed a hard cover book titled *The Presidents* which was released as a part of the rededication of the front campus ceremony on March 1, 2013.

After a summer-long renovation, the Donaldson Dining Hall opened with a new look on August 6. Dr. Sandra Giles (Class of '87) was the guest speaker at the annual Freshman Convocation ceremony in Gressette Gym on August 12.

ABAC began the fall semester on August 13 with a 30 per cent increase in the number of students majoring in baccalaureate degrees over the fall term of 2011. "These programs will shape the institution's future for the next 100 years," President David Bridges said. A total of 3,227 students enrolled for the fall term. The ABAC Public Relations Office and the ABAC Ambassadors began a new initiative by selling "Welcome Back ABAC Students" signs to local businesses. The green-and-gold signs dotted the Tifton landscape.

Dr. Brian Ray was named the new Theatre Director and Director of the Baldwin Players in the School of Liberal Arts. Dr. Cynthia Hall was selected as the new Director of the Honors Program. Traci Bryan was named Director of Student Financial Services.

President David Bridges, Melvin Merrill and Mike Chason visited Mary Threatte (Class of '32) on her 99th birthday on August 22 in Lakeland, Ga. She is one of ABAC's oldest living alumni. Threatte attended ABAC when it was called the Georgia State College for Men in 1932. Her husband, Jim, was also a GSCM alumnus (Class of '32). He passed away on ABAC's 100th birthday on February 20, 2008. Mrs. Threatte passed away on October 18, 2013. Chason was one of the speakers at a service celebrating her life on October 21 at the Threatte Center in Lakeland.

ABAC students gained another hands-on learning opportunity in September with the acquisition of a rare pitcher plant bog in Turner County. One half of the 8.74-acre tract was donated by Fitzgerald native Ben Mills, and the other half of the property was purchased by the ABAC Foundation with the help of several local conservationists including Dan and Ellen Corrie, Dr. and Mrs. Richard F. Davis, Brenda and Keith Douce, Lisa M. Kruse, Freda W. Massey, Karan Rawlins, Dr. Patricia Timper, Dr. and Mrs. Joseph M. Turner, Dr. Bret B. Wagenhorst, Julie Sharpe, and the Georgia Native Plant Society.



The School of Business began a new speakers' series for students with Erik Daniels, Executive Vice President of Ronald Blue & Company. ABAC students Caitlin Rodgers and Kirsten Duncan partnered with ABAC President David Bridges and his wife, Kim, and Business School Deans Dill and Susan Driscoll to represent ABAC in the Game Ball Relay at the University of Georgia on September 1.

The Valdosta Symphony Orchestra kicked off the ABAC Arts Connection series titled *ABAC Presents*. Other performances in the series included Mike Wiley in *Dar He: The Story of Emmett Till*, *Madame Butterfly* by the Peach State Opera Company and the Vega String Quartet. Rural Studies students traveled to Pelham for a project to develop a plan for the use, funding, and marketing of the newly restored Hand Trading Company building. A one-man play by Dr. Brian Ray opened an exhibit at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village on the 150th anniversary of the signing of the Morrill Act.

ABAC had an economic impact of \$281,563,172 on Tift County and the surrounding area according to a study by the University System of Georgia. Dr. Jeff Gibbs helped to analyze the information to determine ABAC's total impact.

After 38 years of service to ABAC in the Computer Center and Business Office, Patsy Hembree (Class of '74) retired in September. The WPLH radio tower and antenna were removed from the top of the J. Lamar Branch Student Center on October 2 after an estimated 44 years on top of the building. WPLH Advisor Keith Perry said a new tower will be installed atop the ABAC water tower.

ABAC helped the Sunbelt Agricultural Exposition celebrate its 35th anniversary at Spence Field on October 16-18. The Expo began as a series of small equipment shows on the ABAC campus in 1964. Dr. Brian Ray and the Baldwin Players staged the hilarious comedy, *The Hallelujah Girls*, in Howard Auditorium October 25-27.

Troy Spicer was selected as the Interim Dean of the School of Nursing and Health Sciences. Wanda Golden will continue to teach classes and serve as an outreach liaison. Six ABAC Turfgrass and Golf Course Management majors assisted with the McGladrey Classic at St. Simons Island on October 17-21.

Nikita Morris from Norfolk, England became the first ABAC soccer player to ever be named Player of the Year for the Georgia Collegiate Athletic Conference. Morris set the ABAC record for goals scored in a season with 34. She was also an All-Conference first team selection and an NJCAA All-America selection. The Fillies ended their season with a 12-8 record and advanced to the semifinal round of the state playoffs.

Jeff Kilgore was named interim coach of the Stallions' baseball team on October 25, replacing Steve Janousek who moved to a full-time faculty position in the School of Human Sciences.



Kilgore had been the assistant coach since 2010. He is an Emmanuel College graduate where he helped to lead the Lions to three NAIA conference tournament appearances from his middle infielder position. He was selected for the All-Conference Team in his junior year when he hit .394 with 14 home runs and 20 stolen bases. Janousek was the coach of the ABAC baseball team from 1998-2012.

In the first press conference ever held in The History Room in Tift Hall on November 7, President David Bridges announced that the college would honor ABAC's largest benefactor by naming the business school the Stafford School of Business. DeNean Stafford, III, made remarks for the family at the ceremony, and Dill and Susan Driscoll, co-deans of the Stafford School of Business, talked about their goals for the Stafford School of Business at the event.

Richard Wood spoke on his book, *Survival of Rural America: Small Victories and Bitter Harvests*, at the Tom M. Cordell Distinguished Lecture Series on November 14. Intramurals Director Alton Hudgins passed away on November 16. A memorial service in his honor was held in the Chapel of All Faiths on November 20. Hudgins also coached the women's tennis team and the women's volleyball team during his ABAC career. Faculty member Cathy Rogers retired in December after 22 years at ABAC.

ABAC alumna Niki Knox (Class of 2000), senior community economic development consultant for the Georgia Electric Membership Corporations, was the guest speaker at the fall commencement ceremony. Justin Gilliard from Nicholls, who earned his bachelor's degree in diversified agriculture, received the George P. Donaldson Award. The Wildlife Society received the 2012 Southeastern Section of the Wildlife Society Student Chapter of the Year award at the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies conference in Hot Springs, Ark.

2013

The ABAC Jazz Ensemble was selected to perform at the International Jazz Educators Network Conference in Atlanta on January 4. Diane Jackson retired in January after 12 years at ABAC. ABAC implemented a new identification policy on January 14 to increase safety on campus. ABAC students, faculty, and staff are now required to clearly display their identification cards at nights and on weekends and holidays while on the campus.

Seven new trustees joined the ABAC Foundation on January 14. They included James Lee Adams, Jr., from Camilla; Dr. Greg Goggans from Douglas; James Holcombe from Savannah; Niki Knox from Peachtree City; John W. Langdale, III, from Valdosta; James H. Moore, III, from Albany; and Jim Sparks from Hendersonville, N.C.

Because of the dishwater gray skies, the first light of dawn came late to the campus of ABAC on January 17. But just as the eastern sky began to show its first glimmer of sunshine, a yellow



Patten Seed/Super Sod Company tractor-trailer load of gigantic rolls of TifBlair centipede sod pulled to a stop on Moore Highway squaring up with the front lawn of the campus. Before the truck had time to even settle in its tracks, a fork lift operator began lifting the rolls off the trailer onto the ground so that personnel from Landscape Associates in Tifton could begin the task of carpeting ABAC's front yard with what Dr. Wayne Hanna calls the "most improved and only certified centipedegrass cultivar on the market." It was developed in Tifton jointly by the University of Georgia and the United States Department of Agriculture Agricultural Research Service. "It has superior seedling vigor and improved tolerance to low soil pH and cold temperatures," Hanna, a longtime researcher at the Coastal Plain Experiment Station, said. "It prefers lower fertility and adapts well to dry conditions." Patten Seed/Super Sod President Ben Copeland (Class of '64) said 13 tractor-trailer loads of the sod, which will cover 130,000 square feet, arrived on the ABAC campus in a span of two days from the company's fields in Lakeland, Ga. Copeland said TifGrand and Emerald will also be used on the ABAC front lawn to enhance an already spectacular view of Tift Hall, Lewis Hall, and Herring Hall.

ABAC President David Bridges received the John Hunt Entrepreneur of the Year Award at the annual Tifton/Tift County Chamber of Commerce Banquet on January 24. Hunt was an ABAC alumnus (Class of '59) who was also a member of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia.

J.T. Turner Construction Company employees lifted the new bronze Stallion Statue into place between the Student Center and Tift Hall on January 29, 2013. The statue weighs over 1,000 pounds. The aluminum Stallion Statue will be stored in the physical plant and used for special occasions such as the Expo. The Peach State Opera Company performed *Madame Butterfly* in Howard Auditorium on January 31 as a part of the "ABAC Presents" performing arts series.

U.S. News & World Report named ABAC one of the top public schools in the South Region of the United States in its annual "Best Colleges" ranking. ABAC was ranked 14th in the poll. The Gallery at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village opened an exhibit titled "Dodd's Cosmos" on February 1, featuring renowned Georgia artist Lamar Dodd. The pieces of art came from the collection of ABAC alumnus C. L. Morehead (Class of '48).

Jimmy Harper (Class of '07) was named interim registrar at ABAC on February 1. He replaced Tarrah Mirus, who left ABAC to take a position in Albany. Ashley Mock and Lindsey Roberts worked with Athens Social Media for six months to develop a new web site for ABAC. After many days of intense scrutiny, the new web site opened on February 3. Faculty advisor Keith Perry said WPLH-FM should have a much stronger signal now that the new antenna is located high atop the ABAC water tower. Joseph Schriefer is the station manager.

Plum Creek forester Rob Hicks presented a check for \$9,982 from the Plum Creek Foundation to Dr. Rod Brown to fund new equipment and software license purchases for the forestry program.



ABAC sponsored 10 recruiting events around the state in February and March titled *ABAC In Your Town*. Counties involved included Tift, Houston, Colquitt, Coffee, Irwin, Ben Hill, Henry, Gwinnett, Thomas, Floyd, and Lowndes. Students from the School of Human Sciences partnered with the admissions office to contact 875 prospective students in a February calling campaign. The top three academic students at Tiftarea Academy announced they were planning to attend ABAC. Valedictorian Caitlyn Morehead of Ocilla, Salutatorian Tiffany Tanner of Ty Ty, and Katy Johnson of Chula had their picture made with ABAC President David Bridges. ABAC Foundation Chief Operating Office Jodie Snow and Honors Program Director Cynthia Hall presented Ashley Childs and Kira Carreira with \$1,000 scholarships at the first ever Stallion Scholars Evening. The ABAC Chapter of the Cattlemen's Association was named the Georgia Cattlemen's Association Chapter of the Year. Dr. Mary Ellen Hicks was the advisor for the club.

Director of Public Relations Ashley Mock coordinated the Historic Front Campus Rededication Ceremony on March 1. As a build-up to the historic day, Murphy and Orr representatives returned to Tift Hall on January 30 and February 13 to complete the hanging of the historic panels, and Fitzgerald sculptor Randy Anthony delivered the busts of Abraham Baldwin and Henry Harding Tift to Tift Hall on February 26. The two busts were each carved from 500-pound blocks of Georgia Marble. Each bust weighs about 250 pounds, and the Georgia Marble pedestals on which they rest weigh 800 pounds each.

A reception was held for family members and special friends of George T. Smith on February 28 to open the George Thornewell Smith Parlor in Tift Hall. President David Bridges talked about Smith in a special ceremony in The History Room as a part of the evening. Other guests including Judge John Ellington (Class of '80) shared poignant stories about Smith and his remarkable life. Nationally known portrait artist June Elizabeth Blackstock was on hand for the unveiling of her portrait of Smith from his days as Lieutenant Governor of Georgia. Smith's widow, Joan, unveiled the portrait. Smith, a 1940 ABAC graduate, remains the only Georgian to win contested elections to all three branches of state government. He was Lieutenant Governor, Speaker of the House, and Presiding Justice of the Georgia Supreme Court. Ashley Mock, Lindsey Roberts, and Mike Chason collaborated on the pictures and information on the Smith historic panels which hang in the Smith Parlor. The Parlor includes a replica of a lawyer's desk with nameplates from Smith's years in state government and a story, picture, and cup from an ABAC episode in Smith's life when he showed a prize-winning bull with the name of "Ferdinand."

Kristen Ray, a junior Rural Studies major from Waycross, was crowned Ms. ABAC in the 44th annual contest on February 28.

A clear and cold blue sky greeted the crowd of over 300 persons at the Front Campus Rededication Ceremony which began at 1:30 p.m. on March 1 on the front steps of Tift Hall. President David Bridges presided over the event which included the presentation of colors by the



Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College

Marine Color Guard from Albany, the National Anthem by ABAC voice performance major Joseph Bishop, the Pledge of Allegiance by Police Chief Bryan Golden, and the invocation by Dr. Joseph Njoroge, professor of political science and religion.

ABAC Alumni Association President George Granade (Class of '74) led the list of speakers followed by Director of Capital Planning Melvin Merrill, Greenline Architecture President Monica Mastrianni, and J.T. Turner Construction Company Chief Operating Officer Tripp Turner. UGA Senior Vice President for External Affairs Tom Landrum offered remarks on the life of Abraham Baldwin, and Tommy Tift, grandson of Henry Harding Tift, talked about the Tift family. Bridges spoke on behalf of the college, and University System of Georgia Chancellor Hank Huckaby spoke on behalf of the System.

As a part of the ceremony, President Bridges directed three alumni, Cathy Cox (Class of '78), A.J. Powell (Class of '40), and Mamie Ethel Talley (Class of '28) to ring the original bell that was on the campus in 1908 that summoned students to class and signaled the change of classes. At the age of 103, Talley could be ABAC's oldest alumnus.

Ashley Mock tied the green-and-gold ribbon to the two newest pillars on the front porch of Tift Hall for the traditional ribbon-cutting. The two white pillars were made from Redwood trees from Washington. Tift Hall had four pillars in 1908 but sometime in the 1940s, two of the pillars were removed because of water damage. The two new pillars were added during the renovation.

After the cutting of the ribbon, everyone entered a renovated Tift Hall which looked quite a bit different than the structure did at its original opening on February 20, 1908. Former faculty members Rosalyn Donaldson, Gary Roberts and Hal Henderson conducted tours of the various areas of the building with assistance from Michelle Reddick, wife of Academic Affairs Vice President Niles Reddick; Kris Chason, wife of Director of Public Relations Emeritus Mike Chason; and the newly crowned Ms. ABAC, Kristen Ray.

Other events during the afternoon included the open house at Herring Hall, which now includes offices for admissions, human resources, and the business office. Members of the Stafford family were on hand for the opening of the Stafford School of Business at 3 p.m. in Lewis Hall. This ceremony also included the unveiling of a special painting by renowned artist, Steve Penley, which focused on the many faces of ABAC. A limited number of prints of the painting were made available for a contribution through the ABAC Foundation to the Stafford School of Business.

MainStream performed for ABAC students in The Meadows on the night of March 1. On the south side of the campus, many supporters of ABAC enjoyed the ABAC Jazz Band at the annual Evening for ABAC in Gressette Gym followed by a special tour of Tift Hall. Retired faculty member Leon Benefield portrayed Captain Tift on the back steps of Tift Hall to welcome the group. Fireworks over Tift Hall ended one of the most spectacular days in the history of ABAC.



ABAC Alumni Association award winners at the annual awards brunch at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village conference room on March 2 included C. L. Morehead, Jr., of Athens, Distinguished Alumnus; Sonya Dale Martin Aldridge of Pavo, Helen Brown Sasser Award; Catrina Kennedy Pollard from Waynesboro, Outstanding Young Alumnus; Elzie Argene Claxton of Perry, J. Lamar Branch Award; Ann Graham from Tifton, Outstanding Educator; Jeff Sinyard from Albany, Outstanding Business Leader; Patricia Barber from Tifton, Outstanding Health Care; Greg Crumley from Tifton, Master Farmer; and Jeff Gibbs from Tifton, Honorary Alumnus. The Grady and Mary Ann Medford Family from Eldorado received the Family Legacy Award.

Inductees for the 2013 class of the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in Gressette Gym on March 2 included members of the 1999 national championship men's tennis team; Henry Will Jones from the 1936-37 baseball, basketball, and football teams; women's basketball coach Julie Conner; baseball player Z.B. Hamilton, and tennis player Derrick Racine. The Gee Haw, Whoa Back rodeo brought alumni and friends back to the rodeo arena that evening and concluded on the afternoon of March 3.

ABAC President David Bridges accompanied members of the Student Government Association and the Political Science Club to Atlanta on March 7 to meet with Governor Nathan Deal, Senator John Crosby, Senator Tyler Harper, Representative Penny Houston, Representative Jay Roberts, and Representative Sam Watson. Harper, Roberts, and Watson are ABAC alumni. Also attending from ABAC were Dr. Chris Kinsey, Dr. Hans Schmeisser, and Dr. Joseph Njoroge.

The Baldwin Players, under the direction of Dr. Brian Ray, presented *The Glass Menagerie* on March 7-9 in Howard Auditorium. Personnel moves at ABAC in March included Elaine Auger as the new marketing assistant at the Museum, Vonda Fenn (Class of '85) as the program coordinator for the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and Lynda Fisher as the new assistant director of advancement.

The ABAC Bass Fishing Team ranked 16th in the nation in the latest Cabella's Association of Collegiate Anglers poll. ABAC's competition includes over 100 NCAA Division I universities. The ABAC Forestry Club and Society of American Foresters Student Chapter were accepted into the National Association of Southern Forestry Clubs by a unanimous vote. The national organization presented the ABAC club with a crosscut saw valued at \$1,400 upon acceptance.

Logan Layne, a freshman rural studies major from Manning, S.C., won the Mr. ABAC competition on March 28. The Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village at ABAC welcomed over 700 visitors at the annual Folklife Festival on April 6.

ABAC hosted its annual Pre-K Day on April 12 when 340 pre-school children and their parents visited the campus. Faculty member Amy Warren coordinated the event. Faculty member

Jordan Cofer signed a contract with Bloomsburg Publishing for his book, *The Gospel According to Flannery O'Connor*.

The *Pegasus* literary magazine celebrated its 40th year with a reading and reception at the annual George Scott Day Celebration of the Arts on April 18 and a Ruby Celebration on April 19 at the Peanut Museum at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village. Former faculty advisors Andrea Savage and Herbert Shippey were featured in a tribute in the 40th edition by student editor Angelo Smith. The *Pegasus* began in 1973 under the faculty leadership of Helen Strickland and Tom Liner and the student leadership of Ronnie Wheeler. Current advisors are Dr. Sandra Giles, Dr. Jeff Newberry, and Diantha Ellis.

ABAC's award-winning student newspaper, *The Stallion*, extends Pacesetter recognition annually to those who have worked for ABAC through their actions and exemplary service. Pacesetters are chosen from the student body, the administration, the faculty, and the staff who, through their hard work, talent, and devotion, embody the spirit of the college. The 2013 faculty and staff Pacesetter recipients included Dill and Susan Driscoll, Deans of the Stafford School of Business; Donna Webb, Director of Enrollment Management for the Office of Admissions; Nicholas Urquhart, Lead Academic Support Counselor for the Office of Academic Support; and Mary White, custodian in the Branch Student Center and Herring Hall. Efrain Ruiz, a diversified agriculture major from Whitmire, S.C., received the Superior Pacesetter. The Superior Pacesetter is given to the person who students believe has done the most for the college during the year while exemplifying leadership and service to the campus. Student Pacesetters included Suzanne Black, a diversified agriculture major from Clermont, Fla.; Devin Gibbs, a rural studies - writing and communication major from Doerun; Sue Mastrario, a rural studies – business and economic development major from Ashburn; Luis Mendez, a business administration major from Lizella; Jacob Nyhuis, a diversified agriculture major from Montverde, Fla.; and Kristen Ray, a rural studies – social and community affairs major from Waycross. In the SGA spring election, Melissa Escobar was selected as the 2013-14 student body president. The Forestry-Wildlife club was named Club of the Year by the SGA.

Both ABAC tennis teams finished second in the state tournament. The Fillies' runner-up finish ended a string of 19 consecutive state titles. The Stallions then wound up ninth out of 26 teams in the national tournament in Plano, Texas. The Fillies did not participate in the national tournament. The ABAC golf team finished second in the state tournament. Freshman Robbie Johnson earned All-Tournament honors and participated in the national tournament in Lubbock, Texas. The Fillies' softball team wound up 26-21 and lost in the first round of the state tournament. The ABAC baseball team compiled a 21-27 record under the leadership of interim head coach Jeff Kilgore.

At the annual Honors Day ceremony on April 24, Dr. Mary Ellen Hicks, Professor of Animal



Science, received the W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence. Ernest Kelly, Senior Systems Administrator in the Office of Information Technology, was honored with the Roy R. Jackson, Sr., Award for Staff Excellence. Dr. Tim Marshall, Dean of the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources, received the E. Lanier Carson Leadership Award for College Administrators, and Lorie Felton, Associate Professor of Environmental Horticulture, received the W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Excellence in Advising Award. At the same ceremony, Sarah A. Rooks, a junior biology major from Ashburn, was selected as the J.G. Woodroof Scholar.

Six retirees were honored, and service awards were presented to 46 other employees at a picnic outside Gressette Gym after the Honors Day Ceremony. Retirees included Patricia Barber, Patsy Hembree, Dr. John Galyean, Bobby Mathis, Catherine Rogers, and Teresa Williams. Barber, an associate professor of nursing in the School of Nursing and Health Sciences, had 32 years of service. Hembree, the Information Services Coordinator for the Business Office, had 38 years of service, and Galyean, an associate professor of speech and theatre, was a faculty member for 14 years in the School of Liberal Arts.

Mathis, a staff member at the Forest Lakes Golf Course, had 31 years at ABAC. Rogers, an associate professor of reading, was a faculty member for 22 years in the School of Liberal Arts. Williams, the Senior Administrative Assistant in the Stafford School of Business, had 28 years at ABAC. Melvin Merrill and Mike Williams were each honored for 35 years of service to the college. A 30-year service award went to Bobbie Baldree. Jimmy Felton, Lori Felton, Alan Kramer, and Vicki Walker were recognized for 20 years of service to ABAC. Honored for 15 years of service were JoAnn Brannen, Nancy Brannen, Brenda Doss, Bernice Hughes, Donna King, Melanie Partlow, Lori Pearman, Kay Powell, and Kim Talley.

Recognized for 10 years of service were Robert Carpenter, Robin Crumley, Dr. James Galt-Brown, Javier Gonzalez, Jokabeth Gutierrez, Mouyyed Hassouna, Todd Hicks, Rhonda Lewis, Dr. Barnabe Miburo, Alan Murphy, Keith Perry, Dr. Doris Roundtree, Reba Selph, and Troy Spicer.

Recognized for five years of service were Tonia Carpenter, Todd Daunhauer, Marie Davis, Dr. Susan Farmer, Gay Hodge, Holly Lawrence, Dr. Lisa Lishman, Ana Martinez, Dr. James McCrimmon, Ashley Mock, Dr. Niles Reddick, Theresa Ryan, Shawn Seat, Lawrence Shepherd, Vicki Sherling, and Amy Warren.

ABAC celebrated Arbor Day on April 26 by planting two Weeping Willow trees on the shore of Lake Baldwin. ABAC faculty member Abul Sheikh was the first person to drive a vehicle on the new four-lane road on April 29 which connects Highway 41 to Moore Highway in front of ABAC. ABAC President David Bridges and ABAC Foundation President Roger Dill worked extensively to get the road changed from two lanes to four lanes.



United States Congressman and Tifton native Austin Scott was the guest speaker at the spring commencement ceremony in Gressette Gym on May 3. Of the 217 graduates participating in the ceremony, a total of 48 students received bachelor's degrees including the first ABAC bachelor's degrees ever awarded in Natural Resource Management (Forestry), Natural Resource Management (Wildlife) and Biology.

Elisabeth O'Quinn, a rural studies – business and economic development major from Fitzgerald, received the prestigious George P. Donaldson award at the ceremony. O'Quinn became the first Summa Cum Laude graduate in the history of ABAC with a grade point average of 3.94 on a 4.0 scale. To be eligible for the Summa Cum Laude distinction, graduates must complete a bachelor's degree. ABAC awarded its first bachelor's degree in 2009.

The ceremony was the first ever at ABAC to require tickets for admission. Each graduate could request seven tickets to the event. The ceremony was also broadcast live on television by Plant Telecommunications. A special live feed was also viewed by the overflow crowd in Howard Auditorium.

The Stafford School of Business partnered with State Farm Insurance agents Chad Sumner (Class of '89) and Brent Dixon to place students in the State Farm Intern Program. Weltner Hall emptied in May when the ABAC Police Department moved to Evans Hall, the Office of Multicultural Education moved to Conger Hall, and the South Region Agricultural Education Office moved to the Chambliss Building. Due to a lack of interest by students during the 2012 Maymester, the college did not offer Maymester classes in 2013.

ABAC alumnus Thomas "Boo" Weekley (Class of '93) won the Crowne Plaza Invitational at Colonial PGA tournament in Fort Worth, Texas on May 26. He received over \$1.1 million for his third win on the PGA Tour. He also won at Harbour Town in 2007 and 2008.

ABAC enrolled 936 students for the 2013 summer term. Jeff Kilgore was named Head Coach of the ABAC baseball team on June 3 after serving as interim coach during the past year when the Stallions compiled a record of 21-27. Before June came to an end, Kilgore resigned the head coach's job to take the head coaching job at his alma mater, Emmanuel College. The search for a new baseball coach began anew. High school students from 75 Georgia counties attended the annual Natural Resources Conservation Workshop at ABAC on June 9-13. President David Bridges stepped on the ABAC campus for the first time when he was a Natural Resources camper in the 1970s.

ABAC representatives including Dr. Tim Marshall and Donna Webb visited the FFA/FCCLA camp in Covington once a week during the summer to speak to potential ABAC students.



Congressman Austin Scott wore an ABAC baseball jersey and cap during the annual Congressional baseball game in June between the Republicans and the Democrats in Washington D.C.

Georgia Power Company Area Manager Lynn Lovett presented a check for \$3,000 to ABAC Foundation Chief Operating Officer Jodie Snow for the general scholarship fund on June 13. Dr. Johnny Evans assumed the position of Dean of the School of Science and Mathematics on July 1. He was a professor of chemistry and physics and the chemistry program coordinator at Lee University in Cleveland, Tenn., for the past 13 years. Evans received his undergraduate degree in chemistry from Georgia College and State University and earned his Ph.D. in physical chemistry from the University of Florida. His father was in the military so he spent most of his formative years on the road, attending 13 different schools before his junior year of high school.

Alan Kramer gave up his role as the men's and women's tennis coach at ABAC on July 1 to become the Assistant Dean of Students. He will continue his duties as the ABAC Athletics Director. Kramer compiled a career record of 339 wins and 217 losses including a 191-110 record with the Fillies and a 148-107 record with the Stallions since he began his ABAC career in 1993. The Fillies won the Region XVII Championship 19 straight years before the streak ended this season when they finished second.

Kramer won 24 Region XVII Coach of the Year awards and led ABAC to 14 Fillies' and 10 Stallions' Georgia Collegiate Athletic Association (GCAA) Championships. Kramer's women's teams finished in the top 10 nationally 10 times, and his men's teams finished in the top 10 nationally 12 times. Kramer was named the Under Armour Athletic Director of the Year for the Southeast Region in 2009-10.

Under Kramer's direction, the Fillies finished second in the nation in 1999. The Stallions wound up second in the nation in 2002 and 2003 and finished third in the country in 2006, 2008, and 2009. He coached five individual national champions including Milena Stanoytcheva, Monica Lalewicz, German Dalmagro, Arya Vafaei, and Matthew Holland.

Taking over as the head coach of the ABAC men's and women's tennis teams on July 1 was Dale White. He had served as Kramer's assistant since 2008. Originally from Boston, England, White came to the United States on a tennis scholarship to Armstrong Atlantic State University where he was an All-America selection for three seasons. He earned his graduate degree in sports psychology from Georgia Southern University. He will also serve as an academic support counselor.

Nicholas Urquhart was named Director of Academic Support Services beginning July 1. Jackie Rose also began her duties as Migrant Education Consortium Coordinator on July 1. Elisabeth

O'Quinn (Class of '13) became the first ever Business Apprentice for the Stafford School of Business on July 1.

The Independence Day Celebration at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village was canceled due to stormy weather on July 3. The fireworks portion of the celebration was rescheduled for November 9 with the Veterans Day holiday.

A new art exhibit titled *Sullo's South* began its run at the Museum Gallery on July 13. The exhibit features the works of New York native turned Georgian Joseph A. Sullo. Jimmy Harper resigned his position on July 13 to become the Chief Information Officer for South Georgia State College. Dr. Amy Willis (Class of '89) was named Interim Chief Data Officer and Registrar.

On July 19, Sodexo announced the consolidation of its dining and facilities operations at ABAC. Prior to that time, the two divisions had been managed independently of each other. ABAC Vice President for Planning and Operations John Clemens said the consolidation will improve communication, reduce costs and improve services. Sodexo named Dan Miller (Class of '04) as the new Director of ABAC Operations. Miller has been with the company since 2005 and at ABAC as director of dining operations for the past four years. The ABAC Alumni Association and the admissions office hosted an event for alumni and prospective students in Chatsworth on July 20.

Robert Morgan was named the head baseball coach and academic support counselor at ABAC on July 26. Morgan served as an assistant coach at Valdosta State University, Georgia Southwestern State University, and Georgia Perimeter College. As a player at Valdosta State in 2004, Morgan set single season records with a .436 batting average, 32 doubles, 172 total bases, 49 extra base hits, and a 31-game hitting streak. With the 32 doubles, he also set an NCAA Division II record. For his heroics on the field for the Blazers in 2004-05, Morgan was named to the All-America team in 2004, selected as the Gulf South Conference East Division Player of the Year in 2004, and was picked as the best shortstop in the 40-year history of Valdosta State baseball. He was also a member of the Gulf South Conference All-Decade team for 2000-2010. In 2013, Morgan was named to the Athletics Hall of Fame at Valdosta State. Morgan was also an All-Conference player for ABAC rival South Georgia College before transferring to Valdosta State. Part-time instructor Joe Courson passed away on July 30.

Fall semester classes began on August 14 with 3,394 students in attendance, marking the first fall term enrollment increase since a record 3,665 students enrolled in the 2007 fall term. ABAC President David Bridges said every room was filled at ABAC Lakeside and ABAC Place. Almost 1,000 students were enrolled in bachelor's degree programs, the highest number in the 105-year history of the college.



Only 13 colleges and universities in the 31-unit University System of Georgia reported enrollment increases for the 2013 fall term. Only two, Southern Polytechnic and Atlanta Metropolitan, topped the ABAC increase of five per cent. The ABAC enrollment included students from 151 of Georgia's 159 counties, 19 states, and 24 countries. The states included Maine and Washington, and the countries included Japan, Jamaica, Australia, and Morocco.

The bachelor's degree in biology is the fastest growing single major with 202 students enrolled in a program that began offering junior and senior level classes in the fall term of 2011. Six hundred of the 1,000-plus students in the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources are enrolled in bachelor's degrees including 170 in Natural Resource Management. The number of Rural Studies majors has grown from 50 to almost 200. Fifty-four per cent of the students at ABAC are female.

At the August Board of Regents meeting, ABAC was designated as Georgia's official agricultural state college. The honor coincided with the fact that the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources enrolled over 1,000 students for the first time ever. Andy Dunn, a diversified agriculture major from Menlo, was the 1,001st student to enroll in the school. To celebrate, Director of Public Relations Ashley Mock organized a press conference in the Ag Sciences Building on August 15 with 1,000 green-and-gold doughnuts and remarks by ABAC President David Bridges and Dr. Tim Marshall, Dean of the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Caroline Black (Class of '09), the Education and Agritourism Coordinator at Jaemor Farms in Alto, was the guest speaker at the freshman convocation ceremony in Gressette Gym on August 16. Dr. Cyndy Hall, director of the ABAC Honors Program and a faculty member in the School of Liberal Arts, said 50 new students joined the Honors Program, up from 23 in 2012. She said there is a new Honors Hall in ABAC Lakeside and an Honors Lounge in Conger Hall. Academic Achievement Center Coordinator Rebecca Cofer said the AAC received the International Tutor Training Program Certification from the College Reading and Learning Association.

Stoney Hart joined the staff as the Recreational Sports Director. He had been the assistant director of facility operations and intramural/club sports at Southwestern Oklahoma State University. He had never seen a Georgia pine tree. ABAC's three fraternities, Alpha Gamma Rho, Kappa Sigma, and Lambda Sigma Upsilon, and one sorority, Sigma Alpha, held a mixer in the Student Center so that students could get to know them on August 21.

Assistant Director of Advancement Lynda Fisher coordinated the first ever Scholarship Milk and Cookies (MAC) Day at the Alumni House on August 27. Over 100 students attending ABAC on scholarships gathered to write personal letters of appreciation to individuals and companies who provided scholarship funding. The ABAC Alumni Association sponsored the event, and ABAC alumni baked homemade cookies for the occasion.



The Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village at ABAC received a surprise gift in August when Stephen Wehunt sent the Museum his dad's 1898 Winchester squirrel rifle. Curator Polly Huff said Wehunt's dad, Roy Dean Wehunt, served under General George Patton in World War II. Stephen Wehunt's wife, Laveta Margret Waters, graduated from ABAC in 1969.

"My dad was a simple farm boy, and he loved farming," Stephen Wehunt wrote in an accompanying letter. "I am sure if he had gone to college, he would have chosen ABAC."

The Campus Activities Board sponsored the Humans vs. Zombies event for the second year in a row. In 2012, this event attracted 300 students. The Albany Symphony Orchestra opened the third season of the ABAC Presents! Performing Arts Series on Sept. 29. Twenty-nine high school students from Georgia, Alabama, Florida, and South Carolina participated in the second annual Stallion Scholars Evening on October 3 in Tift Hall. Dr. William Moore (Class of '91) was named the Department Head for Forest Resources in the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

The total economic impact of ABAC on Tifton and the surrounding area during the 2012 fiscal year was \$261,313,451, according to a study commissioned by the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia. Retired ABAC professor of economics Jeff Gibbs said ABAC sustained 15,205 jobs in Tifton and surrounding communities based on direct expenditures of \$107,369,226 from student spending, personnel services, operating expenses, and capital outlays.

ABAC tennis player Josh Page won the men's singles event at the ITA regional championship, earning an invitation to play in the Small College National Championship tournament. He wound up fifth in the nation in that tournament.

Georgia Governor Nathan Deal and Georgia Commissioner of Agriculture Gary Black visited with students at the ABAC building at the 36th annual Sunbelt Agricultural Exposition on October 15. The Expo began as a series of small equipment shows on the ABAC campus in the mid-1960s.

The Gallery at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village opened an exhibit titled *Back Roads of Georgia* on October 18 which highlighted photography and literary works depicting rural life and culture in Georgia. Traci Bryan stepped down as the Student Financial Services Director in October. She was replaced on a temporary basis by Bill Thumser.

ABAC students working at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village constructed a counterweight trebuchet, which they affectionately dubbed a "Pumpkin Chunker." The Chunker tossed pumpkins hundreds of feet into the lake at the annual Fall Frolics. Thomas



Jeffrey Vasseur, author of *Discovering the World: Thirteen Stories*, spoke at the annual Writers' Harvest sponsored by the Pegasus literary magazine on October 22 at the Peanut Museum.

The Wildlife Society won first place in the annual Halloween Hay Bale competition. Chick-fil-A Vice President for Marketing David Salyers spoke at a Stafford School of Business seminar on steps to becoming "Remarkable" on October 23. The original Golden Stallion statue was erected in front of the Alumni House on Lake Baldwin in October. A new bronze stallion went up between the J. Lamar Branch Student Center and Tift Hall on January 29.

Tim Carpenter was named the Director of Housing Operations on November 1. He replaced Dr. Chris Kinsey, who moved to the position of Director of Residence Life. The Baldwin Players presented *The Taming of the Shrew* in Howard Auditorium on October 31-November 2. Former Navy SEAL team member Coleman Ruiz spoke to ABAC students on November 6. His visit was sponsored by the Stafford School of Business.

Michelle Sheffield, an animal science major, presented a poster at the National Collegiate Honors Conference in New Orleans on November 7 on behalf of the ABAC Honors Program. The Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village hosted a Salute to Veterans on November 9 topped off by fireworks. The fireworks display was originally scheduled for July 3 but was postponed due to inclement weather.

Longtime ABAC benefactor Clarice Eubanks Turk passed away on November 10 at the age of 102. Dr. Tim Marshall, Dean of the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources, announced that he was stepping down from his position on June 30, 2014, to move to Virginia and marry Dr. Allison Faber.

ABAC received the Regents Award of Excellence from the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia for the Historic Front Campus Project. USG Vice Chancellor for Facilities Jim James said the Regents present the award for projects which redefine the "spirit of place" on a campus. Director of Capital Planning Melvin Merrill, who coordinated the project for ABAC, accepted the award.

George and Betty Turk established an ABAC endowment to fund enrichment opportunities for students in the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Mr. Turk was a member of the ABAC Class of 1952. Three generations of his family have attended ABAC.

Dr. Rod Brown was honored at a Professor Emeritus of Forestry ceremony in the Yow Forestry-Wildlife Building on November 20. President David Bridges presented him with a framed copy of his emeritus recognition letter, and Dean of Agriculture and Natural Resources Tim Marshall presented him with an engraved Wise Old Owl. Brown was a faculty member at ABAC from

1982 until his retirement in July, 2013.

ABAC hosted the premier of the documentary *deepsouth* in Howard Auditorium on November 21. Lisa Biagiotti, who produced and directed the film, talked to several ABAC classes during the day before the screening. Education Department Coordinator Amy Warren coordinated the annual visit by 142 kindergarten students at ABAC on November 22. ABAC education majors arranged seven different stops on the tour.

Amanda Biondino, goal keeper on the women's soccer team, was selected All-Region First Team for the Georgia Collegiate Athletic Association. ABAC Coach Jimmy Ballenger said Biondino was the best goal keeper in the eight-year history of the Fillies' soccer program. ABAC missed the playoffs for only the second time in history with a 7-10 overall record.

Members of Alpha Beta Gamma and other students from the Stafford School of Business visited with Doug Ivester, the former chairman of the Coca-Cola Company, at his plantation near Albany in November. Dr. Larry Moorman and his wife, Debra, donated a ball-washing machine to the Forest Lakes Golf Club driving range. The Moormans donated the course to the ABAC Foundation in 2002 and the clubhouse at the course to the Foundation in 2009.

The Academic Support Center and Media Services sponsored a therapy session for ABAC students with six dogs from Therapy Dogs, Inc., on December 3. The dogs provided welcome relief for ABAC students preparing for final exams. President David Bridges and his wife, Kim, hosted their annual Holiday Open House in Tift Hall for the first time ever on December 3. The ABAC Presents! Performing Arts Series staged *It's a Wonderful Life: Live from the WVL Radio Theater* on December 5. The family of Earl H. Bennett (Class of '57) set up an ABAC Foundation endowment fund to assist ABAC forestry students.

Laura Daniel Major from LaGrange became the first student in the history of ABAC to receive two bachelor's degrees at the same commencement ceremony on December 13. She completed degrees in diversified agriculture and rural studies. Major also received the Donaldson Award at the ceremony. She is the wife of Glen Major of LaGrange and the daughter of Larry (ABAC Class of '78) and Ann Daniel. Dr. Tim Marshall (Class of '77), Dean of the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources, was the featured speaker. A total of 197 students received degrees.

2014

ABAC enrolled 3,132 students for the 2014 spring semester, a 7.2 per cent increase over the

2013 spring term enrollment. The increase was the second largest among the 31 units of the University System of Georgia. Only 16 members of the System had increases over the previous spring term.

Kevin Owens (Class of '09) presented a \$10,000 check from Agrium Tifton to Dr. Tim Marshall, Dean of the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources. The funds will be used for student scholarships in Agriculture. ABAC students D.J. Thomas from Willacoochee and Charles Conger from Chula represented the ABAC Bass Fishing Club when they finished seventh in the Carhartt Bassmaster College Series in Lake Okeechobee, Fla. ABAC Bookstore Manager Tracy Dyal earned the designation of Certified Collegiate Retailer from the National Association of College Stores.

Mamie Ethel Arnold Talley, ABAC's oldest living alumnus, celebrated her 104th birthday on January 22. She was a member of the Class of '28 at South Georgia A&M College. She also attended the Second District A&M School. A "Women's Faces" exhibit opened January 30 at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village.

ABAC President David Bridges (Class of '78) received the Stafford Award at the Tifton-Tift County Chamber of Commerce Banquet on January 30. Dallas Hunt (Class of '83) presented the award. Rural Studies major Andrew Smith from Folkston spent a portion of his spring semester in Atlanta as one of the participants in the Georgia Legislature Internship Program. Military Advanced Education awarded ABAC recognition as a 2014 Top Military-Friendly college.

Former ABAC business office accountant Lester Nalls passed away at the age of 88 on February 2. He was employed at ABAC from 1969 until his retirement in 1988. The ABAC Alumni Association hosted a regional roundup at the home of ABAC Foundation Board of Trustee member James Holcomb (Class of '70) in Savannah. The ABAC performing arts series presented the Azalea Quartet on February 18. Sigma Alpha sorority members celebrated the 106th birthday of ABAC on February 20 with birthday cake and cupcakes in the dining hall.

Kristen Card from Cordele won the 45th Ms. ABAC crown in Howard Auditorium on February 25. She will also compete in the Miss Georgia pageant in June. Dr. Tim Marshall was awarded honorary membership in the Georgia Young Farmers.

The annual Evening for ABAC scholarship fundraiser netted over \$48,000 for the ABAC Foundation on March 7. The guest performers were von Grey, a group of four classically trained sisters who formed an indie-alternative folk group. The Baldwin Players' spring musical, *Smoke on the Mountain*, was held at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture.

Museum Curator Polly Huff and a group of ABAC English professors staged an incredible



exhibit around a series of photographs taken in 1909 of the Tifton Cotton Mill Village by photographer Lewis Hine. As a part of a Georgia Humanities Council grant, they brought together descendants of the Catherine Young family at the Museum on March 15. Young was pictured with nine of her 11 children in one of the photographs. Massachusetts historian Joe Manning worked diligently to write the story of the family and played a huge role in the reunion. One of the descendants was Dr. Earl Parker, a former ABAC Professor of Biology and Botany.

During the spring break in March, ABAC students headed to all points of the globe such as traveling on the beef industry tour in Astoria, Ill., washing elephants in India, studying in Belize at the Jaguar Temple, and competing in the Forestry Conclave in Dublin, Va. Scott Blount was named Special Projects Coordinator at ABAC on March 6. The Arbor Day Foundation honored ABAC with Tree Campus USA recognition. Melvin Merrill was named Acting Vice President for Planning and Operations on March 21 after John Clemens left his vice-president's position after seven years to become the Interim Vice President for Fiscal Affairs at Darton State College.

Regents Approve Bachelor's Degree in Business for ABAC

On March 25, President David Bridges announced that the Stafford School of Business at ABAC had been approved by the Board of Regents to offer a Bachelor of Science degree in Business and Economic Development. A press conference and celebration was held on the lower floor of Lewis Hall which was jammed with students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

The Georgia Museum of Agriculture dedicated the Wiregrass Barn Quilt on March 29. Created by the Wiregrass Quilters Guild, the "Churn Dash" pattern will hang on the Wiregrass Opry Shelter. Also on March 29, the ABAC performing arts series presented the Fisk Jubilee Singers. Troy Spicer was named the Dean of the School of Nursing and Health Sciences on April 1. Spicer had served as the Interim Dean since October, 2012. He earned his associate degree in nursing from ABAC in 1982. His mother, Nellie Jo Spicer, was an ABAC nursing student in 1972.

Michael Wright assumed duties as the Student Financial Services Director at ABAC on April 1. Ross McClellan from Tifton was selected as Mr. ABAC on April 2. Savanna Thompson from Nicholls and Daniel Andrews from Jackson, S.C., were named Homecoming Queen and King on April 3 at the Ben Wells Concert at the rodeo arena.

