



2022-2023 Donor Impact Report

ABAC Foundation Annual Report

Celebrating the Investiture of Dr. Tracy L. Brundage

ABAC faculty, staff, students, University System of Georgia (USG) institution representatives, and community officials celebrated Dr. Tracy L. Brundage's investiture as ABAC's 11th President this fall. The event included supportive remarks from a number of individuals about Brundage's contributions to higher education throughout her 31-year career. USG Chancellor Sonny Perdue presented President Brundage with the ABAC medallion, a recreation of the college seal which, represents the scholarship and authority of the office, as well as the ABAC mace, which represents the authority vested in the president of an institution of higher learning by its governing board.

The investiture of a new president is a ceremony of dignity with many academic traditions and protocols. Originating in English universities, the investiture ceremony is among the oldest of traditions in academia. The word investiture comes from the Latin phrase for "dress in robe." In academic circles, the term has come to mean one who will literally don the university's insignia and regalia.



You can view the investiture ceremony by visiting link.abac.edu/watch-investiture.



From Our President

Dr. Tracy Brundage

What a year it has been! From finishing my first full term as the ABAC President to a wonderful investiture ceremony to a very successful visit by the Board of Regents to our campus in October, the past 14 months have made an indelible impression on the story of my life.

I can't go another minute without thanking you for all of your support. Everywhere I have traveled during the past year to meet alumni and friends of ABAC, I have been welcomed with open arms. I appreciate all of you who attended my investiture ceremony as I received my official confirmation as the President from Chancellor Sonny Perdue. What a great thrill it was to look out into that audience and see all the ABAC students, faculty, alumni, friends, and family. It's a moment I will never forget.

This year, our entire team focused on increasing our enrollment so that more students could experience a quality education at a reasonable cost, a trademark of ABAC. I challenged our faculty and staff to raise enrollment by 2.5 percent for the Fall 2023 semester; a lofty goal, considering the challenges that colleges and universities around the country face. Their response was sensational. Our fall enrollment was up 3.5 percent, and I'm so proud of the determined effort from our entire team.

In the past year, ABAC launched two new bachelor's degree programs and two new workforce-oriented certificate programs, bringing our total to 14 bachelor's degrees and four associate's degree.

In May, the Board of Regents approved our proposal to move to a four-year athletic program, which will help in our efforts to retain more students. We are also bringing back men's and women's basketball beginning next year, which will attract more students and give us another way to engage with our community. Gee Haw!

It made me so proud of ABAC and its accomplishments when I shared all this information and more with the Board of Regents when they met recently for their monthly meeting in the Carlton Center in the middle of our beautiful campus. It's the first time the Regents have met at ABAC since 2002. We were so thrilled to show them everything ABAC has to offer and share our unique place in the University System.

There is much to celebrate and a mountain of work to do to keep our momentum going. We developed a new strategic plan, and we are already at work on many of those objectives to ensure that ABAC remains relevant, innovative, and focused on the mission. We will continue to plan the work and work the plan.

Passion for ABAC goes far beyond our campus, and you play such an important role in our growth and success. Your support allows us to provide our students with a transformational experience, and that is the core of everything that we do. On behalf of everyone at ABAC, we are so grateful for your support, and we hope you can actively take part in all of the exciting things happening here this year. Visit us soon!

"We now have almost 3,800 students from 151 of Georgia's 159 counties, 53 of Florida's 67 counties, 14 states and 21 countries. Our residence halls are bursting at the seams with over 1,300 students living on campus."

On the Cover

These are exciting days at ABAC with a new President charting the course for the future. ABAC President Dr. Tracy L. Brundage (center) is joined in her efforts by Melissa Pierzchajlo, President of the ABAC Alumni Board of Directors (lower step), and Jaclyn Ford, Chair of the ABAC Foundation Board of Trustees (upper step).

A Year to Remember

Board of Regents approves four-year athletics, return of basketball at ABAC

Beginning in Fall 2024, ABAC will transition to four-year athletics and will bring back men's and women's basketball. The proposal was approved by the University System of Georgia's Board of Regents at its meeting in May 2023.

"This is a tremendous day for ABAC," said President Tracy Brundage. "I'm not just talking about athletics. This is a great day for the entire college and our community. This directly aligns with our goals and strategic initiatives in enrollment and brand recognition. The support that ABAC received from many community partners, as well as the plan our team put together, proved to the Board of Regents that this was the right decision."

Basketball was a keystone of the college's athletic program for decades until being discontinued in 2008. The college will hire a head men's coach while Athletic Director Chuck Wimberly will coach the women's team.

Brundage championed the move to four-year athletics almost immediately after arriving on campus last summer. Because the college offers 14 4-year degree programs and four 2-year degree programs, ABAC's participation in the National Junior College Athletic Association did not match its academic structure.

"Our student-athletes have been forced to choose between pursuing their athletic career for another two years at another school or continuing their education here at ABAC," Brundage said. "With the move to four-year athletics, those student-athletes will be able to stay here. That is important for our enrollment, but it's really a matter of serving our students well."

Faculty and staff received awards for their commitment to the College

Dr. Sallie McHugh was selected as the recipient of the W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence. McHugh is an associate professor in the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources. She recently completed her 16th year in education.