ABAC Alumni Association award winners at Homecoming 2014 on April 4 included Dr. Tim Marshall, Distinguished Alumnus; Alisha Hall, Helen Brown Sasser Award; Niki Knox, Outstanding Young Alumnus; James Lee Hall, J. Lamar Branch Award; Lola Henning West, Outstanding Educator; James Holcomb, Outstanding Business Leader; Nancy Hilton, Outstanding Health Care Professional; David Moore, Master Farmer; and Dr. Rod Brown, Roger

Dill, and DeNean Stafford, III, Honorary Alumnus status. The Gay and Howell families from Lincolnton, Gordon, Irwinville, and Athens received the Family Legacy Award.

For the first time ever, the ABAC Alumni Association awards were presented with the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame awards in Gressette Gymnasium. Hall of Fame inductees for 2014 were Marshall Taylor, Andrea Pate Willis, and “Sarge’s Crew,” the 1993 State Intercollegiate Softball Champions.

The third annual Run for the Nurses on April 5 raised \$10,000 for the Lisa Purvis Allison Spirit of Nursing Scholarship. The ABAC Ambassadors won the first ever Stallion Cup by being a major part of activities during Homecoming Week.

Jordan Gill from Enigma received the J.G. Woodroof Scholar Award during the Honors Day Ceremony on April 9. Other award winners were Amy Warren, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence; Brenda Doss, Roy R. Jackson, Sr., Award for Staff Excellence; Paul Willis, E. Lanier Carson Leadership Award for College Administrators; and Dr. Abul Sheikh, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Excellence in Advising Award. The Honors Day Ceremony was held at 3 p.m. for the first time ever.

At the annual service awards picnic after the Honors Day ceremony, four retirees were honored and service awards were presented to 30 other employees. Retirees included Dr. Rod Brown, Wanda Golden, Bobbie Baldree, and Dr. Doug Waid. Dr. Kay Weeks received a 35-year service award, and Shirley Wilson received a 30-year service award. Those recognized for 25 years of service were Cindy Barber, Janet Haughton, Dr. Mary Ellen Hicks, and Wayne Jones. Rebecca Arnold was recognized for 20 years of service. Fifteen-year service awards went to Dr. Renata Elad, Anthony Fitzgerald, Philip Hightower, Katrina McCrae, and Beverly Wesley. Honored for 10 years of service were Nancy Anthony, Emily Cheek, Shawn Cox, Teri Mathis, Deborah Pyles, and Keisha Spears. Five-year service awards went to Elaine Auger, Christina Dent, Dr. Kingsley Dunkley, Dr. Cynthia Hall, Nicholas Hardin, Robbie Hawsey, Joseph Johnson, Debbie McComas, John Layton, Mickie Tompkins, Amanda Urquhart, and Donna Webb.

The Omega Delta Chapter of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society at ABAC was named a Five-Star Chapter at the PTK regional conference. Roger Pemberton was the featured performer at the 36th annual ABAC Jazz Festival on April 17. The event was also a part of the ABAC performing arts series and marked the final concert for Don Coates, director of the ABAC Jazz Band since 1974. Coates retired from ABAC at the end of the spring term after 40 years of service with the music program. At his final concert, Coates was honored by letters from the United States Congress, the Georgia Senate and the Georgia Music Educators. Dr. Jeff Newberry was recognized as the first ever Poet-in-Residence at ABAC in a Tift Hall reception on April 23.



Dill and Susan Driscoll were selected as 2014 Superior Pacesetter Award winners by *The Stallion* staff. Pacesetter recipients were Stoney Hart, Alan Kramer, Dr. Jeff Newberry, Elisabeth O'Quinn, Judy Perry, Carlton Brooks, Shawn Burnette, Melody Harper, Trent Hester, and Andrea Smith. Dr. Chris Kinsey received the SGA President's Award. Kevin Vantrees from Alpha Gamma Rho fraternity was named Greek Man of the Year, and Haley Webb from Sigma Alpha sorority was named Greek Woman of the Year.

Stafford Business School Dean Dill Driscoll headed an ABAC event from noon until 6 p.m. on April 24 as a part of the national Carry the Load program which honors the sacrifices of the military, law enforcement, firefighters, and rescue personnel while bringing back the true meaning of Memorial Day. Seven ABAC students will accompany Driscoll and Stafford School of Business Placement Coordinator Lyndsey Walters on a 2,000-mile trek from West Point, N.Y., to Dallas, Texas from April 29 to May 25 as a part of the National Carry the Load Relay.

Mike Williams retired after 36 years of service to ABAC on April 30. Robert Gerhart began his duties as Chief Information Officer at ABAC on May 1. Slayten Carter from Willacoochee received the Distinguished Ambassador Award for the 2013-14 year from the ABAC Ambassadors. She will serve as president of the group in 2014-15. Dr. Jordan Cofer, associate professor of English in the School of Liberal Arts, released a book titled *The Gospel According to Flannery O'Conner*.

The Sigma Chapter of Alpha Beta Gamma at ABAC won the national championship in the presentation competition at the Alpha Beta Gamma national convention in San Antonio. Lindsay Partridge from Bushnell, Fla., was selected as the national president of the organization, Colleen Leu from Chula was named National Marketing Director, and Melody Harper from Pelham was named as the National Secretary.

Dr. James Galt-Brown, Associate Professor of History, spoke on Rural America at the national headquarters of Wal-Mart in Bentonville, Ark. He was selected based on his expertise as a lecturer in the ABAC Rural Studies program, which is the only one of its kind in America.

President David Bridges announced on May 7 that Vice President for Academic Affairs Niles Reddick had been selected as the Vice Provost/CEO for the University of Memphis at Lambuth campus in Jackson, Tenn., effective July 1. Reddick served seven years at ABAC. Dr. Gail Dillard was named the Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Savannah Leigh Brown, a nursing major from Wray, received the George P. Donaldson Award at the spring commencement ceremony on May 8. Former Navy SEAL Coleman Ruiz was the guest speaker. A total of 319 students completed their requirements for graduation at the end of



the spring term. Sixty-five students received bachelor's degrees. One of the graduates who didn't participate in the ceremony was Kay Parten Wylie, who received her ABAC associate degree in arts 59 years after she started classes at ABAC in 1955. She had already received degrees from Valdosta State and Georgia Southwestern but decided she wanted to transfer back some classes to get her degree from ABAC as well. At the age of 76, she got it.

Coach Donna Campbell's ABAC Fillies' softball team wound up second in the NJCAA Region XVII tournament. ABAC recorded a 29-16 overall record. Jenna Byrd from Macon and Rachel Hill from Snellville made first team all-region, and Brittany Davis from Lizella and Taylor Boyett from Fayetteville, Tenn., made second team all-region. Campbell announced in December that she was retiring from coaching after the 2015 season but would stay on at ABAC as a faculty member. In her first year at ABAC, the Fillies won the 1996 National Junior College Athletic Association Slow-pitch championship with a record of 44-12.

Coach Robert Morgan's ABAC baseball team made the state tournament, the first time the Stallions qualified for the tournament since 2010. ABAC wound up with a 21-29 overall record in Morgan's first year at the helm. Christian Miller from Eastman made second team all-state with a .373 batting average.

ABAC Freshman Wins National Tennis Championship

The ABAC men's tennis team won the 2014 state championship, and first year head coach Dale White received Coach of the Year honors. After winning Most Valuable Player honors at the state tournament, Josh Page, a freshman from the United Kingdom, blitzed the field at the national tournament to win the national championship at number one singles. He became the first ABAC player to win the national title at number one singles since Richard Evans led the Stallions to the national championship in 1999. After winning the first set 6-4 in the national title match over Harry Busby from Cowley (Kans.) College, Page fell behind 4-1 in the second and took a medical timeout for a painful blister on his left foot. "I felt like he was in command of the match, and I was already thinking about the third set," Page said. "Then I kind of loosened up, and he got a little tight." Page roared back for a 7-6 victory on the tiebreaker, and his teammates mobbed him on the court. The Stallions wound up fifth in the nation in the team standings by playing what White called "our best tennis all season." Page was also named the ITA Region IV Rookie of the Year at the national tournament. The ABAC Fillies' tennis team finished second in the state tournament and 12th in the national tournament. Kelly Burge from the United Kingdom was named Region IV Rookie of the Year at the national tournament.

The ABAC golf team finished second in the state tournament and eighth in the district tournament. Chris Rogers from Dawson and Lee Wright from Moultrie were named first team All-Region selections. Jimmy Ballenger took over as coach of the golf team when Herb Hendrix

retired during the season.

Dr. Jerry Baker was selected as Dean of the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources on July 1. He replaced Dr. Tim Marshall who served for eight years in the position. Baker came to ABAC from his position as Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director of Sigma Xi: The Scientific Research Society.

President David Bridges unveiled a new strategic plan called Destination ABAC on July 14. As a part of the plan, Paul Willis was named Vice President for Finance and Operations and Chief Business Officer. Director of Public Relations Emeritus Mike Chason was named Interim Vice President for External Affairs and Advancement to replace Willis in that position. Robert Gerhart was named Vice President for Technology and Chief Information Officer. Dr. Darby Sewell, Dean of the School of Human Sciences, will assist with operations at ABAC on the Square in Moultrie while Dr. Gail Dillard serves as Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs.

ABAC became the only college in Georgia to be selected as a Best Value School by the University Research and Review.

Garrett Boone was named the Director of Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village at ABAC on August 1. He had been serving as assistant director since 2012. Charles Conger, a mechanical engineering major from Chula, represented ABAC in the 2014 Bassmaster College National Championship at Lake Chatuge near Hiawassee on July 31-August 2. Randi Walden (Class of '12) became the Information Center Coordinator in Tift Hall on August 4. Larry Byrnes began his duties as the ABAC golf coach on August 7. John Wesley Langdale, III (Class of '90), was the guest speaker at the annual Freshman Convocation on August 14. Alumni Director Lynda Fisher (Class of '89) coordinated a regional alumni roundup in Nashville, Tenn., on August 16.

ABAC enrollment continued to climb in the fall semester with 3,457 students, a 1.9 per cent increase over the 2013 fall term. The enrollment included students from 151 Georgia counties, 16 states, and 25 countries. ABAC was the only college or university south of Macon in the University System to increase its enrollment in both the 2013 and 2014 fall semesters.

The ABAC Alumni Association hosted its annual Milk and Cookies Day on August 26 when over 200 ABAC students stopped by the Alumni House to write thank you letters to their benefactors for their ABAC scholarships.

Rowena Loyd, wife of former ABAC President Harold Loyd, passed away on September 6. Dr. Susan Roe and members of the ABAC choral program sang the National Anthem on the front steps of Tift Hall on September 12 to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the song. The Georgia

Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village was one of only nine places in the state to host the Georgia Art Collection *Inspired Georgia* exhibit beginning September 13. Danielle Buehrer assumed her duties as Director of Institutional Research on September 15.

Paul W. Williams was selected as Interim Vice President for External Affairs on October 1. Also on October 1, every campus in the University System of Georgia adopted a tobacco and smoke-free campus policy. One hundred and fifty families attended the annual ABAC Family Weekend on October 3-5. Former Arts Experiment Station Director Syd Blackmarr was selected as one of 13 recipients for the Governor's Awards for the Arts and Humanities by Governor Nathan Deal on October 7. University System of Georgia Chancellor Hank Huckaby visited the ABAC campus on October 9. Ashley Mock resigned her position as Director of Public Relations on October 17. Lindsey Roberts became the Interim Director of Public Relations.

Marlee Mathis from Nashville was crowned Ms. ABAC 2015 on October 23. Andy Paul, a sophomore agricultural education major from Lexington, was named the president of the national FFA organization at the annual convention in Louisville, Ky. He became the first ABAC student ever selected as the National FFA President.

President Jimmy Carter Speaks at ABAC on October 28

President Jimmy Carter enthralled a standing room only audience in Howard Auditorium on October 28 when he spoke on the Carter Center and his life after the White House. He was hosted by the ABAC College Democrats. The student chapter of the National Wildlife Society at ABAC was named best in the nation at the annual conference in Pittsburgh, Penn. The Baldwin Players presented the female version of *The Odd Couple* on November 6-8. The Stafford School of Business launched a new club called Enactus ABAC.

Baseball Coach Robert Morgan resigned on November 6. Assistant Coach Brandon Reeder was named interim head coach by Athletics Director Alan Kramer. Coach Jimmy Ballenger's ABAC soccer team lost to Darton 5-0 in the second round of the state playoffs. The Fillies had a 2014 record of 6-8-3. Kerry Newman from Hemstead, England was named first team all-conference, and Jasmine Johnson from Warner Robins was named second team all-conference.

ABAC President David Bridges announced on November 14 that all ABAC housing will be under the direction of Corvias Campus Living beginning on July 1, 2015 as a part of Phase One of the University System of Georgia's Public Private Partnership. The ABAC Foundation and its subsidiary organizations, First ABAC LLC and Second ABAC LLC, had worked with the Tift County Development Authority and the University System to build and maintain student housing at ABAC Place and ABAC Lakeside since 2002.

“We are grateful to the ABAC Foundation, its previous and present leadership, and the Tift County Development Authority for stepping up and investing in the College,” Bridges said. “Without the housing that was built under the previous public partnership, ABAC would be a fraction of its current size and its economic impact to the area would have been greatly diminished.”

Bridges said the ABAC Foundation’s effort has been very successful but the University System’s Board of Regents decided that a new financial model was necessary to provide affordable housing for all System institutions without raising the debt load of the State of Georgia. Under the new agreement, which affects nine System institutions, neither ABAC nor the ABAC Foundation will have debt liabilities associated with student housing.

Retha Martin, a business major from Moultrie, received the Donaldson Award at the fall commencement ceremony on December 11. Andrea Smith, a biology major from Fitzgerald, received the first ever ABAC Alumni Association Award for bachelor’s degree graduates at the ceremony. Jim Hall (Class of ’83) was the commencement speaker. He is the Chief of Law Enforcement for the National Wildlife Refuge System through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Dr. Worth Bridges passed away on December 14. A former vice president and dean of student affairs at ABAC, Bridges retired in 1995 after 28 years of service.

2015

A total of 3,137 students enrolled at ABAC for the 2015 spring semester, a slight increase over the 3,132 students enrolled in the spring term of 2014. The enrollment included students from 150 Georgia counties, 18 states, and 28 countries. ABAC has now increased its enrollment for four consecutive semesters.

Dr. Vincent Keesee, an art professor at ABAC from 1965-95, opened a one-man art show at the Gallery of the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village on January 8. The Peach State Opera Company presented *The Elixir of Love* on January 22 in Howard Auditorium as a part of the ABAC Arts Series.

From tablets to Telehealth, the nursing students at ABAC began incorporating the latest technology into their preparations for Registered Nurse certification in January. Troy Spicer, Dean of the School of Nursing and Health Sciences, said ABAC is the first college in the state to



offer certification of nursing students through the new Telehealth technology. “Telehealth is the delivery of health-related services using telecommunications and related technologies in the support of patient care, health education, and administrative activities,” Spicer said. “It’s a technology that’s really changing the way we think about connecting to our health care.” Tools of the Telehealth trade include probes equipped with cameras so a doctor in another location can see the image on a video screen. A Bluetooth stethoscope allows ABAC nursing students to share what they’re hearing from a patient on site with a doctor in his office miles away. Spicer said the ABAC nursing students are adapting rapidly to the new Telehealth technology but they seem to be even more impressed with the new tablets that every student entering the program this semester now utilizes. “No more giant book bags with heavy textbooks,” Spicer said. “These tablets contain all of their textbooks, allow access to specialized nursing and health care apps, and provide access to a web-based simulated patient records platform.” Spicer said as long as the students can get a Wi Fi connection, they can access learning resources on campus, in the classrooms, and in the hospitals where they spend many hours in clinical experiences. “ABAC is the first nursing program in the state to provide tablets and electronically integrate learning resources for a more up to date student learning experience,” Spicer said.

ABAC President David Bridges presented Mamie Ethel Arnold Talley with green-and-gold balloons and flowers on her 105th birthday on January 22. She is ABAC’s oldest alumnus. Talley attended the Second District A&M School and graduated from the South Georgia A&M College in 1928.

The Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village captured three statewide awards at the annual meeting of the Georgia Association of Museums and Galleries. Polly Huff, assistant director and curator at the Museum, said the Museum received the Best Museum Exhibit Award, the Best Museum Gallery Event Award, and the Best Educational Program Award.

The ABAC newspaper received four overall awards and nine individual awards at the Georgia College Press Association convention. The newspaper also received 10 awards at the Southern Regional Press Institute. Dr. Thomas Grant is *The Stallion* advisor.

Equus, a new ABAC dance troupe, performed for the first time at the Stallion Day recruitment event on February 14. For the second year in a row, ABAC met the standards to become a Tree Campus USA community on February 18. ABAC replaced 19 trees and planted 37 new trees in 2014.

The ABAC Ambassadors served cupcakes in the dining hall on February 20 to celebrate ABAC’s 107th birthday. Dr. Deidre Mercer Martin joined the ABAC staff on March 1 as Director of Advancement/Development Officer. Originally from Omega, she recently retired from her position as Vice Chancellor for University Advancement at the University of South

Carolina Aiken.

Dr. Alison Mann, assistant professor of history and political science, helped ABAC students rewrite the constitution for the Student Government Association. ABAC President David Bridges signed his approval of the updated document on March 6 in The History Room in Tift Hall. The SGA was inactive at ABAC for the 2014-15 academic year.

Laura Groover Whiddon (Class of '74) and her husband, Darrell Whiddon (Class of '73) presented a 150-year-old Burdett pump organ to the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village.

The AET Club brought a full-scale Truck and Tractor Pull to the campus on March 5-7 for the first time in 30 years. *An Evening for ABAC* was a complete sellout of all 400 seats available on March 6 when Katie Deal performed the songs of Patsy Cline in Gressette Gym. Vice President for External Affairs and Advancement Paul Williams said the event raised \$62,500 for student scholarships.

The Baldwin Players presented *The Whipping Man* at the Peanut Museum of the Georgia Museum of Agriculture on March 5-7 for their spring production. Dr. J.P. Rowe (Class of '58) passed away on March 12. He was a chemistry professor at ABAC from 1959 until his retirement in 1991.

ABAC students traveled all over the world for spring break 2015, visiting Belize as a part of marine biology and marine science classes; Paris, France for a world literature class; Starkville, Miss., for the 58th annual Southern Forestry Conclave; Orlando, Fla., for a choral engagement at EPCOT; and the states of Iowa, Illinois, Tennessee, and Nebraska for a beef industry tour.

Former ABAC Media Services Coordinator Sandra Hunt (Class of '80) passed away on March 25. She joined the college as a learning resources specialist with the Independent Learning Center on February 21, 1977, and retired on July 2, 1997. Cooper Mayhall threw a no-hitter for the ABAC baseball team in its 3-0 win over East Georgia on March 27. The freshman lefthander from Thomas County Central High School finished with seven strikeouts and continues to lead the Georgia Collegiate Athletic Association in earned run average. He has a 5-1 record and an ERA of 1.05. Mayhall was named the National Junior College Athletic Association Co-Pitcher of the Week.

Betty McCorvey retired from her position as director of sponsored programs on March 31. She joined the ABAC staff as assistant director of development on Sept. 2, 1997. McCorvey helped to coordinate the Trisha Yearwood Dollars for Scholars event in 2006 which attracted the largest crowd in the history of the show. She assumed leadership of sponsored programs in 2009 and



was instrumental in \$22.6 million in funds benefitting the college through sponsored programs in the last six years.

Melvin Merrill retired from his position as Director of Capital Planning on April 1. He joined the college as director of development on July 1, 1978. Honored in 2011 by the Georgia Education Advancement Council with its Lifetime Achievement Award, Merrill was recognized at that time for over 8,600 ABAC constituents contributing in excess of \$23,540,000 in support of ABAC programs. Merrill became Director of Capital Planning in 2011 and led the charge on capital projects valued at almost \$80,000,000.

At the Honors Day ceremony on April 8, award winners included Dr. Hans Schmeisser, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence; Sherin Nixon, Roy R. Jackson, Sr., Award for Staff Excellence; Javier Gonzalez, E. Lanier Carson Leadership Award for College Administrators; and Rebecca Daly Cofer, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Excellence in Advising Award. Sarah A. Rooks, a senior biology major from Ashburn, became the first and only person in the 28-year history of the award to be named the J.G. Woodroof Scholar on two occasions. She also won the award in 2013.

At the annual faculty-staff picnic after the Honors Day ceremony, plaques for 30 years of service to ABAC were presented to Randy Carter and Judy Perry. Other service award recipients included Dr. Gail Dillard and Dr. Abul Sheikh, 25 years; Donna Campbell, Dr. Maggie Martin, Jean Oliver-Burks, Beth Thornton, and Anita White, 20 years; Dr. Erin Campbell, Donna Hatcher, Dr. Joseph Njoroge, and Donnie Thompson, 15 years; Jimmy Ballenger, Tracy Dyal, Diantha Ellis, Dr. Chris Kinsey, Ray Lundy, Dr. Brian Ray, Clayton Riehle, Donna Sledge, Susan Thompson, Elizabeth Wilcox, and Mary Willis, 10 years; and Bonnie Asselin, Dr. Jordan Cofer, Rebecca Cofer, James Lewis, Dr. Hans Schmeisser, Charla Terrell, Nicholas Urquhart, Paul Willis, and Alma Young, five years.

Clay Degler from Greenville and Lisa Stephens from Turin were crowned 2015 Homecoming King and Queen at the annual concert on April 9 in the Tractor Pull Arena. Ray Fulcher and Faren Rachels provided the entertainment. ABAC softball coach Donna Campbell was the Grand Marshal of the Homecoming parade on April 10. The Forestry Society won the Homecoming Stallion Cup.

Both ABAC tennis teams won NJCAA Region XVII championships at the Red Hill Tennis Center on April 10. The Stallions defeated Georgia Perimeter 9-0, and the Fillies beat Georgia Perimeter 8-1. Josh Page was selected MVP of the men's tournament, and Lizanne Jinkertz was named MVP of the women's tournament. Coach Dale White was named the Coach of the Year for both men's and women's tennis in the state. The Fillies finished 12th in the national tournament, and the Stallions wound up third in the national tournament. Page lost his bid to



become only the second ABAC men's tennis player in history to win back-to-back national titles at number one singles when he lost in the semifinal round. Jean Francoise Lagloire won national titles in 1989 and 1990.

Sparks Selected for Top Alumni Award at Homecoming

Dr. Beverly Sparks (Class of '76) received the Distinguished Alumnus Award from the ABAC Alumni Association at the annual awards dinner in Gressette Gym on April 10. Other award winners included Lauri Jo Bennett (Class of '88), Helen Brown Sasser Award; State Senator Tyler Harper (Class of '06), Outstanding Young Alumnus; Jimmy Grubbs (Class of '65), J. Lamar Branch Award; Dr. Shelley Fandel (Class of '01), Outstanding Educator; Keri Jones (Class of '99), Outstanding Business Leader; Johnny Cochran (Class of '76), Master Farmer; Jack Perry, Honorary Alumnus; and the Marshall Bennett, Sr., family from Adel, Family Legacy Award.

Athletics Director Alan Kramer recognized the 2015 class of the Athletics Hall of Fame at the alumni dinner. Recipients included Ralph Bryant (Class of '81), Tommy Dial (Class of '64), Monika Lalewicz (Class of '09), Sonny Skinner (Class of '80), the 1999 women's tennis team, and Dr. Larry and Debra Moorman.

On April 11, the School of Nursing and Health Sciences raised more than \$10,000 for the Lisa Purvis Allison Scholarship at the fourth annual Run for the Nurses, the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village at ABAC had almost 600 people at its annual Folklife Festival, alumni involved in the journalism program enjoyed a reunion with former faculty member Helen Strickland at the Alumni House, and Homecoming culminated with the annual Gee Haw Whoa Back Rodeo.

In Larry Byrnes' first year as coach, the ABAC golf team finished second in the NJCAA Region XVII tournament. Jeb Stewart from Swainsboro finished in a tie for fourth in the individual standings and made the All-Region team. The baseball Stallions finished fourth in the conference with a 27-30 overall record. Brandon Reeder was the interim coach for the season. Caleb Slaughter hit .364 with two home runs and 25 runs batted in to earn a first team spot on the All-Conference squad. Jacob Baxter was named to the second team, and Nick Higginbotham earned a Gold Glove award for handling 127 chances without an error in the outfield.

In her final year as coach, Donna Campbell led the ABAC softball team to the regular season championship in the Georgia Collegiate Athletic Association with an overall record of 26-12 and a conference record of 16-6. The Fillies finished second in the league tournament. Mikela Barlow and Brittany Davis were selected for the NJCAA All-Region XVII team and the Region XVII All-Tournament Team. Taylor Boyett, Brooke Keen, and Taylor Owens were named to

the All-Region team, and Jenna Byrd was named to the All-Tournament team. Campbell will continue to be an ABAC faculty member but will retire from the coaching profession. She ended her career with a record of 753 wins and 494 losses.

Dr. Jordan Cofer completed the Executive Leadership Institute of the University System of Georgia. Rebecca Cofer was named a Superior Pacesetter and 11 other Pacesetter award winners were named at the annual leadership banquet. Student Pacesetter recipients were Slayten Carter, Josh Clements, Clara Grace Coker, Tiffany Miller, and Tre'mon Mills. Faculty-staff Pacesetter winners were Cindy Barber, Bernice Corbin, Doug Hicks, Lindsey Roberts, Terence Turner, and Kaci West.

Taylor Martin, a diversified agriculture major from Wrightsville, was elected as the 2015-16 Student Government Association president. ABAC has been without an SGA for the past year as ABAC students put together a constitutional convention and restructured the entire organization. Andrew Belk, a music major from Douglas, was selected as SGA vice-president.

Former ABAC faculty member Helen Strickland received the Distinguished Alumni Educator Award from the Grady School of Journalism at the University of Georgia on April 18. ABAC alumnus Jay Shaw (Class of '68) passed away on April 20. He was a state representative for 16 years and Mayor of Lakeland for 10 years.

The second annual Carry The Load Step-Off Rally was held at ABAC on April 23. ABAC students Victoria Burnette, Jessica Gorseth, Aaron Harrell, Lane Riley, Rilea Stapf, Spencer Wilbanks, Demarcus Bateman, Matt Reid, and Rodney Troupe will accompany Dill Driscoll, Dean of the Stafford School of Business, on the national Carry The Load relay route from West Point, N.Y., to Dallas, Texas on April 28 through Memorial Day. Carry The Load is a national effort to restore the true meaning of Memorial Day.

As a part of the Carry The Load rally, ABAC President David Bridges and his wife, Kim, hosted a reception for the family of Harold Bascom "Pinky" Durham, Jr., who gave his life for his country on October 17, 1967 in Vietnam. He was awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously in a presentation to his mother, Grace Durham Jolley, on October 30, 1969. Durham was an ABAC alumnus as was his brother, John, who was present at the reception. Bridges said that ABAC will be the home for a Pinky Durham Museum on the campus with memorabilia including the actual Medal of Honor. He also said ABAC will be the home to a Veterans Center where veterans can "gather, study, work together, and access the support they have earned and deserve." In another show of support for veterans, Bridges said he and his wife would commit to the funding of the \$20,000 first phase of the new ABAC Veterans Enrichment Fund. He challenged members of the ABAC Foundation Board of Trustees to grow the fund to \$100,000 by May 1.

Georgia Power Area Manager Lynn Lovett assumed the responsibility of Chair of the ABAC Foundation Board of Trustees at their meeting on April 23. She welcomed five new trustees including Dr. Greg Anderson (Class of '78), Amber Davis Collins (Class of '98), Jaclyn Dixon Ford, Larry Montgomery, and Cain Thurmond (Class of '11).

Brittney Gunter, Kevin Vantrees, and Allison Gordon received Larry Allen Leadership awards from Dr. Jerry Baker, Dean of the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Allen is a former chair of the Division of Agriculture at ABAC. Jessica Swords (Class of '08) was named Director of Student Accounts in the Office of Fiscal Affairs.

Grounds and Maintenance Supervisor Monty Spinks retired after a 21-year career with the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village at ABAC on May 1. His father, former state senator Ford Spinks, spearheaded efforts to build the Georgia Agrirama, which opened to the public on July 4, 1976. On July 1, 2010, Georgia legislators made the Museum a part of the ABAC campus.

More students than at any other time in the 107-year history of ABAC completed their requirements for graduation at the end of the spring term. President David Bridges said a record-breaking 409 students completed degree requirements and 264 of them participated in the spring commencement ceremony on May 7. A total of 117 graduates received bachelor's degrees, shattering the previous record of 67. The Stafford School of Business also set a record by awarding 24 bachelor's degrees in business and economic development.

Allison Gordy, a natural resource management major from Sharpsburg, received the ABAC Alumni Association Award for the top bachelor's degree graduate participating in the ceremony, and Samuel Peraza, a journalism major from Loganville, received the George P. Donaldson Award for the top associate degree graduate participating in the ceremony. Dr. Beverly Sparks (Class of '76) was the guest speaker. Gressette Gymnasium was completely filled, and a total of 90 visitors watched the ceremony on a live audio/video feed in Howard Auditorium.

Brandon Reeder, who led the baseball Stallions to fourth place finish in the state tournament and a record of 27-30, was named head coach of the ABAC baseball team in June after serving one year as interim coach. ABAC outfielder Nick Higginbotham was selected to receive a national Rawlings Gold Glove Award for his stellar play in center field for the Stallions. He was one of only three outfielders in the nation to receive the award. Caleb Slaughter was selected for the East Central All District team.

Clara Grace Coker, an English major from Ashburn, was one of 90 students nationwide to receive a 2015 Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation.



Marlee Mathis, a nursing major from Nashville, was the first recipient of the Christie Ann Vickers Murphy scholarship in nursing. Mathis is the reigning Miss ABAC.

New ABAC staff additions in June included Heather Gilman Fletcher (Class of '07) as the conference facilities coordinator and marketing assistant at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village, Josie Smith (Class of '10) as the advancement coordinator for the office of college advancement, and Kristoff Cohran (Class of '15) as the business coordinator with the Stafford School of Business.

Stafford School of Business instructor Franzelle Pertilla and Georgia Museum of Agriculture Director Garrett Boone completed the Region 11 class of the Georgia Academy for Economic Development.

Groundbreaking for Laboratory Sciences Building on June 25

Ten shovels filled with red soil worked in unison on June 25 for a groundbreaking photo opportunity. Then a yellow motor grader smoothed out the dirt as the real construction began on the new \$8.5 million laboratory sciences building on a steamy hot summer morning. "It is more than symbolic that this building will stand at the academic crossroads of the ABAC campus," ABAC President David Bridges said at the brief ceremony. "More than 80 per cent of our students are enrolled in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics disciplines." Bridges thanked a long list of all those who helped to make construction funds for the building possible. Georgia legislators topped the list including Representative Penny Houston who was present for the ceremony. He also expressed his appreciation to Georgia Governor Nathan Deal, University System of Georgia (USG) Chancellor Hank Huckaby and members of the Board of Regents, USG staff including Michael Miller, who was present for the ceremony, ABAC Capital Planning Director Melvin Merrill, and the trustees of the ABAC Foundation, who made a commitment of up to \$1.5 million to complete the project. Dr. Johnny Evans, Dean of the School of Science and Mathematics, said the 20,966 square-foot building will be utilized by every student who enrolls for classes at ABAC.

"This building will provide an amazing study space for students along with access to the most modern equipment and lab technologies," Evans said. "It is focused on meeting students' needs and providing a space for discovery, research, and creativity." Sarah Rooks, the only two-time recipient of the prestigious J.G. Woodroof Scholar Award in the history of ABAC, spoke from a student's viewpoint. "Frankly, I am a little jealous of the incoming students who will get to use these new labs," Rooks, who graduated with her ABAC bachelor's degree in biology in May, said. "There are times when you don't truly learn something until you can put your hands on it and see it with your own eyes." International City Builders from Warner Robins was selected through a bid process to construct the building. The Georgia State Finance and Investment



Commission will manage the construction process. Rob Evans from Ingram Parris Group in Valdosta is the architect for the project. Merrill said the building will contain eight laboratories focusing on general biology, microbiology, molecular biology, general chemistry, tissue culture, organic chemistry, and anatomy/physiology. Preparation rooms will support each lab. The building is scheduled to be ready for use by ABAC students during the 2016 fall semester.

Jimmy Felton retired on June 30 after 22 years as a horticulture technician in the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Other retirees in recent weeks have included Melvin Merrill, 37 years; Kay Weeks, 36 years; Randy Carter, 30 years; Sherin Nixon, 30 years; Betty McCorvey, 18 years; and Monty Spinks, 21 years.

ABAC President Begins 10th Year

Dr. David Bridges began his 10th year as president of ABAC on July 1. The fact that ABAC is the only college or university south of Macon in the University System of Georgia (USG) to experience an enrollment increase for the past two years tops his points of pride list. “The primary reason for the increase is that we have an identifiable mission,” Bridges said. “We know who we are. Our enrollment went up because we had an increase in the number of students choosing the bachelor’s degrees in agriculture and natural resources. Our bachelor’s degrees in biology and business are doing pretty well also.” Much has changed since Bridges stood on the front porch of Tift Hall on May 11, 2006 when he was selected by the Board of Regents of the USG to serve as the 10th president in the history of ABAC. On May 17, 2006, he returned to that same front porch to announce that ABAC had been granted state college status and would begin offering bachelor’s degrees. That changed everything. “The addition of bachelor’s degrees to the ABAC curriculum is the single biggest change during my tenure as president,” Bridges said. “Nothing else comes close. I think we hit it about right. We didn’t add a lot of bachelor’s degrees overnight. We raised our admissions standards. Now I think more of our students have a start-to-finish mentality. We have more students committed to getting a bachelor’s degree, and we certainly have more graduates. Our graduation rate is 200 per cent of the state college average. Scholarships have really helped the enrollment as well. We had about \$300,000 worth of scholarships when I started and now we have just shy of \$1,000,000 worth of private financial assistance.” With nine years of his presidency behind him, Bridges reflected on how necessity has altered his presidential style a bit. “We have been through some austere budget years,” Bridges said. “I would have liked to have spent more time on leadership and less time on management but we have a much smaller number of non-academic personnel that we did at one time. The number of bureaucratic demands has increased exponentially. We don’t have the autonomy we once had. Now everybody from the federal government to the state government to accrediting agencies to the Board of Regents to the Supreme Court tells us what we need to be doing. I’ve had to become more of an operational president because of that. In tough times, you just manage through it. I don’t necessarily like that but right now we’re operating in that type of



environment.” As Bridges looks to the start of the 2015 fall semester, he hopes to focus on the implementation of a new strategic plan for the college. The cornerstone of the plan involves making sure ABAC graduates are prepared for the real world. “Our value is cast in preparing students for life,” Bridges, the only ABAC president who was also an ABAC graduate (Class of ’78), said. “We have to keep mentoring, coaching, and placing students in internships. Unless we keep doing things of that nature that distinguish us, we’re just like everyone else. We have to remain student-focused.” The list of ABAC accomplishments during Bridges’ tenure is a long one. In 2006, ABAC opened the Health Sciences building. In 2007, ABAC added the ABAC Lakeside housing facility and the soccer field. ABAC celebrated its 100th birthday in 2008 with a year-long centennial celebration. In 2009, the ABAC academic curriculum was divided into six schools of study, and deans were selected to head each school. In 2010, ABAC took over the operation of the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village. In 2012, a USG report said that ABAC had an economic impact of \$281,563,172 on Tift and surrounding counties. In 2013, the college completed the Historic Front of Campus renovation, which changed the physical look of the three original buildings on campus, the front lawn, and the area behind Tift, Lewis, and Herring halls. In recent news, ABAC broke ground on a new \$8.5 million laboratory sciences building on June 25. Not many presidents enjoy double digit tenures at their respective institutions. Bridges, 57, feels fortunate to be in that group. But it’s obvious he is still hungry to climb another hill or two to see what’s on the other side before his time at ABAC ends. “My hope is that I realize it’s time for me to go before others let me know it’s time for me to go,” Bridges said with a chuckle. “I’m not looking for another executive academic position. I am beginning to consider what my post-ABAC life will be like. I will not be here forever, but I do have a few more things I want to accomplish.”

Dr. Mary Emma Henderson, former ABAC librarian, passed away on July 20 at the age of 92. Former Academic Dean Loyal Norman hired her as a cataloging librarian in 1967. She retired on August 1, 1988. Carla Hall (Class of ’91) was named a trustee for the ABAC Foundation by Lynn Lovett, chair of the trustees. Hall won the Ms. ABAC 1991 title.

Dr. Brian Ray appeared in the movie, *Surrender*, which premiered on July 11 at the Grand Theatre in Fitzgerald. Jennifer Martinez was named the new softball coach, replacing Donna Campbell, who retired from coaching but will continue to teach. Martinez was the assistant softball coach and pitching coach at Georgia Southwestern for the past three years.

Dr. Cyndy Hall is the new director for Baldwin Academy, the dual enrollment program for high school students. She is also an associate professor of English in the School of Liberal Arts and director of the Honors Program. ABAC enrolled 1,006 students for the summer term.

Thanks to a five-year federal grant worth \$2.125 million, the College Assistance Migrant Program will return to the ABAC campus this fall. ABAC’s grant application was not approved

in 2014 for the first time since the program began in 1999. After a one-year absence, the program is now funded to service 32 students from migrant families on an annual basis.

In his annual address to the faculty and staff on August 6, President David Bridges said, “Our goal is to be a destination for students who want to come here because it’s the best place to kick start the rest of their life. We’re life developers. We prepare people for life.” Gloria Beard (Class of ’87) was the guest speaker for the Freshman Convocation on August 11.

ABAC enrolled 3,393 students for the 2015 fall semester, a 1.9 percent decrease from the 2014 fall enrollment and the first decline since 2012. ABAC is 52.1 percent female and has the youngest average age of any State College in the University System, 21.1 years old. ABAC has students from 153 Georgia counties, 203 students from 25 states and 33 students from 22 countries. A total of 41 percent of ABAC students are enrolled in bachelor’s degree programs, up from 33 percent in 2014. Every one of the 1,400 possible ABAC housing spots was filled.

Dill Driscoll, Dean of the Stafford School of Business, announced that he would be returning to private business after the 2015 fall term. His wife, Susan, who was appointed a co-dean of the school with her husband in 2012, moved back to the business world on June 30. Dill Driscoll will continue to work with ABAC students on a part time basis.

“We have achieved all the goals we set for ourselves and the school,” Dill Driscoll said. “We realize it’s time for new people to come in and share their ideas. It has been an absolute joy to work with these kids. We couldn’t be prouder of them.”

Milestones during the Driscolls’ tenure included the naming of the Stafford School of Business on November 7, 2012, the re-opening of Lewis Hall as the home of the Stafford School of Business on March 1, 2013, the announcement of the bachelor’s degree in business and economic development on March 25, 2014, Stafford Hall, Carry The Load, and guest speakers such as former Navy SEAL Coleman Ruiz.

ABAC Opens Veteran Success Center on August 21

ABAC opened the Veteran Success Center in J. Lamar Branch Hall on August 21. President David Bridges said the mission of the Center is to provide services and support to veterans, military family members and those currently in service to our country’s armed forces. As a part of the ceremony, ABAC became a Purple Heart College of the USA. ABAC student Matthew Bridges, a retired corporal from the U.S. Marine Corps, said, “In the military, there is a saying ‘leave no man behind’ and with your continued help we can help the students who are veterans now and in the future. I know I owe my own success both personally and academically to the staff here at ABAC, and that is greatly appreciated.”



Georgia Court of Appeals Judge John Ellington (Class of '80) was the guest speaker at the Constitution Day event in the Chapel of All Faiths on September 17. The Albany Symphony Orchestra kicked off the fourth season of the ABAC performing arts series on September 27.

Lindsey Roberts (Class of '09) was named director of the newly created Office of Marketing and Communications at ABAC on October 1. She joined the ABAC staff as public relations assistant in 2012. She had directed the ABAC public relations office since former Director of Public Relations Ashley Mock resigned on October 17, 2014. Randi Walden (Class of '12) was named assistant director of the newly created office. She has been the information center coordinator since 2014.

Director of Enrollment Management Donna Webb has been accepted into the University System Executive Leadership Institute. Madison Lynn, a sophomore diversified agriculture major from Vidalia, was selected as Ms. ABAC 2016 on October 8. Director of Public Relations Emeritus Mike Chason was recognized for his 35th consecutive year as emcee of the event.

Under the direction of Lindsey Roberts, ABAC revamped its 2015 Sunbelt Expo building for the annual event on October 20-22. More student and alumni centered exhibits now dominate the interior and a front porch was added to the building which opened in 1999. Lanier Carson, who donated the funds for the original building, cut the ribbon to open the renovated building.

Jessica Swords (Class of '08), Director of Student Accounts and Veterans Certifying Official, received one of the highest honors presented by the University System of Georgia on October 21 when she was named Gold Level recipient of the Chancellor's Service Excellence Award for an Outstanding Individual. ABAC Comptroller Deidra Jackson described Swords as "one in a million. Jessica is always willing to take care of any task presented to her."

Swords was instrumental in the establishment of the Veteran Success Center which opened in Branch Hall on August 21. "My grandfather is a veteran," Swords said. "I try to make sure we take care of all their campus needs. As civilians, we should show our respect to the veterans."

The Baldwin Players presented *The Skin of Our Teeth* for their fall production in Howard Auditorium on October 29-31. The Golden Fillies' soccer team lost in the second round of the state playoffs to eventual state champion Darton by a 1-0 score. Coach Jimmy Ballenger's team defeated Georgia Military College 4-2 in the first round of the tournament. ABAC wound up 5-7-1 on the season. Alexis Holton and Bridgett Anchinges were named second team all-conference. Shelby Bursey and Katy Hunt were selected honorable mention all-conference. Hunt and Anchinges were named to the all-tournament team.

The Give Back to ABAC campaign sponsored by the Office of Advancement resulted in a 61.2 percent participation rate, up from an 11 percent participation rate in 2014. Former ABAC

President Harold Loyd and his wife, Clydene, visited ABAC on November 9. The Loyds live in Brookfield, Mo.

At a press conference in The History Room of Tift Hall on November 13, President David Bridges announced that Bryan Golden was no longer the Chief of Police at ABAC. Lieutenant Frank Strickland was named Acting Chief of Police. He is the former director of public safety in Griffin who joined the ABAC Police force in August.

The ABAC Concert Band attracted an overflow crowd to the Tift Theatre in downtown Tifton on November 17 when they presented the music of *Star Wars* with clips from the movies projected on the screen behind them. Concert Band Director Johnny Folsom directed the band with a light saber.

Georgia artist Glenn Simmions opened a one-man art exhibit at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village on November 21 featuring three-dimensional broken glass images as well as wood, vinyl, metal, and canvas. The Stafford School of Business held its annual Manna Drop at Charles Spencer Elementary School on November 21, benefitting hundreds of needy families in the community.

The *Pegasus* literary magazine launched its online edition in November, featuring a sampling of its 2015 issue. ABAC President David Bridges announced on December 4 that Perry Johnson (Class of '77) is the new Dean of the Stafford School of Business. Johnson is a former chief investment officer of BME Investment Partners in Atlanta. He and his wife, Lucinda, are both from Pearson.

“I’ve always wanted to come home and help young people discover their true gifts and talents,” Johnson said. “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.”

Kathy Moreno (Class of '96), an assistant professor in the Stafford School of Business, received the 2015 Outstanding Accounting Educator Award from The Educational Foundation of The Georgia Society of Certified Public Accountants, Inc. She joined the ABAC faculty as a fulltime instructor in 2002.

Matthew Daniel, a rural studies major from Summerville, received the ABAC Alumni Association Award for bachelor’s degree graduates at the fall commencement ceremony on December 10. Marlee Mathis, a nursing major from Nashville, received the Donaldson Award for associate degree graduates. Keri Jones (Class of '99) was the speaker for the event, which included 173 graduates.

2016



Lynn Lovett, chair of the ABAC Foundation Board of Trustees, welcomed three new members to the board on January 1. They included Emily Watson from Moultrie, Dr. Beverly Sparks (Class of '76) from Athens, and Michelle Higdon from Clemson, S.C. She announced that John W. Langdale, III, has committed to a new four-year term as well. The Governor's Office of Highway Safety announced a \$4,620 grant to ABAC for the Georgia Young Adult Program.

Dr. Darby Sewell (Class of '98) was named Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs, Engaged Learning, and Dr. Jordan Cofer was named Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs, Learning Resources on January 11. Sewell had served as Dean of the School of Human Sciences, and Cofer was the Department Head for English and Communication in the School of Liberal Arts.

ABAC enrolled 3,122 students for the spring semester, a slight decrease from the 3,137 students enrolled for the 2015 spring term. ABAC had the second highest percentage of full-time enrolled students among state colleges in the University System of Georgia at 68.7 per cent.

Victory Media named ABAC as a Military Friendly School for 2016. *Military Advanced Education & Transition* awarded ABAC a Top School designation for the third consecutive year. ABAC Foundation Chief Operating Officer Jodie Snow (Class of '00) was named president of the Tifton Judicial Circuit Bar Association. Stafford School of Business instructor Franzelle Pertilla spent January 5-15 as one of 15 elite educators in international business selected to take part in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations conference in Singapore and the Philippines.

The Academic Achievement Center employed a record 35 tutors for the spring semester. Marcus McDonald and Sheila Norvell were hired as tutors for the Veterans Success Center. Pianist Jasmin Arakawa performed at the Virtuoso Chamber Music Series on January 20. ABAC President David Bridges presented ABAC's oldest alumnus, Ethel Arnold Talley, with flowers, balloons, and cupcakes on January 22 when she reached the age of 106. The Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village at ABAC opened an exhibit January 28 showcasing the work of Annette Rigdon Swan. Systems Administrator Pathelyn Smith (Class of '77) retired on January 28 after 38 years and seven months at ABAC.

Museum Curator Polly Huff and Museum volunteer Keith Rucker (Class of '91) captured two of the top statewide awards from the Georgia Association for Museums and Galleries. Huff received the Best Museum Special Project award for the Backroads of Georgia Photo and Literary Competition and Exhibit. Rucker received the Volunteer of the Year award for his tireless efforts in many tasks including service as the engineer for the 1917 steam locomotive.

The ABAC performing arts series presented the Peach State Opera Company's version of *Don Giovanni* on February 11 in Howard Auditorium. The Gallery at the Museum opened the "Heart to Heart" art exhibit on February 13, showcasing seven of Lamar Dodd's Heart Series. Six paintings in the series belong to C.L. Morehead, Jr., (Class of '48). Students from the ABAC



Wildlife Society repaired and cleaned the wood duck boxes on President Jimmy Carter's property in Plains on February 13.

ABAC and Tift Regional Health System combined to create a Dedicated Education Unit at Tift Regional Medical Center to provide senior nursing students an opportunity to acquire real-world, hands-on training with an experienced nurse. Dr. Vanessa Lane entertained and informed over 125 persons on February 17 for a unique presentation called "Snakes in the Stacks" in the Baldwin Library. The wildlife faculty member allowed students to hold snakes inside the library.

The annual Evening for ABAC event featuring the Fabulous Equinox Orchestra on March 4 raised \$71,030 for student scholarships. Arts Connection Director Wayne Jones, who coordinated the event for the ABAC Foundation, said 459 persons attended the gala, which moved to the UGA Tifton Campus Conference Center this year after a complete sellout of the 2015 event in Gressette Gym. Jones said the amount raised for scholarships was the second highest net in the history of Evening for ABAC and Dollars for Scholars. The Trisha Yearwood show at Dollars for Scholars in 2006 raised a record \$90,145 for scholarships. The Dallas Brass performed on March 8 as a part of the ABAC performing arts series.

ABAC Announces New Bachelor's Degree in Nursing

In a press conference in The History Room in Tift Hall on March 10, President David Bridges announced that ABAC will begin offering a bachelor's degree in nursing beginning with the summer term. "This is like a dream come true for many of our nursing graduates in this area," Bridges said. "I think it's great that we are able to make this announcement during the 50th anniversary of nursing at ABAC." Troy Spicer (Class of '82), Dean of the School of Nursing and Health Sciences, said, "I would bet there is not a single person in South Georgia who has not been touched by a nurse who graduated from this program. If you have breathed air in the last 50 years in South Georgia, you or a member of your family have had contact with an ABAC nursing graduate." Dr. Tami Dennis (Class of '79), an associate professor of nursing, was the point person on the project to draw up the curriculum for ABAC's latest bachelor's degree.

ABAC was honored as a Tree Campus USA community for the third year in a row. The Baldwin Players under the direction of Dr. Brian Ray staged the musical, *Nunsense*, on March 31-April 3.

ABAC Alumni Association award winners at the annual dinner on April 1 included William H.H. Clark (Class of '56) of Ringgold, Distinguished Alumnus; Judy Perry (Class of '96) of Tifton, Helen Brown Sasser Award; Marcus Pollard (Class of 2003) from Madison, Outstanding Young Alumnus; Dr. Donald Gilman (Class of '81) from Ashburn, J. Lamar Branch Award; Gloria Beard (Class of '87) from Tifton, Outstanding Educator; Bennie Branch (Class of '86) from Tifton, Outstanding Business Leader; Alice Ray (Class of '82) from Lenox, Outstanding Health Care Professional; and Jonathan Harris (Class of '71) of Screven, Master Farmer. Larry



Montgomery from Carrollton was named an Honorary Alumnus, and the Nugent family from Alapaha received the Family Legacy Award.

At the same event, ABAC honored the new inductees into the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame. The Class of 2016 for the Hall of Fame included Wayne Cooper (Class of '62), Paul Fitzgerald (Class of 2008), Tom Moody (Class of '58), Jackie Moore (Class of 2002), David Owens (Class of '63), Ty Wright (Class of 2007), and the 1984 Golden Fillies' state championship basketball team and their coach, Keith Barr. Other Homecoming events under the theme of "There's no place like home" included the annual Gee Haw Whoa Back Rodeo and the fifth annual Run for the Nurses. ABAC alumnus Justin Thigpen (Class of '03) competed in steer wrestling and calf roping. He won over \$19,000 in 2015 in the Professional Cowboys Association as the second place All-Around Cowboy. Tyler Heath from Adrian and Savannah Hartley from Glenwood were crowned the Homecoming King and Queen.

Rebecca Cofer, coordinator of the Academic Achievement Center, was selected to the Commission and Interest Group appointed representative position of the National Academic Advising Association. ABAC tennis coach Dale White was selected for the Armstrong State University Athletic Hall of Fame. During his senior year at Armstrong in 2005, White and his doubles partner won the NCAA Division II national championship at number one doubles.

Hayley L. Dupree, a senior business and economic development major from Sylvester, received the J.G. Woodroof Award at the annual Honors Day ceremony on April 6. Faculty-staff award winners at the ceremony included Dr. James Galt-Brown, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence; Emily Cheek, Roy R. Jackson, Sr., Award for Staff Excellence; Troy Spicer, E. Lanier Carson Leadership Award for College Administrators; and Dr. Cynthia Hall, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Excellence in Advising Award.

In the annual faculty-staff service awards picnic after the Honors Day ceremony, the 30-year recipients included Pam Leonard and Kip Hall. Twenty-year recipients were Michelle Barton and Vickie Wilson. Fifteen-year recipients were Stephanie Coney, Olga Contreras Martinez, Brenda Graham, Wendy Harrison, Dr. Marvin Holtz, Polly Huff, and Dr. Jewrell Rivers. Ten-year recipients were Dr. David Bridges, Vickie Holloway, Ruth Jackson, Brooke Jernigan, Avi Kar, Esthela Lopez Flores, Dr. Tim Marshall, Ryan Myers, Jeannie Paulk, Becca Turner, and Gina Wilson. Five-year recipients were Dr. Joseph Brown, Deidra Jackson, David King, Joy Lott, Richard Spancake, and Dr. Eun-Kyunk You.

Taylor Martin became the only president in the history of the ABAC Student Government Association to be elected for two terms when she was sworn in on April 11. Other members of the SGA include Vice President Ginger Orton and Senators Ben Brock, Charlsy Anesetti, Jana Register, and James Williams. Jessica Wade from Douglas became the first female drummer in the history of the ABAC jazz band this year.

A study commissioned by the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia showed ABAC had a total economic impact of \$329,844,725 on Tift and surrounding counties during the 2014 fiscal year. Dr. Jeff Gibbs, professor emeritus of economics and the former dean of the ABAC business school, analyzed the data from the Selig Center for Economic Growth in the University of Georgia's Terry College of Business.

“ABAC creates substantial economic impact in terms of output, value-added (gross regional product), labor income and employment,” Gibbs said. “The economic impact of ABAC on its host community includes \$112 million in output, \$70 million in value added, \$35 million in labor income, and 1,344 full and part-time jobs.”

The admissions office and the honors program hosted Tift County High School's first ever AP Day on April 13 when 150 high school students spent the day at ABAC living as college students. Saxophonist Gregory Tardy and the ABAC Jazz Band played to a sellout crowd at the final event of the ABAC performing arts series on April 21. High school jazz bands from throughout the state performed in The Meadows during the day as a part of the annual ABAC Jazz Festival.

ABAC placed first in three different events at the annual Forestry Conclave sponsored by the Society of American Foresters at Clemson University. Jason Townley placed first in wood identification, and Ben Rampy finished first in knife throwing and axe throwing. ABAC finished ninth overall in the competition against major universities.

The ABAC Alumni Association hosted a Stallion Baseball Reunion on April 23 at Stallion Field. Former ABAC baseball player and current ABAC Alumni Association President Chuck Scarborough (Class of '78) threw out the first pitch. Athletics Director Alan Kramer highlighted recent improvements to Stallion Field including new bleachers and press box and outlined further improvements for the future.

President David Bridges announced a plan to raise \$1,000,000 for a veterans' endowment fund on the ABAC campus at the annual reception in Tift Hall to honor the Harold Bascom “Pinky” Durham, Jr., scholarship recipients on April 28. “Last year on this day, I told you that we would raise \$100,000 for veterans on the ABAC campus,” Bridges said. “My wife, Kim, and I showed out commitment by pledging the first \$20,000. We have raised that \$100,000, and now I want to let you know of a brand new commitment. I want to raise \$1,000,000 for a veterans' endowment fund on the campus of Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College.” During the past year, ABAC has followed a plan to recognize the accomplishments of veterans on the campus. The Veterans Initiative includes a new Veterans Center in the J. Lamar Branch Student Center, a student veterans' organization, recognition as a Military Friendly College, free tutoring for veterans beyond the normal tutoring hours, and advanced preferred registration for veterans. “We are doing this because I want future generations of ABAC students to know that we respect the



honor, the integrity, and the valor of those who serve in the armed forces of our country,” Bridges said. “We will continue to invest in those who invested so much in us. We must not forget that some of them invested their lives for our freedom.”

Bridges announced that Kevin Joachin, the 2015 Durham scholarship recipient, would have his scholarship renewed for another year. The new scholarship winner is Tift County High School senior Erin Fowler. Durham was a resident of Tifton and an ABAC alumnus. He gave his life serving his country in the Republic of Vietnam with the 1st Infantry Division on Oct. 17, 1967. He was honored posthumously with the Medal of Honor in a presentation to his mother, Grace Durham Jolley, on Oct. 30, 1969. Bridges said plans are progressing toward bringing Durham memorabilia to Tift Hall for a museum which will be dedicated in October.

Later in the day on April 28, the Stafford School of Business hosted the third annual Carry The Load Step Off event in front of Lewis Hall. The goal of Carry The Load is restore the true meaning of Memorial Day by connecting Americans to the sacrifices of our military, law enforcement, firefighters, and rescue personnel. Seven ABAC students will be a part of the Carry The Load National Relay from West Point, N.Y., to Dallas, Tex., and four more students will participate in the new West Coast National Relay from Seattle, Wash., to Dallas. Both groups will meet in Dallas on Memorial Day. ABAC students participating include Rakeem Alexander, Ainsley Cash, John Hall, Lane Riley, Russ Simpson, Rilea Stapf, Rodney Troupe, Matt Turner, Jalen Williams, Madison Woodson, and Chevy Young.

For the first time this year, four ABAC nurses will assist the East Coast National Relay. Kim Baldwin, Tammy Carter, Carmen Counts, and Cindia Dubravcic will be stationed in Washington D.C., Boston, Nashville, Tenn., and Atlanta. Dill Driscoll, former dean of the Stafford School of Business, continues to be one of the national organizers of the event.

As a part of the Step Off event, volunteers walked three laps around the ABAC Circle every 30 minutes during the afternoon. They were accompanied by veterans, students, alumni, faculty, staff, and administrators. An impressive ceremony at the end of the day involved the lowering of the American flag in front of Lewis Hall by the Tift County High School JROTC unit and presenting it to Matthew Bridges, president of the new ABAC Veterans organization. Bridges then presented the flag to Rodney Troupe as the Carry The Load team members boarded the bus to head to West Point, N.Y.

The ABAC Alumni Association hosted a Regional Roundup at Gin Creek in Colquitt County on the evening of April 28. After serving in an interim capacity for the past five months, Frank Strickland was named the new Chief of Police at ABAC. He is a former police chief and public safety director in Griffin, Toccoa, and Fort Valley. He also worked as police chief for the Medical College of Georgia and a police officer and supervisor for the University of Georgia police department during his 35-year career in law enforcement.

Spring 2016 Pacesetter award recipients presented by *The Stallion* included Dr. Kay Weeks, Polly Huff, Dr. Justin Ng., Dr. Heather Cathcart, Andrell Durden, Stoney Hart, Dr. Jordan Cofer, Dr. Gail Dillard, Cici Arriaga, Hillery Reeves, Page Johnson, and Rachel Lord. The ABAC bookstore held a book signing for Dr. Jordan Cofer and Dr. Jeff Newberry on April 26. Cofer wrote *The Gospel According to Flannery O'Connor—Examining the Role of the Bible in Flannery O'Connor's Fiction*, and Newberry wrote *A Stairway to the Sea*.

Gabe Strother from Washington and Amanda Stitt from Sharpsburg received the 2016 Larry Allen Leadership Awards from the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Ninety Lee County Middle School West sixth graders spent a day at the ABAC golf course to learn about soils and the environment. Forest Lakes Golf Course Superintendent Austin Lawton coordinated the visit.

Health care humorist David Glickman was the featured entertainment for the 50th Anniversary Celebration of Nursing Excellence on May 4 at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture. Guests of honor were three of the five graduates from the first ABAC nursing class, Suzette Cofer Alexander, Thresia Williams, and Georgia Bledsoe Simmons. They transferred to ABAC from the nursing training program at Norman College in 1966. The other two graduates were Warren Marilyn Jackson and Emily Bernice Shivers.

Suzette Cofer Alexander was the guest speaker at the ABAC spring commencement ceremony on May 5. She talked about her days as a student in the first days of the nursing program at ABAC in 1966. She later served as Chief of Nursing Service for the Veterans Administration. Cici Arriaga from Macon received the ABAC Alumni Association Award for the top bachelor's degree graduate, and Jacob Vagott from Centerville received the George P. Donaldson Award for the top associate degree graduate. Vagott was a dual enrolled student at Northside High School in Warner Robins and lived on the ABAC campus for the final two years of his high school career. He received his ABAC diploma before he received his high school degree.

The Golden Stallions finished fourth in the 2016 National Junior College Athletic Association national men's tennis tournament. Coach Dale White's team received a free pass to the tournament since there were no other competitors in NJCAA Region XVII this year. The Golden Fillies wound up 12th in the NJCAA women's national tennis tournament. White said the ABAC women's team also received an automatic berth to the national tournament because of a lack of competition in Region XVII.

Coach Brandon Reeder's ABAC baseball team was the third seed heading into the 2016 state baseball tournament. The Golden Stallions lost to East Georgia 8-2 and Gordon 10-2 in the first two games of the double elimination tournament to finish with a 26-29 overall record. Caleb Slaughter was named first team all-conference, and Blake Jackson and Austin Guest were named



second team all-conference. The Stallions hit 38 home runs in 2016. Reeder said the Stallions hit only six home runs on the season in both 2014 and 2015.

The Golden Fillies' softball team of first year Coach Jennifer Martinez compiled a record of 13-23 and did not make the state tournament field. Freshman shortstop Olivia Carter was selected first team all-conference, and freshman right fielder Trinity Coleman was selected second team all-conference.

Coach Larry Byrnes' ABAC golf team won the Division II portion of the NJCAA Region XVII state tournament in April and finished 10th in the national tournament in May in Plymouth, Ind. Ty Gore and Jeb Stewart received first team all-conference honors. Stewart received the honor for the second year in a row.

Eunice Mixon (Class of '58) received the Liberty Bell Award from the Tifton Bar Association at a luncheon in Tift Hall on May 24. Sunny Ross (Class of '14) joined the staff of the Office of Marketing and Communications as the event and information coordinator on June 6. Judy Perry (Class of '96), administrative assistant in the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources, retired on June 30 after 31 years at ABAC.

Dr. David Bridges (Class of '78) began his 11th year as the ABAC president on July 1. He said his number one goal for the coming year is "to add agricultural education as a bachelor's degree on our campus. The State of Georgia has had a deficit of vocational agriculture teachers for 30 years. We are in a unique situation to provide a solution to that problem."

Dr. Renata Elad, professor of agricultural economics, was selected as the interim dean of the Stafford School of Business on July 1 after the departure of Perry Johnson (Class of '77). Fitzgerald artist and educator David Malcolm opened his *Home Place Series* at the Gallery of the Georgia Museum of Agriculture on July 2.

ABAC Opens Laboratory Sciences Building on July 27

Dr. Johnny Evans, Dean of the School of Science and Mathematics, used a portable lighter to burn through a DNA Helix paper ribbon to open the \$8.5 million laboratory sciences building on July 27. "ABAC is now a destination for students who will find cures for diseases, invent amazing technology, and solve the toughest problems the world has ever faced," Evans said. "This new building is focused on meeting students' needs and providing a space for discovery, research, and creativity."

Ford Spinks (Class of '45) passed away on July 27. He served two terms in the Georgia Senate and was a Georgia public service commissioner from 1971 until 1989. Spinks was instrumental in the development of the Georgia Agrirama, which opened in Tifton on July 4, 1976. ABAC



took over the Agrirama on July 1, 2010, and it is now called the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village.

Philip “Goose” Simpson (Class of ’58) passed away on August 2. He was named to the All-America team when he was a member of the ABAC Stallions’ basketball squad. He was later a two-year starter at the University of Georgia where he was the most valuable player during his junior year and team captain during his senior season. Inducted into the inaugural class of the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2008, Simpson gained his nickname from legendary Harlem Globetrotters star Reece “Goose” Tatum.

In his 11th fall conference address to the faculty and staff of ABAC on August 4, President David Bridges assured the audience that “life is better at ABAC.” Now the longest-serving president in the University System of Georgia, Bridges said, “making the lives of young people better was the mission in 1908, and we’re still doing that today. We offer only one product, but it is a very valuable product. We offer the opportunity for a life-changing educational experience to every student who walks on our campus. The value of the ABAC experience is absolutely priceless.”

Dr. Thomas Turcotte (Class of 2012) was the guest speaker at the annual Freshman Convocation on August 9. “In 2008, I was sitting right where you are sitting now,” Turcotte, a former ABAC Ambassador, said. “I can tell you that without hard work, success will not happen. If you want something, go for it. You only live once.”

The ABAC Chamber Singers, under the direction of Dr. Susan Roe, sang the national anthem at the Atlanta Braves’ game at Turner Field on August 20. Alumni Director Lynda Fisher (Class of ’89) used the opportunity as an alumni event.

On behalf of the Harley Langdale, Jr., Foundation, Wesley Langdale (Class of ’91) presented a gift of \$250,000 to the ABAC Foundation on August 23 to support a new Destination Ag program at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village. The program will involve thousands of first through fifth graders from South Georgia. Key components of Destination Ag include hands-on field trip experiences for the youngsters at the Museum focused on the impact of agriculture and natural resources on daily lives with an emphasis on careers in these fields.

ABAC enrollment increased for the third time in the last four years during the 2016 fall term with a total head count of 3,475 students, a 2.4 increase from the 2015 number of 3,393. The college attracted students from 21 states, 26 countries, and 154 of Georgia’s 159 counties. The number of students enrolled in bachelor’s degree programs zoomed to 1,828, the highest in the history of ABAC.

“It looks as if the enrollment from Florida, South Carolina, and Alabama pushed us past last year,” ABAC President David Bridges said. “I think our neighbor waivers played a role in those students’ decisions to attend ABAC.”

The University System of Georgia instituted a policy in 2015 that allowed specified colleges to waive out-of-state tuition for students from bordering states. ABAC used those neighbor waivers as an incentive, resulting in 259 out-of-state students, up from 203 in 2015.

All 16 students enrolled in the new bachelor's degree program in nursing received scholarships during the fall term via the RN to BSN Professional Advancement Scholarship from the ABAC Foundation. The High School Equivalency Program (HEP) in the Office of Multicultural Education received a \$2.3 million grant renewal for the next five years.

Dr. Johnny Evans, Dean of the School of Nursing and Health Sciences, led a group of 20 ABAC students to Louisiana over the Labor Day weekend to assist eight families who were victims of recent flooding in the state. Another group of 88 students and 10 faculty and staff members returned to Louisiana during the fall break when they gutted the interior of 58 homes all the way to the stud walls by removing all flooring, drywall, doors, cabinets, and insulation in three days.

Olga Contreras Martinez (Class of '96) was named Director of Multicultural Programs at ABAC in September. She joined the staff as the HEP Program Coordinator in 2001. Dr. Leslie Pryor, Dr. Thomas Grant, Dr. Jason Scott, Dr. Jay Baldwin, and Dr. Thomas Heflin had proposals funded through the ABAC Foundation's Faculty Enrichment Fund.

Gressette Gym at ABAC served as a center for evacuees from Georgia and Florida during Hurricane Matthew on October 5-9. Tifton was not affected by the storm but it hammered the coast of Georgia and the northeast coast of Florida.

Freedom Gallery Opens in Tift Hall on October 13

When a UH-1 Iroquois "Huey" helicopter landed on the front lawn of Tift Hall on a blue-sky Thursday morning, it was obviously going to be a special day at ABAC. That day was October 13 when ABAC opened the Freedom Gallery inside Tift Hall with many veterans in attendance. "My wife, Kim, and I agreed that when we leave ABAC, we want to make sure that there is a place, a program, and a structure in place that will honor veterans and provide a platform to educate future generations of ABAC students about service to our country," ABAC President David Bridges said. A collection of historic panels laden with photos, documents, narratives, and memorabilia, the Freedom Gallery focuses on the life of Harold Bascom Durham, Jr., an ABAC alumnus and Tifton native who gave his life for his country on a Vietnam battlefield on October 17, 1967. For his courage under fire, he was selected as a posthumous recipient of the Medal of Honor. Lindsey Roberts, director of marketing and communications for ABAC, coordinated the project which showcases the actual Medal of Honor in a specially designed case in the center of the room. Members of the Durham family and the famed Black Lions of the U.S. Army were special guests at the ceremony.

On a small stage inside the ABAC building at the Sunbelt Agricultural Exposition on October 18, ABAC President David Bridges announced that the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia had approved a Bachelor of Science degree with a major in agricultural education for ABAC.

“The State of Georgia has had a deficit of vocational agriculture teachers for 30 years,” Bridges said. “We are now in a unique position to provide a solution to that problem.” Dr. Jerry Baker, Dean of the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources, said 107 students have already expressed interest in the degree. “We have seen growth in all our programs because our graduates have good skills, and they are prepared for the work force,” Baker said.

The Baldwin Players presented *The Birds* for their fall semester production in Howard Auditorium on October 27-29. The ABAC soccer team lost a 4-2 decision to Georgia Military in the semifinal round of the state tournament on October 28. Coach Jimmy Ballenger received Coach of the Year honors as his Fillies recorded a 9-4 record on the way to a best ever second place seed in the state tournament. Ashley Hammonds, Katy Hunt, and Blakeley Bergeron were named first team all-region, and Taylor Sorrows and Breanna Gomez were named second team all-region. Myesha Robinson and Lisa Macedo received honorable mention accolades.

Anna Marie Pugh, a junior agriculture major from Montgomery, Ala., was selected as Ms. ABAC 2017 at the 48th annual event on November 3 in Howard Auditorium. ABAC President David Bridges was the guest speaker at the annual Veterans Day event in Tifton on November 11. Hand sewn by Fereby Whiddon Henderson, a 120-year-old coverlet is now a permanent part of the collection at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village. The third annual Manna Drop organized by ABAC students provided food for 400 families on November 19 at Charles Spencer Elementary School. ABAC students raised nearly \$20,000 with the help of Tifton business owners and members of the community.

Hillery Reeves, an agricultural communications major from Rebecca, received the ABAC Alumni Association Award for bachelor’s degree graduates, and Madison Thornhill, a writing and communications major from Tifton, received the George P. Donaldson award for associate degree graduates at the fall commencement ceremony on Dec. 8. Matt Bentley (Class of ’88), general manager at Bendabout Properties in McDonald, Tenn., was the commencement speaker.

Military Advanced Education recognized ABAC as a Top School in the 2017 Military Advanced Education and Transition for the fourth year in a row. ABAC has also been named a 2016 Military Friendly School by Victory Media for the second consecutive year. Former ABAC Academic Dean Caroline Helms passed away at the age of 70 on December 15. Former ABAC Professor of Wildlife Charlie Marshall passed away at the age of 89 on December 21.

Ethel Arnold Talley, ABAC’s oldest alumnus, passed away on December 24 at the age of 106. She was a member of the Class of 1928 at the South Georgia Agricultural and Mechanical

College. She knew the secret to living a long life. “Live right and don’t eat a lot of sweets,” Talley said. “That’s the main thing. Keep walking and talking.”

2017

University System of Georgia Chancellor Steve Wrigley announced on January 6 that he planned to recommend to the Board of Regents the consolidation of ABAC and Bainbridge State College. “Consolidating ABAC and Bainbridge creates a unique opportunity to strategically align Bainbridge State’s degree offerings with workforce and regional needs,” Wrigley said. ABAC President David Bridges will be the president of the consolidated institution, and the name will be Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College. The Regents approved the recommendation on January 11. “I believe this is a real vote of confidence in ABAC, and we will make it work for all of our students, whether they are in Bainbridge or Tifton or points in between,” Bridges said. “This expands our base, makes us a larger institution, and will give us access to more resources.” Bridges and Bainbridge State College Interim President Stuart Rayfield addressed the media at a press conference in The History Room in Tift Hall on January 12. A similar press conference was held later in the day in Bainbridge. A town hall meeting on the consolidation in Howard Auditorium on January 23 featured Bridges, Rayfield, and John Fuchko, vice chancellor for organizational effectiveness for the University System of Georgia. Later in the day, another town hall meeting was held in Bainbridge.

The spring semester enrollment was 3,133 students, a slight increase over the 3,122 students enrolled during the 2016 spring term. Dr. Renata Elad was appointed Dean of the Stafford School of Business on January 26 by ABAC President David Bridges. Elad, a Professor of Agricultural Economics in the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources, had served as interim dean of the Stafford School of Business since June 13, 2016. She joined the ABAC faculty in 1999.

Polly Huff, assistant director and curator at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village, received the Top Museum/Gallery institution in the state award and the Top Special Project Award at the annual meeting of the Georgia Association for Museums and Galleries. Grounds Manager Brad Barbee (Class of 2015) has been elected president of the Georgia branch of the Professional Grounds Managers Society. The ABAC Quizbowl team received first place for the second year in a row at the Southeastern Section of the Society of American Foresters event on Jan. 31. Syd Blackmarr, creator of the Arts Experiment Station at ABAC, was named to the Tifton-Tift County Chamber of Commerce Wall of Fame on February 2 at the annual meeting. The Olney Theater Center’s National Players presented *Grapes of Wrath* as a part of the ABAC Performing Arts Series on February 2.



Legendary civil rights activist and an original member of the Freedom Singers Rutha Harris spoke and sang on February 22 in the observance of African-American History Month. Pianist Read Gainsford performed as a part of the Arts Series on February 23. A \$1.8 million renovation of King Hall is underway. It will be home to six classrooms and 12 offices as well as its first elevator. The building was constructed in 1939. *The Stallion* received second place in the General Excellence category at the Georgia College Press Association awards ceremony among four-year colleges with enrollment under 8,000.

An Evening for ABAC on March 3 was the most successful in the history of ABAC. Wayne Jones, Director of the Arts Connection and the coordinator of the event for the ABAC Foundation, said the event raised \$100,820 for ABAC scholarships with 500 attendees. The previous high was the 2006 Dollars for ABAC Scholars featuring Trisha Yearwood which raised \$90,145 for scholarships.

The Baldwin Players performed *Little Foxes* at the Peanut Museum at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture on March 9-11. Dr. Jay Baldwin headed a committee which put together a student conference on freedom of speech, religion, press, and assembly on March 24-25. The Albany Symphony Orchestra performed as a part of the Arts Series on March 26. Dr. Vanessa Lane hosted the popular *Snakes in the Stacks* in the Baldwin Library on March 28. SGA President Taylor Martin cut the ribbon to open the Thrash Wellness Center and the renovated ABAC swimming pool on March 29. Constructed in 1939, the facility was named for Joseph M. Thrash, a professor and onetime football coach at the Second District Agricultural and Mechanical School. ABAC closed on April 5 due to severe weather conditions including heavy rain, strong winds, and the threat of tornadoes. The Honors Day ceremony had to be moved from April 5 to April 20.

Ben Copeland Receives Distinguished Alumnus Award at Homecoming

ABAC Alumni Association award winners at the annual Homecoming Awards Dinner on April 7 were Ben Copeland of Lakeland, Distinguished Alumnus; Gerald Long of Bainbridge, Master Farmer; Monika Griner of Moultrie, Helen Brown Sasser Award; Elizabeth Rowland of Jacksonville, Fla., J. Lamar Branch Award; William Bowen of Tifton, Outstanding Business Leader; Dr. Julie Rucker of Tifton, Outstanding Educator; Suzette Alexander of San Antonio, Texas, Outstanding Health Care Professional; Sam Watson of Moultrie, Outstanding Young Alumnus; the family of Abbie Jones Mulkey of Colquitt County, Family Legacy Award; and James Lee Adams from Camilla, Honorary Alumnus. ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame inductees at the dinner were tennis player Luiza Biktyakova, softball standout Lacy Whatley Kennon, soccer star Katrina Duncan-Marshalleck, basketball player Worth Hartry, golfer Joey Dixon, Tift County Recreation Department Director Craig Sowell, the posthumous induction of former volleyball and tennis coach Alton Hudgins, and the members of the 1964 state championship men's basketball team.



The Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village at ABAC opened an old-fashioned barber's booth and the office of a traveling circuit judge during the annual Folklife Festival on April 8. The ABAC Ambassadors received the Stallion Cup for best participation in Homecoming at the annual Gee Haw Whoa Back rodeo on April 8. Gavin Reed from Vienna and Meredith McGlamory from Abbeville were crowned Homecoming King and Queen. University Research and Review named ABAC a Best Value School for the fourth year in a row. Dr. Heather Cathcart from the School of Science and Mathematics was named the 2017 Southeastern District Tri-Beta Advisor of the Year at the Association of Biologists Conference.

Coach Larry Byrnes' ABAC golf team won its second consecutive NJCAA Region 17 golf championship on April 18 at The Brickyard Course in Macon. With a three-day score of 931, ABAC defeated Georgia Military College and Andrew College. Andrew Nagel had rounds of 75, 72, and 72 to secure medalist honors. Nagel, Lane Jowers, and Kyung Chung from ABAC were named to the all-tournament team. Byrnes was selected as the Region 17 Coach of the Year. The Golden Stallions advanced to the district tournament in Spartanburg, S.C., on April 24-25 where they finished second behind Walters State. Chung and Jowers had rounds of 74 and 75. As one the top two finishers in the district, ABAC advanced to the national tournament in Mesa, Ariz., on May 23-26, where the Stallions finished 18th in the nation. Nagel wound up as the top individual finisher for ABAC in 50th place. Other ABAC participants were Jowers, Chung, Trevor Dailey, and Austin Bowman.

Dr. Erin Campbell received the W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence at the Honors Day ceremony on April 20. Other award winners were Anita White, Roy R. Jackson, Sr., Award for Staff Excellence; Dr. Gail Dillard, E. Lanier Carson Award for College Administrators; Christina Dent, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Excellence in Advising Award, and Dr. Thomas Grant, the first ever W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Excellence in Student Engagement. Ashley Pelham, a senior business major from Doerun, was selected as the J.G. Woodroof Scholar. On the same day, 23 employees who have been a part of ABAC for a combined 320 years were honored at the annual faculty-staff service awards ceremony. Senior Network Administrator Ernest Kelly from the Office of Technology Services received a 30-year service award. Other recipients included Dr. Bobbie Robinson and Keetra Branch, 25 years; Gary Dicks, Dr. Sandra Giles, Steve Janousek, Howard McCrary, and Dr. Amy Willis, 20 years; Doug Hicks, Dr. William Moore, Kathy Moreno, Dr. Jeff Newberry, Dr. Susan Roe, and Dr. Darby Sewell, 15 years; Deborah Drummonds, 10 years; and Gwen Anderson, Garrett Boone, Brenda Corbin, Cindy Epperly, Lynda Fisher, Dr. Jason Scott, Dr. Ray Smith, and Gloria Sulkowski, five years. Trumpeter Terrell Stafford performed with the ABAC Jazz Band in the final event of the Arts Series on April 20.

Baker Named Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs



Dr. Jerry Baker was named the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at ABAC on April 21. ABAC President David Bridges said the appointment will become effective July 1. Baker replaces Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs Gail Dillard, who is retiring June 30 after serving in the interim position since July 1, 2014. “I feel very honored and blessed to have this new opportunity,” Baker said. “Dr. Dillard’s leadership for the past three years has positioned ABAC for continued growth in enrollment because of refinements to our programs. There’s no question that the quality of our students and our faculty has significantly improved since the initiation of bachelor’s degrees to our curriculum.” Baker joined the ABAC administration on July 1, 2014 when he was named the Dean of the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Prior to that time, he was the Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director of Sigma Xi: The Scientific Research Society, an international honor society for scientists and engineers. Baker also served as publisher of the Sigma Xi American Scientist Magazine. His previous academic experience includes 13 years as a faculty member in the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences at the University of Georgia. From 1990-2003, Baker was an Assistant Professor, an Associate Professor and then Research, Extension and Instruction Coordinator for Animal and Dairy Science at the UGA Tifton Campus. Prior to his position at Sigma Xi, Baker was the Chief Executive Officer of the Federation of Animal Science Societies. His tenure at the Federation followed his stint as the Executive Director for the American Society of Animal Science.

For the fourth consecutive year, ABAC hosted a Carry The Load Step Off event on April 26-27. Dr. Johnny Evans and Matthew Reid coordinated the event which included a 1.32-mile route through the campus traversed by ABAC students carrying the American flag and the Carry The Load flag for 24 hours. ABAC students participating in the National Carry The Load event included Lane Riley from Adel, Madison Woodson from Jesup, Mitchel Sheffield from Donalsonville, Ginger Orton from Ellaville, Dustin Thomas from Plainville, Hunter Gainous from Brunswick, Collin Vickers from Alapaha, Landon Rowe from Ocilla, and Shannon Kehoe from Myakka City, Fla. Their journey begins in West Point, N.Y., and ends in Dallas on Memorial Day.

ABAC President David Bridges hosted Regents Day at ABAC on April 28 when Regents Doreen Styles Poitevint, Larry R. Walker, Philip Wilheit, Sr., and Sara Elizabeth Reed toured the campus along with University System of Georgia Chancellor Steve Wrigley. University System personnel Shelly Nickel, Charles Sutlive, and Tricia Chastain also attended.

The Golden Fillies’ softball team won the regular season title in the Georgia Collegiate Athletic Association with a conference record of 20-8. ABAC then lost the first two games of the conference tournament on April 28 to finish with an overall record of 30-22. In her second year at ABAC, Coach Jennifer Martinez was named as the NJCAA Region 17 Coach of the Year. Olivia Carter, Sydney Vaughn, and Kameron Coggins were selected first team all-conference, and Hayley Dobson and Savannah Gabriel were selected to the all-conference second team.

Ferol Coper, who has been employed by the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village at ABAC since it opened as the Georgia Agrirama in 1976, was honored with the George A. Wright Award on May 2 as a part of Older Americans Month in Tifton. Coper is 100 years old. “The highlight of my life is working,” Coper said. “I plan on working until I can no longer drive or see.” Former ABAC instructor Shirene Daniell was also named a recipient of the award.

When the Golden Stallions lost their first game in the Georgia Collegiate Athletic Association 2017 state baseball tournament, a quick trip back to Tifton seemed inevitable. That’s when the true grit, the will to play on, and the perseverance of the ABAC nine kicked into high gear.

“After losing that first game, nobody would have expected us to play for the championship,” Brandon Reeder, head coach of the Stallions, said. “We battled, and we played hard the rest of the way.” ABAC lost in the title game on May 6 by an 8-3 score to the Georgia Highlands Chargers, who captured their first league championship. “We played five games in three days, and that’s more baseball than we’re used to,” Reeder said. “I was proud of my guys for battling the heat and then holding up through the rain delay on that one day.”

Entering the tournament as the number three seed, ABAC found itself facing a huge uphill climb after losing the first tournament game to sixth-seeded Andrew 7-1. But in 10 innings, the Stallions bounced back to nip fourth-seeded Gordon 8-7 in their second game. ABAC then knocked off Andrew 5-2 and fifth-seeded South Georgia 5-1 before coming up short against the second-seeded Chargers. The Stallions compiled a 32-28 overall record on the year, the most wins in Reeder’s three years as the ABAC diamond boss and the most wins for the Stallions since the 1997 team rolled up a 35-16 record.

Centerfielder Bryce Shupe, a sophomore from Loganville, was named to the All-Tournament Team along with pitchers Blake Howell, a freshman from Schley County, and Blake Durrence, a freshman from Tattnall County. Shupe was also named First Team All-Conference along with second baseman Justin Russell, a sophomore from Marietta. First baseman Josh Jackson, a sophomore from Wilcox County, was selected Second Team All-Conference. Additional honors went to Shupe, Russell, and shortstop Brett Usry, who were named to the GCAA Gold Glove Team. Usry is a freshman from Schley County.

Roquemore Gives First Commencement Address at Age of 93

At the age of 93, lifelong Lakeland, Ga., resident Nell Roquemore gave her first commencement address at the spring graduation exercises for ABAC on May 11. She received a standing ovation after the address in which she encouraged the graduates to get involved in their communities no matter where they decide to live. Roquemore is the creator of Milltown Murals in Lakeland. Another Lakeland native, Jay Shaw, was honored with a posthumous honorary bachelor’s degree for his civic and community involvement on local and statewide levels. Shaw was a former mayor of Lakeland, a state legislator, and a former chairman of the board of the



Georgia Department of Transportation. He was also an ABAC alumnus who played tennis for the Golden Stallions in 1968. Shaw passed away at the age of 67 on April 20, 2015. “Jay attended but did not graduate from Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College,” ABAC President David Bridges said. “He was a proud alumnus of this institution. He served the people of Georgia with honor and integrity, and he never failed to be a strong advocate for ABAC.” Bridges said it was the first honorary bachelor’s degree in the history of ABAC as he presented the degree to Shaw’s wife, Libby (Class of ’68), and their two sons, Sam and Jason. Amanda Stitt, an agriculture major from Sharpsburg, received the ABAC Alumni Association Award for the top bachelor’s degree graduate, and Alexia Watson, a biology major from Covington, received the Donaldson Award as the top associate degree graduate participating in the ceremony. Bridges also recognized Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs Gail Dillard and School of Liberal Arts Dean Bobbie Robinson upon their participation in their final ABAC commencement ceremonies before their retirements on June 30.

Tennis Coach Dale White was named the Wilson/Intercollegiate Tennis Association National Women’s Tennis Coach of the Year at the NJCAA national women’s tennis tournament in Tucson, Ariz. The Golden Fillies finished in seventh place in the national tournament on May 12. Celia Morel from ABAC won the regional award for the ITA Rookie of the Year.

Three All-America selections powered the Golden Stallions to third place in the NJCAA men’s national tennis tournament in Plano, Texas on May 19. Yohan Nguyen from ABAC won the national championship at #2 singles when he knocked off Jorge Martinez from Tyler 6-4, 7-5 in the title match. At #5 singles, Eymeric Chevalier lost a 6-4, 6-1 decision to Kentaro Mizushima from ASA Miami in the championship.

Nguyen, Chevalier and Elvyn Nguyen were selected for All-America status. Elvin Nguyen lost in the #1 singles’ semifinal and made the #1 doubles’ semifinal with Chevalier before losing. ASA Miami won the national title with 44 points followed by Tyler with 43 and ABAC with 35. The third-place finish matches the way the Golden Stallions wound up in the 2015 national tournament. ABAC finished fourth in 2016. The Stallions have two national titles to their credit, one in 1984 and the other in 1999.

On June 5, the Harley Langdale, Jr. Foundation committed \$1,000,000 to the ABAC Foundation over the next four years to continue the Destination Ag program at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture at ABAC. Destination Ag connects students and teachers to the importance of agriculture and natural resources in their daily lives. The Harley Langdale, Jr. Foundation announced a gift of \$250,000 to launch the program on August 23, 2016. Since that time, the Destination Ag program has touched the lives of 5,000 pre-k through first grade students in Tift, Colquitt, and Cook counties. Museum Director Garrett Boone said the continued funding will allow the program to eventually reach pre-k through fifth grade students in the existing counties as well as Berrien, Irwin, Turner, Ben Hill, and Worth.

Ameris Bank donated two pieces of undeveloped property at the Forest Lakes Golf Course to the ABAC Foundation. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges Board of Trustees voted in June to reaffirm ABAC's accreditation for another 10 years.

As he began his 12th year as the ABAC President on July 1, Dr. David Bridges announced that the state legislature has approved \$1.6 million in design funds for a \$21.4 million project to create a fine arts building and completely rehabilitate and repurpose the Carlton Library into a more comprehensive learning center. Weltner Hall and the Weltner Annex will be razed to make room for the 24,000-square foot fine arts building which will be located on ABAC Circle.

Dr. Johnny Evans assumed the newly created position of Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences on July 1. Evans had served as the Dean of the School of Science and Mathematics since 2013. The schools of Science and Mathematics, Liberal Arts, and Human Sciences have been combined into the schools of Arts and Sciences, Agriculture and Natural Resources, Nursing and Health Sciences, and the Stafford School of Business. Dr. Darby Sewell (Class of '98) is now the Acting Dean of the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources since Dr. Jerry Baker left that position to become the new Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. James Holcomb (Class of '70) became the chair of the board of trustees of the ABAC Foundation on July 1.

New Bachelor's Degrees Approved by Regents

The Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia approved ABAC bachelor's degree programs in agribusiness, agricultural communication, history and government, rural community development, and writing and communication on August 8. Coupled with existing bachelor's degree programs in agriculture, agricultural education, biology, business and economic development, environmental horticulture, natural resource management, nursing, and rural studies, ABAC now has 13 bachelor's degrees, the most in the history of the college.

At the annual fall conference for faculty on staff on August 10, President David Bridges said, "we are getting better prepared students every year. Our graduation rate is two and one-half times the state college average in Georgia. We are doing a lot of things right. But we need to continue to look ahead. ABAC can be as good as you want it to be. Moving forward is up to us. It's all about the people in this room and our connection with the students." Later in the day, Bridges opened the renovated King Hall with remarks to the assembled faculty and staff. Constructed in 1939, King Hall now contains six classrooms, 12 offices, and its first ever elevator. Louise Hill (Class of '77) was the speaker for the annual Freshman Convocation on August 15.

Fall semester classes began on August 16 with an enrollment of 3,394 students from 24 countries, 18 states, and 155 of Georgia's 159 counties. The enrollment was a 2.3 per cent decrease from the 2016 enrollment of 3,475. ABAC has the highest percentage of fulltime

students at 72.8 percent and the highest percentage of male students at 46.4 percent of the 10 State Colleges in the University System of Georgia.

Dr. Thomas Grant showed a one-hour documentary titled *Elephants in the Coffee* in Howard Auditorium on August 30. Grant and his students produced the film, which shows how the expansion of coffee plantations in Southern India led to conflicts between humans and elephants. The film explores the question of whether farmers can co-exist with this species. It won Best Documentary at the Doc Sunback Film Festival in Kansas.

A University System of Georgia study showed that ABAC had an economic impact of \$369,874,664 during the 2016 fiscal year. The figure represented a 12.1 percent growth over 2014. President David Bridges pointed toward enrollment, the growth of bachelor's degrees and near capacity housing as major factors.

Audrey Luke-Morgan (Class of '94), a lecturer in the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources, was selected as one of 35 participants in Locate South GeorgiaLEADS, an eight-month leadership development program for the region. Tifton attorney Craig Webster spoke at Constitution Day on September 22. Dr. Adrian Israel Martinez-Franco, a Fulbright Scholar from Mexico, taught the first ever population health class at ABAC during the fall term.