Dr. Benjamin Gahagen was selected for the W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Excellence in Student Engagement. He is an Associate Professor of biology from the Department of Science and Mathematics.

Dr. Janet Kuposko, associate professor from the Department of Rural Studies, was selected as the 2023 recipient of the W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Excellence in Advising Award Winner.

Deidra Jackson was selected as the recipient of the E. Lanier Carson Leadership Award. She oversees business operations, human resources, student financial aid, student accounts, information technology, facilities, campus police and auxiliary services. Jackson joined the ABAC Family in May 2010 as the Comptroller.

Doug Hicks was selected as the 2023 recipient of the Roy R. Jackson Award for Staff Excellence presented, each year to the top staff member. Hicks, an agriculture specialist in the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources, has been at ABAC for 20 years. He currently serves as the ABAC Beef Herd Manager.

"We are very fortunate to have very dedicated employees who put students first," said President Tracy Brundage.



Highlights of the 2022-2023 Year

Seven ABAC students accepted into top vet programs

Seven biology and animal science students from ABAC were accepted into top veterinary programs after participating in a USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture grant opportunity designed to streamline and track the acceptance rate of ABAC students into veterinary colleges.

Dr. Jenny Harper applied for the grant in conjunction with Dr. Hemant Naikare at the University of Georgia Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory located in Tifton.

Harper said that the grant's main goal is to increase the number of underrepresented undergraduate students qualified to apply to veterinary medicine programs in hopes that those students return to rural areas to practice.

"When we say underrepresented, we mean students that are from rural areas, that are first generation college attendees, and that come from socioeconomically challenged backgrounds," Harper said. "Not only are very few students from rural areas of Georgia applying to vet school, but there is also a very poor return of graduating veterinarians deciding to practice in rural areas, leaving those areas in great need of professionals."

Harper said veterinary school is more competitive than almost any other field. A lack of opportunities to fulfill all the vet school application requirements is one of the problems she seeks to solve by partnering with the diagnostic lab at UGA, one of only two vet labs in Georgia, to give students 135 supervised lab hours. This new opportunity is yielding great results for ABAC students.

Pumpkin celebrates 20 years as Beef Herd Matriarch

While the Golden Stallion may be the iconic symbol most associated with ABAC, the beloved four-legged bovine that many students have grown to love celebrated a milestone birthday this year.

ABAC's students, faculty, and staff were joined by alumni and other community partners at the college's Beef Unit to celebrate the 20th birthday of Pumpkin, the reddish-orange Braford cow that is the matriarch of the herd.

"Pumpkin has played an important role in not only the operation of our beef herd, but most importantly, to student hands-on learning," said Dr. Mark Kistler, Dean of ABAC's School of Agriculture and Natural Resources. "It's quite an achievement for a cow to reach 20 years old. The productive life for a beef cow is 8-10 years. Pumpkin has been productive for the majority of her mature life."

As part of the ceremony, ABAC Alumni Association board member Kaytlyn Cobb announced the creation of the first "Spirit of ABAC Award," given to a recipient that embodies the qualities that make the school special. Pumpkin was presented a personalized award as the first recipient. Dr. Mary Ellen Hicks, Professor of Animal Science, and Doug Hicks, the ABAC Beef Herd Manager, accepted the award on Pumpkin's behalf. Also, Pumpkin's "300" ear tag was officially retired.

"I'm delighted to recognize an animal who is a great point of pride for all of us at ABAC," said ABAC President Tracy Brundage. "She is truly the matriarch of the ABAC herd with 206 calves that trace back to her as daughters, granddaughters, or even great granddaughters."



Alumni Spotlight

Brent Galloway

Thirty years after Brent Galloway, Class of 1993, worked with his college roommate to begin ABAC's first Cattlemen's Chapter, he remembers standing before the student organization as the State President of the Georgia Cattlemen's Association. "Now that was a special moment in time."

Growing up in Covington, Georgia, on a farrow-to-finish hog operation, Galloway knew the agricultural life first-hand and was active in 4-H and FFA showing pigs and cows from fifth grade through college.

When it came time to choose a college, ABAC was the natural choice. "FFA really steered me into agriculture as a college choice," he said. "My older brother, Harry, went to ABAC as did other FFA friends who were older than me. It was just a good fit all around."

Galloway felt right at home at ABAC, getting involved in the Agricultural Engineering Technology (AET) Club and serving as President of Collegiate FFA. He credits his friend and roommate, Cliff Bowden, with the idea to begin a Cattlemen's Chapter on the campus. "Cliff came up to me one day and said, 'We need to start a Cattlemen's Club at ABAC.' I said let's do it, and we met with President Harold Loyd who gave us his blessing."

While at ABAC, Galloway also had the honor of serving as the FFA State Vice President from 1989 to 1990 and was a member of the Rodeo Club. Some of his more interesting ABAC experiences include participating in the rodeo on campus in bull riding and team roping. He even won a bull riding competition in those days, staying on for eight seconds and winning the prize of \$163.

ABAC Animal Science Professor Dr. Mary Ellen Hicks – who he calls "Doc" – had a tremendous impact on his life when it came to his career choice.

"When I started at ABAC, I wanted to be an ag teacher. I took one of Doc's classes in animal science and knew that was for me," said Galloway. "Later when she was my advisor, she said if you go one more quarter, you can graduate with two associate degrees. So, I did – animal husbandry and animal science. We just clicked, and she taught me so much."