Shannon Kehoe, an agricultural communications major from Myakka City, Fla., was selected Ms. ABAC 2018 in the annual contest on October 11. In a collaboration with the Magnolia Garden Club, ABAC dedicated a Blue Star Memorial as a tribute to the Armed Forces who have defended the United States of America in the Baldwin Memorial Gardens on October 12. Earlier in the day, Colonel Ralph Puckett spoke to an audience of students and community members in Howard Auditorium on his book, *Ranger, A Soldier's Life*. The Baldwin Players presented *Greater Tuna* on October 26-28.

Dr. Jerry Baker, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at ABAC, received the Honorary American FFA Degree at the National FFA Convention. Sandra Deal, wife of Georgia Governor Nathan Deal, and Kim Bridges (Class of '78), wife of ABAC President David Bridges, observed first graders in the Destination Ag program at ABAC's Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village on October 31.

Director of Enrollment Management Donna Webb received the Joe F. Head Professional Development Award at the annual conference of the Georgia Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers. Thanks to the generosity of donors from across the nation, the cotton gin was up and running on November 18 at the Museum. Georgia Farm Bureau President Gerald Long (Class of '69) spoke in the Chapel on November 27 at an event sponsored by the Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow Club. President David Bridges and his wife, Kim, hosted their annual Holiday Open House in Tift Hall on December 5. It was followed by

the annual Christmas Concert by the ABAC music students, an event held at the Tift Theatre in downtown Tifton for the first time.

Victory Media named ABAC as a Military Friendly School for the third consecutive year. ABAC has also been named a Purple Heart College and a Top School by Military Advanced Education and Transition for five years in a row.

Consolidation Process with Bainbridge Takes Final Step

The consolidation of Bainbridge State College (BSC) with ABAC moved a step closer to culmination on December 12 when the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia (USG) approved the prospectus for the merger. Coupled with the approval of the prospectus by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) on December 5, all current BSC students will become ABAC students on January 1, 2018.

“I want to thank Stuart Rayfield for the job she did as interim president at Bainbridge during this entire process,” ABAC President David Bridges said. “She has been a terrific partner for ABAC, and I wish her well.” Rayfield, interim president at Bainbridge since June 1, 2016, has been selected by University System Chancellor Steve Wrigley to be the interim president at Gordon State College beginning January 1.

“Creating the new Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College will allow us to better serve students, broaden and redesign academic programs and reinvest savings into academics to improve student success,” Wrigley said. “We will continue to work toward ensuring the success of our students, faculty, and staff in partnership with our local communities.”

Bridges is ready to spring forward with the new look of ABAC. “We plan to offer students at our instructional site in Bainbridge the best collegiate educational opportunity they have ever had,” Bridges, the longest serving active president in the USG, said. “We offer only one product but it is a very valuable product. We offer the opportunity for a life-changing educational experience to every student who walks on our campus. The value of the ABAC experience is absolutely priceless.”

“We’ll begin a series of soft starts in Bainbridge in January,” Bridges said. “Our two business offices will become the ABAC business office. Our two student records systems will become the ABAC student records system. Bainbridge students will enroll for the spring as they usually do.” By the time the 2018 fall semester begins on August 15, ABAC plans to offer classes leading to the bachelor’s degree in business and possibly the bachelor’s degree in nursing at the Bainbridge instructional site. ABAC will also offer classes leading to the associate of arts, associate of science, and associate of nursing degrees in Bainbridge.



“Under the existing plan, Southern Regional Technical College (SRTC) will assume responsibility in July for the technical programs now taught in Bainbridge,” Bridges said. “Students enrolled in those programs will be ABAC students in January, but then will become SRTC students when the changeover occurs.” Students in Bainbridge, Donalsonville, and Blakely who are completing degree requirements during the spring term will have an opportunity to participate in the final Bainbridge State College commencement ceremony in May. All future graduates enrolled in ABAC classes will have the opportunity to participate in ABAC commencement ceremonies, which are held in May and December each year.

The Regents approved a recommendation from Wrigley to consolidate BSC with ABAC on January 11. Since that time, an implementation team with representatives from both BSC and ABAC has been working to iron out the details of the consolidation so that it can provide the best service for the region and the state. ABAC enrolled 3,394 students, and BSC enrolled 1,746 students for the 2017 fall term. At their meeting, the Regents also approved the prospectus for the Armstrong State University consolidation with Georgia Southern University. With the completion of the two consolidations, the number of USG institutions is now 26, a reduction from the 35 USG institutions which existed prior to the launch of the consolidation initiative in 2011.

State Representative Sam Watson (Class of '99) was the guest speaker at the fall commencement ceremony on December 14. Jared Smith, an agriculture major from Hastings, Fla., and John Winkler, an animal science major from Cumming, received the top awards presented by the ABAC Alumni Association. Smith was named the winner of the ABAC Alumni Association Award which goes to the top bachelor's degree graduate participating in the ceremony, and Winkler received the George P. Donaldson Award for the top associate degree graduate participating in the ceremony.

When the graduates of ABAC streamed out of Gressette Gym after the ceremony, their happy smiles grew even bigger when they heard the chimes from the Chapel of All Faiths serenading them on their accomplishments. Silenced for the past five years due to technical problems, the chimes rang out loud and clear on a crisp blue-sky day as the graduates celebrated with their parents. ABAC Media Productions Coordinator Matthew Reid (Class of '15) said it has been quite a process to restore the beautiful music from the majestic bell tower of the Chapel.

“It couldn't have happened without everyone's commitment and teamwork,” Reid said. “ChimeMaster from Atlanta made sure the installation went just fine.” Reid said the new digital system features a high definition speaker that will produce a deeper sound throughout the front of the campus. “There are currently 5,000 song options, and we have the ability to add an additional 1,000 more,” Reid said. “It is truly a new technology to enhance an old system. We plan to ring the chimes on the hour just as they did when the Chapel opened.”

Reid said Vice President for Finance and Operations Paul Willis was instrumental in bringing the project to fruition along with Arts Connection Director Wayne Jones, Department of Fine Arts Head Susan Roe, and Chief Development Officer Deidre Martin. Martin said restoring the chimes is only one step in a larger improvement plan for the Chapel in the coming year. Generous donations from alumni and friends led by alumnus Tyron Spearman helped to get the project underway and will provide a jumpstart for the future.

The Sodexo unit at ABAC received the Global Safety Award for Contract Site Performance from former Sodexo CEO Michel Landel in Paris, France in December. Dan Miller, the ABAC General Manager for Sodexo, traveled to Paris to receive the award along with ABAC Sodexo employees Margie Dove and Tomira Tucker. “We have a great employee family that is dedicated to looking for new ways to improve campus safety,” Miller said. “This award wouldn’t have been possible without the hard work of our staff.”

2018

Ninety-year-old Doc Severinsen performed with the Byron Stripling Quartet on January 11 at the Tift County High School Performing Arts Center as a part of the ABAC Presents! Performing Arts Series. Arts Connection Director Wayne Jones said the Severinsen performance replaced *Tuesdays with Morrie* starring Jamie Farr that was scheduled for November 30, 2017. The production company handling that performance cancelled because of scheduling difficulties. Enrollment for the spring term was 3,085, down 1.5 per cent from the 2017 spring semester. ABAC still led all State Colleges in the University System in full time enrollment at 68.3 per cent.

Dr. Mark J. Kistler will be the new Dean of the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources at ABAC effective March 1. “ABAC and the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources are both in a tremendous growth phase right now,” Kistler said. “I am excited to be a part of that growth so that I can help in the shaping and molding of the College and the School for the future.” Kistler has been a faculty member in the Department of Agricultural and Human Sciences at North Carolina State University since 2006. He was also a faculty member at the University of Florida from 2004-06 and at Texas Tech University from 2002-04. At North Carolina State, Kistler is an associate professor who serves as the Undergraduate Coordinator for the bachelor’s degree in extension education and as the Director of Graduate Programs in the Department of Agricultural and Human Sciences. A native of Winter Haven, Fla., Kistler received his bachelor’s degree and master’s degree in animal science from the University of Florida and his Ph.D. in agricultural education from Texas A&M University. Kistler replaces

Dr. Jerry Baker, who became the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at ABAC on July 1, 2017. Dr. Darby Sewell has been serving as the Acting Dean of the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Dr. Michael Kirkland, a faculty member at Bainbridge State College since 2003, will serve as the Executive Director of ABAC at Bainbridge as well as for instructional sites in Donalsonville and Blakely. During his time at BSC, Kirkland served as interim vice president for student affairs, dean of arts and sciences, assistant vice president for academic affairs, and interim vice president for academic affairs. A 1992 graduate of Bainbridge High School, Kirkland received his associate degree from Bainbridge College, his bachelor's degree in history from the University of Georgia, his master's degree in history from Valdosta State University, and his Ph.D. in Humanities from Florida State University.

Nestled in the deep woods near the legendary Satilla River, the old moonshine still could probably tell some fascinating stories of how it hid from revenue agents while gurgling out its eye-popping illegal home brew. Those stories came to life on April 8, 2017 at ABAC's Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village in the form of The Moonshine Shack, named in January 2018 as the winner of the Best Exhibit Created on a Small Budget by the Georgia Association for Museums and Galleries (GAMG). Polly Huff, assistant director and curator at the Museum, received the award on behalf of ABAC at the recent GAMG conference. "That old moonshine still was in our collection for over 30 years, and I decided it was time to put it to work," Huff said. "I was so proud that the awards committee called the exhibit 'significant, creative, resourceful, innovative, and designed by a very dedicated staff.'"

Georgia Commissioner of Agriculture Gary Black spoke at the Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow lecture series, *Agriculture's Footprint on Georgia* on Jan. 23. Visitors to the Museum Gallery had a chance to see sculptor Walter Hobbs' creations up close and personal at the opening of a tantalizing exhibit titled "For the Love of Mud: The Works of Walter Hobbs" on January 27.

Jimmy Ballenger gave up his position as soccer coach to assume fulltime duties in the classroom in February. When he became the first head coach in the history of women's soccer at ABAC, the Golden Fillies didn't have a field or even any soccer balls. In 12 years, Ballenger compiled a record of 116-84-7.

ABAC President David Bridges introduced a presentation on ABAC to the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia at their monthly meeting in Atlanta on February 13 which included Harrison Booker from Varnell, the ABAC Forestry Club President; Dr. Leslie Pryor, Assistant Professor of Biology; Jovani Raya, a biology major from Norman Park; Dr. Thomas



Grant, Associate Professor of Journalism and Advisor for *The Stallion* newspaper and *Stallion TV*; and Amanda Mohammed, a rural community development major from Snellville.

Rhythm Nation performed at An Evening for ABAC on March 2 at the UGA Tifton Campus Conference Center. The ABAC Foundation raised a record \$106,144 for 42 scholarships at the event. The Baldwin Players of Dr. Brian Ray performed *I Do! I Do! I Do! I Do!* in a dinner theatre at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture for their spring production on March 8-10.

Students from the Wildlife Society at ABAC spent an exciting March morning with former President Jimmy Carter at their annual wood duck box cleanup on his property in Plains. “We were delighted to spend over an hour with President Carter on a personal tour of his newest pond as students scouted how many new boxes were needed,” Dr. Vanessa Lane, assistant professor of wildlife at ABAC, said.

At the Georgia College Press Association Conference, ABAC students representing *The Stallion* brought home first place awards for General Excellence, Layout and Design, General Advertising, Overall Improvement, Best Campus Community Service-News, and Best Campus Community Service-Features. Dalton Spangler is the editor, and Dr. Thomas Grant is the advisor. At the Southern Regional Press Institute, ABAC brought home nine awards including First Place Best Overall Newspaper for the third year in a row and Second Best Overall Online Newspaper along with seven individual awards. “Competition came from three states in the Southeast,” Grant said. “Not only did *The Stallion* win the best newspaper among small colleges, but it also won the top television awards among all schools.”

The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi installed its 346th chapter at ABAC on March 14. Phi Kappa Phi is the nation’s oldest and most selective all-discipline collegiate honor society. “The recognition and reputation of Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College as a baccalaureate degree granting institution has dramatically increased over the past 10 years,” Dr. Jerry Baker, ABAC Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, said. “It is now time for ABAC to more formally recognize the achievements of our student scholars.” Officers elected by the chartering group to serve the newly installed chapter included Beth Morehead-Thornton, President; Dr. Johnny Evans, President-Elect; Dr. Joseph Falcone, Secretary; Vonda Doss Fenn, Treasurer; and Baker, Primary Contact.

ABAC Teaching Forest Includes 1,000 Acres

President David Bridges announced on March 24 that the ABAC Foundation has purchased 1,000 acres of timber land in Tift County to create the first ever ABAC Teaching Forest. Bridges made the announcement at the 61st annual Southern Forestry Conclave, which ABAC hosted for the first time. “ABAC has made tremendous commitments to our agriculture and natural resources programs in recent years,” Bridges said. “We will continue to do so because agriculture and forestry are Georgia’s leading industries. Our commitment is for ABAC to be



the leading provider of human capital to work, lead, and grow these industries.” Chuck Williams (Class of '75), the Georgia Forestry Commission Director, assisted in the awards presentation for the Conclave, which featured students from 13 institutions across the country. Stephen F. Austin University won the overall competition and the physical events category. The University of Florida won the technical events category. In a surprise announcement, ABAC won the Sportsmanship Award, despite having no competitors in this year's Conclave because all the ABAC students were involved in hosting the mammoth event. Harrison Booker, president of the ABAC chapter of the Society of American Foresters, received the award.

Kip Hall, an assistant professor of forest resources, received the W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence at the annual Honors Day ceremony on April 4. Other award recipients included Wayne Jones, Director of the Arts Connection, Roy R. Jackson, Sr. Award for Staff Excellence; Dr. Darby Sewell, Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs—Engaged Learning, E. Lanier Carson Leadership Award for College Administrators; Dr. Justin Ng, an assistant professor of agronomy, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Excellence in Advising Award; and Dr. Heather Cathcart, an associate professor of biology, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Excellence in Student Engagement. Olivia Nicole Minish from Royston was named ABAC's top academic student when she received the J.G. Woodroof Scholar award.

Forty-five employees who have been a part of ABAC for a combined 490 years were honored April 4 at the annual faculty-staff service awards ceremony. Alan Kramer received an award for 25 years of service. Honored for 20 years of service were JoAnn Brannen, Nancy Brannen, Bernice Hughes, Donna King, Melanie Partlow, Lori Pearman, and Kim Spinks. Recognized for 15 years of service were Robert Carpenter, Robin Crumley, Dr. James Galt-Brown, Dr. Todd Hicks, Rhonda Lewis, Dr. Barnabe Miburo, Alan Murphy, Keith Perry, Reba Selph, and Troy Spicer. Ten-year award recipients were Tonia Carpenter, Todd Daunhauer, Gay Ann Hodge, Ana Martinez, Dr. James McCrimmon, Shawn Seat, Vicki Sherling, and Amy Warren. Recognized for five years of service were Kristin Beasley, Tammy Carter, Dr. Heather Cathcart, Trey Davis, Dr. Tamara Dennis, Amanda Dow, Johnny Folsom, Dr. Thomas Grant, Dr. Jan Gregus, Lynne Hoatson, Myra Jackson, Dr. Chris Kiser, Austin Lawton, Nathan Mumm, Grant Rentz, Lindsey Roberts, Allen Saylor, Yvonne Smith, and Jodie Snow.

ABAC Alumni Association award winners at the Homecoming luncheon on April 6 included Jimmy Hill from Dawsonville, Distinguished Alumnus; T.E. Moye from Newton, Master Farmer; Ada Beth Spruill from Hartsfield, Helen Brown Sasser Award; Dr. Anna Daniel Reddish from Atlanta, J. Lamar Branch Award; Steve Spooner from Sumner, Outstanding Business Leader; Nancy Purcell Hyte from Atlanta, Outstanding Educator; Claire Byrnes from Tifton, Outstanding Health Care Professional; Ben Kennedy from Bluffton, S.C., Outstanding Young Alumnus; the family of Clarie Whitfield from Worth County, Family Legacy Award; Spencer Highsmith from Wray; Rising Star Award; and Senator Jeff Mullis from Chickamauga, Honorary Alumnus. The Rising Star Award was presented for the first time to an alumnus whose



career is off to a fast start. Mitchel Sheffield, a crop and soil science major from Donalsonville, and Sara Brackin, an agriculture major from Covington, were crowned as the 2018 Homecoming King and Queen.

Athletics Hall of Fame Celebrates *Glory Days*

ABAC Athletics Director Alan Kramer and Public Relations Director Emeritus Mike Chason introduced inductees into the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame Class of 2018 at an evening banquet at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture on April 6. For the first time since 2013, the event was held separate from the Alumni Association awards ceremony. Inductees included the 1982 state championship men's basketball team, Luis Paredes of Panama from the 1974-76 men's tennis teams, Teresa Cromer Walker of Tifton from the 1993-95 softball teams, Andy Vaughn of Douglas from the 1981-83 golf teams, Jorge Novoa of Tifton, a friend of the tennis program since 1972; Jenni Collins Smith of Cotton from the 1980-82 women's basketball teams, and Chuck DeVane of Valdosta from the 1980-82 baseball teams. As an extra added attraction, Polly Huff, assistant director and curator at the Museum, featured an entire exhibit based on ABAC athletics titled *The Glory Days* in the Museum Gallery. The exhibit will remain open through July 5. "We've got memorabilia ranging from Kyle Farnsworth's glove when he played in the major leagues to pictures and stories from previous Hall of Fame recipients," Kramer said. "The original Golden Stallion statue is the centerpiece of the room. Anyone who loves sports is going to love this exhibit."

The Stallion awarded 2018 Pacesetters to Brandon Reeder, head baseball coach; Dr. Jewrell Rivers, professor of sociology; Catherine Davis, Sodexo cashier in the Dining Hall; Tametha Lambert, Director of the Baldwin Libraries; Laura Agundis, College Assistance Migrant Program recruiter; Dr. Jason Scott, assistant professor of forestry; Dr. Johnny Evans, Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences; Virginia Johnson, a biology major from Zebulon; Harrison Booker, a forestry major from Varnell; and Karmen Tovar, a history and government major from Lenox. Concert Band Director Johnny Folsom received a Superior Pacesetter award.

Grant Thelen, a freshman turfgrass science major from Roswell, has been elected as the 2018-19 ABAC Student Government Association (SGA) President. The newly appointed Executive Vice Presidents are Ben Brock, a business and economic development major from Lenox, for the Tifton campus and Kathryn Patterson, a history major from Whigham, for the Bainbridge campus. The newly appointed SGA Senators include Caroline Langdale, an agricultural communication major from Valdosta; Kevin Joachin, a history and government major from Tifton; Katie Carver, a nursing major from Blakely; Emily Cunningham, a nursing major from Jakin; Kim Dixon, a history major from Leary; Jillian Grim, a nursing major from Meigs; Caitlyn Corbran, an agricultural education major from Parrish, Fla.; Joshua Kimsey, a business major from Chula; Justin Conner, a management major from Bainbridge; David Hall, an ag business major from Woodstock; and Macy Jones, an information technology major from Fitzgerald.

Landon Rowe, a junior writing and communication major from Ocilla, was crowned Mr. ABAC 2018. Revived by the Ag Business Club and Ag Communicators of Tomorrow, the event was held for the first time since 2014. Victory Media awarded ABAC recognition as a Bronze Level Military Friendly® institution on the 2018-2019 *Better for Veterans* list. The Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation recently presented ABAC with the *Excellence in Rehabilitation* award for the renovation of King Hall, a building constructed in 1939. The award recognizes a project that makes compatible use of a building through repair, alteration, or additions while preserving features of the property that convey its historic value.

Governor Nathan Deal opened a new door of opportunity for economic revitalization for rural Georgia on May 2 at Tifton's Henry Tift Myers Airport when he signed House Bill 951, creating a Center for Rural Prosperity and Innovation to be housed at ABAC. "On behalf of all Georgians who live in rural Georgia or who grew up in rural Georgia, I want to thank Governor Deal and the legislators who turned this idea into reality," ABAC President David Bridges said. "Rural communities face many challenges, hurdles, and obstacles as they attempt to revitalize and strengthen their situations." Created by action of the Georgia General Assembly, HB 951 was sponsored by Representative Jason Shaw, Representative Sam Watson (Class of '99), Representative Penny Houston, Representative Jay Powell, and Representative Terry England, and it was broadly supported by legislators from across the state. Powell, England, and Watson headed up the House Rural Development Council.

During his stop in Tifton, Governor Deal also signed House Bill 684 which is the FY 2019 state budget which contains \$17.7 million in funding for a new Fine Arts building at ABAC and rehabilitation of the Carlton Library. "We have needed a Fine Arts building on this campus for a long time," Bridges, the longest serving president among the 26 colleges and universities in the USG, said. "Our music program is second to none, and those students deserve a first-rate facility. The Carlton renovation will allow us to take advantage of a large space which is presently under-utilized. Moving the campus store operation to Carlton opens all kinds of possibilities." ABAC received \$1.6 million in design funds for the Fine Arts building and the Carlton renovation in the FY 18 state budget. To complete the \$21.4 million project, Bridges is hoping for \$2.1 million in funding for equipment for the two buildings in the FY 20 state budget.

Director of Capital Planning Melvin Merrill said the 24,000-square foot Fine Arts building will be located at the south end of ABAC Circle on the front of the campus. "The building will have practice space for a 100-plus member orchestra and space for an 80-plus member vocal group," Merrill said. "There will also be individual practice rooms which are acoustically controlled." The projected plan for the first floor of the building includes the band rehearsal room, instrument storage, the band and choral music library, the choral rehearsal room, band and choral storage, music faculty offices, and a keyboard laboratory. The second floor will feature individual music practice rooms, a recording control room, art faculty offices, painting/general art labs, visual arts material storage, student work storage, a display area, and a computer design lab. Music students

will have easy access to nearby Howard Auditorium, the concert venue for the choral program, the jazz band, and the concert band.

Tentative plans for the rehabilitated 61,000-square foot Carlton Library call for it to be the home for student academic support, the bookstore, the mail room, information technology, offices of the Dean of Students, Veterans' Lounge, archives, the Student Government Association offices, the library, reading and study areas, computer lab, One Button Studio, the Student Engagement Programs Center, symposium/exhibit space, the Academic Success Center, campus media, and student development. ABAC Project Manager Tim Carpenter said Praxis 3 Architecture from Atlanta is designing the Carlton Library, and JMA Architecture from Perry is designing the Fine Arts building. All State Construction Co. from Perry is the contractor on both projects. Jones, Lang, and LaSalle will be the project manager. Carpenter said construction should begin by January of 2019 with completion scheduled for January of 2020. All occupants of the Carlton Center will be relocated. "Carlton will be closed for at least three semesters," Carpenter said.

For the first time all year, the cotton gin, turpentine still and sawmill operated on the same day on May 5 at ABAC's Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village. Guests also witnessed sheep-shearing. The Arbor Day Foundation named ABAC a Tree Campus USA for the fifth year in a row. Aliriza Sisman, a former starting sweeper for Black Sea Technical University in Trabzon, Turkey is the new ABAC soccer coach. Sisman replaces Jimmy Ballenger who stepped down as the soccer coach to assume fulltime classroom duties at ABAC. Ballenger was hired as the ABAC's first soccer coach in 2006 when the Fillies literally had no soccer balls and no soccer field. He compiled a record of 116-84-7 in 12 seasons.

Ginger Orton from Ellaville and Matthew Fisher from Tifton received the top awards presented by the ABAC Alumni Association during the spring commencement ceremony on May 10. Orton, an agricultural communication major, was selected as the recipient of the ABAC Alumni Association Award which goes to the top bachelor's degree graduate participating in the ceremony. Fisher, an engineering major, received the George P. Donaldson Award as the top associate degree graduate participating in the ceremony. State Senator Tyler Harper (Class of 2008) was the guest speaker at the ceremony, which included 304 graduates, marking the largest number of graduates to participate in an ABAC commencement ceremony in the 110 year-history of the college.

After a positive vote from the members of the Georgia Professional Standards Commission on May 10, the Agricultural Education Teacher Preparation program at ABAC is fully accredited, and ABAC is ready to help to fill the void of agricultural education teachers in the state. "Having our Agricultural Education program approved by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission as an Educator Preparation Provider and Educator Preparation Program is a major accomplishment for ABAC," Dr. Mark Kistler, Dean of the ABAC School of Agriculture and Natural Resources, said. "Our students can now be certified to teach agricultural education at the middle and high school level in Georgia." Dr. Marcus Johnson, Education Department Head at



ABAC, said that ABAC received approval from the Board of Regents to offer the Agricultural Education bachelor's degree in 2016. Since that time, ABAC faculty members and administrators have been working to ensure that the College is able to recommend candidates for teacher certification upon their completion of the Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Education degree program. "This vote makes it official that ABAC can submit teachers for candidacy to the Professional Standards Commission," Johnson said. "Students who complete the rigorous and content-heavy ABAC Agricultural Education program and pass licensure exams will be certified to teach Agricultural Education in the State of Georgia. Because of ABAC's strong reputation among agricultural educators, we expect that the demand for our students will be very high." ABAC Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs Darby Sewell expects 27 ABAC students to be ready for student teaching duties in January of 2019. She said approximately 140 students are enrolled in the degree program. Kistler said the Georgia Professional Standards Commission also approved a certification only option that will allow students who complete bachelor's degrees in other areas to return to ABAC for two semesters to obtain certification in Agricultural Education.

ABAC Baseball Team Wins 2018 State Championship

Coach Brandon Reeder's ABAC baseball team shocked the state by emerging from its fourth seed to win the 2018 state baseball championship on May 11. The 5-1 win over South Georgia State gave the Golden Stallions their first state tournament title since 1993. In earlier tournament action, ABAC beat East Georgia 11-2 and South Georgia 10-1. Outfielder Matt White was named the Most Valuable Player of the tournament. He had seven hits and scored seven runs. Isaiah Arnold, Dalton Rentz, and Drew Martens also made the all-tournament team. "It's kinda' been a blur," Reeder said. "I am super proud." ABAC's Rudy Amaya and Joel Ellis were selected first team all-conference, Amaya as a closer and Ellis as an infielder. White and infielder Alex VanDerStok made second team all-conference.

As the top team in Georgia, ABAC gained the right to host the East Central District Championship against Walters (Tenn.) State, the number one-ranked team in America. Rainy days and a saturated field resulted in the two District Tournament games being moved from Stallion Field to Thomas University in Thomasville where Walters State won 14-3 on May 16 and 15-7 on May 17. ABAC wound up 29-29 on the season, and Walters State advanced to Grand Junction, Colo., for the NJCAA World Series with a 56-6 record. "If there's someone better, I'd like to see them," Reeder said. Walters State lost to Chipola in the national title game.

The ABAC softball team of Coach Jennifer Martinez finished 17-31 overall and 11-17 in the conference. The Golden Fillies did not make the state playoffs. Taylor Corbett was named second-team all-conference as an infielder, and Samantha Davis made second team all-conference as a pitcher. Corbett hit a team high .310, drove in 16 runs, and hit a homer. Davis won four games from the mound and had one save. Her ERA was 1.63.

The Golden Fillies' tennis team of Coach Dale White finished fourth in the national tournament. Playing at #1 singles, Celia Morel lost in the championship round and was a second team All-America selection. White's Golden Stallions' tennis team finished sixth in the national tournament. Vitor Paulino was named National Most Improved Player of the Year, and Frederic Fibleuil was named Regional Player of the Year. Neither ABAC tennis team played in a state tournament because of a lack of competition.

Coach Larry Byrnes' ABAC golf team won its second consecutive NJCAA District J title at the Innsbrook Resort and Golf Club in Helen. The tournament also served as the Georgia state tournament. Because of torrential rain, tournament play was only 18 holes instead of 36. Adam Park shot 78 for the Stallions to lead the way and win the individual championship. He made the all-tournament team along with ABAC's Ryan Walters and Andrew Nagel. Byrnes was named the Coach of the Year in Georgia for the second straight year. The Stallions then finished sixth in the national tournament at the Glenlakes Golf Club in Foley, Ala. ABAC's Adam Park was a second team All-America selection when he shot a one-under-par 287 for the tournament, finishing in ninth place in the individual competition. Other ABAC competitors in the national tournament were Andrew Nagel, Ryan Walters, Trevor Dailey, and Will Bozeman.

ABAC Takes Over Dining Hall Operation Again

ABAC ended its contract with Sodexo Dining Services on June 30. Effective July 1, ABAC became a self-operated dining service for the first time since George Graul retired on December 31, 1984, and ARA Services took over the campus food service operation on January 1, 1985. ABAC alumnus Dan Miller, formerly a Sodexo employee, will be the new ABAC food services director. "Becoming a self-operated dining service will allow ABAC to provide a new and different dining experience for students, faculty, and staff," ABAC Vice President of Finance and Operations Paul Willis said. "This change is an opportunity to diversify our dining experience with the goal of incorporating local and statewide produce, products, and vendors."

Dr. Jaibun Earp began her duties as Dean of the School of Nursing and Health Sciences on July 1. She replaced Troy Spicer, who is returning to his former position as director of the ABAC Health Center. Earp has been an advanced nurse practitioner with the Federal Bureau of Prisons in Tallahassee, Fla. Prior to taking that position in 2016, Earp was a professor and associate dean in the undergraduate and graduate programs at the Florida A&M School of Nursing. Charley Lollis from Perry and Jacob Smith from Cochran will receive the prestigious ABAC Presidential Scholarship beginning with the 2018 fall semester.

Dr. David Bridges began his 13th year as the ABAC President on July 1, 40 years after he graduated from ABAC as a student. "I have basically been on a college campus since I left Parrott to come to ABAC," Bridges said. "I can remember every step of the way but time doesn't have a lot of meaning to me. I take life one day at a time." Bridges is now the third longest tenured president in the history of ABAC, trailing only Dr. George King, 1934-47, and George P. Donaldson, 1947-61.



Garrett Boone, director of ABAC's Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village, said 6,359 students from four different South Georgia counties participated in the Destination Ag program during its second year. That's an increase of 2,390 students over the first year. Destination Ag gives elementary school students a first-hand look at where their food, fiber, and shelter originates. Ben Kennedy (Class of 2003) spoke at the annual Freshman Convocation on August 14. "My time at ABAC was amazing," Kennedy, a custom home builder in Bluffton, S.C., said. "I use what I learned here on a daily basis to make a difference in the lives of others and my own life."

Classes for the 2018 fall semester began on August 15 with instructional sites in Tifton, Bainbridge, Moultrie, Blakely, and Donalsonville and a record enrollment of 4,291 students from 30 countries, 18 states, and 155 of Georgia's 159 counties. The previous enrollment record was 3,665 students in the 2007 fall term.

The University of Georgia Symphony Orchestra opened the ABAC Performing Arts Series on September 9. Dr. Steven Hahn kicked off the Carter Arts and Lecture Series at ABAC Bainbridge on September 13. Vice President of External Affairs and Advancement Paul Williams said ABAC has been recognized by the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education with a 2018 Educational Fundraising Award for Overall Fundraising Excellence. Kelly Scott from ABAC's Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village received the 2017 Georgia Project Learning Tree Outstanding Facilitator Award at the Georgia Forestry Association annual conference.

Dr. Jess Usher, an assistant professor of history, spoke on *An Examination of American Immigration History* on September 25 as the first speaker in a new ABAC History Lecture Series. ABAC is partnering with Columbus State University, Columbus Technical College, Georgia Southwestern State University, South Georgia Technical College, and Valdosta State University to share in a \$3 million National Science Foundation grant to create a scholar program for minority students enrolled in science, technology, engineering, and math programs beginning with the 2019 spring semester. Dr. Brian Ray directed the Baldwin Players in *Stop Thief* on October 4-6. *Stop Thief* was the first play performed by the Baldwin Players under the direction of George P. Donaldson on December 15, 1933. Ray said the performance was a tribute to the 85-year history of the Baldwin Players. Dr. Doug Waid, Professor Emeritus of Wildlife, received the Jenkins-Crockford-Hayes Wildlife Conservation Award from the Georgia Chapter of The Wildlife Society (GATWS).

Hurricane Michael Closes Campus for Three Days

ABAC closed October 10-12 when Hurricane Michael slammed the entire South Georgia area with high winds and rain. Museum Curator Polly Huff received the 2018 Award for Excellence



in Archival Program Development at the Georgia Archives Awards Ceremony on October 16. Huff spent three or four days a week for 16 weeks cataloging the archives of ABAC in the Carlton Center in the spring of 2018.

Dr. Jaibun Earp, Dean of the School of Nursing and Health Sciences, unveiled the school's new mission statement on October 25 in a ceremony in the Health Sciences Building. Earp said the new mission statement, "To deliver excellent nursing education by engaging, teaching, coaching, and mentoring that prepares graduates to care for and to promote healthy clients, families, and communities," keeps faculty and students in the school current with the times.

Surchero's opened an ABAC location with an outside entrance in the Donaldson Dining Hall on October 25. Sub Connection and Pizza Hut formerly occupied the space. Congressman Austin Scott spoke as a part of the Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow lecture series on October 30. Six ABAC faculty members will receive funding for special research projects this year from the 2018-19 Gail Dillard Faculty Enrichment Fund, provided by the ABAC Foundation. Dr. Heather Cathcart, Dr. Kennon Deal, Dr. Kingsley Dunkley, Dr. Andrew McIntosh, Dr. Alex McLemore, and Dr. Leslie Pryor-McIntosh will receive funding for the projects which involve students in their classrooms and run the spectrum of research activities. Award-winning poet Juliana Gray opened ABAC's new Georgia Poetry Circuit series on Nov. 5. Coach Aliriza Sisman's Golden Fillies' soccer team wound up with a 3-9 record during his first season at the helm of the program.

Dr. Jordan Cofer, Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs – Learning Resources and Professor of English at ABAC, has been appointed to serve as the Interim Dean for the School of Arts and Sciences. He will serve in this role upon the departure of the current dean, Dr. Johnny Evans, on December 21. Evans has been selected as the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at the College of Coastal Georgia. Cofer previously served as Department Head for Literature and Language at ABAC. He earned his Ph.D. (English) from Texas Tech University, his M.A. (English) from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, and a B.A. (English) from Southwest Baptist University. He has been a member of the ABAC faculty since 2009. Director of Enrollment Management Donna Webb recently received the prestigious Carol Nobles Distinguished Service Award from the Georgia Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (GACRAO).

Four ABAC faculty members have been selected for the University System of Georgia (USG) Chancellor's Learning Scholars program. Dr. Mark Johnson, Assistant Professor of Education; Dr. Justin Ng, Associate Professor of Agriculture; Dr. Leslie Pryor-McIntosh, Assistant Professor of Biology; and Dr. Dave Nelson, Professor of History; were chosen for the program. Dr. Laura Clark has been appointed as the new Director of ABAC Libraries. "I am very passionate about libraries and their function in meeting the needs of faculty and students," Clark said. "ABAC provides a high-quality education to a rural area that is embedded in the



agricultural industry.” Baldwin Library on ABAC’s Tifton campus is now located in J. Lamar Branch Hall while the former home of the library in the Carlton Center is undergoing renovation. Clark graduated from the University of South Alabama with a B.S.B.A. in Marketing before earning a master’s degree in Library and Information Science with a concentration in Information Architecture from Florida State University (FSU). She then earned her Ph.D. in Information Studies from FSU.

Dr. Deidre Mercer Martin, ABAC’s Director of Advancement, received the Georgia Education Advancement Council (GEAC) 2018 Award for Excellence in Educational Fundraising at the GEAC annual conference in Savannah. Scott Pierce has been named ABAC’s new Director of Sponsored Programs. Pierce has been a senior program manager at Albany State University for the past eight years, where he said he helped to bring in “over \$7.5 million” in federal grants. He will begin his ABAC career by promoting undergraduate research and faculty research projects. Pierce, who has lived all over the world including stints in New York City and the Virgin Islands, received a bachelor’s degree in economics and philosophy from Sewanee--University of the South and another bachelor’s degree in chemistry from Albany State. He also earned a master’s degree in criminal justice and forensic science from Albany State.

Two students from ABAC claimed the top prize in a national research grant competition from the Beta Beta Beta Biological Society Research Foundation. Michele Moncrief, a senior biology major from Bogart, and Corey Brooke, a senior biology major from Sycamore, won the national competition open to TriBeta students conducting mentored research from all participating chapters. Their research proposal was titled, “The effects of nicotine and niacin on chemoreception in fall army worms, a major pest of sweet corn in the Southeastern United States.” Dr. James Galt-Brown continued the ABAC History Lecture Series on November 19 when he spoke on “Lasting Impacts: 100 Years After WWI.”

Former ABAC Band Director Woody Leonard was inducted into the National High School Band Directors Hall of Fame on December 10. Leonard, the Director of Bands at ABAC from 2007-12, also served as the band director at Dalton High School from 1980-81, Tift County High School from 1986-2005, and Cook Middle School from 2008-15.

Madison Lynn from Vidalia and Ashley Jensen from Sumner received the top awards presented by the ABAC Alumni Association during the fall commencement ceremony on December 13. Lynn, a crop and soil science major, was named the winner of the ABAC Alumni Association Award which goes to the top bachelor’s degree graduate participating in the ceremony, and Jensen, an agricultural education major, received the George P. Donaldson Award for the top associate degree graduate participating in the ceremony. Dr. Tracy Nolan, an ABAC alumnus (Class of ’97) who is the first female general surgeon at Tift Regional Medical Center, was the guest speaker at the ceremony. “Start climbing the ladder of success today,” Nolan said. “Every

rung brings you closer to being or doing what makes you, you. Develop connections. Let people know they can count on you. Be confident in your ability to get the job done. Get out there! Not much was ever accomplished by sitting around.” A total of 180 graduates received their diplomas.

Pam Leonard, Executive Assistant to the President, retired on December 31. She joined the ABAC staff on September 28, 1986 as the secretary in the Public Relations office. Leonard received the ABAC Staff Excellence Award in 2007. She received the Pacesetter Award from ABAC students on five different occasions.

2019

A gigantic jack hammer pounding the concrete steps of the Carlton Center and the arrival of a mammoth dump truck to haul away the debris signaled the beginning of the renovation of the Carlton Center in the middle of the ABAC campus on January 2. “If the weather holds, we should move right along,” ABAC Capital Planning Director Melvin Merrill said. “The building will look quite different when the renovation is completed.” The Fiscal Year 2019 budget for the State of Georgia includes \$17.7 million in funding for the renovation of the Carlton Center and the construction of a Fine Arts Building on the campus. ABAC received \$1.6 million in design funds for the Fine Arts Building and the Carlton renovation in the FY 18 state budget. To complete the \$21.4 million project, ABAC President David Bridges is hoping for \$2.1 million in funding for equipment for the two buildings in the FY 20 state budget.

A total of 3,906 students enrolled for the 2019 spring semester at ABAC, the highest spring term enrollment in the history of the college. The key reason behind the increase was the fact that ABAC had instructional sites in Bainbridge, Blakely, and Donalsonville for the first time because of the consolidation with Bainbridge State College in addition to offering classes at the main campus in Tifton and in Moultrie. Enrollment for the 2018 spring term was 3,085.

Thanks to a higher number of students, more employees, and more expensive off-campus housing, the economic impact of ABAC on South Georgia soared to a record \$529,838,507 in fiscal year 2017, according to a recent statewide study. The University System of Georgia (USG) sanctioned the statewide economic impact study, which was conducted by Dr. Jeffrey M. Humphreys, Director of the Selig Center for Economic Growth in the University of Georgia’s Terry College of Business. The 2017 report revealed that 444 jobs at ABAC resulted in 1,382 jobs off campus for a total impact of 1,826 jobs in the area. The previous fiscal year report in 2016 showed ABAC with 230 on-campus jobs resulting in 886 off-campus jobs for a total impact of 1,116 jobs in the area. “More jobs at ABAC means more jobs in South Georgia,” Dr. Renata Elad, Dean of the Stafford School of Business at ABAC, said. “ABAC had a much bigger employment impact plus the cost of housing went up, and the average rent in Tifton went



up that year. Personal expenses for entertainment, apparel, and services were also up.” Elad analyzed the USG numbers for ABAC and found the ABAC economic impact a monumental 31 per center higher than the \$369,874,664 impact in the 2016 fiscal year. “ABAC needs South Georgia, and South Georgia needs ABAC,” Elad said in her analysis. “With total employment of over 1,800 jobs directly from student spending activities and an overall labor impact of almost \$66 million, ABAC is definitely a strong partner in regional growth.”

Fulwood Garden Center Becomes a Part of ABAC

One of the most historic homes in Tifton became a part of ABAC on January 31 after the donation of the Fulwood Garden Center to the ABAC Foundation by the Council of Garden Clubs of Tifton, Inc. “We appreciate the generosity of the Council of Garden Clubs of Tifton, Inc., and we look forward to utilizing this important piece of Tifton’s history for many special events in the future,” ABAC President David Bridges said. “We are ecstatic to gift ABAC this historic property,” Terri Branch, chair of the Board of Trustees of the Council of Garden Clubs of Tifton, Inc., said. “Our goal was to find an organization that would preserve the past, maintain the property for community enjoyment, and secure the history for future generations with progressive and innovative ideas to promote education, conservation, preservation, and beautification. ABAC was the perfect choice.” Paul Willis, Vice President of Finance and Operations at ABAC, said the Garden Center will continue to be available for rental to the public for special events. “ABAC will maintain and showcase the historical elements of the Center for the community and for visitors to Tifton,” Willis said. “ABAC students will also help curate the Center, including the beautiful grounds and gardens.”

Polly Huff, curator for ABAC’s Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village, said tours of the historic home will be available by appointment through Jennifer Vieth, facilities rental coordinator at the Museum. “We will also be working to preserve and display the available artifacts in the Garden Center and maintain an inventory of every artifact in our digital database,” Huff said. Constructed in 1914 as a home for Paul D. and Ruth Vickers Fulwood, the interior of the structure became a part of history almost immediately. The beautiful flooring installed in the home was originally intended for the home of Tifton founder Henry Harding Tift and his wife, Bessie. The mill sent the flooring to the Fulwood home by mistake. “Mr. Fulwood always said that the floors were the finest element of the home,” Huff said of the original flooring which is still in place today. The Council of Garden Clubs of Tifton, Inc. purchased the Fulwood Garden Center in 1985. The two-story, 2,764 square-foot house features landscaped grounds that offer a suitable location for both indoor and outdoor gatherings. All the vintage ceiling light fixtures are original to the house.



Another unique aspect of the Garden Center is a Rufus Porter style mural in the home's foyer and staircase wall. From 1825 to 1845, Porter painted scenes of New England towns and harbors in homes in that area. His work often depicted Connecticut, home state of Tifton's founder. Led by Tifton artist Susan Saye, five artists from across America painted the mural at the Garden Center in 2013. Huff said a tiny fox is painted into the mural and presents a bit of a puzzle for those who try to find it. With the aid of several community groups including the Tifton Rotary Club, the historic gardens and the camellia collection around the Garden Center continue to thrive. In 2013, Rotarians financed and built a brick path to the wedding garden, and local citizens, ABAC club members, and FFA volunteers have assisted with various projects in the gardens. Camellias in the gardens are named for Bessie Tift, Ruth Fulwood, and Sandra Deal, wife of former Georgia Governor Nathan Deal. Mrs. Fulwood was president of the American Rose Society and is reported to have maintained 250 camellias in her yard. Historic landmark status was granted to the Fulwood Garden Center on Oct. 5, 2015. A marker in the front yard designates the facility as an historic landmark for Tifton, dedicated to the memory of Paul D. and Ruth Vickers Fulwood. The property is also listed on the National Registry of Historic Homes.

Diving into the ABAC archives for five months paid off for ABAC's Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Curator Polly Huff. The Georgia Association for Museums and Galleries (GAMG) presented ABAC with the top award in the Special Project Category and the Multimedia Project of the Year at its annual meeting. ABAC won the top prizes for "An Overhaul of 110 Years of College Archives" in the Special Project Category and "Fridays with the Curator" as the first ever Multimedia Project of the Year. Huff directed both projects. She was assisted on the archives project by two student interns, Britt Fuller and Will Hunnicutt, who both majored in Rural Studies. "For five months, Britt, Will, and I sorted through hundreds of boxes of ABAC institutional archives," Huff said. "Then we organized, cataloged, and stabilized them with proper care and archival supplies before packaging them for storage while the Carlton Center is undergoing renovation." The Special Project Award recognizes outstanding achievement on a project other than static exhibits, completed by the institutions, friends, and supporters of the GAMG. Huff said the awards committee noted that "this enormous undertaking by the ABAC archives team was worthy of recognition, and was a testament to the dedication, perseverance, and resourcefulness of the project's staff," according to Christy Crisp of the Georgia Historical Society, who served as the 2018 Awards Committee Chair.

Wellsley Martin, a junior agribusiness major from Hawkinsville, was selected as Ms. ABAC 2019 at the 50th annual event on February 21. She was sponsored by the ABAC Agronomy Club. "I love the people at ABAC," Martin, daughter of Ginger and Christopher Martin, said. "They are all so kind and generous, and ABAC feels like a second home to me. Every year is an honor but being able to serve as the 50th Ms. ABAC is so special to me." Other finalists included Jaylee Bass, a junior writing and communication major from Adel, first runner-up; Meredith McGlamory, a junior agricultural communication major from Abbeville, second runner-up; Charley Lollis, a freshman agricultural communication major from Perry, third runner-up, and



Madison Barber, a sophomore nursing major from Warwick, fourth runner-up. Katibeth Mims, a sophomore agricultural communication major from Donalsonville, received the Essay Award and the Ms. Congeniality Award. McGlamory received the Interview Award, and Caitlyn Lawton, a junior crop and soil science major from Leesburg, received the People's Choice Award. Four former Ms. ABAC winners attended the event as a part of the 50th anniversary celebration. They included Keegan Daniel from 2009, Kristen Ray McHugh from 2013, Kristen Smith from 2014, and Shannon Kehoe from 2018. The ABAC Agricultural Business Club sponsored the Ms. ABAC competition. A portion of the proceeds from the event benefitted the American Cancer Society Relay for Life. Director of Public Relations Emeritus Mike Chason was the emcee for the 38th consecutive year. Sponsored by the ABAC Foundation, *An Evening for ABAC* raised \$104,000 for 41 student scholarships on February 23 at the UGA Tifton Conference Center.

ABAC President David Bridges and Dr. Susan Roe, Head of the Department of Fine Arts, spoke on the new Fine Arts Building at a Fine Arts Preview on February 27 in the History Room at Tift Hall. Dr. Hans Schmeisser spoke on *Henry Clay and the Making of America* in the new ABAC History Lecture Series on February 28. The Baldwin Players of Dr. Brian Ray performed Shakespeare's *The Tempest* on March 7-9. Dr. Wendy Harrison concluded the ABAC History Lecture Series on March 12 with *The Georgia Chautauqua in Albany*. Solar technology came to ABAC in March with a new bench that allows students to charge their phones and enjoy the beautiful South Georgia weather. Students have Bill Elliott to thank for the generous donation that was given in memory of his wife, Julia Ann Simpson Elliott. "Julia Ann had a dream to be a teacher," Elliott said. "She came to ABAC in 1962 and 1963, and then went to the University of Georgia to study home economics."

ABAC has again been named a Military Friendly School and a Best Value Institution by Victory Media. To qualify for the award, Victory Media takes into consideration academic policies and compliance, admissions and orientation, culture and commitment, financial aid and assistance, graduation and career, and military student support and retention. The standards employed at ABAC exceed the Military Friendly® standard in each category. "Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College is honored to again receive these military accolades," said Veterans Affairs Certifying Official and Student Veterans Organization Advisor Jessica Swords. "Our military and veteran students have served our country, and now we are privileged to serve them through assisting in their educational success." Swords said veteran initiatives empowered at ABAC include access to the Veteran Success Center, peer tutoring by other veteran students, priority one registration, eligibility to receive a United States Veteran graduation stole, veteran scholarships, and a Student Veterans Organization chapter on campus. ABAC has also been named a Yellow Ribbon institution which means that five veteran students may qualify for \$2,105.50 toward college expenses per year. ABAC is also home to the Freedom Gallery which honors Medal of Honor recipient and ABAC alumnus Harold "Pinky" Durham and the contributions of the United States military. ABAC also added a Blue Star Memorial Garden in 2017.



ABAC Hosts Wildlife Society SE Student Conclave

ABAC hosted the Wildlife Society Southeastern Student Conclave on March 21-23. The Conclave is one of the most active and challenging wildlife-specific competitions in the world. College and university undergraduate and graduate students from across the United States compete for three days in a variety of physical, artistic, and intellectual events. The University of Georgia (UGA) was the overall 2019 Conclave winner with the highest scores across all competitions. Mississippi State University finished second followed by North Carolina State University, and Haywood (N.C) Community College. A total of 21 colleges and universities, all with wildlife-related programs, competed in the Conclave, bringing 359 registrants, including student competitors and their faculty advisors, to Tifton. Eleven states were represented, ranging from Maryland to Arkansas. Competing in the Conclave were Auburn University, Clemson University, Arkansas State University, University of Arkansas at Monticello, Arkansas Tech University, University of Florida, University of Georgia, Murray State University, Eastern Kentucky University, Louisiana State University, Louisiana Tech University, Frostburg State University, Mississippi State University, North Carolina State University, Haywood Community College, Western Carolina University, Cleveland State Community College, University of Tennessee Knoxville, Tennessee Tech University, University of Tennessee at Martin, and Virginia Tech University. ABAC used the opportunity as the Conclave host to showcase its newly acquired 1,000 acre working school forest, which contained the obstacle course, archery, air rifle, and orienteering competitions. Field photography was held at the nearby Paradise Public Fishing Area, and the skeet shoot was held on nearby private property. ABAC's vast campus served as the host for the team competition, an event where entire school teams run to and complete 22 various stations on equally diverse topics within five minutes on a 1.7-mile route. The ABAC campus also served as the site for the fishing competition, field estimations, lab practical, museum study skin preparation of hispid cotton rats, GIS Practical, and dendrology.

New Generation Begins for ABAC Black Walnut Tree

Roaring winds and heavy rains from Hurricane Michael in October 2018 took a toll on the landscape at ABAC. Grounds Superintendent Brad Barbee and his crew members spent weeks putting the campus back into the pristine shape that characterizes one of the most picturesque campuses in the state. Most trees and plants survived but a legendary black walnut tree in front of the Health Sciences Building became a victim of the unforgiving force of the monumental hurricane. "That particular tree's origin on the campus was said to be the work of Dr. Vernon Yow, professor of forestry and former Dean of Men at ABAC," said Dr. Doug Waid, professor emeritus of wildlife and forestry at ABAC, said. "The black walnut he planted stood outside what was once the women's dormitory, later renamed Creswell Hall." When Creswell Hall was razed in 2005 to make way for the Health Sciences Building, the tree barely survived the impact of the heavy construction equipment. In fact, Wanda Golden, the former head of the nursing program, went to great lengths to make certain that Barbee and his team kept the tree alive. "Against all odds, Brad and the ABAC personnel were able to revitalize the tree, and its fruit provided new trees to beautify the campus," Waid said. "It continued as a living record for those



who shared and cared.” Waid and other faculty and staff members nurtured seedlings from the tree after Barbee’s team saved the historic black walnut. Some of the seedlings made their way off campus through Horticulture Club plant sales or the Wildlife Club’s annual Beast Feast. Others were presented to faculty members as retirement gifts. “The intrinsic value of the wood and the meat of the nuts makes the black walnut really special,” Waid said. “The shell of the nut is so hard that it was once ground up and added to the rubber of tires in the early days of the automotive industry to make them more durable. “Because of the unusual physical properties of the tree, it was commonly planted around homes, barns, and out-buildings as a natural lightning rod.” Even though the original black walnut didn’t make through the natural disaster of Hurricane Michael, Waid knew there was a seedling just waiting to start a new generation. On March 26, that fresh start came to life when Barbee put shovel to dirt in front of the Health Sciences Building. “Hurricane Michael got the original but we’re hoping this seedling has a long life,” Barbee said. “We’re going to do our best to take care of it.” Golden was on hand for the planting along with Dr. Jaibun Earp, Dean of the School of Nursing and Health Sciences; Kip Hall, an assistant professor of forest resources; Barbee; and one of his grounds crew members, Timothy Nelson, an ABAC graduate who takes great pride in maintaining the landscape on the front of the ABAC campus. Nursing students stood in the background as Golden and Earp dug out small bits of soil before Barbee took over to deepen the hole with his shovel. He then placed the seedling carefully in the space and packed the soil around it. A new generation of the historic black walnut tree was underway.

ABAC Alumni Association Honors Eight at Homecoming

Eight former ABAC students were honored for their accomplishments at the annual ABAC Alumni Association awards luncheon as a part of the 2019 Homecoming Celebration on April 5. ABAC Alumni Association award winners included George Turk from Commerce, Distinguished Alumnus; Andy Bell from Climax, Master Farmer; Ben Smith from Columbus, J. Lamar Branch Award; Dr. Audrey Luke-Morgan from Tifton, Outstanding Educator; Kim Gilman from Ashburn, Outstanding Health Care Professional; Amanda Bridges Harden from Dahlonega, Outstanding Young Alumnus; the Harry and Lester Thompson families from Colquitt County, Family Legacy Award; and Josie Smith from Tifton, Miles A. Drummond Rising Star Award.

Turk is a 1952 ABAC graduate who recently retired after working as the Northeast Georgia Division Manager of Gold Kist Poultry. He currently works as a General Partner with Turk Family LP. Turk has served as the President of the Georgia Hatchery Association and is a lifetime member of the Georgia Poultry Association. Turk has served on the ABAC Ag Council and is a lifetime member of the ABAC Alumni Association. He also established the George and Betty Turk Endowment Fund for the Ag School.

Bell, a 1980 ABAC graduate, farms a diversified operation of row crops and cattle in partnership with his brother, Buster. They currently grow approximately 1,100 acres of cotton, 750 acres of peanuts, 150 acres of corn, 150 acres of pine timber, 15 acres of pecans and 350 acres of hay and



pastureland. Bell is a founding director of the grower owned peanut shelling plant, American Peanut Growers Group, located in Donalsonville. He was named the Ag Man of the Year in Decatur County, received the Georgia Young Farmers Association President's Award, and earned his FFA American Farmer Degree.

A 1965 ABAC graduate, Ben Smith recently retired after working with Tom's Foods and Lance-Snyder's for over 46 years. He managed a peanut shelling operation for these companies for many years, allowing him to work closely with peanut farmers. Smith has earned honors from the American Peanut Shellers Hall of Fame and American Peanut Council Hall of Fame. After graduating from ABAC, he went to the University of Georgia to earn a Bachelor of Science degree in Forestry.

Now an ABAC Assistant Professor of Agribusiness, Luke-Morgan graduated from ABAC in 1994. She teaches a variety of the ABAC agribusiness and agricultural economics courses. As an academic advisor, Luke-Morgan works closely with students as they embark on their college journey. She is the current advisor of the ABAC Agribusiness Club, National Ag Marketing Association (NAMA) Team, and ABAC's Collegiate Young Farmers and Ranchers. She is a lifetime member of the ABAC Alumni Association.

Gilman, who graduated from ABAC in 1992, now works with Phoebe Putney Health System as the CEO of Critical Access Hospitals. She serves Phoebe Worth Medical Center in Sylvester and Southwest Georgia Regional Medical Center in Cuthbert. Gilman was elected to the Georgia Hospital Association's Center for Rural Health Board, received a Georgia Hospital Association Award, and was a guest speaker at ABAC's Nurse Pinning Ceremony in 2015.

A 2000 ABAC graduate, Harden is Assistant Vice President of University Advancement at the University of North Georgia. In addition, she is the Chief Operating Officer of the UNG Foundation. Harden serves as the President of the Georgia Education Advancement Council, as a member of the Council for Advancement and Support of Education, and as a member of the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges.

The Thompson Family, including Lester O. and Robert Harry Thompson's families, has been selected for the ABAC Family Legacy Award. Lester O. Thompson is a 1952 ABAC graduate, and his brother, Robert Harry Thompson, is a 1969 graduate. Other family members who have attended ABAC include Regina Thompson Murray, class of 1977; John Neely, attended 1975-1976; Jennifer Neely, graduated in 2006; John Michael Thompson, graduated in 2011; Michael Thompson, attended summer of 1985; Deborah Gail Darby Thompson, class of 1970; Joey Thompson, attended in 1995; Dr. Darby Thompson Sewell, graduated in 1998; and Jeff Sewell, attended 1994-1996.

Josie Smith, a 2010 ABAC graduate and lifetime member of the ABAC Alumni Association, is the Office of College Advancement Marketing Coordinator and Alumni Assistant in the ABAC alumni office. She assists with the planning and execution of alumni events such as reunions, socials, homecoming, and graduation events. Smith is the advisor to the Student Alumni



Council. She was a recipient of the Georgia 4-H Volunteer of the Year Award in 2018, and she also received the Tift County 4-H Volunteer of the Year Award.

ABAC Alumni Director Lynda Fisher said the 2019 Homecoming festivities also included the Gee Haw Whoa Back Rodeo, Homecoming Cookout, Alumni Awards Luncheon, Athletics Hall of Fame Dinner, The Fabulous Golddusters Reunion, Golden Alumni Gathering welcoming the class of 1969, a reunion of the '68, '69, and '70 basketball teams, Alumni Socials, Tailgate Under the Big Top, Remembrance Service, and Community Plant Sale. Dahlia Sutliff, an agricultural education major from Bradenton, Fla., and Jonah Smith, a forestry major from Vidalia, were selected by the student body as Homecoming Royalty. They were sponsored by the ABAC Forestry Club. The ABAC Forestry Club won the coveted Homecoming Stallion Cup, which goes to the student organization that scores the most points during a week-long competition during Homecoming.

Athletics Hall of Fame Selects 2019 Class

Five individuals and one team were inducted into the Class of 2019 of the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame on April 5. ABAC Athletics Director Alan Kramer said the 2019 class included the 1968-69 men's basketball team, former softball standout Jenny McCarthy, former tennis star Lisa English, former football player and longtime high school coach Sidney White, former basketball player and college basketball coach Alfred Barney, and former baseball player and outstanding high school coach Terry Mixon.

English, originally from South Africa, was the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) Region XVII Most Valuable Player in 1995 and 1996 when she played for Kramer's Golden Fillies. She was an NJCAA All-America selection in 1995 and an International Tennis Association (ITA) All-America selection in 1995 and 1996. English was also named to the All-Region team both years. When she continued her career at Mercer University, English was named the Most Valuable Player of the team during both her junior and senior seasons. She was also named an ITA All-American Scholar Athlete in 1998.

A Canadian, McCarthy was the first international player to play softball for the Golden Fillies. She led Coach Donna Campbell's team to Georgia Junior College Athletic Association (GJCAA) state fast-pitch titles in 1997 and 1998 when she was named the GJCAA Most Valuable Player both years. She was also named to the All-Region team and the All-Tournament team in 1997 and 1998. In 1998, McCarthy led ABAC to its first District C Championship and its first trip ever to the National Fastpitch Softball Tournament. She won over 30 games as the ABAC pitcher and hit over .300 during both her freshman and sophomore seasons.

A native of Pelham, Barney played basketball for the Golden Stallions from 1975-77. He was named the Most Valuable Player during his sophomore season. He earned a scholarship to Austin Peay State University where he was named the MVP of the team during his senior year. During his coaching career, he was the head coach at Pelham High School, Tuskegee University and Dekalb College, later renamed Georgia Perimeter. At Georgia Perimeter, he was named



NJCAA Region XVII Coach of the Year, Naismith Junior College Coach of the Year, and the Atlanta Tipoff Club Coach of the Year. His Georgia Perimeter teams made six appearances in the national tournament, including a Final Four berth in 2003.

Coach Vann Brackin's 1968-69 Golden Stallions compiled a record of 25-5 and won the Southern Conference of the GJCAA with a perfect 12-0 mark. The Stallions were the first intercollegiate athletics team at ABAC with African American players, Albert Lewis and David Adams. Other team members included Leslie Moore, Ashley DeLoach, Harold Adkins, Julian Deaton, Mark Hall, Jerry Johnston, Odell Pack, Dennis McSwain, Carlos McSwain, Harley Stewart, and Buddy Whitley. The team averaged 93 points a game and scored over 100 points nine times. ABAC set a single game scoring record with a 140-64 win over Jones Junior College on Nov. 20, 1968. ABAC lost only one home game all year, a 93-77 decision to Gardner Webb, led by its 7-foot-2 center Artis Gilmore. Nine players from the team signed with senior colleges.

Originally from Sylvester, White passed away at the age of 90 in 1999. He played football for the Georgia State College for Men Rams who defeated the University of Miami in 1931 and 1932. In 1931, he scored a total of eight touchdowns against Troy, Fort Benning, Oglethorpe, Florida's freshman squad, and Parris Island. White's coaching resume includes a stint at Warner Robins where he led the girls' basketball team to the state tournament 17 straight years including a state title in 1965, the school's first state championship in any sport. White also coached in Wrightsville, McRae, Americus, and Worth County.

A former Most Valuable Player in baseball and basketball at Suwannee High School in Live Oak, Fla., Mixon was a standout player for Coach Tom Moody's Golden Stallions when he hit .321 in 1975 and .359 in 1976. He was named All-Conference and All-State in 1976. As the starting shortstop, Mixon led the 1975 Stallions to the state championship. After completing his ABAC career, Mixon transferred to Georgia Southern where he was selected to the All-South Baseball Team and the Coaches Association Team during his senior year. He returned to Live Oak in 1979 and has served as head coach for varsity baseball, softball, bowling, and golf teams. Mixon was inducted into the Suwannee High School Hall of Fame in 2009.

Honors Day Recognition Goes to Top Faculty and Staff

Beth Thornton, an assistant professor of biology, received the top award presented to a faculty member at ABAC on April 3 when she received the W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence at the annual Honors Day ceremony. Other top award recipients included Beverly Wesley, a Financial Aid Analyst II, who received the Roy R. Jackson, Sr. Award for Staff Excellence, and Dr. Jerry Baker, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, who received the E. Lanier Carson Leadership Award for College Administrators. Dr. Ray Smith, a professor of agronomy and department head, received the W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Excellence in Advising Award, and Dr. Mary Ellen Hicks, a professor of animal science, received the W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Excellence in Student



Engagement. Alexandra Ikner, a senior agricultural education major from Perry, was selected as the top academic student at ABAC when she was named the J.G. Woodroof Scholar

Thornton began her ABAC teaching career in 1995. She received her associate degree in biology from ABAC, her bachelor's degree in zoology from the University of Georgia (UGA), and her master's degree from UGA in secondary science education. One of her recommendations stated, "Whether in a lab setting or in a study abroad experience in Belize, the hands-on active learning approach is a hallmark of how she engages our students and challenges them to think and make connections." Another recommendation said, "She is one of the most dedicated professors on our campus. She is constantly re-evaluating and adjusting course material to continuously improve her teaching."

An ABAC employee for 19 years, Wesley is a key member of the financial aid staff at ABAC. One letter of recommendation said, "She is a very hard worker and is very conscientious about completing her duties. She does an excellent job of managing our HOPE programs and awarding processes." Wesley was commended for "being consistent throughout her department's changes due to reorganization, changes in leadership, consolidation and annual updates in state and federal guidelines." Another recommendation said, "She is always willing to help and support others in our office and that really strengthens the team which in turn strengthens ABAC."

Baker was selected in 2014 as the Dean of the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources at ABAC. In 2017, he was appointed as ABAC's first Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. In the position, he provided leadership for the consolidation of academic and student affairs programs when the former Bainbridge State College merged with ABAC. In his role as the chief academic officer at ABAC, Baker was instrumental in helping the college launch a new chapter of Phi Kappa Phi, which recognizes the achievements of the top baccalaureate degree-seeking students. Baker earned his Ph.D. and master's degree from Texas A&M in animal breeding and genetics and his bachelor's degree in biology from Morningside College.

Smith, who averages 98 advisees each semester, earned his Ph.D. and master's degree in agronomy from UGA and his bachelor's degree in agronomy from Penn State. He manages 17 faculty members, six staff members and oversees the J.G. Woodroof Farm and three educational buildings. "As an advisor, you may need to take on the role of friend, coach, drill sergeant, mentor, and career counselor, depending on the needs of individual students," Smith said. "I strive to guide these students down a path that will keep their options open until such time as their future becomes clear to them."

An ABAC faculty member for 30 years, Hicks received the Donaldson Advising Award in 2011, and the Donaldson Teaching Award in 2013. She received her associate degree from ABAC, and a bachelor's degree and Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree from UGA. One recommendation for Hicks said, "She has devoted much of her time, energy, and finances to engage and enhance real world skills that are very applicable for her students. She travels with

her students on educational trips, introduces us to industry leaders and mentors, and visits operations around the country, all with a smile on her face.”

Shirley Wilson, Administrative Associate in the Office of Athletics and Recreational Sports, was honored for 35 years of service at ABAC during the service awards ceremony after Honors Day. ABAC President David Bridges presented the award to Wilson, who received a standing ovation from the faculty and staff in the arena. “I just love my job,” Wilson said. “I absolutely love coming to work every day.”

Those employees honored for 30 years of service included Cindy Barber, Dr. Mary Ellen Hicks, and Wayne Jones. Twenty-year service awards were presented to Dr. Renata Elad, Philip Hightower, and Beverly Wesley. Fifteen-year service award winners were Emily Cheek, Teri Mathis, and Debbie Pyles. Honored for 10 years of service were Dr. Kingsley Dunkley, Dr. Cyndy Hall, Robbie Hawsey, Joseph Johnson, John Layton, Mickie Tompkins, Amanda Urquhart, and Donna Webb. Dr. Audrey Luke-Morgan was honored for seven years of service. Receiving recognition for five years of service were David Bass, Adam Brumfield, Tim Carpenter, Shubha Chatterjee, Kitty Davis, Sue Dees, Kaycee Jones, Dr. George Lowerts, Dr. Franzelle Mathis-Pertilla, Sara Mumm, Dr. Justin Ng, Pooja Patel, Lisa Pryor, Dr. Russell Pryor, Daniel Sollenberger, Jessica Swords, Kaci West, and Dale White.

Students, faculty, and staff from ABAC’s Stafford School of Business joined with their community business partners on April 3 to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the Bachelor of Science degree in Business at ABAC. Dr. Renata Elad, Dean of the Stafford School of Business, said the school bases the success of the degree on five tenets. “Our business partners in the room know we have a well-rounded, broad-based program because they hire our students as interns,” Elad said. “We also pride ourselves on hands-on experiential learning, strong faculty mentorships, an innovative curriculum, a low student-to-faculty ratio, and a quite affordable degree.”

The annual Gee Haw Whoa Back Rodeo at ABAC was named the Best \$750 Rodeo of 2018 by the Professional Cowboys Association. Niki Vanderslice, president of the ABAC Alumni Association, accepted the award on behalf of ABAC and its alumni. Nearly 2,000 spectators attended this year’s rodeo, which was held during the Homecoming 2019 weekend.

Alexandra Ikner from Perry and Diego Escobar from Douglas received the top awards presented by the ABAC Alumni Association at spring commencement on May 9 when 330 graduates walked across the Gressette Gymnasium stage to set a record for most graduates participating in a single ceremony in ABAC’s 111-year history. “It’s a record-setting day for ABAC,” ABAC President David Bridges, who received his associate degree from ABAC in 1978, said. “I am so proud of these graduates and all they have accomplished. Now I look forward to hearing from them as they leave this campus and move into the world where they have a chance to be difference-makers in their chosen professions.” Ikner, an agricultural education major, was named the winner of the ABAC Alumni Association Award which goes to the top bachelor’s



degree graduate participating in the ceremony, and Escobar, who received an Associate of Science degree, earned the George P. Donaldson Award for the top associate degree graduate participating in the ceremony. Dr. Jean Sumner, Dean of the Mercer University School of Medicine, was the guest speaker. Dr. Jerry Baker, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, offered special recognition to the 26 graduates who received their bachelor's degrees in agricultural education. He presented each one of them with a school bell for their desks. The ceremony marked the first time ever that ABAC has awarded bachelor's degrees in agricultural education. On the evening of May 9, Bridges awarded degrees to 62 students at the ABAC Bainbridge commencement ceremony. Former Bainbridge State College Interim President Stuart Rayfield was the guest speaker.

ABAC Features Largest Number of Ag Ed Graduates in Southeast U.S.

When 26 agricultural education graduates walked across the commencement stage at ABAC on May 9, they represented the largest group of agricultural education graduates in the entire southeastern United States. Dr. Frank Flanders, an associate professor of agricultural education in the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources at ABAC, lays out the data. "No other college or university in Georgia had those kinds of numbers this year in ag ed," Flanders said. "Neither does anyone else in the South. The best thing is most of these graduates have jobs. Fourteen or 15 of them have already signed teaching contracts." "ABAC is happy to try to end the 30-year drought of ag ed teachers in Georgia," Bridges said in May 2018 when the agricultural education teacher preparation program at ABAC became fully approved by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission. "For 30 consecutive years, Georgia has produced fewer ag teachers than spots available. We are going to do something about that." Flanders said ABAC is well on its way to making Bridges' prophetic statement a reality. "The cohort which will graduate from ABAC in the spring of 2020 is our biggest one," Flanders said. "We could have as many as 35 ag ed graduates."

Jessica Casaday from Jefferson and Matthew Cooper from Flowery Branch were the 2019 recipients of the prestigious Larry Allen Student Leadership Awards presented annually by the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Casaday is a junior pursuing the bachelor's degree in agricultural education, and Cooper is a junior majoring in the wildlife track of the bachelor's degree in natural resource management.

Pacesetters Selected for 2019

Pacesetter recipients for 2019 from the ABAC student newspaper from the faculty and staff included Dr. Jay Baldwin, Assistant Professor of Communication; Lynda Fisher, Alumni Director; Suzanne Smith, Lecturer of Sociology and Psychology; Dr. Alan Kramer, Assistant Dean of Students and Director of Athletics; Dr. Erin Campbell, Professor of English, Honors, and Rural Studies; and Mike Chason, Public Relations Director Emeritus. Chason received a Superior Pacesetter award. The Superior Pacesetter is presented to a person who has already received a Pacesetter award but continues to exemplify leadership and service to the campus. Pacesetters from the ABAC student body included Kathryn Patterson, a history major from



Whigham; Jessica Casaday, an agricultural education major from Jefferson; Hannah King, a biology major from Tifton; Kaycee Aultman, a writing and communication major from Tifton; Jordyn James, a general studies major from Hinesville; and Lane Riley, a business major from Adel. “The Stallion” extends Pacesetter recognition annually to outstanding members of the ABAC community who have excelled in scholarship, service, and commitment to others. The recipients are chosen by newspaper staff members.

James also received the Official of the Year award from Campus Recreation. Other recipients in this category included Cheyenne Murray, an agricultural education major from Rossville, Employee of the Year; Cyahn Wicker, an early childhood education major from Rentz, Leadership Award; and NyJee Sykes, a business major from Ludowici, Campus Outreach Award. Greek Council President Wesley Harris, a forestry major from Jesup, recognized Greek Man of the Year Ben Burkey, an agribusiness major from Fort Myers, Fla., and Greek Woman of the Year Emily Ralston, an agribusiness major from Bradenton, Fla. Kramer honored students as Running Stallion of the Year and Running Fillie of the Year from each intercollegiate sports team. Recipients included baseball player Tate Kight from Homerville who is pursuing an Associate of Science degree; softball player Kelsey Steller, an agriculture major from Lakeland, Fla.; men’s tennis player Juan Pino Contoleon, an engineering major from Argentina; women’s tennis player Sofia Guaglianone, a business major from Argentina; women’s soccer player Hannah Glass, a writing and communication major from Kennesaw; and Adam Park, a biology major from Toronto, Canada, in men’s golf. Kramer also recognized Ronald Pugh, an agricultural education major from Stockbridge, as the Campus Activities Board Cabbie of the Year. The Residence Hall Association was named the Club of the Year, and the Forestry Club received the Stallion Cup from Homecoming.

Jake Harris, a freshman agricultural communication major from Hamilton, was elected as the 2019-20 Student Government Association (SGA) President at ABAC. The newly elected Executive Vice President is Jireh Jones, a general studies major from Albany, who will serve the Tifton campus. SGA Senators include Sydney Conley, an agricultural education major from Ellijay; Jacob Weaver, an agribusiness major from Zebulon; Sarah Hughes, a history and government major from Willacoochee; Jesse Page, a history and government major from Athens; and Caitlin Wood, a nursing major from Sylvester. Hannah King, a biology major from Tifton, has been selected as the 2019-20 president of the ABAC Ambassadors.

Three faculty members in the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources were selected as recipients of the North American Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture (NACTA) Teaching Award of Merit for the 2018-19 academic year at ABAC. This year’s recipients are Dr. Frank Flanders, Associate Professor of Agricultural Education; Dr. George Lowerts, Associate Professor of Forestry; and Dr. Erin Porter, Assistant Professor of Agricultural Engineering. NACTA is a professional society formed in 1955 that focuses on the scholarship of teaching and learning in agriculture and related disciplines at the postsecondary level. It provides professors of agriculture a forum for discussion of questions and answers, seeks improvement of agricultural related teaching, and rewards instructional excellence in agriculture and research.

Fillies Claim 2019 State Softball Title

In her fourth year as the head coach, Jennifer Martinez Walls led her 2019 Golden Fillies' softball team to a 41-16 overall record, a state championship, and ABAC's first berth in the national tournament since 2002. ABAC entered the state tournament on an eight-game winning streak as the second seed with a 24-4 conference record, second only to Georgia Military College at 26-2. In the state tournament, ABAC defeated East Georgia State 2-1, Georgia Military 5-3, and then Georgia Military again 8-0 for the title. Taylor Layfield, a freshman from Sylvester, was named the state tournament MVP. Layfield drove in three runs in the title game and scored twice. She homered twice in the semifinal win over Georgia Military. Samantha Davis two-hit Georgia Military from the mound in the championship tilt after picking up her first tournament win on the first day of action. Through the state tournament, Layfield compiled a .418 batting average with 12 home runs, 39 runs batted in, and an on-base percentage of .517. She was also named the Georgia Collegiate Athletic Association regular season Player of the Year. With a 17-8 record on the mound, Layfield packed quite a one-two pitching punch with Davis, who was 16-5 on the hill through the state tourney. Layfield and Davis were named GCCA First Team selections along with outfielder Alexis Meadows, who hit .349 and recorded a team high 25 steals. Sutton Bridges, who hit .331, was named to the GCCA Second Team. ABAC's GCCA All-Academic Team selections were Bridges, Davis, Meadows, Aspen Barker, Shyann Dorough, and Josey Wessel. In the national tournament in St. George, Utah, the 15th-seeded Fillies lost to second-seeded College of Central Florida 12-4 in the first round of the 16-team tournament. Baylor Brown had a single that scored two runs. Davis took the loss on the mound. In the second round, ABAC lost to Butler Community College 6-4. Meadows had a home run, and Layfield had two hits in that game. Layfield struck out seven from the hill and pitched a complete game. ABAC has never won a national fast-pitch title but has three national slow-pitch championships to its credit in 1991, 1995, and 1996.

On the baseball field, Coach Brandon Reeder's Golden Stallions recorded a record of 15-32 overall and 9-21 in league play. Tate Kight and Rudy Amaya were named to the Georgia Collegiate Athletic Association second team. Kight hit .347 with 30 runs batted in and seven home runs. He had 50 hits and scored 30 runs to lead the team in all categories. Amaya had a 2.75 earned run average with four saves on the year. During the season, the Stallions rallied back from a 10-1 second inning deficit on April 26 to knock off West Georgia Tech 22-19. Matthew White went five for five, and Tate Kight drove in six runs. ABAC's Slayton Marina, the third pitcher for the Stallions in the game, picked up the win on the mound. ABAC did not qualify for the state tournament.

Coach Larry Byrnes' ABAC golf team finished second in the NJCAA District J championship tournament behind Walters (Tenn.) State. The two teams were tied at the end of the tournament, and Walters State won on a playoff hole. ABAC's Will Bozeman was the low medalist for the tournament with a 147 during the 36-hole tournament at Chateau Elan Golf Club in Braselton.



The Golden Stallions' Adam Park finished second in the tournament with a 150 score. Hunter Dokey finished in 14th place, and Tyler White and Matthew Cheek tied for 15th. Byrnes was named Coach of the Year. The Stallions qualified for the national tournament for the fourth straight year under Byrnes' leadership. ABAC did not qualify for the national tourney in Byrnes' first year in 2015. In the national tournament at Swan Lake in Plymouth, Ind., ABAC finished in 10th place. Adam Park wound up 12th overall and earned Second Team All-America honors. Will Bozeman tied for 21st overall and was named Honorable Mention All-America. Adam Park was named PING All-Region for the East Region. Tyler White, Hunter Dokey, and Matthew Cheek also competed.

Coach Dale White's Golden Stallions finished in a tie for 8th place in the NJCAA men's tennis tournament in Tucson, Ariz. The doubles' team of Frederic Fibleuil and Lukas Zavrel won the Flight 1 Consolation Championship after being upset in the second round of the tournament. They advanced through the consolation round and lost only one more set. Fibleuil and Zavrel were the number one-ranked doubles' team in America heading into the tournament. Cristobal Quevedo had the top finish in singles, advancing to the semifinals in Flight Two. White was honored at the tournament with the Herschel Stephens Coaching Award for his outstanding service to the NJCAA Tennis Coaches Association.

The Golden Fillies' tennis team of Coach Dale White finished 12th in the women's NJCAA national tournament. Agustina Diaz won the consolation bracket in Flight One. Neither ABAC tennis team participated in a state tournament because there were no other colleges fielding tennis teams in ABAC's classification.

ABAC Student Designs Flowers for First Lady's Luncheon

When ABAC student Brittany Braddy developed an interest in floral design as an eighth-grade student in tiny Mount Vernon, Ga., she never knew that her love for flowers would pave a path to a gigantic ballroom in our nation's capital with the First Lady of the United States standing directly in front of her. Braddy, a freshman agricultural education major, was the youngest of 30 floral designers from across America selected to put together flower arrangements for the recent Congressional Club's 107th annual First Lady's Luncheon in Washington D.C. "I filled out an application that Dr. Frank Flanders from ABAC sent to me," Braddy said. "He knew I had an interest because I took his Floral Management class and helped him with the floral arrangements at the Georgia Vocational Agricultural Teachers' mid-winter conference. I don't know how I got selected but I'm sure glad I was. I met flower farmers from Alaska and California and Virginia. I talked with florists from all over. I met an agriculture teacher from Texas who was there with her daughter who was also an ag teacher." Braddy said the lead designer picked a team of 30 from the mountain of applications received to be a part of the event. Led by professional, renowned florists, the team prepared over 1,100 boutonnieres, 140 center pieces, hundreds of bud vases and other florals for First Lady Melania Trump, Second Lady Karen Pence, and 1,400 guests.



ABAC President David Bridges Begins 14th Year

Dr. David Bridges began his 14th year as the ABAC President on July 1. Since Bridges became the 10th president in the history of ABAC on July 1, 2006, over 7,000 graduates have received their ABAC diplomas. Since Bridges' presidency began, over \$84 million in capital projects have been completed or are in the construction phase at ABAC. Those projects include the Health Sciences building at \$7.2 million, ABAC Lakeside at \$17 million, Historic Front of Campus at \$15.5 million, King Hall at \$2.7 million, Donaldson Dining Hall at \$4 million, Thrash Wellness Center at \$4.5 million, the Laboratory Sciences building at \$7.2 million, and the ongoing Carlton Center/Fine Arts Building project at \$24 million. Road improvement adds another \$2 million. "Each of these projects has made this campus better," Bridges said. "That plays a part in recruitment of students as well. When students visit ABAC, they like what they see here." Bridges is the longest tenured president in the USG.

Visitors to ABAC's Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village took "one small step" on July 20 when a new exhibit opened in the Museum Gallery focusing on the historic moon landing 50 years ago. ABAC Curator Polly Huff said a letter to ABAC students from ABAC President Clyde Driggers in 1969 prompted the exhibit. "My two student interns and I found a letter from President Driggers when we were cataloging the ABAC archives last year," Huff said. "In the letter, he said that ABAC wanted to celebrate the milestone by giving the student body and staff an unexpected day off on the Monday after the landing to celebrate and absorb the enormity of what was accomplished on the Apollo 11 mission." Throughout the world, everyone was glued to mostly black-and-white television sets on that Sunday, July 20, 1969 as American astronauts Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, and Michael Collins traveled to the moon. The lunar module, "Eagle," landed on the moon's surface at 4:18 p.m. At 10:56 p.m., Armstrong set foot on the moon, proclaiming to the world, "that's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind." Titled "One Small Step," the exhibit characterized what it was like at ABAC and in Tifton on that day. Two ABAC students, Jason Gentry from Tifton and Brittany Bass from Arcadia, Fla., interned with Huff this summer and helped her to assemble the exhibit.

Destination Ag Program at Museum Attracts 10,980 Students

Museum Director Garrett Boone said 10,980 students participated in the Destination Ag program in its third year of existence in 2018-19. "Destination Ag had a great year," Boone said. "We have the nuts and bolts of the program in place, and now we're concentrating on minute details that will provide the best possible fun, educational experience." Destination Ag allows school children an up-close and personal look at where their food, fiber, and shelter originate. This year, students from school systems in Brooks, Irwin, and Lowndes counties, as well as the Valdosta city school system, participated in the program for the first time. They joined pre-kindergarten through third grade students from Tift, Colquitt, Cook, and Berrien counties. Thanks to an initial gift of \$250,000 from the Harley Langdale, Jr. Foundation to the ABAC Foundation, Destination Ag began educating students in September 2016. In 2017, the Harley Langdale, Jr. Foundation committed \$1 million over the next four years to continue the program.

The generosity of the Harley Langdale, Jr. Foundation allows the Museum to provide Destination Ag programming at no cost to the visiting students. This year, the program's industry partner additions included the Georgia Peanut Commission, the Georgia Pecan Growers Association, the Blueberry Growers Association, the Georgia Peach Council, Stripling's General Store, and Pearson Farm. Sixteen ABAC students taught at the Destination Ag learning stations, adjusting their Museum workload around their own ABAC classes. Destination Ag added an observation beehive, a pollinator garden, two Shetliot sheep, two new dairy goats, and Georgia's state reptile, a gopher tortoise, this year. Boone said fourth graders from the participating counties will be added to Destination Ag when the new school year begins. He said students from Turner County will also immerse themselves in the Destination Ag experience for the first time, elevating the expected number of children impacted by the program to over 21,000 for the 2019-20 year. "We intend to make Destination Ag the premier ag literacy program in the country," Boone said.

Dr. Gary L. Roberts, Professor Emeritus of History at ABAC, was recently honored by the Wild West History Association for "lifetime contributions to Wild West history." "It was a great honor, and I am very appreciative of those who made it happen," Roberts, who taught at ABAC from 1969 to 2000, said. "I have been playing cowboys and Indians all my life. I guess I never quite grew up." Roberts is the author of three books, *Death Comes for the Chief Justice*, *Doc Holliday: The Life and Legend*, and *Massacre at Sand Creek*. He also co-authored *Georgia Governors in an Age of Change* with Dr. Hal Henderson.

Valerie Touchstone, a 1985 ABAC alumnus who founded her own marketing and public relations agency in Tifton, was the keynote speaker at the 15th annual Freshman Convocation on August 12. Touchstone founded *The Big Picture* in 2000 after serving for 12 years as the Director of Marketing and Public Relations at Tift Regional Medical Center.

Dr. Matthew Anderson has been selected as the Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences at ABAC. He is the former Associate Dean of Curriculum and Advising in the School of Arts and Sciences at Saint Joseph's University in Philadelphia.

A total of 3,923 students enrolled at ABAC for the 2019 fall semester from 156 Georgia counties, 21 states, and 23 countries. Dr. Chris Kinsey, Director of Residence Life, said ABAC Place and ABAC Lakeside were at capacity with 1,322 students. Arts Connection Director Wayne Jones said a new entertainment series will begin this year titled *ABAC at the Tift*. ABAC operates the historic Tift Theatre in downtown Tifton for the City of Tifton. Concerts will celebrate the music of Michael Jackson, the Allman Brothers, Tom Petty, and the grand finale will feature Cornell Gunter's Coasters.

Sixteen students at ABAC have been selected to participate in one of the most prestigious organizations on campus, the ABAC Ambassadors. Students serving as Ambassadors include Hannah King, a senior biology major from Tifton; Abby Green, a junior agricultural education major from Montrose; Ava Jane Teasley, a freshman agricultural communication major from

Covington; Emily Owenby, a freshman agricultural education major from Blairsville; Cydney Slapa, a freshman agriculture major from Deltona, Fla.; Charley Lollis, a sophomore agricultural communication major from Perry; Jake Harris, a sophomore agricultural communication major from Hamilton; and Jaylee Bass, a senior writing and communication major from Adel. Other Ambassadors include Claire Ryland, a junior business major from Tifton; Ja'Mi Barnes, a sophomore social and community development major from Tifton; Jarrett Mobley, a senior agricultural communication major from Covington; Emily Ralston, a senior agribusiness major from Bradenton, Fla.; Will Bostelman, a sophomore business major from West Point; Raegan Clack, a sophomore nursing major from Leesburg; Kendall Prescott, a freshman agricultural education major from Lake Placid, Fla.; and Johnathan Strickland, a junior environmental horticulture major from LaGrange. King serves as president; Bostelman is vice-president; Owenby is secretary; and Teasley is the historian for the Ambassadors. Ambassador advisors are Director of Marketing and Communications Lindsey Roberts and Director of Enrollment Management Donna Webb.

An agreement reached in September will allow ABAC students seeking careers as pharmacists to earn doctoral degrees a year early at PCOM Georgia. The Suwanee campus of Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine (PCOM) is the home of the PCOM School of Pharmacy. Dr. Matthew Anderson, Dean of the ABAC School of Arts and Sciences, said, "We are very excited about this new venture with PCOM, which is sure to be of tremendous benefit to our students and the broader region. This agreement will allow students to complete their combined bachelor and doctoral level education in a shorter time frame, which will make this advanced training more accessible and prepare more pharmacists to enter the workforce."

ABAC Economic Impact Half a Billion Dollars on South Georgia

Always a major player when it comes to economic impact, ABAC hit a home run during the 2018 fiscal year when ABAC impacted South Georgia to the tune of a half billion dollars. "ABAC's footprint in South Georgia makes quite a large impression," Dr. Renata Elad, Dean of ABAC's Stafford School of Business, said. "As a result of the overall multiplier effect, ABAC's economic impact was \$499,403,672 in 2018." Elad analyzed the overall University System of Georgia (USG) report which was conducted by Dr. Jeffrey M. Humphreys, Director of the Selig Center for Economic Growth in the University of Georgia's Terry College of Business. "Out-of-state enrollment definitely played a part," Elad said. "Obviously, the word is getting around that ABAC offers a valuable education at an affordable cost." The USG report covered the 2017 fall term and the spring and summer terms of 2018. During the 2017 fall semester, ABAC enrolled 3,394 students from 24 countries, 18 states, and 155 of Georgia's 159 counties. "With direct student spending of \$44,729,654 impacting the region and an overall labor income impact of over \$60 million regionally, ABAC is a strong partner in regional growth," Elad said. "ABAC has a significant footprint in Tift, Worth, Cook, Colquitt, Irwin, Turner, Decatur, Seminole, Miller, Grady, Early, Thomas, Mitchell, and Baker counties."



Hurricane Dorian hit the Bahamas recently as a Category 5 hurricane. With Dorian came massive storm surges and sustained winds up to 185 mph which caused major damages to these islands and their native communities. Due to the devastating effects of this hurricane, the students, faculty, and staff at ABAC Bainbridge wanted to lend a hand in the relief efforts. “We were thrilled to receive a call from Dr. Michael Kirkland, Executive Director at ABAC Bainbridge, letting us know that the students, faculty, and staff had been collecting food, clothes, cleaning supplies, and other items to send to the Bahamas,” said Bainbridge Public Safety Officer LaDaric Jones and Public Information Officer Julie Harris.

ABAC Launches Community Health Track

With the naming of Dr. Adrian Israel Martinez-Franco as the new head of the Department of Rural Studies, ABAC is launching a new Community Health track in the Rural Community Development bachelor’s degree program. Dr. Matthew Anderson, Dean of ABAC's School of Arts and Sciences, believes the appointment of Martinez-Franco and the new Community Health program will have far reaching implications for ABAC students. “We are very excited that Dr. Martinez-Franco will be joining ABAC in this role,” Anderson said. “I am confident that the Department of Rural Studies will thrive under his leadership, and students graduating from the programs will leave ABAC with the skills and knowledge to make a positive impact on the communities of rural Georgia and beyond. The Community Health track is designed to prepare individuals for a variety of roles in the rapidly growing healthcare field. As the healthcare industry expands, it will require not only clinical practitioners providing direct care to patients but also many healthcare professionals working in a variety of support and administrative roles.” Martinez-Franco holds a master’s degree in Health Systems Management and a Doctor of Medicine degree from the National Autonomous University of Mexico. He has also held a faculty appointment at the National Autonomous University of Mexico and served as head of its Biomedical Informatics Department. In recent years, Martinez-Franco has served as a Fulbright Scholar in Residence at ABAC.