After his first job with a cattle buyer in the Southeast and attending the Graham Cattle Management School in Kansas, Galloway and his new bride, Beth, set off for a new opportunity in Terry, Montana with Thoeny Angus. The Galloways stayed for a year and felt the calling to return to their roots in Georgia.

"I started looking after cows for locals," Galloway said. "We slowly worked to build our own operation through the support of people in our community who rented land and leased or financed equipment for us. We eventually grew

to 250 head and we were checking another 200 head for others. I was farming full-time, between the cattle and the row crops. Plus, I was helping run the Mid-Georgia Livestock Sale Barn."

For 25 years, this was all that Galloway knew. Then a new and very unique opportunity came his way. Galloway became the State Farm and Livestock Advisor of Georgia Correctional Industries (GCI) under the umbrella of Georgia's Department of Corrections.

His scope of work includes supervising six managers at the eight farm locations across the state with 250 dairy cattle, 120,000 laying hens, and 2,000 beef cattle as well as crops such as potatoes, carrots, kale, collards, squash and much more. This farming operation for the Georgia Department of Corrections has reduced the organization's meal cost to \$2.10 per inmate per day.

"I am proud of what we do. We provide an ag service – from the gate to the plate. We grow it, process it, and package it in a cost-effective way," said Galloway. "I am always an advocate for agriculture, and this is another avenue to advocate for agriculture. Today's population, even in Georgia, is so far

removed from agriculture as a society. Only about 10% of the prison population I deal with has ever had any experience with a farm. Through their work on our farms, they soak up knowledge about the agriculture process and become more educated consumers of ag."

"It was home. I never felt out of place. I knew I belonged at ABAC."

Uprooting everything the Galloway family knew has provided its share of challenges. When he accepted the job in Lyons, his family was still in Monticello running the farm. Ultimately, the Galloways decided to completely move their farming operation to Southeast Georgia.

It proved to be a good move for the family. Beth is now an ag teacher at Toombs County Middle School and often has ABAC student teachers in the ag education program in her classroom. Galloway continues to manage his own 200-acre farm in Toombs County with 100 brood cows as well as hay.

Just like their parents, the Galloway children have a strong work ethic and have begun their own careers. Wyatt graduated from the US Naval Academy and was selected for the Marine Corps, now serving as a first lieutenant stationed in Japan. Cheyenne graduated from Emory University and is a NICU nurse with Children's Healthcare of Atlanta while also working as a NICU travel nurse.

In 2020, Galloway was recognized by his alma mater with the J. Lamar Branch Award for outstanding leadership in the field of agriculture. "I was blown away to receive the ABAC award," he said. "I've never seen myself as an outstanding alumni as there are many who I would feel are more deserving but I was very honored."

Galloway invests in his community by serving in the Newton County Farm Bureau, the Georgia Cattleman's Association, and the Georgia Beef Board as well as other local organizations. Being active in the agricultural industry is a priority to Galloway.

"When I went home and started farming, I knew that I had to get outside of my own fence rows to know what was going on in the ag industry, to understand how I could be a voice to those making decisions that impacted my livelihood. Organizations like Georgia Farm Bureau and Georgia Cattlemen provided the support and helped me learn, advocate and educate people," he said.

"I tell people you cannot afford not to be involved in the industry. If you stay home, you do not have a voice, and you are at the mercy of those making uninformed decisions."

Galloway is proud of ABAC's connection to the agricultural industry he loves. "I loved my ABAC days," he said. "I have been married for 30 years and working my entire life, but I can remember my ABAC days better than any other time in my life. I remember everything we did. I was with people who were like me with the same interests and often the same kind of truck."



Whitnie Yoder Crowned 2023 Florida Cattlemen's Association Sweetheart



An ABAC junior will be doing double duty as a college student and an ambassador for the Florida beef industry. Whitnie Yoder from Jackson County, Florida, was selected as the 2023 FCA Sweetheart at the Florida Cattlemen's Association Annual Convention and Allied Trade Show in June.

"I am honored to represent the industry that has made me who I am today. Some of the finest people I know are connected to the Florida Cattlemen's Association, and it brings me no greater joy than to serve alongside them, advocating for Florida beef. In the next few months, I hope to grow the FCA Sweetheart social media presence to reach and educate consumers and producers alike in this way," Yoder said.

The Florida Cattlemen's Sweetheart Contest was established to build favorable publicity for the Florida Cattlemen's Association, Florida Beef Council, and the Florida CattleWomen. During her year, the sweetheart will promote and educate consumers about beef and the Florida beef industry. She is selected based on knowledge of the beef industry, communication skills, personality, poise, and appearance.

Yoder said that as much as she loves her home state, she chose to cross state lines and call herself an ABAC Stallion. "I have heard nothing but excellent recommendations of the school," she said. "I've listened to countless personal testimonies of the integrity of professors and thoroughness of the classes. I am so excited to study agricultural communication in Tifton, and one day be a proud alumni."

Building Connections

President Brundage has been on the go during her first year at ABAC. She has enjoyed meeting with ABAC alumni, friends, corporate partners, elected officials, and more both on and off campus. You can view the full gallery from her visits at link.abac.edu/connections.