Nine students have been selected as School of Agriculture and Natural Resources (SANR) Leaders at ABAC. SANR Academic and Career Coordinator Suzanne Bentley said the students play a key role in the growth of the School. “The SANR Leaders program is in its first year and thriving,” Bentley, advisor for the group, said. “So far, they have participated in the Sunbelt Ag Expo, ABAC Farm tours on Family Weekend, and the SANR Golf Tournament. They have several events planned for the rest of the year including our Career Connections event and Stallion Day. They also host SANR information sessions during campus tours by the admissions office.” SANR Leaders include Justin Henderson, an agriculture major with a concentration in livestock production from Rome; Shelbie Jordan, a general agriculture major from Whigham; Louie Canevari, a general agriculture major from Lake Placid, Fla.; Ben Mediate, a natural resource management major with a concentration in forestry from Monticello, Fla.; David Hall, an agribusiness major from Woodstock; Savannah Eastall, an agriculture major with a concentration in livestock production from Lilburn; Makayla Pulsifer, an agriculture major with a concentration in crop production from Fort Valley; Claire Hunkler, double majoring in

agriculture with a concentration in livestock production and agribusiness from Marietta; and Audrey McGee, an agribusiness major from Hartwell.

Director Brian Ray and the Baldwin Players staged “Boeing, Boeing” on October 10-12 in Howard Auditorium for their fall production. Thirty-four women have become the founding members of the Iota Kappa chapter of the Alpha Sigma Alpha sorority at ABAC. Alpha Sigma Alpha is a social sorority that was founded in 1901. The purpose is to “Foster close friendships between members and to develop women of poise and purpose.” Advisors for Alpha Sigma Alpha include Dr. Renata Elad, Dean of the Stafford School of Business; Melanie Partlow and Eunkyung You, both faculty members in the School of Arts and Sciences; and Karen Willis with Partners Benefit Group. Other sororities on campus include Sigma Alpha and Sigma Gamma Rho. ABAC’s fraternities include Kappa Sigma, Alpha Gamma Rho, and Lambda Sigma Upsilon.

Students enrolled in the bachelor’s degree programs in Environmental Horticulture and Agricultural Education are utilizing a new 3,600 square foot greenhouse at the J.G. Woodroof Farm at ABAC. “It has all the bells and whistles of a modern greenhouse,” Dr. Mark Kistler, Dean of the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources, said at the ceremonial cutting of the ribbon on December 3. “It will benefit the entire campus but primarily students involved in horticulture and ag education.” Kistler thanked the Georgia Department of Education for a \$150,000 construction-bond grant which supplied the majority of the funding for the structure. He also credited Atlas Greenhouse, Barber Construction Company, and the ABAC administration for their support. Sarah Herring, Residence Life Coordinator for Leadership Development, recently received a \$6,000 grant to expand the food pantry at ABAC. The grant is being used to help Herring double the space of the clothing closet and food pantry and to purchase items such as shelves, collection bins, and storage items.

Largest Ever Fall Commencement at ABAC

Kaycee Aultman and Kaycee Goodman, both from Tifton, received the top awards presented by the ABAC Alumni Association at the fall commencement on December 12 on a day when ABAC had the most graduates participate in a fall ceremony in the 111-year history of the College. ABAC President David Bridges said 221 students participated in the ceremony in Tifton and another 36 ABAC graduates received their diplomas at ABAC Bainbridge later that day. “It’s another record-setting day for ABAC,” Bridges, who received his associate degree from ABAC in 1978, said. “Each of these graduates has participated in the life-changing experience we call ABAC, and I believe their lives after ABAC will reflect the quality education they have received.” Aultman, who received a bachelor’s degree in writing and communication, was named the winner of the ABAC Alumni Association Award which goes to the top bachelor’s degree graduate participating in the ceremony, and Goodman, who received an associate degree in nursing, earned the George P. Donaldson Award for the top associate degree graduate participating in the ceremony. Cain Thurmond, Senior Account Manager, Ag Products



Business Unit, CSX Corporation, and a 2011 ABAC graduate, was the guest speaker. “The stage is set,” Thurmond said. “Don’t take your degree from ABAC for granted. Keep growing. Keep striving for more. Keep accomplishing those goals.” Dr. Mary Diallo, Coordinator of Language and Study Abroad Programs and an Associate Professor of French at Florida A&M University, was the guest speaker for the ABAC Bainbridge ceremony. It was the first ever ABAC Bainbridge fall commencement. ABAC has traditionally had only one commencement ceremony for its graduates in Bainbridge in the spring.

Former ABAC Director of Student Publications Helen Strickland passed away on December 19 at the age of 83. From the time she stepped onto the campus in 1968 until her retirement in 1999, Strickland made a tremendous impact on the College and its students. She served as the advisor to the campus newspaper, *The Stallion*; the campus yearbook, *TABAC*; and the magazine, *The Agriculturist*. All the publications she advised received state and national honors. During one phenomenal streak, the campus newspaper was named the top two-year college paper in the state in 26 of 27 years by the Georgia College Press Association. Cathy Cox, one of Strickland’s editors, spoke at Strickland’s celebration of life service in Lakeland, Ga., on December 23. “Helen Strickland was larger than life,” Cox, Dean of the Mercer University School of Law, the first female Georgia Secretary of State and former president of Young Harris College, said. “She was a professor, advisor, designer, publicist, friend, and all-knowing mom-figure to hundreds, if not thousands, of ABAC students.”

2020

A total of 3,511 students from 15 states and 24 countries enrolled at ABAC when classes began for the 2020 spring semester on January 7. ABAC attracted students from 155 of Georgia’s 159 counties and from 48 of Florida’s 67 counties. The year 2020 will always be remembered as the year of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was quite the year of disruption.

With the signing of a new articulation agreement with Presbyterian College in January, ABAC took another step toward building a reputation as an excellent destination for students who wish to become pharmacists. The new agreement guarantees qualified ABAC biology students an interview and consideration for acceptance into the Presbyterian (S.C.) College School of Pharmacy Pharm.D. program. ABAC now has relationships with the Pharm.D. programs at both Presbyterian College and the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine (PCOM) in Suwanee. Later in the year, ABAC signed articulation agreements with Valdosta State University (VSU) to give ABAC graduates in Rural Community Development and History and Government consideration in applying to graduate school at VSU.

Dr. Homer Day, a former interim president and longtime administrator at ABAC, was named to the Tifton-Tift County Chamber of Commerce Wall of Fame at the annual Chamber of

Commerce banquet on January 23. Day served as Interim President from August 1, 2000 until he retired on June 30, 2001. Day joined the college administration in 1972 and held a variety of leadership positions including Director of College Services, Coordinator of Federal Programs and Director of Financial Aid. He had also served as Interim Vice President and Dean of Academic Affairs. Day was the first African American to lead the institution in either the role of president or interim president. Dr. Ryan Currie, a faculty member in the Stafford School of Business at ABAC, was selected for the J. Lamar Branch Award at the Chamber banquet. He began his ABAC teaching career in 2017.

New Mural in Agricultural Sciences Building

The School of Agriculture and Natural Resources (SANR) unveiled a new mural titled *South Georgia Roots* on January 24 in the lobby of the Agricultural Sciences Building. Artist Jill Whitley said the reason for the title was that “this is the only agricultural college in South Georgia, and many of the students are young and fresh out of high school, looking for a place to plant their roots.” SANR Dean Mark Kistler said there were 50 limited edition canvas prints of the mural to be auctioned and sold. The first one was auctioned for a final bid of \$1,200 by Lasseter Equipment Group. Thirteen other prints were sold which raised over \$7,300 for SANR student scholarships and professional development opportunities for ABAC faculty and staff.

Accomplished poet and author Ed Pavlic spoke on February 3 in the History Room in Tift Hall as a part of the Georgia Poetry Circuit. The Arts Connection staged *The Pirates of Penzance* at the Tift County High School Performing Arts Center on February 7.

Dr. Amanda Glaze-Crampes spoke at the first Darwin Day for Scientific Literacy lecture at ABAC on February 12. Co-sponsored by the students of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society and the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Affiliates, the event promoted science literacy and explored the relationship between science and religion. Glaze-Crampes, an assistant professor of science education at Georgia Southern University, spoke on *Can Science and Faith Truly Co-Exist?* Darwin Day commemorates the birthday of Charles Darwin, born February 12, 1809. The School of Arts and Sciences hosted the event.

Dr. Jay Baldwin, assistant professor of communication, explored fictional crime-fighters from *Hawaii Five-O* to *Law and Order* in a speech titled *From Dragnet to Blue Bloods: TV Cops and Why They Matter* on February 20 in the ABAC Lecture Series.

Two of the top awards at the annual Georgia Museums/Alabama Museums Association Joint Conference belong to ABAC’s Georgia Museum of Agriculture. Museum Curator Polly Huff brought home the 2020 Best Museum Exhibition Award, Category One, for *One Small Step: Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Moon Landing Day and Everyday Life in 1969* and the 2020



Special Project Award, Category Two, for *A to Z: A Story of Hope, Healing, A Book, An Exhibit, A Springboard.*

Rutha Harris Highlights African American History Month

As part of the celebration of African American History Month at ABAC, Rutha Harris, legendary civil rights activist and Freedom Singer, spoke and sang to students on February 26 in Howard Auditorium. A lifelong resident of Albany, Harris joined the Albany Movement and original Freedom Singers in 1961, traveling over 50,000 miles singing for the cause of freedom and raising funds for the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee.

ABAC has again been named a Bronze Level Military Friendly School by Victory Media. To qualify for the award, Victory Media takes into consideration academic policies and compliance, admissions and orientation, culture and commitment, financial aid and assistance, graduation and career, and military student support and retention. The standards employed at ABAC exceed the Military Friendly® standard in each category. Veterans Affairs Certifying Official and Student Veteran Organization Advisor Jessica Swords said veteran initiatives empowered at ABAC include access to the Veteran Success Center, peer tutoring by other veteran students, priority one registration, eligibility to receive a United States Veteran graduation stole, veteran scholarships, and a Student Veteran Organization chapter on campus. ABAC has also been named a Yellow Ribbon institution which means that five veteran students may qualify for \$2,105.50 toward college expenses per year. ABAC is also home to the Freedom Gallery in Tift Hall which honors Medal of Honor recipient and ABAC alumnus Harold “Pinky” Durham and the contributions of the United States military. ABAC also added a Blue Star Memorial Garden in 2017.

Dr. Jeffrey Ross has been selected as ABAC’s Interim Dean of the School of Nursing and Health Sciences. “ABAC and ABAC-Bainbridge have exceptional nursing programs,” Ross said. “I am honored to be able to serve as Interim Dean. I want to guide, support, and aid the students, faculty, and staff into the next phase of the programs.” Ross, who is from Donalsonville, has been teaching practical, associate, and baccalaureate nursing degree level programs for 15 years. He has served as Chair of Nursing for the practical and associate degree programs at ABAC Bainbridge. Ross received his associate degree from Darton College, his bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Albany State University and his Ed.D. in Nursing Education from the University of West Georgia. Ross also maintains certification through the National League for Nursing as a Certified Nursing Educator. He replaces Dr. Jaibun Earp, who left ABAC to pursue other interests.

The ABAC baseball team beat Tallahassee Community College 10-9 in a game at the Bainbridge

High School field on February 29. ABAC Athletics Director Alan Kramer said the game showcased the Golden Stallions in Bainbridge, one of the five instructional sites where ABAC offers classes. The ABAC chapter of The Wildlife Society staged its annual Beast Feast on March 7 in Gressette Gym. The menu included venison, wild hog, duck, geese, alligator, bobcat, and fish.

A new book by Dr. David J. Nelson, a professor of history at ABAC Bainbridge, has been selected by The Florida Historical Society to receive the Rembert Patrick Award. *How the New Deal Built Florida Tourism: The Civilian Conservation Corps and State Parks* is the first full book Nelson has written.

Eight individuals and one team will be honored with their induction into the Class of 2020 of the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame. Athletics Director Alan Kramer said the 2020 class includes the 2002 women's state championship basketball team, tennis player German Dalmagro, three-sport letterman Clayt Hurst, softball player Lee Davis Watson, soccer standout Nikita Morris, tennis player, coach, and contributor Margaret Treadway, contributor and volunteer assistant softball coach James Winfred "Vic" Vickers, contributor and volunteer assistant softball coach Jimmy Spurlin, and Director of Public Relations Emeritus Michael D. Chason. The Hall of Fame dinner was later cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic. Recipients will be honored in 2022.

Bridget Dixon, a freshman agricultural communication major from Kite, was selected as Ms. ABAC 2020 at the 51st annual event on March 12. Sponsored by the Ag Communicators of Tomorrow, she received a \$500 ABAC scholarship as the winner of the contest. Other finalists included Abigail Zerwig, a freshman agricultural education major from Metter, first runner-up; Charley Ann Lollis, a sophomore agricultural communication and agribusiness major from Perry, second runner-up; Kerstin Grace Hall, a sophomore agribusiness and agricultural communication major from Tifton, third runner-up; and Jaylee Bass, a senior writing and communication major from Adel, fourth runner-up. Katibeth Mims, a junior agricultural communication major from Donalsonville, received the Essay Award in the contest for the second straight year, and Bass received the Ms. Congeniality Award. Lollis received the Interview Award, which included a \$100 scholarship for the first time this year, courtesy of Kenny, Kristen, and Karter Jane Smith. Kristen Card Smith was Ms. ABAC 2014. Jordan Mathews, a freshman education major from Pearson, received the People's Choice Award. The ABAC Agricultural Business Club sponsored the Ms. ABAC competition.

COVID-19 Sends ABAC into On-Line Instruction Mode

Unbeknownst to all at the time, the Ms. ABAC contest was the final public event at ABAC for months. The COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic, a type of flu virus, descended on the United States and changed life considerably. ABAC students, who were scheduled to be on spring break from March 14-22, had an extra week of spring break as ABAC faculty prepared to teach



the remainder of the spring semester classes online. Online classes began on March 30. All spring semester events including Homecoming were cancelled. Even the spring commencement ceremony on May 7 was a virtual ceremony online. All ABAC employees who could do their job away from the campus worked from home. Beautiful spring flowers came and went on the campus without a single student to enjoy their radiance. ABAC became a ghost town with a few administrators, faculty, and staff on campus with the Sodexo grounds crew. It was a strange time.

Because of the pandemic, ABAC utilized a four-day work week from April 6 through July 24. “With no students on campus during the remainder of the spring semester and the summer term, this gives us a chance to be as energy efficient as possible,” Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration Paul Willis said. ABAC was open from 7 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday and closed completely on Friday.

With COVID-19 raging through the community, Tift Regional Medical Center (TRMC) began running low on personal protective gear on March 19. Dr. Tracy Nolan (Class of '97), the first female general surgeon in the history of TRMC, texted her father, ABAC Director of Public Relations Emeritus Mike Chason, to see if ABAC could help. Less than one day later, TRMC had a small supply of splash resistant goggles, gloves, and a box of laminated polypropylene aprons from the ABAC chemistry labs thanks to the efforts of ABAC Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration Paul Willis. ABAC President David Bridges drove to Macon on March 23 to meet a friend who ran a welding supply business. Bridges paid for a carload of protective masks and other equipment and headed back down I-75 to meet a TRMC contact to deliver the gear. Kathy Baker, wife of ABAC Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Jerry Baker, was one of several Tifton community members who helped to make protective masks for the health care workers. ABAC played the Chapel chimes at 7 p.m. each night to honor the nurses fighting the pandemic. ABAC Arts Connection Director Wayne Jones shared an inspirational Amazing Grace music clip from TAKE3 for TRMC and Colquitt Regional to play over their public address systems during the pandemic. Sue Mastrario baked 100 sugar cookies for each of the healthcare facilities to share with their employees. Josie Smith wrapped the cookies with notes which said, “your care and concern for our community has been music to our ears.” Acts of kindness of this nature were common as the coronavirus continued to spread and take its toll on South Georgia.

ABAC created a new Department of Education and Wellness in the School of Arts and Sciences. Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Jerry Baker said nearly 150 students are enrolled at ABAC in the Early Childhood or Teacher Preparation program. They complete the first two years of the program at ABAC and the final two years on the ABAC campus with classes from Georgia Southwestern.

Maddie McDonald, an agricultural education major from Dublin, was selected to First Lady Melania Trump's Congressional Luncheon floral design team. The event was later cancelled due to the coronavirus. McDonald would have spent three days in Washington D.C. preparing for the event.

Barden Receives Top ABAC Alumni Association Award

Dr. Glenn Arthur Barden (Class of '58) was selected for the 2020 Distinguished Alumnus Award by the ABAC Alumni Association. The Homecoming ceremony was cancelled because of the pandemic. Other award winners included James Alex Hardy (Class of '69) from Hawkinsville, Master Farmer; Brent Galloway (Class of '92) from Lyons, J. Lamar Branch Award for Outstanding Leadership in Agriculture; Lori Brown Ewing (Class of '87) from Dacula, Outstanding Healthcare Professional; Dr. Frank Flanders (Class of '72) from Tifton, Outstanding Educator; Alma Young (Class of 2005) from Tifton, Outstanding Young Alumnus; and Joshua Dawson (Class of 2013) from Valdosta, Miles A. Drummond Rising Star Award. The John Lewis Herring family from Tift County was selected for the Family Legacy Award, and ABAC Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration Paul Willis was named the Honorary Alumnus. An abbreviated awards ceremony was held for the recipients at Homecoming on April 10, 2021.

First Ever Virtual Commencement Ceremony for ABAC on May 7

All graduates of ABAC including those at ABAC Bainbridge heard their names called on their cell phones, iPads, and computers on May 7 when ABAC presented its first ever virtual commencement ceremony. "Thanks to the hard work of our media team, we have put together a program that will recognize all graduates individually, calling their names, and allowing their friends and family to celebrate their achievements at ABAC," ABAC President David Bridges said. "We would love to be able to celebrate with our graduates in person but that's not possible this year." All 26 colleges and universities in the University System of Georgia cancelled their in-person commencement ceremonies due to the pandemic. All students in USG institutions also completed their spring semester and summer term course work online. The virtual ceremony aired at 10 a.m. on May 7 on Watch.ABAC.edu, ABAC's Facebook page, and ABAC's YouTube page. A total of 429 graduates were recognized during the ceremony. Louis Mitchell Canevari, an agriculture major from Lake Placid, Fla., received the ABAC Alumni Association Award, and Joshua Allen Wilkinson, an agriculture major from Haddock, received the George P. Donaldson Award.

For the second year in a row, ABAC produced more graduates with a bachelor's degree in Agricultural Education than any college in the southeastern portion of the United States. Dr. Mark Kistler, Dean of ABAC's School of Agriculture and Natural Resources, said ABAC had 33



Agricultural Education graduates at the virtual commencement ceremony on May 7. That number represents a 27 percent increase over the 26 Agricultural Education graduates at ABAC in the spring of 2019, the first time in its 112-year history that ABAC produced bachelor's degree graduates in Agricultural Education. Norman Gay from Perry was named an Honorary 2020 Cohort Member at the virtual pinning ceremony for the 33 graduates of the bachelor's degree in Agricultural Education. Gay, a 1968 ABAC graduate and the president of the Georgia FFA Alumni Association, is a longtime supporter of Agricultural Education and the FFA.

DeAnthony Price from Morrow became the first Black Agricultural Communication bachelor's degree graduate in the history of ABAC on May 7. "I guess you can give Google the credit for me choosing ABAC," Price said. "When I decided I wanted to major in agriculture, I googled the top ag schools in Georgia, and ABAC came up first." Bothered for much of his life by a slight speech impediment, Price overcame the obstacle and received his degree. "It means a lot to me to be the first Black American to graduate from ABAC with the bachelor's degree in Agricultural Communication," Price said. "At ABAC, I learned to communicate and to educate people about agriculture. Academically, ABAC was very positive for me."

Willacoochee Student Selected as J.G. Woodroof Scholar

Abby Unger, a senior biology major from Willacoochee, has been named the J.G. Woodroof Scholar as the top academic student at ABAC. Unger represented the college in Atlanta in February when the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia hosted the Academic Recognition Day students from each of the 26 colleges and universities in the USG at its meeting. Chancellor Steve Wrigley then honored the students at a luncheon, attended by ABAC President David Bridges and Unger's family. The Woodroof Scholar Award is named for Dr. J.G. Woodroof, the first president of ABAC in 1933. The award is normally presented at the ABAC Honors ceremony, but the ceremony was cancelled this year because of the pandemic. After compiling a 3.97 grade point average on a 4.0 scale during her four years at ABAC, Unger graduated this semester. She has been accepted to the Mercer University School of Medicine this fall where she plans to attend classes on the Savannah campus.

Jack Bazemore, a junior agricultural education major from Rutledge, was one of 14 students nationwide selected as a National Teach Ag Ambassador for the 2020-21 year. Bazemore is the first student from a college or university in Georgia selected for the honor in the history of the National Teach Ag Ambassadors' program.

Jaylee Bass, a writing and communication major from Adel, received the Award of Distinction as the top student in the School of Arts and Sciences. Bass has compiled a 3.97 grade point average on a 4.0 scale. An ABAC Foundation Scholar, she received the AT&T Georgia Scholarship from the ABAC Foundation. Jennifer Pardo, a business major from Fitzgerald, was

selected as the Award of Distinction winner in the Stafford School of Business. Pardo compiled a 3.80 grade point average. Scout Hogan from Douglasville was selected as the Award of Distinction recipient in the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Hogan majors in the ABAC bachelor's degree in Natural Resource Management with a concentration in Wildlife. She has compiled a 3.91 grade point average. Hogan made the prestigious President's List and the Dean's List. Sydney Vaughn from Moultrie was selected as the Award of Distinction winner in the School of Nursing and Health Sciences. Vaughn graduated from Howard High School in Macon and now lives in Moultrie where she works as a Registered Nurse at Colquitt Regional Medical Center. She has compiled a 3.93 grade point average in her pursuit of a bachelor's degree in Nursing.

Brenda Taylor-Hickey has been named ABAC's new Director of Financial Aid. Taylor-Hickey has served as the Associate Director of Financial Aid at the College of Coastal Georgia since 2012. Prior to that time, she worked in several different positions at Coastal Georgia including University Center Director, Student Affairs Special Assistant, and Operations Specialist. She replaces Michael Wright, who has been named the new Director of Financial Aid at Georgia Southwestern University.

Henry "Bo" Miller of Tifton, Assistant Dean of Student Affairs at ABAC for 24 years, died on May 20 at the age of 86. Miller retired from ABAC on June 30, 1995.

ABAC Athletes Earn NJCAA All-Academic Status

Twenty-four ABAC athletes earned NJCAA All-Academic status for the 2019-20 year. All spring sports season were cancelled after March 13 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Athletes had to earn at least a 3.6 GPA. First team required a perfect 4.0, second team was 3.8-3.99, and third team was 3.6-3.79. ABAC first team selections were Abbey Adkins, softball; Taylor Haddock, soccer; Jessica Lindsey, tennis; Tiago Marques, tennis; Kari Mills, softball, and Karli Williams, softball. Second team selections were Desirae Beachem, softball; Arianna Calcatelli, tennis; Lorenzo Del Biondo, tennis; Chloe Evans, soccer; Sheridan Lowry, soccer, Amber Maxwell, softball; Taylor Middleton, softball; Irene Romero Redondo, tennis; and Bailey Spires, softball. Third team selections were Joshua Campbell, golf; Melissa Escalante Alvarado, soccer; Caleb Lanoux, baseball; Kenneth Limyadi, tennis; Phuong Pham, tennis; Katie Royals, softball; Matt Terrill, baseball; and Olivia Wright, soccer. Four ABAC teams were honored for having cumulative GPAs over 3.0. Softball led the way with a 3.63 followed by men's tennis at 3.52, women's tennis at 3.5, and golf at 3.02.

ABAC golfer Tyler White was selected by the Golf Coaches Association of America for the NJCAA PING All-America team. He was named Division II All-America Honorable Mention. He is continuing his career at Dalton State College. White had the top score for ABAC at all three tournaments the Golden Stallions participated in this spring. He was also named to the



NJCAA East All-Region first team. White is the fourth Canadian to play for ABAC Coach Larry Byrnes' team. Four ABAC softball players received All-Academic awards from the Georgia Collegiate Athletic Association. Sophomores Baylor Brown, Braxton Hill, Kati Hill, and Courtney Savignano were honored. Coach Jennifer Walls' Fillies, the defending state champions, were 10-11 when the season was halted due to the coronavirus. Coach Brandon Reeder's ABAC baseball team had won four in a row and compiled a 10-12 overall record before COVID-19 ended the season.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the NJCAA changed all fall sports to spring semester. That moved Coach Aliriza Sisman's Fillies to an opening day of practice on March 15, 2021 and the first match to April 2. "As a coach, we face a lot of challenges, and we have to be more flexible and find the best solution for the situation," Sisman said.

Bridges Becomes Longest Serving President in ABAC History

When he walked up the steps of historic Tift Hall on the campus of ABAC on July 1 to begin his 15th year, Dr. David Bridges became the longest serving president in the history of ABAC. As a member of the Class of 1978, Bridges is also the only ABAC president to have been a student at the school. "My goal for ABAC hasn't really changed," Bridges said. "I want us to teach students and give them a life experience they will never forget while they are on our campus." The 62-year-old native of Parrott, who is also the longest tenured president in the 26-member University System of Georgia (USG), says he does not spend a single moment thinking about his ABAC tenure. "I didn't really think about how long I was going to stay at ABAC when I became president in 2006, and I don't think about it now," Bridges said. "When I was a student at ABAC, I never dreamed of being president. And when I became president, I never looked at this job as a stepping-stone to something else. It has been fun most of the time. As you can imagine, it has not been all that much fun lately, mainly because of the virus impacting our budget situation. ABAC has transformed itself into a one-of-a-kind baccalaureate-degree granting institution that has a worldwide reputation for excellence. At ABAC, students get more for their money." Bridges' remarks come on the heels of an announcement by the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia (USG) that said there will be no tuition increase for USG students enrolled for the 2020-21 academic year.

A brand new 432-piece full color puzzle featuring the Chapel of All Faiths at ABAC is now available for purchase from the ABAC Alumni Association. Josie Smith, Advancement Coordinator, said the 18 by 24 inches limited edition puzzle can be purchased for a price of \$30 at www.abac.edu/alumni. Local buyers can pick up their puzzles at the ABAC Alumni House or the puzzle can be shipped at an additional cost of \$15. Smith said the puzzle is a perfect gift for ABAC friends and alumni, particularly those who exchanged their wedding vows in the Chapel.



Sara Hand (Class of 2010), assistant director of finance and operations at ABAC's Georgia Museum of Agriculture, and Eric Larson, assistant professor of rural sociology, were selected from ABAC for the 2020-21 class of South GeorgiaLEADS. South GeorgiaLEADS chair Barbara Grogan, (Class of '98), said the purpose of the organization is to link participants to the region's economic development agenda and efforts.

ABAC Professor of Art Donna Hatcher passed away on August 9 at the age of 53. She was an ABAC faculty member for over 18 years. The ABAC Foundation has set up a scholarship honoring Hatcher. Once funding is complete, it will be awarded to a student from South Georgia majoring in the Fine Arts.

ABAC First in Nation for P-5 Agricultural Education Instruction

The Georgia Professional Standards Commission has approved a plan that will allow ABAC to become the first program in the nation to offer instruction to prepare graduates to teach agriculture classes at the pre-kindergarten through fifth grade level, adding to its agriculture teacher certification program for grades 6 through 12. Dr. Andrew Thoron, Associate Professor and Department Head for Agricultural Education and Communication, said ABAC courses for the P-5 Agricultural Endorsement could begin in the summer of 2021. "Our endorsement is two-fold," Thoron said. "First, we'll equip our current students with the ability to enter the classroom as a certified teacher in P-5 agriculture in addition to our 6-12 certification. Second, we already have over 500 agriculture teachers in grades six through 12 in Georgia who will have an opportunity to gain this endorsement through our course offerings. That is the reason we will begin to offer the classes in the summer and most likely, online, so that we can reach the entire state. Current P-5 teachers can take the classes but because they already have P-5 certification, they only need to pass the Agricultural Content Knowledge examination." Thoron said Georgia is the first state to offer agriculture classes at the P-5 level.

Ten ABAC faculty members will begin the 2020-21 academic year with promotions. Seven faculty members will also be granted tenure at the college. Dr. Jerry Baker, ABAC Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, said faculty members receiving promotions and tenure include Dr. Audrey Luke-Morgan, Dr. Erin Porter, Dr. Jay Baldwin, Dr. Kennon Deal, Dr. Jennifer Huang, Dr. Jess Usher, and Dr. Franzelle Mathis-Pertilla. Baker said Dr. Juan Gomez, Dr. Jeffrey Ross, and Nancy Hall are receiving promotions. Gomez and Ross are already tenured. Luke-Morgan and Porter have been promoted to the rank of associate professor in the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Gomez has been promoted to the rank of professor in the School of Arts and Sciences. Baldwin, Deal, Huang, and Usher have been promoted to the rank of associate professor in the School of Arts and Sciences. Ross, the interim chair of the School of Nursing and Health Sciences, has been promoted to the rank of professor.

Hall has been promoted to the rank of assistant professor in the School of Nursing and Health Sciences. Mathis-Pertilla has been promoted to the rank of associate professor in the Stafford School of Business.

Dr. Erin Porter, an Associate Professor of Agricultural Engineering, received the top award presented to an ABAC faculty member when she received the 2020 W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence. Other award recipients included Clayton Riehle, Administrative Assistant in the Office of Technology Services, Roy R. Jackson, Sr., Award for Staff Excellence; Dr. Deidre Martin, Chief Development Officer, E. Lanier Carson Award for College Administrators; Dr. Frank Flanders, Associate Professor of Agricultural Education, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Excellence in Advising Award; and Dr. Jason Scott, Associate Professor of Wildlife, W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Excellence in Student Engagement. Usually presented at the Honors Day ceremony in April, the awards were announced at various meetings across campus in the recipient's school of study or office unit. Honors Day was cancelled by the COVID-19 pandemic as ABAC and the other 25 colleges and universities in the University System of Georgia taught classes online for the final weeks of the spring semester and the entirety of the summer term.

Thirteen new faculty members joined the ranks of the teaching professionals at ABAC prior to the start of the fall semester. In the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources, the new faculty members include Dr. Pamela Kemerait, lecturer of agronomy; Dr. Taylor Hendricks, assistant professor of agronomy; Britta Thinguldstad, lecturer of animal science; Dr. Andrew Thoron, associate professor and department head of agricultural education and communication; and Dr. Umesh Chaudhari, assistant professor of forestry. In the School of Arts and Sciences, the new faculty members include Dr. Israel Martinez-Franco, associate professor and department head of rural studies; and Dr. Kaushalya Sharma Dahal, chemistry lab instructor. In the School of Nursing and Health Sciences, the new nursing lecturers include Cayla Beasley, Gentry Cater, Tracy Fouraker, Stephanie Marquess, Debra Owings, and Candice Thornton.

ABAC Returns to In-Person Instruction for 2020 Fall Semester

ABAC returned to in-person instruction when the fall term began on Aug. 12 after offering only online classes for the final portion of the spring semester and the entirety of the summer term because of the coronavirus. "Our modified class schedule will ensure smaller class sizes, will provide greater distance between students, and will provide hybrid and online options that can reduce the amount of time students spend in the classroom," ABAC President David Bridges said. "I know that parents are concerned about the health of their students, and we have expanded our custodial and public health measures to protect students, faculty, and staff."



Bridges said ABAC will utilize a compressed ABAC fall semester schedule that will wind up on Nov. 19 instead of Dec. 3. When students go home for the Thanksgiving holidays after the completion of final exams on Nov. 24, they will be finished until the spring semester begins on Jan. 11. There will be no Labor Day holiday and no Fall Break. “We are doing everything we can to prevent an outbreak at ABAC,” Bridges said. “When those students go home for the holidays, we figured out a way for them to stay home until the spring term begins. That extra time in December will also give our cleaning crews more time to disinfect the entire campus.”

ABAC usually houses over 1,300 students in ABAC Place and ABAC Lakeside. Due to new guidelines, only about 1,200 students will live on campus this fall since every student will have a private bedroom in the state-of-the-art on-campus apartment complexes.

ABAC enrolled 3,990 students for the 2020 fall semester, the second largest enrollment in the history of ABAC. ABAC was the only one of the nine institutions in the State College sector of the 26-member University System of Georgia (USG) to experience an enrollment increase. ABAC attracted students from 19 states, 24 countries, 155 of Georgia’s 159 counties and 53 of Florida’s 67 counties. ABAC’s largest enrollment was 4,291 students in the fall of 2018 after the merger with Bainbridge State College. The 2019 enrollment was 3,923. ABAC Registrar Amy Willis said a record 326 students are currently enrolled in associate degree nursing classes at ABAC Tifton and ABAC Bainbridge. A total of 895 ABAC students are pursuing nursing degrees, many of those taking core curriculum classes to prepare them for the nursing program. Fifty-nine students in that total are enrolled in ABAC’s bachelor’s degree program in nursing. A record number of 1,375 students are enrolled in the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Of that number, a record 271 students chose Natural Resource Management which features programs in forestry, wildlife, and conservation law enforcement.

New Fine Arts Building, Revitalized Carlton Center Open for Students

The opening of the fall term coincided with the unveiling of the new fine arts building on the front of campus as well as the revitalized Carlton Center, both a part of the \$21.4 million project. The fine arts building features gigantic rooms for the concert band and concert choir. When ABAC President David Bridges was a student at ABAC in 1978, the ABAC musicians flung open the windows on the third floor of Conger Hall so the entire campus could hear them practice their tunes. When the Baldwin Library moved to the Carlton Center in 1990, the music program eventually occupied that library facility for years. Now the concert band, jazz band, concert choir, and jazz choir will have plenty of space to operate at peak efficiency. Dr. Susan Roe, a Professor of Voice and Head of the Department of Fine Arts, is ecstatic about moving into the new building. “It is beyond a dream come true,” Roe, a faculty member at ABAC since 1999, said. “I walked in there the other day. When we walked in, I just had a moment with God, just being in that building. To watch this program transform itself through the years has been great,



and now we have this building. Even COVID-19 will not keep ABAC down.” Bridges said the building will be a stellar addition to the other structures on ABAC Circle, which is the historic “Sweetheart Circle” on the front campus. Most of the Congressional District Agricultural and Mechanical schools established in the early 1900s had the traditional circle. ABAC began classes in 1908 as the Second District A&M School. The Health Sciences Building opened on ABAC Circle in 2006, and Lewis Hall, Herring Hall, and Tift Hall were a part of the historic Front of Campus Project, which culminated in 2013 when the three original buildings on campus received a much-needed rehabilitation.

ABAC Director of Facilities and Land Resources Tim Carpenter said the fine arts building will have practice space for a 100-plus member orchestra as well as a separate space for an 80-plus member vocal group. He said the individual practice rooms will be acoustically controlled. The first floor of the building includes the band rehearsal room, instrument storage, the band and choral music library, the choral rehearsal room, band and choral storage, music faculty offices, and a keyboard laboratory. The second floor of the building features individual music practice rooms, a recording control room, art faculty offices, painting/general art labs, a visual arts material storage room, a student work storage room, a display area, and a computer design lab. Music students will have easy access to nearby Howard Auditorium, the primary concert venue for the music program.

The Carlton Center’s primary purpose since it opened in 1990 has been as the home for the Baldwin Library. The library has been temporarily located in J. Lamar Branch Hall. The Carlton Center is named for the late O.D. Carlton, II, a longtime ABAC benefactor. The rehabilitated 51,600-square foot Carlton Center will be the home for student academic support, the bookstore, the mail room, information technology, Veterans’ Lounge, ABAC archives, the Student Government Association offices, the Baldwin Library, reading and study areas, computer lab, One Button Studio, the Student Engagement Programs Center, symposium/exhibit space, the Academic Success Center, campus media, and student development. Carpenter said Praxis 3 Architecture from Atlanta designed the Carlton Center rehabilitation, and JMA Architecture from Perry designed the fine arts building. Allstate Construction Group from Perry was the contractor on both projects. Jones, Lang, and LaSalle personnel served as the project managers.

Senator Harold Ragan (Class of ’49) from Cairo passed away on August 24 at the age of 91. He was first elected to the Georgia Senate in 1986 and served eight two-year terms. He received the Distinguished Alumnus award from the ABAC Alumni Association at Homecoming in 1987.

Regents Approve \$11.8 Million in Funding for ABAC

The Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia (USG) agreed at its August meeting to include \$11.8 million in funding for ABAC as a part of the USG Capital Outlay Construction request to the General Assembly when legislators convene in 2021. ABAC President David Bridges said the agricultural facilities enhancement project includes funds for renovation to existing facilities, primarily the Chambliss Building, and new construction to support ABAC's fast-growing agriculture and natural resource programs. "We have just announced a record enrollment in the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources," Bridges said. "ABAC is now the leading producer of workforce ready graduates for Georgia's number one industry, agriculture. We are supporting a portion of these students with aging buildings that were not designed for the scope or scale of programs today. Some of our students go to classes in facilities designed for the ABAC enrollment in 1971 when the Chambliss Building was constructed." Nearly 4,000 students are enrolled at ABAC for the 2020 fall semester as compared to the 1971 fall quarter enrollment figure of 2,153 students. A record 1,371 of this year's students chose programs in the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources, including an all-time high of 273 in the Natural Resources major. "The facilities involved in this enhancement project are woefully undersized and unable to accommodate modern equipment," Bridges said. "Agriculture is a complex, high technology business that requires leaders with general knowledge and keen problem-solving skills. Mastering these abilities requires hands-on learning. Courses in agricultural engineering, agricultural technology, and mechanization are critically important for students in Agricultural Technology and Systems Management and in Agricultural Education. This upgrade will probably prolong the life of these facilities another 30 years." Bridges said Georgia legislators approved \$1.1 million in planning money for the agricultural facilities enhancement project in the 2021 fiscal year, which runs from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021.

ABAC's Georgia Museum of Agriculture hosted a unique multimedia event titled "Blood, Bone, & Stone" on September 19. Presented in collaboration with ABAC's School of Arts and Sciences, the event featured Jack McKey, a master craftsman of Naturalistic and Native American Technology. Guests of the day-long event participated in the world premiere of McKey's biographical film, which was created by Dr. Thomas Grant, an associate professor in the School of Arts and Sciences, and a team of ABAC journalism students. Grant said the documentary was filmed over a period of two years and features multiple interviews with McKey, his family, and his associates. The film also includes extensive footage of a trip to the American West when McKey and the ABAC crew visited states and places significant to McKey's life story. Following the morning film premiere at the GMA's Opry Shelter, guests walked to the GMA Gallery for the opening of McKey's exhibit, which features several hundred hand-crafted artifacts. McKey and GMA Curator Polly Huff hosted a gallery "walk and talk" during which the artist demonstrated some of his pieces, told stories, and answered questions. The exhibit will remain on display through July 2021.



Will Bostelman, a junior business major from West Point, was elected as ABAC's 2020-21 Student Government Association (SGA) President. As the new president of the student body, Bostelman looks forward to serving as the voice of ABAC students. "The Student Government Association is excited to kick off the new school year," Bostelman said. "I am extremely thankful to serve ABAC and all of its students this year." Since he enrolled at ABAC as a freshman, Bostelman has been selected as an ABAC Ambassador where he was elected Vice President of the student leadership organization. As an SGA member, he previously served as a Senator for the Stafford School of Business. The newly elected SGA Executive Vice President is Brooke Lowery, a senior history and government major from Tifton. Students selected as SGA Senators include Lindsey Winzell, a junior agriculture education major from Cairo, and Jaci Martin, a freshman agribusiness major from Clermont, School of Agriculture and Natural Resources; Claire Ryland, a senior business major from Tifton, and Torri Williams, a senior business major from Sylvester, Stafford School of Business; Taylor Moyer, a senior history and government major from Macon, and Shamiyah Williams, a junior history and government major from Tifton, School of Arts and Sciences; and Madison Lynn, a senior nursing major from Vidalia, and Raegan Clack, a junior nursing major from Leesburg, School of Nursing and Health Sciences.

New selections for the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources (SANR) Leaders program include Chrys Kirby, an agricultural education major from Tifton; Cole Patterson, an agriculture major with a concentration in ag technology and systems management from Ty Ty; Katibeth Mims, an agricultural communication major from Donalsonville; Jamya Barnett, an agriculture major from Wauchula, Fla.; Youry Gonzalez, an agribusiness major from Douglas; Meredith McGlamory, a double major in agriculture with a concentration in animal science and agricultural communication from Rochelle; and Brittany Braddy, an agricultural education major from Mount Vernon.

ABAC Leads the University System in Saving Money on Textbooks

When it comes to saving money on the cost of textbooks, ABAC leads the way among the 26 colleges and universities in the University System of Georgia (USG). According to information from GALILEO, Georgia's virtual library, ABAC had 89 per cent of its course sections at no cost or low cost for books and materials. That figure tops all USG institutions. "This is an initiative launched several years ago by the USG to help with the cost of textbooks for students," Dr. Jerry Baker, ABAC Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, said. "All the institutions were encouraged to identify in the course schedule if a course offered a low-cost or no-cost textbook option. We have had several faculty members receive grants to help develop the no cost low cost 'books.' Our math faculty were some of the first to look at this issue, and they received a USG grant to develop the no cost option. We started slowly but I have continued to ask faculty to think of options that can save students money." The low cost no cost materials

could include open educational resources, which are free and customizable digital resources; online textbooks; library materials; or other resources accessible for free or reduced cost. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, these resources have become increasingly more important for USG students.

ABAC President David Bridges announced in a memo to faculty and staff on October 14 that ABAC will cease operations at its instructional sites in Blakely, Donalsonville, and Moultrie on December 31, 2020. ABAC will continue dual enrollment at high schools in those areas. He also announced that recruiting, admissions, processing, and scholarship management will be consolidated into one unit headed by Dr. Michael Kirkland, who has been named the new Vice President for Enrollment Management. Donna Webb will move from her position in enrollment management to become Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs. Dr. Darby Sewell will continue to lead student engagement as an Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs. Dr. Amy Willis has also been named an Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs and will assume leadership responsibility for institutional research.

The show must go on for ABAC's Baldwin Players. Like many performing arts organizations, the Players have experienced challenges because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to social distancing guidelines, large audiences are not allowed on the ABAC campus for live theatre. The Players have found an alternative. "As the Director of the Baldwin Players, I looked around for something that 'fit' our current situation, and I realized that today, like in the war years of the 1940s, Americans are looking for entertainment that comes to them, instead of venturing out into the pandemic," said Dr. Brian Ray, a Professor of English and Theatre at ABAC and the Director of the Baldwin Players. Ray said a six-person cast has been selected which will perform a "Tribute to the 1940s Radio Drama" that will be recorded and made into a video production. Cast members include Jessica Wade, ABAC biology lab coordinator; Craig Wells, former ABAC student; Alena Norton, ABAC graduate; Roderick Baisden, ABAC general studies major with pathway in theatre; Dr. Doug Waid, retired ABAC professor; and Dr. Elizabeth Medley, current ABAC assistant professor. This cast will bring 1940s radio stories to life, tailored to a 2020 audience. Stories that are highlighted in the production are "The Maltese Falcon" and "Sorry, Wrong Number." Many cast members play more than one role in the production as well. "This option still allows the Baldwin Players the opportunity to prepare a live production even though it will have to be shared with our audience via video," said Ray. "Most of the goals that the Baldwin Players have for live theatre production will still be possible in this format, though it lacks the direct communication between performers and audience of a live performance."