- A. Georgia Governor Brian Kemp along with First Lady Marty Kemp
- B. Sonny Perdue, chancellor of the University System of Georgia
- C. Dale Sandlin, executive vice president of the Georgia Cattlemen's Association
- D. Jim Langdale, president of the Langdale Company
- E. Chip Blalock, executive director, and Cody Mitchell, farm manager of the Sunbelt Ag Expo
- F. Bennie Branch, president of Kelley Manufacturing Corporation
- G. Beth DeLoach Meeks of Georgia Grown
- H. Tyler Harper, agriculture commissioner for the State of Georgia
- I. Assistant executive director, Joy Crosby, and executive director, Don Koehler, of the Georgia Peanut Commission
- J. Tom McCall, president of Georgia Farm Bureau



Alumni Spotlight

Tyler Harper, Agriculture Commissioner of Georgia

“There were a number of reasons I chose to start my college career at ABAC,” said Agriculture Commissioner Tyler Harper, Class of 2008. “Growing up on the family farm and with my background and passion for agriculture, I knew I wanted to pursue a degree that would further my ag education, and ABAC was the obvious choice as one of the premier agricultural colleges in the state.”

When asked about his fondest memories at ABAC, he says “There are too many great memories from my time at ABAC to count, but there are definitely a few that still stand out. First and foremost, the lifelong friends that I made at ABAC and the times we had together are some of my favorites. While we’ve all taken different paths and made different career choices, we still keep up with each other, and it’s exciting and rewarding to see how much we’ve all grown both personally and professionally. I also fondly remember taking part in many of the ABAC traditions: the rodeos, the truck and tractor pull, and my personal favorite – the mud bog.”

Harper received his associate degree in agriculture from ABAC, he then went on to complete his bachelor’s degree in agricultural engineering from the University of Georgia. Taking an active role in his community, he has served on various boards, committees, and as a State Senator before being elected as the 17th Agriculture Commissioner of Georgia.

In speaking of his time at ABAC, he recalls being a part of groups like Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, Collegiate FFA, Baptist Student Union, and the Agricultural Engineering Technology Club (AET). He said he always knew he wanted to serve the public in some capacity but didn’t know the opportunity would present itself so quickly after graduation.

“In the spring of 2012, I vividly remember getting an early morning phone call from my State Representative Jay Roberts, who was in Atlanta for the legislative session. Jay was a longtime friend and mentor, but it was rare for him to call that early in the morning, especially during session. He said “Tyler, Greg (our State Senator at the time) isn’t running for re-election. You need to run for the State Senate, and I need an answer by lunch.”

“My first thought was that there is no way people are going to vote for a 25-year-old kid to represent them in the State Senate. After a long morning on the phone asking for advice, I decided to put my apprehension to the side and jumped in with both feet. We campaigned hard and won that race and then won four more after that. It was an honor to serve the people of the 7th Senate District, and I’m proud of the work we did to help make Georgia the best state in the nation to live, work, worship, and raise a family.”

Now as Ag Commissioner, his priorities lie in telling the story of Georgia agriculture, investing in the next generation through education and technology, and building on the success of the Georgia Grown Program. He’s already accomplished a great deal in just a few short months. Some of the things he’s been able to cross off his list include restoring GDA’s Law Enforcement Division that had been disbanded in 2013, the passing of the Farmland Conservation Fund that will play a critical role in helping farmers protect their operations for generations to come, and delivering relief to Georgia peach producers after untimely freezes that took place in March, causing significant damage to our peach crop.

Along with this important role, Harper is also a farmer and small business owner. What started as a boy playing with toy tractors, hoping for the chance to drive the real thing, he said, “I remember how excited I was when my granddad taught me how to drive on his Massey Ferguson 135 and immediately put me to work plowing the garden. Now, I’m humbled and proud to be the 7th generation on my family farm.”

Some may be surprised to know that Commissioner Harper plays and sings at his church every Sunday morning when he is home. He began taking piano lessons when he was five years old and later taught himself how to play guitar. He says playing at church on Sundays is “a highlight of my week, and I don’t plan on stopping anytime soon.”

A lifetime member of the ABAC Alumni Association, Harper was recently voted on to the ABAC Foundation Board of Trustees and will serve a four-year term. He also received the Outstanding Young Alumnus award in 2015.



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A Tale of Two Sisters

It all began with a five-dollar bill.

That small sum combined with boundless determination shaped the lives of two of ABAC's alumni – Jane Grogan Gibbs, Class of 1952, and Dr. Wanda Grogan, Class of 1962 – on a journey as successful educators and community leaders, touching the lives of countless students across the state of Georgia.

JANE GROGAN GIBBS

“Loretta Lynn, as the coal miner’s daughter, had nothing on me. I was the eleventh child of a sharecropper, and I was born during the depression. I was reared by parents who had very little education and very little money,” said Gibbs. “In today’s world, I would have been labeled one of the ‘at risk’ children, but back in the 1930s no one told me that I couldn’t survive and succeed.”

As she approached graduation from Sale City High School, Gibbs had a dream of going to college. She would rush to the post office each day to see if she had received any brochures from the colleges she had written.

Having received five dollars as a gift when she graduated from high school, Gibbs tucked this precious money in her pocket and packed her suitcase on Sunday, June 11, 1950. She called a neighbor who had family in Tifton and asked if she could catch a ride with him and be dropped off at ABAC.

However, when the neighbor left her at the campus, it was quiet and the dorms were empty. The ABAC Comptroller lived in Lewis Hall with his family, and Gibbs knocked on his door. After learning of her situation, he found a room in Lewis Hall for her to spend the night and told her to knock on the wall during the night if she needed him. The Comptroller, Mr. William Dewberry, took Gibbs to get registered for classes the next day but paused when he discovered she didn’t have the funds to pay for her tuition, just the five-dollar bill in her pocket.

“A man came to the window and took a look at me. Then he said, ‘Sign her up, and I will find her a job.’ That man was Mr. Pete Donaldson, President of ABAC,” said Gibbs. Never one to be afraid of hard work, she had five jobs at one time including sitting with Mr. Pete’s wife, Mrs. Holly, as well as working at the ABAC farm and canning plant, library, and dining hall. She truly “worked her way through

college.” Mr. Pete had a tremendous impact on her life and made sure she had the opportunity to attend ABAC. He was often concerned with how much she was working as he wanted to be sure she focused on her academic coursework. However, Mr. Pete was also her greatest cheerleader in other parts of her life.

Gibbs was also actively involved on campus including the Women’s Basketball Team, 4-H Club, Student Cabinet, Baptist Student Union, Home Economics Club, and the TABAC Yearbook Staff. “I was in just about every club and was in the top three in seven categories for superlatives,” said Gibbs.



Wanda Grogan and Jane Grogan Gibbs grew up close.

Gibbs also found her soulmate at ABAC. She first met him in the Dining Hall. “Randolph told everyone that he fell in love with me that day,” she said. “When we started dating, there was a break every day at 10 between classes. We started meeting at the Log Cabin, and he was always ready for me at one of the tables with an Orange Crush and cheese crackers. It was years later when he finally learned that I didn’t like either of them.”

Mr. Pete came to the rescue once again when it was time for the fall dance. “I didn’t have a formal dress for the dance,” said Gibbs. “Mr. Pete heard about it, sent me to the Big Store in downtown Tifton, and told

me to find a dress for the dance. I found a beautiful aqua dress that was marked down. Randolph also gave me an orchid, and I had never seen an orchid before.”

After graduating from ABAC with many wonderful memories, Gibbs went on to earn her bachelor’s degree in home economics from Georgia State College for Women. Her first two jobs after college were teaching home economics at Cook County High School followed by working with the Colquitt County Extension office in Moultrie with 4-H and home demonstration clubs.

Teaching was definitely her true calling and soon she was back in the classroom. She taught for 36 years including 28 years at Colquitt County High School (CCHS). When there were two Mrs. Gibbs in her department in the 1980s at CCHS, a student told her she would begin calling her “Mama Jane,” a name she is still affectionately known by today.

“I am only one in a long line of former students,” said Dr. Deidre Martin, Chief Advancement Officer at ABAC. “Mrs.



Jane and Randolph at her first ABAC dance.

DR. WANDA GROGAN

Though there was 10 years difference between the two sisters, Grogan's time at ABAC had some similarities. She said that she also worked in the ABAC Dining Hall, was interested in Home Economics, and "was involved in everything."

Grogan also has sweet memories of ABAC's former president Pete Donaldson. "Mr. Pete took such a personal interest in all of us," she said. "I thought nothing of having him come by to talk with us and ask about our lives. It was just an everyday kind of thing with him."

"I knew right away that ABAC was for me," said Grogan. "I thought it was the only school in Georgia I should consider. We didn't have cars on campus so there was no going home. We wrote letters home but we became each other's family. I remember being happy all of the time and making wonderful friends." Grogan was very active in campus life including the Student Cabinet, Baptist Student Union, 4-H Club, Home Economics Club, and Young Women's Auxiliary.

After ABAC, she also followed in Gibbs' footsteps to attend Georgia State College for Women for her bachelor's degree. She went on to earn her Ph.D. in Home Economics Education from Iowa State University, a point of great pride to both sisters.

Her career included many years of service to the Georgia Center for Continuing Education at the University of Georgia (UGA) as the Family and Consumer Science (FACS) Program Specialist. She also became the first Alumni Director for the UGA FACS program and the Alumni Association was established under her leadership.

Her home in Athens has a wall lined with awards and accolades for her achievements, including Outstanding Adult Educator in Georgia from the Georgia Adult Education Association, Woman of the Year from the Pilot Club of Athens, the Creswell Award from the Family and Consumer Sciences Alumni Association, Honorary Life Membership from the Georgia School Food Service Association, Honorary State Homemaker Degree from the Georgia Association of the Future Homemakers of America, the Walter Barnard Hill Award for Distinguished Achievement in Service (1992) and as a Distinguished Service Fellow (1993) at UGA, and a Proclamation from Georgia Governor Zell Miller honoring her 23 years of distinguished service at UGA.

Strength and resilience mark the life and career of Grogan. In 1994, she experienced an unusual headache. After working nearly a full week, her doctors discovered a problem which eventually led to a stroke. Gibbs fondly remembers her husband Randolph driving through the night to be sure he was there for Grogan when she went into the hospital. "He loved Wanda and was like a

Gibbs had a profound impact on my life as she did on the lives of many others including my sister Denise. All who walked into her classroom were blessed to have her in their lives."