Twelve ABAC students have been selected to participate in one of the most prestigious organizations on campus, the ABAC Ambassadors. Students serving as Ambassadors include Ava Jane Teasley, a sophomore agricultural communication major from Covington; Cydney Slapa, a sophomore agriculture major from Deltona, Fla.; Charley Lollis, a sophomore



agricultural communication major from Perry; Elijah Alford, a freshman fine arts major from Ashburn; Kira Buckner, a freshman agribusiness major from Conyers; and Gabi Ius, a senior agricultural communication and agribusiness major from Clermont, Fla. Other Ambassadors include Claire Ryland, a senior business major from Tifton; Raegan Clack, a junior nursing major from Leesburg; Kendall Prescott, a sophomore agricultural education major from Lake Placid, Fla.; Bryce Roland, a sophomore agricultural education major from Perry; Caroline Sullivan, a sophomore biology major from Tifton; and Johnathan Strickland, a junior environmental horticulture major from LaGrange. Strickland serves as president; Lollis is vice-president; Ius is secretary; and Teasley is the historian for the Ambassadors.

Donna Kay Sledge, Head Athletic Trainer at ABAC, has been named Junior College Head Athletic Trainer of the Year by the National Athletic Trainers' Association Intercollegiate Council for Sports Medicine. The qualifications for this award include having professional experience in a collegiate setting as well as being actively involved in the community on and off campus. The Tifton native has been serving ABAC athletics for 15 years. She currently serves as the Southwest co-representative for the Georgia Athletic Training Association and is the Region 17 Athletic Trainer representative for the NJCAA Athletic Trainers. Sledge followed her love of athletic training to Valdosta State University where she received a Bachelor of Science in Sports Medicine and Physical Education. She then attended Austin Peay State University to receive her master's degree in secondary education with a minor in community health care administration.

ABAC Annual Economic Impact at \$584,544,166 on South Georgia

The annual economic impact of ABAC on South Georgia increased to \$584,544,166 during the 2019 fiscal year, according to a recently released report by the University System of Georgia (USG). Dr. Renata Elad, Dean of the Stafford School of Business at ABAC, analyzes the USG report each year to determine the impact of the institution on the region. She said ABAC's impact is up \$85,140,494 over the 2018 fiscal year. "ABAC continues to be economically and academically important to South Georgia," Elad said. "As a part of the USG, ABAC is an integral part of the region. With ABAC housing at over 91 per cent occupancy, that translates to significant potential business traffic for Tifton and surrounding areas." A record ABAC enrollment figure of 4,292 students during the 2018 fall term contributed to the rise in economic impact with a student direct spending figure of \$50,556,118. The employment number related to student spending climbed to 1,416 including 954 jobs outside of ABAC and 462 jobs inside the college. "In the present, ABAC is a part of the lifeblood of the region with initial spending of over \$200 million which reflects \$112,850,878 for operations, \$37 million for capital investment, and \$50 million of student spending in the region," Elad said. Counties directly impacted by ABAC include Tift, Worth, Cook, Colquitt, Irwin, Ben Hill, Turner, Decatur, Seminole, Miller, Grady, Early, Thomas, Mitchell, and Baker.

A strong fear of snakes turned into a love of education for ABAC student Triston Hansford. Hansford, a junior natural resource management major from Winder, is the owner and operator of the Longleaf Snaketuary. Before coming to ABAC, Hansford could not bear the thought of being in the same zip code with a snake. He had a strong passion for wildlife, but snakes were not in the picture. Hansford credits conquering his fear to the amazing professors in the Forestry and Wildlife department at ABAC. “I began to develop a respect for all wild things that eventually turned into a love for snakes,” Hansford said. Hansford is the President of ABAC’s student chapter of the Wildlife Society. “So many folks have a fear of snakes that often results in harm for snakes and people, and I used to be one of those people,” said Hansford. “In the end, what helped me to get over my fear was learning about them, so that’s exactly what I aim to do for others.” Hansford said his goal is to teach people about snakes in the hope that they develop a respect for the species and have healthy interactions with snakes as they encounter them in the wild. After Hansford purchased two king snakes, the Longleaf Snaketuary was born. Longleaf now has many species including a rat snake, corn snake, ball python, and more. Other than education, Hansford hopes to serve the community by rescuing unwanted, neglected, or needy snakes and reptiles and giving them a good home.

The hub for books, supplies, and ABAC gear is now located in the center of the ABAC campus. The Stallion Shop, formerly known as the ABAC Bookstore, has moved to the newly renovated Carlton Center with an expected first day of operation on October 12. Stallion Shop Manager Tracy Dyal is trying to make the move as seamless as possible from J. Lamar Branch Hall to the Carlton Center. “We do not plan to shut down at all during this time,” Dyal said. “We are crossing our fingers that all of the pieces come together as we have planned in order for this to happen.” The movement of merchandise began on October 5, the Branch Hall location will close October 9, and the Stallion Shop will begin formal operations on October 12. Although the new space will be slightly smaller, Dyal is looking forward to offering more ABAC related products than ever before. Much of the new merchandise will feature traditional ABAC logos with vibrant ABAC green and gold colors. Along with an array of jackets, t-shirts, sweatshirts, pullovers, caps and other items, the Stallion Shop will also be the home for the campus mail center. A small snack bar area will be added in the future.

Sunbelt Expo Started as Dealer Days at ABAC

Since an event called Dealer Days on the banks of Lake Baldwin in 1964, ABAC has always been a part of the Sunbelt Agricultural Exposition. But not this year. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Expo will not be held. Plans are for North America’s Premier Outdoor Farm Equipment Show to return to its Spence Field site near Moultrie in 2021. “ABAC and the Expo have certainly changed over the years but we both still have a commitment to agriculture, which continues to be Georgia’s largest industry,” ABAC President David Bridges said. “The Expo has always represented a great opportunity for me to connect with our ABAC alumni, many of whom



are on site as exhibitors.” ABAC faculty and staff members from the Division of Agriculture began the Dealer Days farm equipment show to connect students with possible future employers. Dealer Days became the Sunbelt Agricultural Exposition when it moved to Spence Field in 1978. ABAC personnel were front and center when the change was made, helping to lay out the exhibit areas and prepare the former air base for thousands of visitors and exhibitors. Ironically, ABAC had students at Spence Field after World War II, so it was a homecoming of sorts when college personnel returned to the site. Dr. Frank McCain, Jesse Chambliss, Wright Crosby, Jimmy Grubbs, and many others helped to prepare the Expo site. Grubbs, a former ABAC student who then became a longtime ABAC employee, is still an annual visitor to the Expo. “ABAC students did a lot of work down there to make the Expo what it is today,” Grubbs said. “We have come a long way since Dealer Days.” The Expo opened at its new Spence Field site near Moultrie on October 10-12, 1978. ABAC had a stage featuring student entertainment in front of the air traffic control tower. ABAC students distributed gold stickers with ABAC #1 on them, signifying the claim as “Georgia’s Number One Junior College.” Helen Strickland designed the ABAC exhibit. The ABAC AET Club helped exhibitors with set-up and take-down, and the Home Economics Club members assisted with the information booths. ABAC invested in a green-and-gold tent in later years and showcased its student performing groups on a stage inside the tent. From the Travelin’ Stallion square dancers to the ABAC Cloggers to the Fabulous Golddusters dance team, the students attracted record crowds for every show during the three days of the Expo every year. Dr. Fred Reuter and Ed Hawkins performed the patten for the square dancers, and Betty Mealor led the ABAC Cloggers. Andrea Willis choreographed the Golddusters’ performances. Bookstore Manager Emory Johnson often took the stage with his guitar when he wasn’t selling ABAC hats and t-shirts in a specially designed store just outside the tent. Through the years, Don Coates, Wayne Jones, Woody Leonard, Dr. Susan Roe, and others brought their student performers to the Expo site with featured slots for the Jazz Band, Jazz Choir, and the Thundering Herd Pep Band. Occasionally, the ABAC Bluegrass Band also made an appearance, much to the delight of Expo audiences. In 1999, Lanier Carson and Kelley Manufacturing donated the funds for ABAC to construct its own building at the Expo. The building made for a much nicer performing area for the students and allowed for merchandise sales of ABAC gear inside the structure. “The building changed everything for the better,” ABAC Director of Public Relations Emeritus Mike Chason said. “We were protected from the weather, we had dressing rooms for the performers, and we had a better way to display our ABAC apparel. We still thank Mr. Carson every year.” When ABAC took over the operation of the Georgia Museum of Agriculture in 2010, a Museum exhibit was added to the ABAC building. It proved to be a big hit with everything from tea cake sales to a blacksmith demonstrating his prowess. Under the guidance of Director of Marketing and Communication Lindsey Roberts, the building underwent a total revamp in 2015. Porches were added along with huge pictures and exhibits detailing success stories involving ABAC alumni and students. “We are really proud of our ABAC alumni, and Expo visitors get to find out more about them and their contributions to agriculture,” Roberts said. “We also get to showcase our bachelor’s degrees.” Now a four-year college



instead of a two-year college, ABAC offers 12 different bachelor's degrees for its enrollment of nearly 4,000 students. Alumni Director Lynda Fisher sees more alumni at Expo than just about any other event during the year except for Homecoming.

ABAC Students Collaborate with Writers from India

Writers from India and across the United States have connected with ABAC students through the "Our Farm 2 Your Table" project. Funded by a special grant from the state department, the six-month project gives ABAC students the opportunity to help develop a website and produce stories about how COVID-19 has affected agriculture across the world. "The idea is to develop international discussions about farming using the commonality of the pandemic to connect farmers in India and the U.S. through writing and Zoom conversations," ABAC Professor of Journalism Thomas Grant said. Grant said the writers for the project are quite diverse. Some are actual farmers in India, others are Ph.D. professors, and some are ABAC students. The website usually posts four stories a week that have gone through an extensive editing process by region coordinators and advisors. Writers get a stipend which acts as an incentive on top of the classroom experience for students involved with the project.

In a memo to the ABAC faculty and staff on October 14, ABAC President David Bridges outlined a series of changes including the naming of Dr. Michael Kirkland as the Vice President for Enrollment Management. Donna Webb was named the Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs, and Dr. Darby Sewell (Class of '98) was named Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs. Dr. Amy Willis (Class of '89) was named Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs and will assume leadership responsibility for Institutional Research.

Bridges also said that effective December 31, 2021, ABAC will cease operations at instructional sites in Blakely, Donalsonville, and Moultrie. ABAC will continue to serve dual enrollment students in those areas.

Tom Moody (Class of '58), a former ABAC baseball and golf coach, passed away on November 9 at the age of 82. Moody was the ABAC baseball coach for 24 years, winning state tournament titles in 1975 and 1986. He took the reins of the Golden Stallions on the golf course from 1992 through 1995, and ABAC won the state championship each of those years, earning Moody four consecutive State Coach of the Year honors. Moody was selected for the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2016. Moody played baseball at ABAC and began his ABAC coaching career in 1967. He retired from ABAC in 1996.

ABAC Students Photograph Rare Eastern Indigo Snake



Two ABAC students recently photographed a rare six-foot long Eastern Indigo snake while preparing capstone project research for their bachelor's degree in Natural Resource Management. "This is a really noteworthy observation and of significant conservation value," Dr. Vanessa Lane, ABAC Associate Professor of Wildlife Ecology and Management and a Certified Wildlife Biologist, said. "The sighting of this federally threatened species has already been reported to the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, and a biologist will be conducting formal surveys sometime this month." ABAC students Morgan Pierce from Hartwell and Scott Herkel from Norwood were using trail cameras to monitor gopher tortoise burrows on private property for their undergraduate research project. They were trying to learn what kinds of mammals and other animals were using gopher tortoise burrows when they serendipitously photographed the rare snake. "It really was a shock," Herkel said. "I honestly felt like it was a once in a lifetime thing." Lane said the Eastern Indigo snake is the largest of Georgia's 46 snake species, reaching over eight feet long and weighing nearly 11 pounds. Famous for its ability to hunt and eat venomous snakes such as rattlesnakes, the harmless Eastern Indigo snake has unfortunately suffered steep population declines.

Tom McCall, a 1977 ABAC graduate, has been selected as the new president of the Georgia Farm Bureau. McCall is a grain and livestock farmer and former State Representative from Elbert County. He has been farming since 1976. "I have known Tom for a long time, and he will be a perfect fit as President of the Georgia Farm Bureau," ABAC President David Bridges said. "During the time he spent in the Georgia House of Representatives, he proved without a doubt that he loves this state and has a genuine concern for agriculture, which is Georgia's largest industry." McCall received the Distinguished Alumnus Award from the ABAC Alumni Association at the 2008 Homecoming Luncheon when ABAC celebrated its 100th birthday.

New Media Studio in Carlton Center

Students who are interested in television broadcasting, radio, or producing will now have access to a new state of the art media studio at ABAC. Chris Daniels, manager of instructional technology, said the buildout to complete the studio will take several weeks. Installation of the set, lighting grids, and practice tests are still underway. "We are excited about the new studio and want to provide opportunities for students to be involved from the ground floor," Daniels said. The 1,100 square foot studio in the recently renovated Carlton Center will be accompanied by an ultra-modern control room with stations for students to run lighting, audio, and graphics. Students enrolled in journalism classes and members of the Stallion TV production team can also use the new equipment to practice switching and producing. Just down the hall from the studio there is a new audio/podcast recording booth, ABAC radio station WPLH, Stallion student media, a print-layout/conference room, and a post-production editing suite. Director of Digital Media Services Cindy Barber said the modern studio has been her "dream studio" during the

twenty plus years she has been involved with media services at ABAC. Her overall career at ABAC has stretched over 30 years. “We hope to see students from all disciplines use it as a tool for class projects, but also our goal is for it to be a learning lab for communications students,” Barber said. “The state-of-the-art equipment we have now will give students excellent hands-on training that will translate into a more employable graduate.”

Paul Willis, Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration and Chief of Staff at ABAC, has announced that he will retire from ABAC on January 29, 2021. “I feel like it’s time,” Willis said. “I’d like to do a little traveling to see some friends and former students, people we have had relationships with during the 38 years I have spent in higher education.” Willis joined the ABAC administration in 2009 as the Director of College Enrichment. ABAC took over the operation of the former Georgia Agrirama in 2010, and ABAC President David Bridges selected Willis as the director of the newly named Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village. “The transformation of the Museum is one of my fondest memories of my time at ABAC,” Willis said. “It’s one of the most challenging things I have ever done.” Under Willis’ direction, the Museum expanded with three historic buildings and increased the number of special events, workshops, and special exhibits in the Museum Gallery. In 2012, Bridges named Willis as the Vice President for External Affairs. In 2014, Willis took the reins as Vice President for Finance and Operations. Willis moved up to Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration and Chief of Staff in 2018. Willis was recognized by the ABAC faculty and staff in 2014 as the recipient of the prestigious E. Lanier Carson Award for College Administrators. The ABAC Alumni Association named him an Honorary Alumnus in 2020. Before he came to ABAC, Willis had a stellar 26-year career in teaching and administration at the University of Florida.

Jaylee Bass, a writing and communication major from Adel, received the ABAC Alumni Association Award as the top bachelor’s degree graduate participating in the 2020 fall commencement ceremony on December 3. The Donaldson Award for the top associate degree graduate was not presented. To adhere to social distancing guidelines, ABAC hosted three commencement ceremonies, two in Tifton and one in Bainbridge. The day marked the first time in history that ABAC had three commencement ceremonies in one day.

Dr. Joseph Day passed away on December 9 at the age of 90. He served from 1965 until his retirement in 1989 as an Associate Professor of Mathematics at ABAC. After he retired, he enjoyed regular golf outings with his friend, Bo Miller, at ABAC’s Forest Lakes Golf Club. Miller was the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs at ABAC for 24 years. He passed away on May 20, 2020, at the age of 86.

Dr. Jeffrey Ross Named Dean of School of Nursing and Health Sciences



Dr. Jeffrey Ross has been selected as the Dean of the School of Nursing and Health Sciences at ABAC. Ross had served as the Interim Dean since February 2020. His appointment will be effective Jan. 1, 2021. “I am both humbled and excited to accept the permanent position of Dean for the School of Nursing and Health Sciences at ABAC,” Ross said. “The School of Nursing has exemplary faculty and staff members, and I have the utmost respect for each one of them. Ross, who is from Donalsonville, has been teaching practical, associate, and baccalaureate nursing degree level programs for 15 years. He had previously served as Chair of Nursing for the practical and associate degree programs at ABAC Bainbridge. Ross received his associate degree from Darton College, his bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Albany State University and his Ed.D. in Nursing Education from the University of West Georgia. Ross also maintains certification through the National League for Nursing as a Certified Nursing Educator.

Deidre Jackson Named ABAC Vice President for Finance and Operations

Deidra Jackson was named ABAC’s Vice President for Finance and Operations on December 14. “Deidra has served ABAC in a very thorough and outstanding manner for the past 10 years,” ABAC President David Bridges said. “She first served as Comptroller and more recently as Assistant Vice President for Finance and Operations. I have the greatest confidence in her ability and commitment to ABAC.” A Tift County High School graduate, Jackson received her undergraduate degree in accounting from Auburn University and her MBA from Valdosta State University. She joined the ABAC staff in 2010 after nearly six years in Douglas as a senior auditor for the Georgia Department of Audits. “I am extremely thankful and honored for the opportunity to serve ABAC in this position,” Jackson said. “ABAC’s economic impact can be seen every day through our students and our very successful alumni. “As Vice President, I will make certain that we are excellent stewards of the funds we receive from our students and the State of Georgia. I plan to follow a pattern of exemplary customer service while maintaining the fiscal integrity of the College.” Bridges said Jackson will serve on the President’s Cabinet. He said her appointment will become effective immediately.

When the students went home on November 24 after completing their fall semester classes and final exams, ABAC became a very quiet place again until December 3 when the graduates returned to campus for commencement ceremonies at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. At 6 p.m., ABAC convened its third commencement ceremony of the day at the ABAC Bainbridge campus.

The COVID-19 pandemic made 2020 the strangest year in the history of ABAC. For five months there were no students on campus because of the pandemic. When they did return for the fall semester on August 12, most of them took a combination of online and in-person classes. Without intercollegiate athletics, music program concerts, Arts Series events, Baldwin Players’ presentations on stage in Howard Auditorium and the other usual activities which make the campus hum with activity, the fall semester was quite different than any other. And now, with

the pandemic still raging in Georgia and across the country, the ABAC spring semester start date has been pushed back until January 19.

.2021

The first day of classes for the spring term was moved for the second time from Jan. 19 to January 25 because of continued concern with COVID-19. It marked the latest start of the spring term in the history of ABAC. Spring term classes were mainly in-person with some virtual classes for the students.

“We gain an extra week of time for the surge to resolve, and we only lose four days of classes because we were scheduled to start on January 19 anyway,” ABAC President David Bridges said. “Everything we do is predicated on providing for the health and safety of our students and our employees.”

Paul Willis, Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration and Chief of Staff at ABAC, retired on January 29. Willis joined the ABAC administration in 2009 as the Director of College Enrichment. A collaboration between ABAC and Cumberland (Tenn.) University will open the doors for ABAC graduates pursuing careers in athletic training. A new articulation agreement between the schools gives qualifying ABAC graduates who complete a bachelor’s degree in biology an interview and consideration for acceptance into the Master of Science in Athletic Training program at Cumberland University.

Black History Month activities at ABAC began February 15 when students attended the screening of *Selma* in the ABAC Lakeside lobby. Other events included an African American Professionals Panel on February 23 in Howard Auditorium. To maintain social distancing guidelines, the maximum capacity was 50 people, and all attendees had to wear a mask to protect against the virus. Individuals also participated via Microsoft Teams.

As ABAC prepared to celebrate its 113th birthday on Feb. 20 amid a global pandemic, it pays to remember that it’s not the first time that students at ABAC faced a health crisis that affected the world’s population. The deadliest pandemic of the 20th century took place in 1918-19 when a flu virus resulted in 50 million deaths worldwide and approximately 675,000 deaths in the United States. Ironically, the solutions to coping with the flu at that time included isolation, quarantine, good personal hygiene, use of disinfectants, and limited public gatherings. Pictures from the era show Americans wearing cloth masks over their faces. Such is the case again in 2021 on the ABAC campus.

Students are wearing masks, practicing social distancing, using hand sanitizer, and taking some of their classes online. During the pandemic of 1918-19, ABAC was an area high school called the Second District Agricultural and Mechanical School. Tift Hall was the main classroom building, and Lewis Hall and Herring Hall were used as dormitories. Because of World War I, there were nursing shortages during the 1918-19 flu outbreak. Today, graduates of the stellar nursing program at ABAC find jobs almost immediately because of the shortage of nursing



professionals across the country. In fact, ABAC enrolled more students in nursing classes during the 2020 fall term than at any other time in the history of the program, which began at ABAC in 1966.

ABAC celebrates its latest birthday with an enrollment that reached its second highest number ever during the fall term when 3,990 students from 155 of Georgia's 159 counties, 19 states, and 24 countries took classes. ABAC also attracted students from 53 of Florida's 67 counties.

Students Pursue Bachelor's Degrees at ABAC in Record Number

Bachelor's degrees are more popular than ever before at ABAC, according to numbers released by Dr. Amy Willis (Class of '89), Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs. Willis said that of the 3,990 students enrolled at ABAC during the 2020 fall semester, a total of 2,353 pursued bachelor's degrees. That tops the mark of 2,194 students who enrolled in four-year degree programs during the 2019 fall term.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, students at ABAC tried an alternative to the traditional in-person job fairs in the first virtual ABAC Career Connections event. The virtual event launched February 23 and continued through March 9. The virtual event offered live sessions with employers, post presentations for students to view, and allowed students to schedule meetings with employers. Over 250 companies, agencies, and organizations were invited to attend the virtual event, giving the event a global reach.

A new agreement between the ABAC School of Agriculture and Natural Resources (SANR) and Murray State University's Hutson School of Agriculture (HSOA) will afford ABAC graduates the opportunity to further their education in a graduate level program. SANR graduates from ABAC who meet the given criteria will be accepted for admission to MSU's Master of Science in Agriculture online degree program. If students wish to seek admission for the face-to-face option, they will be given full consideration. ABAC's SANR graduates have the potential to secure nine hours of graduate credit through the new Accelerated Stallion-Racer Agreement.

The student newspaper at ABAC has been recognized by the Georgia College Press Association (GCPA) Better Newspaper Contest as the best overall publication in its division in Georgia. Dr. Thomas Grant, advisor for *The Stallion*, said the newspaper has been the best in the state in its classification for decades, beginning when Helen Strickland took over as the advisor in 1968.

"Then ABAC became a four-year college in 2008 and our students had to compete against schools like Georgia College and State University, Berry College, and Morehouse," Grant said. "That increased the level of competition. The fact that *The Stallion* continues to earn awards as the best small college newspaper in the state shows how talented ABAC students are. They can compete with anyone."

Grant said *The Stallion* competes in GCPA Division B, representing colleges with less than 8,000 students. *The Stallion* placed first in General Photography Excellence, Best Campus



Community Service in Features and News, and General Excellence. The General Excellence Award means *The Stallion* was the best overall compared to the other colleges in the division. *The Stallion* also received awards in General Advertising Excellence, Layout and Design Excellence, and Best Campus Community Service in Sports and Editorials.

Dr. David Bridges, the president of ABAC since 2006 and the longest serving president in the University System of Georgia (USG), says ABAC students can expect a return to normalcy for the 2021 fall semester. “Our plan is to return to normal operations in the fall,” Bridges said. “I want our existing students to know that, and I particularly want incoming freshmen to know it.” Bridges said ABAC will continue to take precautions against the pandemic but activities for the students should return to pre-pandemic levels.

Dr. Frank McGill (Class of 1949), passed away on March 3 at the age of 94. Known as Mr. Peanut for his research with the peanut industry, McGill was a World War II veteran who was involved with the peanut industry for 52 years. He visited 20 countries on four continents with his duties with the University of Georgia. Dr. Vincent Keese, Professor of Art at ABAC for 30 years, passed away on March 8. Keese retired from his faculty position in 1996.

Arts and Culture at ABAC presents a new way to celebrate performing arts despite current challenges with a brand-new Spring Virtual Arts Series beginning March 11 on the ABAC website. Presented by James C. and Jolene C. Bell, each virtual performance will be available for 24 hours at no charge to the viewer. The four performances in the series can be accessed at arts.abac.edu on the dates of the performances. “This mini-series features a variety of artists, some of whom will be included in next year’s full season as a part of the ABAC Presents! Performing Arts Series and An Evening for ABAC,” Arts Connection Director Wayne Jones said. The Spring Virtual Arts Series opens with the American Spiritual Ensemble performing *The Power of Spirituals* on March 11. Farewell Angelina will be featured on March 25 followed by TAKE3 on April 8, and Jaimee Paul and Leif Shires: *Bonded* on April 22.

Agricultural Education Takes Another Step at ABAC

ABAC’s Department of Agricultural Education and Communication is providing opportunities to combat the shortage of agricultural educators in Georgia. ABAC and the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GPSC) have collaborated to provide a one-year teaching certification program for agricultural education. Dr. Frank Flanders, coordinator of the agricultural education program at ABAC, said the post baccalaureate teacher certification program is targeted toward students who have completed or are in the process of completing a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree in any area of agriculture. “This program is one of the quickest to complete and one of the most inexpensive for students,” Flanders said. “It contains all the recommended coursework for a beginning teacher.” Students enrolled in the certification program will be on the ABAC campus for a fall semester to take education classes, pedagogy and instruction, community development, and agricultural education practicum courses. In the spring, students are placed with an experienced agricultural educator in a Georgia public school. Flanders said student teaching sites are available all over the state, and administrators try to accommodate those who wish to be placed near their hometowns.



Benny Dees, coach of the ABAC men's basketball team from 1962–1967, passed away on March 23 at the age of 86. Under Dees' leadership, the Golden Stallions won the state junior college basketball championship in 1964. The victory marked the first men's basketball state title for ABAC since Coach Bruce Gressette's team won the 1949 crown. Dees was inducted into the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2011 and the entire 1964 ABAC team was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2017. In the 1966-67 season, Dees' ABAC team was ranked 13th in the nation, went undefeated in league play and rolled up a school record 29-5 record. Dees resigned his ABAC position at the end of the 1967 season to become the first head coach at the new men's basketball program at Virginia Commonwealth University. His mother, Pearl Dees, was a longtime house mother in an ABAC dormitory, and his brother, Peter, played and coached at ABAC.

Bernice Hughes, the Dean of Students at ABAC, has been selected as a 2021 Phi Theta Kappa Distinguished College Administrator. "Dean Hughes was selected because of her outstanding support for the Omega Delta Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa at ABAC," Dr. Charlotte Klesman, advisor to ABAC's PTK chapter, said. Klesman said Hughes will be honored at the PTK Catalyst 2021 Live on April 9. Because of the pandemic, the annual convention will be presented in a virtual format this year. After serving as the Assistant Director of Housing at Middle Tennessee State University, Hughes joined the ABAC staff in 1998 and became the Dean of Students in 2004.

Robert Gerhart, the Vice President of Technology and Chief Information Officer at ABAC, has announced that he plans to retire on April 30. "I'm going to miss the challenges that go with ABAC's progress," Gerhart said. "Under Dr. (David) Bridges' leadership as President, this college has been transformed in a positive direction. Being a part of that has been extremely rewarding." Gerhart joined the ABAC administration in May 2014. Prior to coming to Tifton, he was the Director of Operations for the College of Architecture at Georgia Tech.

ABAC Enrolls More Nursing Students Than Ever Before

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the shortage of nurses in America has become more acute. Dr. Jeffrey Ross, Dean of the School of Nursing and Health Sciences at ABAC, says ABAC is ready to come to the rescue. "During the 2020 fall semester, there were more students enrolled in nursing classes at ABAC than at any other time in our history," Ross said. "Currently, we have more students in the RN-BSN program than we have had since the program began." Dr. Amy Willis, Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs, said 326 students were enrolled in associate degree nursing classes at ABAC Tifton and ABAC Bainbridge during the fall term. That figure tops the 304 students who were enrolled in classes at the two locations in 2019. A total of 895 ABAC students pursued nursing degrees in the 2020 fall semester, many of those taking core curriculum classes to prepare them to enter the nursing program. Fifty-nine students in that total enrolled in ABAC's bachelor's degree program in nursing. "The reputation of the ABAC nursing program has never been higher," ABAC President David Bridges said. "ABAC turns out quality graduates who are much sought after in an industry that looks for more nurses every day."



The Nature Study Area at ABAC will get a new boardwalk thanks to a recently announced \$2,097 Wildlife Viewing Grant from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources to the ABAC Foundation. “The Nature Study Area on the ABAC campus is one of only two public nature trails in Tift County,” Dr. Mark Kistler, Dean of ABAC’s School of Agriculture and Natural Resources, said. “This grant will allow our students in Natural Resource Management under the supervision of the faculty and staff in the Department of Forest Resources to make needed repairs and improvements to the boardwalk along the nature trail. These repairs and improvements will not only allow our students to have a safe and enjoyable hike through the Nature Study Area but will also benefit Tifton area residents who frequently walk, jog, and ride their bicycles through our campus.” Dr. Vanessa Lane, ABAC Associate Professor of Wildlife Ecology and Management and a Certified Wildlife Biologist, and Dr. Deidre Martin, Chief Development Officer, developed the grant.

Females Play Prominent Role in ABAC Leadership Positions

Women have always played a role in the leadership of ABAC since it opened as the Second District Agricultural and Mechanical School in 1908. There is no better time to highlight some of those accomplishments than Women’s History Month. As a part of Women’s History Month activities at ABAC, Dr. Marjorie J. Spruill will speak in a virtual presentation on “One Woman, One Vote: The Long Road to the Nineteenth Amendment” at 6 p.m. on March 22. Spruill is a historian and Emeritus Professor at the University of South Carolina, known for her work on women and politics from the women’s suffrage movement to the present day. The speech is open to the public via Zoom at link.abac.edu/women.

The latest ABAC female administrator to move to a featured role is Deidra Jackson. She was named ABAC’s Vice President for Finance and Operations in December 2020. Jackson is a member of the President’s Cabinet and fills a vital position in the operation of the college. “I am extremely thankful and honored for the opportunity to serve ABAC in this position,” Jackson said. “ABAC’s economic impact can be seen every day through our students and our very successful alumni.” Jackson is just one of many female administrators who fill key positions across the ABAC campus. Dr. Darby Sewell is the Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs, Engagement, Learning Resources, and Compliance, and Dr. Amy Willis is the Assistant Vice President for Academic Records and Registrar. As the Dean of the Stafford School of Business, Dr. Renata Elad is one of only four deans in the academic sector of ABAC. Dr. Wendy Harrison serves as the Department Head for English and Communication, and Dr. Susan Roe is the Department Head for Fine Arts, both departments in the School of Arts and Sciences. In the student services area, Bernice Hughes has served as the Dean of Students since 2004, and Donna Webb was named Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs in October 2020. Olga Contreras is the Director of Multicultural Educational Programs, and Jessica Swords is the Director of Student Accounts and Veterans Affairs Certifying Official. Amy Warren is the Director of Assessment.

Brenda Taylor-Hickey is the Director of Financial Aid, and Debbie Pyles is a Lieutenant with ABAC Police. Cindy Barber is the Digital Media Director, and Carmen Counts is the Health Center Director. Tracy Dyal is the Manager of The Stallion Shop, Polly Huff is the Museum Curator, and Donna Sledge is the Athletic Trainer. Dr. Deidre Martin is the Chief Development



Officer for the institution, and Jodie Snow is the Chief Operating Officer of the ABAC Foundation. Lynda Fisher is the ABAC Alumni Director, and Lindsey Roberts is the Director of Marketing and Communication. Sue Mastrario is the Director of Operations and Accounting for the Office of College Advancement.

Dr. Bettie Horne became the first female Vice President at ABAC in 1995 when she was selected as the Vice President and Dean of Academic Affairs. In later years, Dr. Chrystle Ross served as Vice President and Chief Information Officer, Bertha Daniel served on the President's Cabinet as Director of College Services, and Dr. Caroline Helms was the longtime Vice President for Academic Affairs. Dr. Gail Dillard served as Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs and developed the ABAC Honors Program.

In intercollegiate sports, Ellen Vickers and Donna Campbell coached their teams to national championships in slow pitch softball for ABAC. Coach Jennifer Walls' Golden Fillies softball team won the 2019 state title. Today, there are many more females at ABAC who contribute their time and energy to make ABAC a better place for its students. These women build on the legacy created by those who have gone before. Even the ABAC enrollment has taken on a different look because of female students. During the 2020 fall semester, ABAC had the highest percentage of female enrollment in the history of the college at 59.4 per cent. Of the 3,990 students enrolled, a total of 2,371 were female, and 1,619 were male. Women are still making history at ABAC.

Tania Bautista Selected as Woodroof Scholar

Tania Bautista, a senior agricultural education major from Tifton, has been selected as the 2021 recipient of the J.G. Woodroof Scholar award. The award is named for Dr. J.G. Woodroof, the first president of ABAC in 1933. The award was presented at the recent ABAC honors ceremony in Tift Hall. After compiling the highest-grade point average possible with a 4.0 during her four years at ABAC, Bautista will graduate on May 14 with her bachelor's degree in agricultural education. "Throughout my educational journey, I have worked hard to get to where I am today," Bautista said. "I take the privilege of getting an education with pride because having been born in Mexico and moving to the United States gave me the opportunity to get one of the best educations available."

Four students were recognized with Awards of Distinction for being named the top student in each school of study at ABAC for the 2021 academic year. The recipients included Coletia Bentley from Moultrie, Stafford School of Business; Johnathon Strickland from LaGrange, Agriculture and Natural Resources; Kaycee Goodman from Chula, Nursing and Health Sciences; and Luke Guy from Fitzgerald, Arts and Sciences.

Daniel Stout from Suwanee and Lawrence Langston, III, from Beech Island, S.C., have been selected as the overall winners among students participating in the 2021 Student Engagement Programs (STEPS) Symposium representing undergraduate research at ABAC. Dr. Darby Sewell, Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs, Engagement, Learning Resources and Compliance, said the symposium included 29 presentations and 38 ABAC student presenters. Viewership of the virtual symposium increased from 300 views in the pandemic year of 2020 to 1,847 unique presentation views in 2021. Stout and Langston are pursuing the Bachelor of



Science degree in Natural Resource Management, Wildlife. They also won first place in the Biological, Life, and Chemical Sciences category. Their faculty mentor was Dr. Jason Scott. Ivan Zapote from Ashburn, pursuing an Engineering Pathway Associate of Science degree, finished second overall. His faculty mentors were Dr. Alex McLemore and Dr. Michael Maw. Zapote finished first in the Computational and Engineering category. Daniel Adams from Nashville, Ga., finished in third place overall. He is majoring in the Bachelor of Science degree in Biology. His mentor was Dr. Chris Beals. In the other categories, Kyerra Mahogany from Pineview finished first in Social/Behavioral Sciences and Education. She is pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree in Rural Community Development, Community Health. Her mentor was Dr. Janet Kuposko. Danielle Long from Fitzgerald finished first in Art, Design, Performing Arts, Communication, and Journalism. She is pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree in Writing and Communication. Her mentor was Dr. Brian Yost. In the Environmental Sciences category, Emma Tyre from Patterson finished first. She is pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture, Crop Science. Her mentors were McLemore and Maw.

Because of Covid precautions, the annual Homecoming 2021 Remembrance Service was held on the ABAC Lakeside Lawn on April 9. Director of Public Relations Emeritus Mike Chason read the names of alumni and friends who have passed away in the past year. On April 10, a brief Homecoming Brunch honored the award recipients who were named in 2020 but were not formally honored because no Homecoming activities were held because of the pandemic. Award recipients included Dr. Glenn Arthur Barden (Class of '58) from Lakeland, Fla., Distinguished Alumnus Award; James Alex Hardy (Class of '69) from Hawkinsville, Master Farmer; Brent Galloway (Class of '92) from Lyons, J. Lamar Branch Award for Outstanding Leadership in Agriculture; Lori Brown Ewing (Class of '87) from Dacula, Outstanding Healthcare Professional; Dr. Frank Flanders (Class of '72) from Tifton, Outstanding Educator; Alma Young (Class of 2005) from Tifton, Outstanding Young Alumnus; and Joshua Dawson (Class of 2013) from Valdosta, Miles A. Drummond Rising Star Award. The John Lewis Herring family from Tift County was selected for the Family Legacy Award, and ABAC Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration Paul Willis was named the Honorary Alumnus. All other Homecoming activities including the Gee Haw Whoa Back Rodeo were cancelled because of the pandemic.

New technology is at the fingertips of ABAC students thanks to a \$40,000 donation to the ABAC Foundation from ClicRtechnologies. A ClicRweight Bovine Solution System will be utilized at the Beef Unit at ABAC's J.G. Woodroof Farm. Dr. Mark Kistler, Dean of ABAC's School of Agriculture and Natural Resources, is excited about the partnership with ClicRtechnologies. "The ClicRweight Bovine Solution System will provide valuable data for the management and operation of our Beef Unit," Kistler said. "More importantly, it will be utilized by many of our academic programs such as Animal Science and Livestock Production as well as Agribusiness and Agricultural Technology and Systems Management."

Horseman Press Hosts Book Launch at Museum



ABAC's Horseman Press hosted a book launch featuring a new edition of Sarah Barnwell Elliott's novel, *Jerry*, on April 15 under the Opry Shelter at ABAC's Georgia Museum of Agriculture (GMA). Dr. Rachael Price, Assistant Professor of English and the Horseman Press advisor, said Horseman Press is the only student-staffed undergraduate teaching press in the state of Georgia. Price spoke on Elliott's career and the numerous obstacles Elliott had to overcome as a female writer in the South in the 1890s. All titles for the press are produced by students in the ENGL 3130 course, the Publishing Process. The mission of the Horseman Press is to provide students with firsthand experience and training in all aspects of book production, including editing, design, and marketing. The secondary goal is to promote forgotten works of rural American literature.

Using a different approach to live theatre, the Baldwin Players performed their entire spring term production in front of cameras in the ABAC television studio. That production of *A Program of Morality Tales* in a reader's theatre format is now available online at watch.abac.edu/media/21s+Morality+++video/1_qpdxj51/201261423. "*Morality Tales* is the result of several hundred man-hours of effort on the part of the actors, technicians/videographers, and editors," Dr. Brian Ray, Director of the Baldwin Players and Professor of English and Theatre at ABAC, said. "It began as a vague idea to stage a video production of a reader's theatre to allow the Baldwin Players to continue producing during the pandemic." The program includes a compilation of scripts from *The Game*, *Wisdom*, and *Hansel & Gretel*.

For the second straight year and the fourth time in the last six years, there will be no tuition increase for students attending ABAC for the 2021-22 academic year. ABAC President David Bridges applauded the decision by the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia (USG). "On behalf of our students and their parents, I want to say thank you to the members of the Board for taking this stance during a year when the pandemic has turned our entire world upside down," Bridges, the longest serving president among the 26 colleges and universities in the USG, said. "ABAC has always prided itself on offering a life-changing education at a reasonable cost. We will continue to do that." The Board also voted to approve a recommendation of no increases to any mandatory fees for the 2021-2022 academic year.

Dr. Audrey Luke-Morgan Receives Teaching Excellence Award

Dr. Audrey Luke-Morgan (Class of '94) has been selected as the 2021 recipient of the W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence. First awarded in 1965, the purpose of the prestigious award is to publicly recognize superior instruction and exemplary service to the college by honoring one faculty member each year, as chosen by a special representative committee of faculty and students. An Associate Professor in the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Luke-Morgan has taught at ABAC since 2012. She received an associate degree from ABAC, a Bachelor of Business Administration in Accounting from the University of Georgia (UGA), a Master of Science in Agricultural Economics from UGA, and a Ph.D. in Public Administration from Valdosta State University.

Kim Spinks has been selected as the 2021 recipient of the Roy R. Jackson Award for Staff Excellence, presented each year to ABAC's top staff member. Presented in memory of Roy R. Jackson, Sr., award recipients must have completed at least 10 years of continuous full-time



service to ABAC. Award criteria states that the staff member must be dependable, loyal, reliable, and one who contributes to the growth and development of the college beyond the normal call of duty. Now serving as the Office Coordinator for the Office of Academic Support, Spinks has been an ABAC staff member for 22 years.

Dr. Amy Willis (Class of '89) has been selected as the 2021 recipient of ABAC's E. Lanier Carson Leadership Award. Willis serves as Assistant Vice President of Academic Affairs and Registrar at ABAC. Established in 1973 as the Carlton Award for Administrative Excellence, the purpose of the award is to recognize leadership contributions of an ABAC administrator who is not eligible for one of the faculty or staff awards. Each year the recipient is selected by a campus-wide committee. An ABAC employee since 1997, Willis received the Roy Jackson Award for Staff Excellence at ABAC in 2011. She earned associate degrees in computer science and business administration from ABAC, a bachelor's degree in computer science from Valdosta State University (VSU), an MBA from Albany State University, and a Doctorate in Education from VSU.

Dr. Hans Schmeisser, an Associate Professor of Political Science in the School of Arts and Sciences, has been named the recipient of ABAC's 2021 W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Excellence in Advising Award. Schmeisser earned his Bachelor of Arts degree from Mercer University and his Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Florida. He has been an ABAC faculty member since 2009. The criteria for the W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Excellence in Advising Award includes strong interpersonal skills, a caring attitude toward advisees, mastery of institutional regulations and policies and procedures, the ability to engage in career and life planning versus simply course scheduling, and availability to advisees.

Dr. Jay Baldwin has been selected for the W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Excellence in Student Engagement at ABAC. An Associate Professor in the School of Arts and Sciences, Baldwin earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Mass Communication from Fort Lewis College, a Master of Arts degree in Communication and Leadership Studies from Gonzaga University, and his Ph. D. in Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies from the University of Arkansas.

Hall, Sheikh Lead Service Award Recipients

Faculty members Kip Hall and Dr. Abul Sheikh topped the list of honorees at ABAC's recent service awards presentation. Hall, an assistant professor of forestry in the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources, received a plaque for 35 years of service to ABAC, and Sheikh, a professor of business and information technology in the Stafford School of Business, received a plaque for 30 years at ABAC. Employees honored for 25 years of service included Michelle Barton, Donna Campbell, Mary Beth Thornton, Anita White, and Vickie Wilson. Honored for 20 years of service were Dr. David Byrd, Dr. Erin Campbell, Tammy Clark, Olga Contreras, Dr. Wendy Harrison, Dr. Marvin Holtz, Polly Huff, Dr. Joseph Njoroge, Dr. Jewrell Rivers, Donnie Thompson, and Dr. John Vanzo. Fifteen-year award recipients include Chandra Anderson-Casteel, Jimmy Ballenger, Dr. David Bridges, Tracy Dyal, Diantha Ellis, Brooke Jernigan, Dr. Chris Kinsey, Esthela Lopez Flores, Ray Lundy, Sheila McLendon, Ryan Myers, Jeannie Paulk,



Dr. Brian Ray, Clayton Riehle, Frederick Shorter, Donna Sledge, Elizabeth Wilcox, and Gina Wilson. Award recipients for 10 years of service included Janice Baty, Dr. Juan Gomez, Deidra Jackson, David King, Joy Lott, Dr. Hans Schmeisser, Richard Spancake, Nicholas Urquhart, and Dr. Eun-Kyung You. Employees recognized for five years of service included Dr. April Abbott, Dr. Jerry Baker, Dr. Jay Baldwin, Kyle Basko, Dr. Christopher Beals, Suzanne Bentley, Scott Blount, Kristi Brown, Dr. Kennon Deal, Dr. Emily Dowd-Arrow, Justin Exum, Jessica Gandy, Nancy Hall, Dr. Marcus Johnson, Jamie Kinsley, Dr. Charlotte Klesman, Dr. Vanessa Lane, Dr. Deidre Martin, Sue Mastrario, Bridgett Mobley, Sandra Musselwhite, Dr. Erin Porter, Trena Prewitt, Margo Ransom, Joann Saylor, Kelly Scott, Josie Smith, Frank Strickland, Tamie Taylor, Dr. Jess Usher, Jennifer Walls, Joseph Weatherford, Dr. Brian Yost, and Tim Youngblood. Because of the pandemic in 2020, the list of honorees covered both 2020 and 2021.

Dr. Farish Mulkey, an assistant professor of agricultural education at ABAC, has been selected for the Georgia Agricultural Education Hall of Fame. Mulkey joins two current ABAC faculty members, Dr. Frank Flanders and Von Peavy, in the Hall of Fame. Mulkey began his 32-year career in agricultural education as a classroom agriculture teacher and FFA advisor at Macon County High School in 1988.