Her college sweetheart, Randolph Gibbs, was an agriculture teacher, and the couple had two children, two grandchildren, and three great grandchildren. Their lives were filled with family, church and community involvement, and a love for Georgia Bulldogs football. While it was hard to lose Randolph in 2014, recent times have been made better by sharing life with her sister, Dr. Wanda Grogan.

The two sisters share a love for ABAC and a love for teaching, though with slightly different styles. "I have always been a busy person," said Gibbs. "My mother said that I never walked but that I started running at nine months of age. She always said Wanda was the 'good' child of the two of us." Grogan's bright and sunny smile and cheery demeanor are still evident today.

father to her,” she said. The number of friends and supporters reaching out during this challenging time grew so much that the hospital had to put up a sign stating only one visitor at a time.

Grogan was well loved throughout her career at UGA, and her retirement party had a room full of people to thank her for her many contributions. She even received the “Outstanding Georgia Citizen” recognition for service to Georgians from Georgia Secretary of State Max Cleland in 1995 which reads: “May this outstanding citizen be afforded every courtesy as a Goodwill Ambassador from Georgia in his/her travels to other states, to nations beyond the borders of the United States of America, or wherever this person may hereafter travel or reside.”

Dr. Darby Sewell, an ABAC alumnae of Colquitt County said, “Dr. Grogan is the epitome of grace and resilience under adversity and challenge. Even though her career was cut short due to a health challenge, she has continued to give to others and teach them from her own experiences. She represents the heart of home economics/family and consumer sciences.”

Both sisters have received numerous accolades throughout their careers from recognition in their professions and in their communities to being recognized by ABAC as outstanding alumni. Grogan received the highest alumni recognition with the Distinguished Alumni Award in 1985. Gibbs received the Master Homemaker Award in 1980 and the Outstanding Educator Award in 1995. Both have been active alumni through the years and hold the status of Emeritus Members of the ABAC Alumni Association Board of Directors and are members of the ABAC President’s Club.

From that five-dollar bill that brought Gibbs to ABAC, the investment has paid off in many ways. Today, both Gibbs and Grogan proudly have created endowed scholarships at ABAC to benefit future generations of college students attending the institution they love.

Gibbs created the Jane Grogan and Randolph Gibbs Endowed Scholarship at ABAC to provide scholarships for students from Colquitt or Worth County who were actively involved in Future Farmers of America (FFA) or the Family Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) in high school.



Grogan created the Dr. Wanda Grogan Endowed Scholarship at ABAC to provide scholarships for students from Colquitt or Worth County who were actively involved in FCCLA in high school. She also created the Wanda J. Grogan Professional Development Academic Support Fund Endowment at the University of Georgia for students in the College of Family and Consumer Sciences.

“I told someone the other day, you are looking at two girls who came from absolutely nothing,” said Gibbs. “Both were determined to get a college degree and make something of themselves. Two girls who graduated from college not owing a penny but working their ways through. Two girls who had great careers and touched the lives of so many students. And two girls who now have funded endowments at their alma mater. Wanda and I both have always felt a strong commitment to our communities. We have had successful lives because of ABAC and giving back comes naturally.”

Join these sisters by creating an endowment at ABAC. Contact Deidre Martin at dmartin@abac.edu or 229-391-4907 for more information.

PlantTel Museum Exhibit at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture

A stunning and unique collection of over 538 artifacts, including antique telephones of every variety imaginable, forms the heart of a new exhibit at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College's Georgia Museum of Agriculture.

A grand opening took place during ABAC's 2023 Homecoming weekend and included guided tours of the exhibit, a "cord cutting," and a reception.

The collection was donated in early 2022 by Danny and Beverly Sterling of Plant Telephone Company to the ABAC Foundation.

"The ABAC Foundation is delighted to accept the donation of this wonderful collection of telephones from the Sterling family," said Dr. Deidre Martin, ABAC's Chief Advancement Officer. "Spanning almost an entire century, this collection is truly a treasure. The collection's new home in a permanent exhibit at ABAC's Georgia Museum of Agriculture ensures it can be enjoyed and appreciated by many for years and years to come."

According to ABAC's museum curator Polly Huff, curatorial staff at the museum spent the rest of 2022 obtaining the large collection, re-designing the exhibit, writing copy for the exhibit's interpretation, and carefully installing each one of the 500 telephones. The PlantTel Museum Exhibit will be permanently housed in the same building as the village printshop in the historic village. The space was refurbished by the Sterling family and designed to be reminiscent of the original PlantTel Phone Museum at the company's Tifton headquarters.

"The collection represents the historic evolution of communications beginning with a model of Alexander Graham Bell's 1876 telephone, and chronicling the next hundred years of improvements of one of the most important communication devices of our lifetime," said Huff.

Curatorial interns, Logan Grubbs and Juliann Dyer, spent two consecutive semesters working on the collection and assisted the GMA team of Huff and Artifact Restoration Specialist David King in many of the tasks associated with the cataloging and installation of this new exhibit.

The Sterlings' daughter Ginger and her husband David Nelson were instrumental in assisting with the physical transition of the collection, and in providing rare family artifacts and archives which aided in completing the exhibition.

The five-generation story of the Plant Telephone Company began in 1895 in the rural farming community of Doles, when Ben Gleaton connected a magneto telephone from his home and commissary to the farm home of his wife Lula's parents. Neighboring farmers soon heard of the device and wanted a telephone of their own. A Western Electric switchboard was installed in the commissary where it was operated for daytime service. Gleaton was on to something, and the expansion of the telephone followed the development of many small independent telephone companies in isolated rural America.

In 1919, Henry Perry Gleaton moved to Warwick and soon purchased the inoperative Warwick Telephone Company with one switchboard, 23 telephones and the poles and wire. The Warwick exchange grew rapidly, and Warwick became



The Sterlings family includes: David Nelson, Angela Ringenberg, Beverly and Danny Sterling, and Ginger and Francis Nelson.



the first Georgia telephone exchange to have automatic dialing with less than 100 lines. In 1937, the Gleatons reacquired the Doles exchange with service to Isabella, near what is now Sylvester. In 1946, James Perry Gleaton inherited the growing telephone company from his father. J.P. had moved his family, wife Allene, and three daughters (Betty Chloe, Beverly, and Barbara) to Tifton as he was employed by Southern Bell to learn the telephone business as a lineman.

The Omega Telephone Company was acquired in 1946 and the name was changed to Plant Telephone Company. At the time, Omega was known as the "Starter Plant Capital of the World," and the company was incorporated in 1948. The Lenox exchange was acquired in 1949 and the company offered long-distance calls through Southern Bell Trunk lines in Tifton.

In 1950, J.P. Gleaton purchased the Pearson and Willacochee telephone exchanges for \$1 and the assumption of notes. Plant Telephone and Power Company Inc. was formed in 1951 to include the Warwick power dam and to expand the Pearson and Willacochee exchanges. The Pinehurst exchange was purchased in 1954; the facilities were in such disrepair that a note on the door read, "Office Closed, Key is in the River." The company continued to expand its service in each exchange and began converting all systems to rotary dial service.

In 1956, Mr. Gleaton purchased the Soperton exchange in central Georgia, which is the largest exchange in the company. During this time, the company was headquartered in Tifton on Highway 41 in several buildings. In 1966, Beverly Gleaton married Danny Sterling and they continued the tradition of working at the family business. In 1978, J.P. Gleaton passed away, leaving a legacy of telephone expansion and modern technology to rural communities.

Under the leadership of Danny Sterling, Plant Telephone continued to grow while upgrading to the newest telephone technology, including electronic switches that provided the highest quality service and features. In 1983, Plant opened its new headquarters on Highway 82 West. Services were expanded to offer business phone systems, security systems, and internet service. As the demand for internet access increased, PlantTel built a fiber optic network to rural customers across South Georgia.

In 2009, CityNet was purchased from the City of Tifton, allowing PlantTel to provide telephone, internet, and television to customers in Tift County. Over the years, the Sterlings received numerous awards for business leadership and contributions to South Georgia communities.

The Georgia Museum of Agriculture is a great place to visit! Learn more at gma.abac.edu.

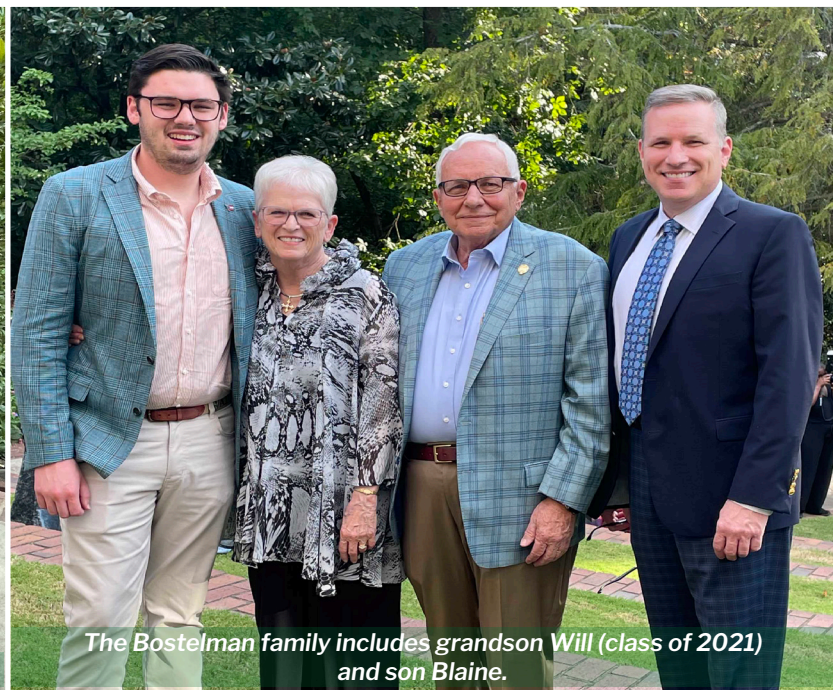
USG Regents 2023 Hall of Fame Distinguished Alumni Award Presented to the Bostelmans