Dr. Thomas Grant, an associate professor of journalism at ABAC, served as co-executive producer of the new documentary, “In the Valley of Sin,” which recently premiered on Fox Nation. Grant said the documentary is six hours long and is about a story he broke as a reporter 25 years ago as a reporter for a Spokane, Wash., television station. “My reporting was the impetus for getting 18 innocent people released from prison,” Grant said. “After I began working on the story, there were also reports by the *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Times*, *Dateline NBC*, and *48 Hours*.” For the original story, Grant won his first Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Award, as well as the George Polk Award for courage in reporting. The documentary was produced by Texas Crew and uses the videos Grant shot in the 1990s and his files from the case. The six-part series opened on May 9 followed by an episode per day until the finale appeared on May 14. A faculty member at ABAC since 2012, Grant serves as advisor to the school’s student newspaper, *The Stallion*, and the student television program, *Stallion TV*. He teaches core classes and upper division journalism classes for the ABAC bachelor’s degree in Writing and Communication.

Fine Arts Building Named for Dr. Ernest Edwards

The memory of Dr. Ernest Aaron Edwards, Jr., lives on at ABAC after the dedication ceremony on May 11 to name the new Fine Arts building Edwards Hall in honor of the longtime ABAC faculty member. “Dr. Edwards loved ABAC students, he loved music, and he delighted in stirring the hearts of others with his finely tuned talent at the keyboard,” ABAC President David Bridges said. “As one who had the privilege and honor of having Dr. Edwards as an instructor when I was an ABAC student, he was a man who unselfishly served the college, the community, and the state for more than five decades.” Edwards was a faculty member at ABAC for 35 years and the organist at Tifton’s First Baptist Church for over 50 years. In 1965, Edwards was honored as the first recipient of the Distinguished Professor Award at ABAC. Untold numbers of Georgians enjoyed his piano concerts until he died at the age of 82 on May 27, 2009. Edwards was a soloist with the University of Georgia (UGA) Symphony, the Atlanta Pops

Orchestra, and the Atlanta Chamber Orchestra. A graduate of Covington High School, Edwards and his family moved to Tifton after his graduation where he attended ABAC, completing his degree in 1945. He continued his education at UGA, where he received his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Music/English in 1953 and his Master of Fine Arts degree in 1958. In 1971, he completed his doctorate degree in interdepartmental humanities. Edwards taught part-time at ABAC while serving as the Glee Club instructor and piano teacher at Tifton High School before assuming a full-time instructor's position at ABAC in 1957. Named to Who's Who in Music International in 1962, Edwards was a former President of the Tifton Concert Association. In 1971, he was selected as one of the Outstanding Educators in America. After being a part of ABAC either as a student or as a faculty member for a portion of five decades, Edwards had a special appreciation for the small-town flavor of the college. "I feel the friendliness still exists because we have a 'the door is always open' attitude toward the students," Edwards said when he retired in 1989. "The faculty and staff at ABAC really care, and it shows." The dedication program included remarks from Bridges; Dr. Susan Roe, Fine Arts Department Head; Rosalyn Ray Donaldson, Associate Professor Emerita of English; Dr. Wayne Roe, Pastor of Tifton's First Baptist Church; and Michael D. Chason, Director of Public Relations Emeritus. Dr. Jennifer Huang, Assistant Professor of Piano, also performed a piano tribute to Edwards.

Meredith McGlamory, an Agricultural Communication major from Abbeville, received the ABAC Alumni Association Award as the top bachelor's degree graduate participating in the commencement ceremony on May 14. Because of social distancing guidelines, ABAC hosted three commencement ceremonies, two in Tifton and one in Bainbridge. A total of 302 graduates participated in the ceremonies. McGlamory received a plaque and a check for \$500 from the ABAC Alumni Association. From her role as Homecoming Queen to the time she rode on horseback carrying the flag for the Alpha Gamma Rho Breast Cancer Barrel Race, McGlamory has experienced all sides of ABAC. A stellar academic student with a 3.73 grade point average, McGlamory was a Distinguished Honor Student and made the Dean's List and the President's List. No recipient was selected for the Donaldson Award.

ABAC President David Bridges received an honorary agricultural education pin at the recent pinning ceremony for graduates of the agricultural education program at ABAC. "That was a real honor for me," Bridges said. "The agricultural education program continues to grow, and I am happy that ABAC is making a concerted effort to alleviate the shortage of teachers in agricultural education across the state and the nation." A total of 40 ABAC graduates received their bachelor's degrees in agricultural education at the recent spring commencement ceremony. For the third consecutive year, ABAC produced more graduates with a bachelor's degree in agricultural education than any other college or university east of the Mississippi River.

Jason Boyette from Hahira received the South Georgia Medical Center Dedication to Nursing Award, and Sara Faulk from Cochran received the Clinical Excellence Award presented by Tift Regional Medical Center at ABAC's 2021 spring nurses' pinning ceremony. Jeremy Spencer from Alapaha received the Academic Excellence Award, presented by Colquitt Regional Medical Center. Maria Smith from Douglas and Amy Miller from Ty Ty received the Lisa Purvis Allison Spirit of Nursing Award, Smith for the bridge track and Miller for the traditional track. A total of 80 students received associate degree pins, and 15 students received bachelor's degree pins at the ceremony.

Jaci Martin Selected as SGA President

Jaci Martin, a sophomore agribusiness major from Clermont, has been elected as ABAC's 2021-2022 Student Government Association (SGA) President. Prior to being elected president, Martin served as an SGA Senator, representing the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Outside of SGA, Martin is involved in the ABAC Honors program. She also serves on the Tift County Collegiate Ducks Unlimited committee and mentors middle school girls through Tift County Young Life.

Ava Jane Teasley, an agricultural communication major from Covington, has been selected as president of the ABAC Ambassadors for the 2021-22 academic year. "I am a firm believer in leading by example and surrounding myself with people who challenge me," Teasley said. "I believe this group of Ambassadors will exceed that standard." Prior to being elected president, Teasley served as the ABAC Ambassadors' Historian and maintained the organization's social media and archives.

The Georgia Association of Museums (GAM) recently honored Polly Huff, curator at ABAC's Georgia Museum of Agriculture, with the Museum Professional Award, the industry's top honor for a museum professional currently serving in the state of Georgia. "The Middleton Shoe Shop," an original exhibition at the Museum curated by Huff, also won the Exhibit Award in Category 2, which encompasses project budgets below \$25,000. The awards committee singled out Huff for "more than two decades of producing innovative exhibits, maximizing limited resources in incredibly creative ways, and being an advocate for the museum field." Huff oversees a collection of more than 100,000 GMA artifacts. She has designed and installed over 100 significant exhibitions at the GMA, the Art Gallery, and satellite locations; oversees the institutional archives on campus and at the Museum; handles the curatorial duties at ABAC's Fulwood Garden Center; and is the staff liaison for Tifton's Wiregrass Farmers Market.

The bachelor's and associate degree nursing programs in ABAC's School of Nursing and Health Sciences have received "continued accreditation" from the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN), the nationally recognized accrediting authority for nursing education programs. "The continued accreditation of our Associate degree in nursing and the Bachelor of Science degree in nursing reaffirms the confidence that ACEN has in our programs," Dr. Jerry Baker, ABAC Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, said. "This recognition by ACEN is a reflection on the team effort of the faculty to deliver quality and rigorous educational opportunities to prepare graduates to serve our communities after graduation."

David Edens of Tifton has been promoted to the position of Director of Libraries at ABAC. Edens has been employed at ABAC since 2016 as the Instructional Services Librarian. "My duties are anything and everything that has to do with the library," Edens said. "I work alongside our library assistants both here in Tifton and at our Bainbridge site. My primary concern is making sure that the library is doing what it needs to do to support the rest of campus. The main body of our collection is intended to support the curriculum." Edens graduated from

Tift County High School in 2007. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree in English literature from the University of Georgia in 2011. Edens completed his master's degree in library and information studies at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro in 2015.

Golden Stallions Finish Fifth in National Tournament

The Golden Stallions finished fifth in the NJCAA national men's tennis tournament. Coach Dale White's team posted 32 points. Players in five of nine flights made the semifinals including Gaston Cantero, Cheng En Tsai, and Baptiste Mercier in singles and Cantero/Mercier and Lorenzo Del Biando/Tsai in doubles. No NJCAA Region 17 tournament was held because ABAC is the only team competing in men's or women's tennis. ABAC finished eighth in the 2019 national tournament. No tournament was held in 2020 because of the pandemic. The ABAC women's tennis team, also coached by White, finished ninth in the 2021 national tournament. Natalie Kohoutkova lost in the singles' final. The ABAC golf team of Coach Larry Byrnes won the NJCAA Division II Southeastern District Golf Championship. The Stallions were down nine strokes to Walters (Tenn.) State after the first day of the tournament in Gramling, S.C., but came back to win the title. Brock Barber was the tournament medalist with a 143 including a 72 on the final day. ABAC finished 16th in the NJCAA national golf tournament. Hagen Marion recorded a team-low 73 in the final round and a 306 total. Brock Barber had a 310 score. He also had a 72 on the first day of competition. Ben Sanders, Ian Arnold, and Brady Kotkiewicz also played for ABAC. The Golden Stallions finished with a 19-29 season record on the baseball diamond. Coach Brandon Reeder's team lost to East Georgia 6-5 in the first round of the state tournament. Reeder resigned his post after the season to become the head coach at Fitzgerald High School. Matthew Williams, a former assistant at Valdosta State and Young Harris, was selected as the new head coach. ABAC's C.J. Rose was named to the Georgia Collegiate Athletic Association (GCAA) All-Region baseball team. Rose, a freshman first baseman from Lowndes High School, hit .310 with nine home runs and 45 runs batted in. Second team selections were Henry Daniels, Sam Bennett, and Garrett Bradley. Daniels led the team with 57 hits, 42 runs scored, and 10 home runs. Bradley hit .302 and stole nine bases. Bennett led the team in hitting with a .371 average. Shortstop Ryan Smith was named to the GCAA Gold Glove team. Coach Jennifer Walls' ABAC softball team finished with a 16-22 record. The Golden Fillies lost to East Georgia 4-3 and 14-3 in the first round of the GCAA tournament. Karli Williams was named the GCAA first team catcher for softball. She hit .339 with five home runs, 37 hits, and 30 runs batted in. Infielder Breanna Harper was a second team selection as an infielder. She hit .327 and shared pitching duties as well as playing the infield. The ABAC soccer season was moved to the 2021 spring semester because of the pandemic. The Golden Fillies of Coach Aliriza Sisman wound up 2-8 and lost to South Georgia State 2-0 in the postseason tournament. ABAC's Chloe Gould was named All-Conference first team, and Hanna Sikes and Megan Hoopingarner were both selected All-Conference second team.

The United States Department of Education recently awarded ABAC a \$2.1 million College Assistance Migrant Program grant from the Office of Migrant Education. Scott Pierce, Director of Sponsored Programs at ABAC, said the five-year CAMP grant is federally funded by the U. S. Department of Education and is designed to provide support to first-year college students of



migrant and seasonal workers within the area of agriculture. The CAMP grant is dedicated to meeting the academic, social, emotional, and financial needs of its students. The program pays for tuition, room and board, books, and a small stipend for student participants. “This is a really great program for South Georgia,” Pierce said. “At a funding level at just over \$2.1 million over five years, it’s a healthy boost to our local economy. It goes a long way toward meeting the educational needs of our migrant and agricultural communities. We are very proud of our College Assistance Migrant Program here at ABAC.”

The ABAC Family began the summer with double notes of sadness when Dr. Marvin Holtz, an ABAC faculty member since 2001, passed away on May 29, and Dr. Jess Usher, an ABAC faculty member since 2015, passed away on June 14. Wayne Jones, former director of the ABAC choral music program and the Arts Connection Director since 2002, retired on June 30. Jones joined the ABAC faculty in 1989.

Bridges Begins 16th Year as ABAC President

When Dr. David Bridges became ABAC’s 10th president on July 1, 2006, he had two main goals in mind. “I knew we had to find a way to ensure the viability of the institution for the next 100 years, and we had to promote a sense of excellence across the curriculum,” Bridges, who began his 16th year at ABAC on July 1, said. “Bachelor’s degrees were the key to both of those goals.” Bachelor’s degree graduates walked across the ABAC stage in Gressette Gymnasium for the first time at the 2009 commencement. ABAC was a two-year college for 75 years. “Bachelor’s degrees changed everything,” Bridges said. “I don’t think ABAC had a future as a two-year college. Bachelor’s degrees changed our alumni base forever. Fifty years from now, the makeup of our alumni will be quite different than the previous 50 years. Bachelor’s degrees changed our relationship with prospective employers for our graduates. I think it changed the way people feel about us and the way we feel about ourselves.”

Bridges is the longest serving president in the history of ABAC and the longest serving president among the 26 colleges and universities in the University System of Georgia. He is also the only ABAC president to have once been an ABAC student. He graduated from ABAC with an associate degree in 1978. Obviously excited about taking on the challenges of his 16th consecutive fall semester which begins at ABAC on Aug. 10, Bridges contemplated on why he has stayed at ABAC far beyond the average tenure of three to five years for a college president. “When I took the job, I never thought about how long I was going to stay,” Bridges said. “I stayed because there were still things to do here. I want ABAC to continue to provide opportunities for students in rural parts of the state to get a great education at a reasonable cost. My hope is that many of those students will choose to go back to those rural communities and make them better because of the education they received at ABAC.”

Through the years, the 63-year-old native of Parrott has received numerous offers of employment to try to lure him away from ABAC. “None of them titillated my interest enough to make me leave my job here,” Bridges said. “People ask me when I’m going to retire. I tell them all the same thing. I’m going to be here until I’m not here anymore.” During his tenure, Bridges has guided ABAC through the addition of bachelor’s degrees which are now 12 in number including



agribusiness, biology, agriculture, nursing, agricultural communication, writing and communication, agricultural education, history and government, environmental horticulture, business, natural resource management, and rural community development. “A little-known fact is that biology is ABAC’s fastest growing single bachelor’s degree,” Bridges said. “And we had an all-time record number of students enrolled in many different bachelor’s degrees in the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources last year.”

ABAC recorded its second highest enrollment ever in 2020 with 3,990 students from 24 countries, 19 states, 155 of Georgia’s 159 counties, and 53 of Florida’s 67 counties. A total of 2,353 of those students were enrolled in bachelor’s degree programs and in a remarkable change from when Bridges first became president, females were 59.4 per cent of that number. “Our student body has changed over the years,” Bridges said. “I believe a number of our students are more focused on getting to the end and completing their four-year degrees. When I came to ABAC, we were essentially open enrollment. Our first-year retention rate was 40 per cent. Now, it is over 60 per cent.”

Bridges has jumped over hurdles aplenty since he became president. Those have included taking over the Georgia Agrirama and making it a part of the ABAC campus, merging the Bainbridge State College campus into ABAC, and surviving the coronavirus pandemic. “We learned some things during the pandemic about how we can do business better,” Bridges said. “It was certainly a challenge for the leadership of the college, but we have come through it quite well. I’m more concerned about the pandemic’s impact on us in the future than its impact on our past. Have we lost something on the engagement side that will have a lasting impact in the future? Time will tell I guess.”

ABAC Honors Cordell, Spinks at Museum

Two icons in the history of Tifton were honored on July 23 when ABAC’s Georgia Museum of Agriculture hosted a dedication ceremony for the Tom M. Cordell Conference Center and the Ford B. Spinks Exhibit Hall. ABAC President David Bridges said the recognition for Cordell and Spinks is well deserved. “Both of these men had a tremendous impact not only on Tifton and South Georgia, but on the entire state of Georgia,” Bridges said. “Honoring them in this way is a tribute to the impression they made while they were serving the citizens of this great state.” The Tom M. Cordell Conference Center honors the longtime Dean and Coordinator of Continuing Education at ABAC. Recognized as the “Man of the Year” by the Progressive Farmer magazine in 1971, Cordell received the Georgia Adult Education Council Citation in 1972. During his 39-year career at ABAC, Cordell created ABAC’s famous agricultural short course program which helped to educate thousands of Georgians including President Jimmy Carter when he was a peanut farmer in Plains. Before he retired in 1979, Cordell served as Acting President of ABAC on five different occasions. The ABAC Foundation created the Tom M. Cordell Distinguished Lecture Series in his honor in 1985. Cordell passed away in 1991. The Ford B. Spinks Exhibit Hall recognizes an ABAC alumnus who was a key influencer in the establishment of the Georgia Agrirama in Tifton in 1976 and a strong supporter of the State Museum of Agriculture when it became a part of ABAC in 2010. A World War II veteran, Spinks served in the Georgia State Senate from 1962 until 1971. He also served on the Georgia Public Service Commission from



1971 until 1989. An active member of the community, Spinks owned and operated Tifton Tractor Company, was a director at South Georgia Banking Company, and was the chairman of the Coastal Plain Area Tourism Council. In 2000, he was named to the Tifton-Tift County Chamber of Commerce Wall of Fame. He passed away in 2016.

Erin Pearce, a junior agricultural education major at ABAC, is one of 18 students nationwide selected as a National Teach Ag Ambassador for the 2021-22 year. A native of Cairo, Pearce found her passion for agricultural education during her time at Cairo High School. “I want to give to the kids of the future what my agriculture teachers gave to me,” Pearce said. “I want to give knowledge of the industry that affects more lives than any other.” The 18 ambassadors will begin their training this summer to become advocates for agricultural education at the 94th National FFA Convention in Indianapolis on Oct. 27-30. These students will represent the National Teach Ag Campaign at the convention as they promote agricultural education as a career choice.

Thanks to a five-year \$2.4 million grant funded by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Migrant Education, the High School Equivalency Program (HEP) at ABAC will continue its legacy of assisting farmworkers reach their academic goals for the 21st consecutive year. Scott Pierce, Director of Sponsored Programs at ABAC, said the ABAC program is one of only two such programs in the state of Georgia that provide much-needed services to the agricultural workforce. “We just received word this project would be funded again, and we are very excited,” said Pierce. “HEP is ABAC’s largest grant at \$475,000 a year. This money helps support the students, the instructional staff, the educational resources, and a small project team to organize everything. The fact that this grant has been funded for 20 years is a real testament to our fantastic team.” Since 2001, HEP has served over 1,400 students from Georgia and neighboring states. The program assists 70 agricultural workers and their dependents each year in receiving a high school equivalency diploma and subsequently finding better employment, enrolling in an institution of higher education, or enlisting in the military.

ABAC Secures Funding for \$14.4 Million Ag Facilities Project

With funding secured for the construction phase of a \$14.4 million agricultural facilities project, ABAC President David Bridges said ABAC is ready “to step into the future of agriculture. Agricultural technology is the future of agriculture at ABAC. These new facilities will allow us to train ABAC students with cutting edge technology in state-of-the-art facilities, making sure that ABAC graduates are ready to go to work. Agriculture continues to be Georgia’s largest industry, and we want to be a part of fueling the future.” Legislators approved \$1.1 million in planning money for the agricultural facilities enhancement project in the 2021 fiscal year and then followed that up with \$11.8 million in construction funding for the existing year. Bridges hopes that lawmakers fund \$1.5 million in equipment costs in Fiscal Year 2023 to complete the \$14.4 million project.

Dr. Mark Kistler, Dean of School of Agriculture and Natural Resources, believes the renovation of the Chambliss Building and the construction of the new Agricultural Technology Center broaden the foundation for programs that are already on the move. “The new Agricultural Technology Center provides much needed facilities for our growing Agricultural Technology



and Systems Management program,” Kistler said. “The covered, open-air multi-purpose space can be used for numerous types of teaching and demonstration activities. The Chambliss renovation will provide a home for the Agricultural Education and Communication Department which will include a state-of-the-art agricultural sciences classroom/laboratory; upgraded space for our Agricultural Engineering faculty, staff, and Agricultural Technology experiential laboratories; and improved space for our Georgia Agricultural Education partners.”

ABAC Director of Facilities and Land Resources Tim Carpenter said the project includes 28,000 square feet of new construction and renovation of the 22,215 square-foot Chambliss Building. Carpenter said the new construction includes a pre-engineered steel structure with brick veneer containing three elements including a high-bay clear span shop to support the large-scale equipment necessary for modern agricultural engineering technology, precision agriculture, and forestry program operations; a high bay clear span covered structure for livestock and animal science instruction, youth programs, equipment operation and display, and other related activities that would benefit from a covered open air venue; and central connector space including restrooms, service space, instructional space, office and service space, and facility storage. “The renovation of the Chambliss Building will include enhanced specialized labs to support smaller-scale equipment and materials involved in agriculture, technology, forestry, and agricultural education programs,” Carpenter said. “Upgraded shop functions will include welding, hydraulics, engine, machine, and fabrication. The renovation will also include classrooms, offices, and service space.”

School of Agriculture & Natural Resources Sets Enrollment Record

The School of Agriculture and Natural Resources (SANR) shattered its previous enrollment record on August 10 when fall semester classes kicked off at ABAC. A total of 1,439 students were enrolled in the SANR. That tops the previous record of 1,360 SANR students who were enrolled in the fall of 2020. “I believe it’s an affirmation of the reputation and legacy of ABAC,” ABAC President David Bridges said. “Agriculture is Georgia’s largest industry, and we are preparing students every day to become a part of that industry. The jobs are there, and we intend to fill those jobs with our graduates who will be ready to hit the ground running.” Agriculture is the largest SANR major with 565 students. Other top choices for students are Agribusiness with 273, Natural Resource Management which includes Forestry and Wildlife with 266, and Agricultural Education with 213. SANR Dean Mark Kistler said that enrollment in the SANR at ABAC has increased by 79 per cent in the past 10 years.

ABAC’s fall semester enrollment included 3,815 students, a drop from the 3,990 students enrolled in the 2020 fall term. The 2021 enrollment included students from 19 countries, 18 states, 155 of Georgia’s 159 counties, and 52 of Florida’s 67 counties. A total of 60 per cent of the students were female, the highest percentage in the history of ABAC. A record 2,364 of the students were pursuing bachelor’s degrees. The average age of the student body was 21 years old.

Bobby Rowan (Class of ’55) passed away on August 10. He was elected to the Georgia Senate in 1962 when he was 27 years old. He later served on the Georgia Public Service Commission

beginning in 1985. Former ABAC faculty member Leona Mott passed away on August 14 at the age of 92. She taught at ABAC from 1978 through 1996.

Twelve new faculty members joined the ranks of the teaching professionals at ABAC for the start of the fall semester. In the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources, the new faculty members include Dr. Gertrude Nakakeeto, Assistant Professor of Agribusiness; Dr. Austin Moore, Assistant Professor of Agricultural Communication; Jane Anne Veazey, Lecturer of Agricultural Communication; and Dr. Andrew F. Egan, Professor of Forestry. In the School of Arts and Sciences, the new faculty members include Dr. Kaushalya Sharma Dahal, Assistant Professor of Chemistry; Dr. Inna Estep, Assistant Professor of Biology; and Gina M. Profetto, Instructor of Biology. New faculty members in the School of Nursing and Health Sciences include Dr. Susan A. Clement, Professor of Nursing; Jennifer L. Harrison, Assistant Professor of Nursing; and Cheryl D. Solomon, Assistant Professor of Nursing. In the Stafford School of Business, the new faculty members include Dr. Paul L. Ewell, Associate Professor of Management, and Jennifer Reid, Lecturer of Business.

The Harley Langdale Jr. Foundation, Inc., announced that it will extend its support of Destination Ag for three more years at the ABAC's Georgia Museum of Agriculture. Donnie Warren, Executive Director of the Harley Langdale Jr. Foundation, Inc., made the announcement during a recent visit to the Museum in Tifton. "The Harley Langdale Jr. Foundation is very pleased to continue our partnership with ABAC's Destination Ag," Warren said. "We believe it is vitally important to educate our youth about the importance of agriculture and natural resources in their daily lives. We are proud of the success of this great program, now entering its sixth year of outreach to South Georgia, and we are excited about the teachers and children who will attend programs at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture this school year." Museum Director Garrett Boone said a total of 36,590 children attended Destination Ag programming during the first five years at the Museum. Over 14,000 students are expected to attend Destination Ag classes at the Museum during the 2021-22 year.

Eighty students beginning their first year at ABAC are now enrolled in the high merit honors program, pushing the total to 175 students on the books as honors program participants. Dr. Cyndy Hall, Director of the Honors Program, said that an honors section of a core class is different because students are learning with others who share the same academic interests in rigor and intellectual inquiry. "This allows for a pedagogy centered on critical thinking and discussion," Hall said. "Most honors students are disappointed when they no longer have any honors sections to take." The honors program creates a community of students who support each other through academic success. The model for the program is a "Living and Learning Community" where students can take many of the same classes as their friends, and even live on the same residence hall during their freshman year.

The Migrant Education Program (MEP) Consortium at ABAC recently received Department of Education funding in the amount of \$410,000 for Fiscal Year 2022. Scott Pierce, ABAC's Director of Sponsored Programs, said the Migrant Education Program is a Title I-C, federally funded program designed to support comprehensive educational programs for migrant children



to help reduce the educational disruption and other problems that result from repeated moves. ABAC's MEP Consortium enrolled 536 participants last school year.

Bridges Announces Retirement from ABAC Presidency

Dr. David Bridges announced on September 14 that he plans to retire from his position as president of ABAC. "I have some other things in my life that I want to do," Bridges, the longest-serving president in the history of ABAC, said. "I believe it is the right time. The institution is on solid footing for the future." Bridges plans to retire from the position on Dec. 31, but he is willing to stay until the end of the spring semester, if that is the desire of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia (USG). "As the longest-serving president among our 26 institutions and ever in the history of Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College, President David Bridges for the past 16 years has been a leading voice for rural Georgia and its students," USG Acting Chancellor Teresa MacCartney said. "An ABAC graduate himself, he skillfully guided the college through the addition of bachelor's degrees, consolidation with the former Bainbridge State College and record growth in enrollment. Before that, he spent two decades as a faculty member and administrator at the University of Georgia. The son of a farmer and a teacher, he never strayed far from his roots. The University System of Georgia is better for it, and we're incredibly grateful for his service to our students and state."

A native of Parrott, Bridges is the only ABAC president to have once been an ABAC student, receiving his ABAC associate degree in 1978 before completing his undergraduate and graduate degrees at Auburn University and his Ph.D. at Texas A&M University. Prior to becoming the 10th president in the history of ABAC on July 1, 2006, Bridges was the Assistant Dean of the Tifton Campus of the University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. He joined the UGA faculty in 1987 as an assistant professor in the Department of Crop and Soil Sciences. Bridges, who turned 63 this summer, will retire as one of the most accomplished presidents in the 113-year history of ABAC. After offering only associate degrees for 75 years, the college began offering bachelor's degrees under Bridges' leadership in 2008. ABAC now offers 12 different bachelor's degrees with an enrollment that reaches toward 4,000 students from 155 of Georgia's 159 counties, 52 of Florida's 67 counties, 19 countries, and 18 states.

"My goal was to transform ABAC from a two-year college into a senior college of excellence," Bridges said. "I believe we have done that. ABAC is the leading producer of undergraduates who work and lead Georgia's number one industry, agriculture. In my opinion, ABAC also has the largest and best nursing program in South Georgia." Bridges cited the introduction of bachelor's degrees as his greatest accomplishment at ABAC. He said several of the degree programs required extraordinary work and patience. "Many people doubted whether ABAC could ever offer a bachelor's degree in Forestry or Agricultural Education," Bridges said. "It did take a long time, but we did it."

Bridges also masterminded an incredible project to rehabilitate the entire front of campus, which culminated with the renovation of ABAC's three original buildings, Tift Hall, Lewis Hall, and Herring Hall, in 2012. Bridges paved the way for the implementation of the Freedom Gallery in

Tift Hall, a room which honors Medal of Honor recipient and ABAC alumnus Harold Bascom Durham, Jr., and all other veterans. In 2020, ABAC added Edwards Hall to the front of the campus, a sparkling, multi-purpose facility, which provides a home for the ABAC music and fine arts program, including gigantic practice facilities for the ABAC Concert Band and Concert Choir. Through Bridges' work with the ABAC Foundation, Inc., the college now offers more than \$800,000 in scholarships for students, the largest amount of scholarship funds in the history of ABAC. The Foundation's net assets have doubled during Bridges' tenure.

In 2010, Bridges navigated the addition of the Georgia Museum of Agriculture to the ABAC campus. Formerly known as the Georgia Agrirama, the facility is still open to the public, and ABAC students guide thousands of school children annually through the Museum in the Destination Ag program. In 2017 and 2018, Bridges concentrated his efforts on the consolidation of the former Bainbridge State College into ABAC. At its fall and spring commencements, ABAC now conducts three ceremonies, two for ABAC students in Tifton and another for students in Bainbridge. These are two special days that Bridges treasures each year. "Graduation days are the days I will miss the most," Bridges said. "Seeing those students walk across that stage in Tifton and Bainbridge are always my favorite days at ABAC. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve my alma mater. It has been the greatest of times for me."

ABAC has been awarded a three-year \$297,000 collaborative grant with the University of Georgia (UGA) Tifton Veterinary Diagnostic and Investigational Laboratory (TV DIL) to encourage more veterinary medicine students to practice in rural South Georgia. Activities will center around student recruitment, retention, and experiential learning at the UGA diagnostic lab aimed at increasing the overall number of underrepresented and rural undergraduate students qualified to apply to veterinary medicine programs. Dr. Matthew Anderson, Dean of the ABAC School of Arts and Sciences, serves as the director for the project. "ABAC students will benefit tremendously from the experiences this grant will support, and it will help them be more competitive when applying to vet school," Anderson said. "Our hope is that they are successful in applying to vet school, and that they return to serve the region following their veterinary training."

Cathy Cox (Class of '78) became president of Georgia College and State University on October 1. She served as the Dean of the Mercer University School of Law for the past four years after serving as the president of Young Harris College for 10 years. Cox was also the first female Secretary of State in the history of Georgia.

Dr. Sandra Giles (Class of '87) explored a portion of the life of one of the most popular presidents in the history of ABAC on October 7 when she opened the new Jess Usher Lecture Series at ABAC in Howard Auditorium. Titled "Mr. Pete and the Baldwin Story," the lecture focused on George P. Donaldson and his time at ABAC as a Professor of English beginning in 1933 through his 14-year tenure as president of the college from 1947 through 1961. Formerly known as the ABAC Lecture Series, the special collection of speakers was renamed for Dr. Jess Usher, an ABAC professor and a former lecturer in the series. Usher passed away in June 2021. Other speakers in the series include Dr. Rachael Price on "Rediscovering Georgia Author Sarah Barnwell Elliott" on November 1, Dr. Russell Pryor on "Making the 'Alcatraz of the Piney Woods:' Prisons, Power, and Politics in 20th Century Georgia" on February 17, 2022, and Dr.

Joseph Njoroge on “China, the United States, and Regional Hegemony in Africa: Implications for Africa’s Democracy and Economic Development” on March 17, 2022.

ABAC Economic Impact at \$390,015,778 on South Georgia

Despite the pandemic, ABAC had an economic impact of \$390,015,778 on South Georgia during the 2020 fiscal year. “ABAC provides enormous social and economic benefits to the region in a variety of ways,” Dr. Renata Elad, Dean of the Stafford School of Business at ABAC, said. Elad analyzed the ABAC numbers from the annual University System of Georgia (USG) report which showed the USG had an \$18.6 billion statewide economic impact in Fiscal Year 2020. The annual study is conducted on behalf of the Board of Regents by Jeffrey M. Humphreys, Ph.D., Director of the Selig Center for Economic Growth in the University of Georgia’s Terry College of Business. The study area for ABAC’s impact included the counties of Tift, Worth, Cook, Colquitt, Ben Hill, Irwin, Turner, Decatur, Seminole, Miller, Grady, Early, Thomas, Mitchell, and Baker. Elad said that ABAC influences the South Georgia economy in a variety of ways through spending on personnel services, operating expenses and capital outlay, and spending by students and visitors, both on and off campus. “ABAC had a tremendous impact on jobs in the community,” Elad said. “That includes 473 jobs on campus and 803 jobs off campus for a total of 1,276 jobs in South Georgia. ABAC and the other USG institutions also directly contribute to the lifetime earnings of Georgians. Once again, the report proves that a college degree from ABAC does pay off.”

ABAC returned to the Sunbelt Agricultural Exposition on October 19-21 at Spence Field near Moultrie. The Expo did not take place in 2020 because of the pandemic. The Expo started as a series of small farm equipment shows on the ABAC campus in 1964. It moved to the Spence Field location in 1978. The Baldwin Players of Dr. Brian Ray staged *Bullshot Crummond* on October 28-30 in Howard Auditorium.

A new partnership between ABAC and the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine (PCOM) gives ABAC students majoring in biology an opportunity to complete medical school a year early. The partnership grants ABAC Bachelor of Science in Biology students two possible routes of action for consideration into the PCOM (Moultrie, GA) Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine program (DO). After graduation with a four-year degree from ABAC, students can receive special consideration for the four-year DO program. Qualifying ABAC Biology BS students can also opt to attend ABAC through their junior year, then transfer to the DO program and take medical school courses a year early.

Another new partnership between ABAC and Valdosta State University (VSU) ensures ABAC graduates a direct route to furthering their careers in writing and communication. The partnership grants ABAC graduates who earn a Bachelor of Science degree in Writing and Communication fast-track consideration for application to the Master of Arts in Communication Arts program at VSU.

ABAC History Room Named for Michael D. Chason

A man who has made some history at ABAC captured the spotlight on November 5 when ABAC dedicated the Michael D. Chason ABAC History Room in Tift Hall in honor of longtime Director of Public Relations Mike Chason. “During the past 42 years, Mike Chason has put in countless hours for the betterment of Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College,” ABAC President David Bridges said. “He is the official historian of the college, and it is quite fitting that we dedicate the History Room in his honor.” “This is a tremendous honor, and I appreciate the faith and trust that ABAC has placed in me over the past 42 years,” Chason said. “When I began my career here in 1979, I had one goal in mind, and that was to spread the good word about ABAC to as many people as possible on a daily basis.” Chason retired from ABAC in 2011 after a distinguished 32-year career as the Director of Public Relations. He was selected for the prestigious E. Lanier Carson Award as ABAC’s top administrator in 2002 and has received the Pacesetter and Superior Pacesetter Awards from the ABAC student newspaper. Chason returned to work parttime at ABAC and in 2012, he was named Director of Public Relations Emeritus.

The statewide Georgia Education Advancement Council (GEAC) honored Chason with its annual Communications Award in 1994 and with the GEAC Lifetime Achievement Award in 2010. He was the GEAC President in 1991 and Chair of the University System of Georgia Public Relations Administrative Committee in 1993. The Tifton Kiwanis Club recognized Chason as a prestigious Hixson Fellow in 2001. A past president of the club, Chason received the Kiwanian of the Year Award in 1991 and the Legion of Honor Award in 2010 for 30 years of service.

A native of Lakeland, Ga., Chason was instrumental in creating the collection of materials, pictures, and artifacts in the History Room. The spacious venue displays the history of ABAC from the first day of classes in 1908 through recent years. Chason has also compiled a 287-page history of ABAC on the college’s web site. The Salutatorian and STAR Student of the Lanier County High School Class of 1970, Chason graduated in 1974 from Valdosta State College where he was a member of the Omicron Delta Kappa honor society, Editor and Sports Editor of the campus newspaper, and a Who’s Who at VSC selection. Chason is the former award-winning sports editor of the Valdosta Daily Times. He is now the owner of Chason Enterprises, LLC, a company which utilizes his speaking and broadcasting skills. “After 42 years, great memories come easy,” Chason said. “I appreciate this honor very much. It was one of the most amazing days of my life.”

The Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia (USG) has named the two committees to conduct a national search for the next president of ABAC to replace Dr. David Bridges, who has announced his retirement. The search and screening of candidates is the responsibility of the campus-based Presidential Search and Screen Committee and will guide the first stage of the search. Members are as follows:

- Ray Smith, Ph.D., search and screen committee chair, professor of crop science; department head of Department of Agriculture; School of Agriculture and Natural Resources
- Elijah Alford, student and ABAC Ambassador
- Tamara “Tami” Dennis, Ph.D., RNC, professor of nursing and RN to BSN program director, School of Nursing and Health Sciences



- Diantha V. Ellis, J.D., faculty senate president and associate professor of business administration, Stafford School of Business
- Jessica Gandy, staff council chair and financial aid counselor, Finance and Operations
- Bernice Hughes, dean of students, Academic and Student Affairs
- Jaci Martin, president, Student Government Association
- Franzelle Mathis-Pertilla, Ph.D., associate professor of business, Stafford School of Business
- Richard “Tony” Matthews, assistant professor of biology, School of Arts and Sciences
- James N. McCrimmon, Ph.D., professor of turfgrass management, School of Agriculture and Natural Resources
- Joyce Mims, community liaison, Southern Regional Technical College
- Marcus Pollard, Ed.D., president, ABAC Alumni Association
- Erin Porter, Ph.D., associate professor of agricultural engineering, School of Agriculture and Natural Resources
- Darby Sewell, Ph.D., professor, Family and Consumer Sciences and Education, School of Arts and Sciences
- Abul Sheikh, Ed.D., professor of business and information technology, Stafford School of Business
- Yvonne Smith, Ph.D., RN, assistant professor, School of Nursing and Health Sciences
- Niki Vanderslice, chair, ABAC Foundation

The duties of the Presidential Search and Screen Committee include the development of a position description, recruiting candidates and conducting interviews. The search firm of ZRG Partners has been engaged to assist the search committee. At the conclusion of its work, the campus committee will forward the credentials of three to five unranked candidates to the Regents Special Committee for consideration. The Regents Special Committee will be chaired by Regent Barbara Holmes, with members including Board Chairman Sachin Shailendra, Regent W. Allen Gudenrath, Regent Cade Joiner, Regent Lowery Houston May, and Regent Harold Reynolds. The initial meeting of the Presidential Search and Screen Committee will be November 29, at which time the members will be formally charged with their roles and responsibilities in conducting the search.

Veterans Center Named for Melvin L. Merrill

In a fitting salute on Veterans Day, ABAC dedicated the Melvin L. Merrill ABAC Veterans Center on November 11 to a longstanding administrator who has made his mark at ABAC in a remarkable 42-year career. “Melvin Merrill has distinguished himself with his service to his country and to this college,” ABAC President David Bridges said. “He is a man who believes in doing things the right way.” Merrill served 29 years in the United States Army Reserve before he retired with the rank of Major in 1993. He also occupied an administrative position at ABAC for 42 years, first as Director of Development before moving on to other roles as Chief Development Officer, President of the ABAC Foundation, Inc., and Director of Capital Planning.



Merrill was instrumental in the design and construction of the Veterans Center, which is now located in the renovated Carlton Center. Its original location was in J. Lamar Branch Hall. Students who are veterans use the area as a place to study and relax, while acquainting themselves with others who also served in the military.

“Veterans Day means something special to me every year,” Merrill said. “With this honor, this day takes on extra special significance. I am humbled by the idea and appreciative of the recognition. It’s one of the best honors I have ever had.” Merrill retired from ABAC in 2015 but continued to work as ABAC’s Director of Capital Planning until 2020 on a parttime basis. Upon his retirement, he received the title of ABAC Foundation President Emeritus.

Honored in 2011 by the Georgia Education Advancement Council with its Lifetime Achievement Award, Merrill was recognized at that time for over 8,600 ABAC constituents contributing approximately \$23,540,000 in support of ABAC programs. He was also lauded for coordinating the ABAC Foundation’s \$52 million student housing project.

Maddie McDonald and Kira Buckner, two ABAC agricultural education majors, were selected as floral design assistants for First Lady Jill Biden’s recent Congressional Luncheon. McDonald, a junior from Dublin, and Buckner, a sophomore from Covington, spent three days in Washington D.C. in October preparing for the event. “Selection for the congressional design team is an honor and excellent professional development opportunity for these students,” Dr. Frank Flanders, ABAC’s agricultural education program coordinator, said. “These are the type of engaged activities that ABAC encourages for students. As design team members, Maddie and Kira worked alongside some of the top designers in the U.S.”

ABAC’s Nature Study Area (NSA) recently received a facelift from a new boardwalk constructed by students majoring in the ABAC bachelor’s degree in Natural Resource Management. A Wildlife Viewing Grant for \$2,097 from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources to the ABAC Foundation along with financial support from the ABAC administration funded the boardwalk materials and construction.

Top Commencement Award Named for David and Kim Bridges

A delightful smile of surprise and appreciation danced across the faces of ABAC President David Bridges and his wife, Kim, on December 2 when the ABAC Alumni Association named its top award for bachelor’s degree graduates in their honor. During the morning fall commencement ceremony, one of two that ABAC held that day, Melissa Pierzchajlo, president-elect of the ABAC Alumni Association, said, “Beginning today and from this day forward, the ABAC Alumni Association is changing the name of its top award for ABAC graduates who participate in the ceremony and receive bachelor’s degrees to the David and Kim Bridges Award. Thanks for all you have done for ABAC.”

Dr. Bridges and Mrs. Bridges are both 1978 alumni of ABAC, who met while they were ABAC students in Rosalyn Donaldson’s English class. Dr. Bridges is the only ABAC president to have ever been a student at the college. He is also the longest serving president among the 26 colleges

and universities in the University System of Georgia (USG) and the longest serving president in the history of ABAC.

“This is a wonderful surprise for both of us,” Dr. Bridges said. “Kim and I both love ABAC, and we will always treasure our time here. I have always said there are two kinds of people in this world, those that came to ABAC and those that wish they had. We are glad we came to ABAC.” Now in his 16th year as the ABAC President, Dr. Bridges announced his impending retirement in September. He is scheduled to retire in 2022.

Pierzchajlo cited the many accomplishments of the Bridges during their time at ABAC. “They have devoted themselves to the betterment of this college and its students,” Pierzchajlo said. “They have attended student events, Foundation functions, alumni activities, and much more. A few years ago, Kim and Dr. Bridges wanted to celebrate ABAC alumni who had served this country with distinction. That’s how the Freedom Gallery came into existence.”

Pierzchajlo also mentioned the Historic Front of Campus Project that revitalized the three original buildings on the campus, the addition of the Georgia Museum of Agriculture to the campus, and the consolidation of Bainbridge State College into ABAC. It is fitting that the bachelor’s degree award at commencement was selected to carry the Bridges’ names because ABAC began offering bachelor’s degrees during Dr. Bridges’ tenure. The college had offered only associate degrees for the previous 75 years prior to making junior and senior level classes available in 2008. The first ABAC bachelor’s degree graduates received their diplomas in 2009. The award for the top associate degree graduate participating in the ceremony has long been called the George P. Donaldson Award in honor of the ABAC President who served from 1947-61.

Skylar Victoria Mizell, a biology major from Perry, was named the first ever recipient of the David and Kim Bridges Award for the top bachelor's degree graduate participating in the ceremony. Rebecca Mims Butler, a nursing major from Hazlehurst, received the George P. Donaldson award. Both recipients received a plaque and a check for \$500 from the ABAC Alumni Association, which sponsors the awards.

Dr. Jeffrey Ross, Dean of the School of Nursing and Health Sciences, said a total of 57 students, 45 from Tifton and 12 from ABAC Bainbridge, received associate degree pins, and 26 students received bachelor’s degree pins at the fall nursing pinning ceremony. Carrie H. Dunn from Omega received the Southwell Clinical Excellence Award, and the Memorial Hospital and Manor in Bainbridge Clinical Excellence Award went to Katlyn McKenzie Lawson from Leesburg. Bailey Nicole Powers from Lake Park received the South Georgia Medical Center Dedication to Nursing Award, and Andrea Louise Cooper from Camilla received the Nightingale Award. Sarah Katie Hollingsworth from Moultrie received the Colquitt Regional Medical Center Academic Excellence Award. Jason Dean Rice from Chula and Jamie Riley from Valdosta received the Lisa Purvis Allison Spirit of Nursing Award, Rice for the associate degree track and Riley for the bachelor’s degree track.



Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College

The ABAC nursing program provides a quality education at a low cost to students, according to a new survey which rates ABAC as one of the 15 lowest cost nursing programs for international students in the United States. The website is located at <https://www.tuko.co.ke/facts-lifehacks/study/434567-15-cheapest-nursing-schools-usa-international-students-2021/> . ABAC offers both Associate of Science in Nursing (ASN) and Bachelor of Science in Nursing (RN-BSN) programs for future nurses. Once students graduate the ASN program and pass the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX), they qualify as Registered Nurses.

ABAC closed out 2021 on a positive note when Georgia Power announced a \$25,000 contribution to the ABAC Foundation in support of the development of the forest at ABAC, and AT&T Georgia presented a \$25,000 donation to the ABAC Foundation for the ABAC Multicultural Programs.

Edited by Michael Chason on February 1, 2022.