Rick and Sandy Bostelman are outstanding alumni of ABAC who serve as role models for all of us. Their consistent and active involvement with their Alma Mater for more than 50 years is inspiring. They operate as a team in every aspect of their lives so it is appropriate for them to share this honor as a couple. They met and fell in love at ABAC. Graduating in 1966, Rick in animal science and Sandy in home economics, they have served in their professions and community as dedicated citizens. Rick was the owner of Paulk Funeral Home for nearly 30 years, and Sandy served in many classroom and leadership positions during her more than 40 years in the Ben Hill County School System. Actively involved in their community, they participate in a range of civic and charitable endeavors from their church

to Rotary. Their generosity to ABAC includes endowments for scholarships as well as engagement opportunities such as study abroad experiences and undergraduate research. Known as "Honey" and "Papa," the couple is often on campus for alumni activities, enjoying Fried Chicken Thursdays in the dining hall, meeting scholarship recipients, and even witnessing the May 2021 graduation of their beloved grandson Will. In 2022, they received one of ABAC's highest honors as the recipients of the Distinguished Alumni Award. As one nominator wrote: "You meet very few people and think - wouldn't the world be a better place if there were more people like them?" The world and ABAC are definitely better places because of the love, generosity, and dedication of Rick and Sandy Bostelman.



President Tracy Brundage with Sandy & Rick.



The Bostelman family includes grandson Will (class of 2021) and son Blaine.



On hand for the award presentation was the USG Chancellor Sonny Perdue, Governor Brian Kemp and his wife Marty.



Rick - Class of 1966



Sandy - Class of 1966



From Our Foundation Chair

Jaclyn Ford

A new school year represents a new beginning for so many. As the 2023-2024 school year begins at ABAC, it is my honor to begin my tenure as the President of the ABAC Foundation. It's an exciting time to welcome new students and welcome back returning students to this great institution. ABAC is a special place. Coming from rural south Georgia, I'm very aware of how vital ABAC is to our area.

The numbers prove that many of the students who are educated at ABAC return to their rural communities all over our state and neighboring states. This is important to me, and it's important to ABAC. Our children are our largest asset and are the future of our country. Rural America needs to keep

her children. ABAC provides that affordable, safe, community-driven atmosphere where our young people can be well educated while transitioning into adulthood.

This will be the second school year under the leadership of Dr. Brundage. Our new president made great progress in her first year and continues to implement her plans to deliver us into the future. She worked hard to deliver on her promise to revive the ABAC basketball program and to expand all of our athletic teams to be four-year programs. We anticipate great things from her commitment to workforce development, ensuring that ABAC students may continue to be ready to go out into their communities to accomplish success in their chosen career fields.

In this Donor Impact Report, we look back on the previous year with the utmost appreciation for you, our donors, and the community you have shown to ABAC. With your support, ABAC is sure to continue on its successful path of offering a great, affordable education to our young people. The ABAC Foundation's total assets have grown from \$34 to \$43 million over the past five years. Please join me in making your own investment in ABAC's future in the years to come.

Jaclyn Dixon Ford has served on the ABAC Foundation Board of Trustees since 2015 as a key member of the Finance and Investment Committee and is the incoming Chair. She attended ABAC before going on to the University of Georgia and her son J. Manry was also a dual enrollment student at ABAC. Her father, Steve Dixon, was the recipient of the 2023 Master Agriculturalist Award from the ABAC Alumni Association.

She is the Vice-President and Chief Operating Officer of Dixon Gin Co., Inc. and serves as the company director of Commodities Marketing. She is involved in production agriculture with her family in Berrien County where they grow cotton, peanuts, corn, cattle, and pecans.

Mrs. Ford was appointed by Governor Kemp in 2019 to serve on the Georgia Economic Development Board. She was formerly appointed by the United States Secretary of Agriculture to the Georgia Farm Service Agency State Committee, serving from 2011-2017. Mrs. Ford serves on the regional advisory board for Synovus, the Georgia Agribusiness Council Board, The Georgia Farm Bureau Commodities Committee for Cotton, the South Georgia Medical Center – Berrien Campus Authority, Delegate for the National Cotton Council, and the 2019 Emerging Leaders Class of the National Cotton Council.

Mrs. Ford has a bachelor of science degree in agriculture from the University of Georgia and is a 2018 graduate of Leadership Georgia. She and her husband, Jake, have two children and reside in Alapaha, Georgia.



Jaclyn and Jake Ford with their children, J. Manry and Mabry

Alumni Spotlight

Kristoff Cohran

The term “Swiss Army knife” is a metaphor for usefulness and adaptability. Those who need to be ready for anything take one with them everywhere.

Throughout his life, ABAC alumnus Kristoff Cohran, Class of 2015, has been on an adventure that always seemed to require him to adapt, and he always found a way to give back and be useful in every aspect of his life.

Cohran was recognized for his contributions when he was named to Georgia Trend 40 Under 40 in 2021. As the Program Administrator for the Georgia South Psychiatry Residence Program at Colquitt Regional Medical Center (CRMC), he is described in the magazine article as: “A student who dropped

out of public speaking class who became a public speaker. A person uninterested in healthcare who became a psychiatry residency program coordinator. A boy who lost his dad early in life who became a father figure to many. That’s Kristoff Cohran, and the common motivator is his strong passion for helping others and a belief that his life’s purpose is to be a catalyst for a better, brighter tomorrow.”

Growing up in Thomasville, Georgia, Cohran came to ABAC for a campus tour with a friend. “From the moment I first walked on campus and began meeting the people of ABAC, I knew it was the place for me. And it was the only college campus I visited, even though I was accepted into other colleges,” he said.

A business and economic development major, he was involved in the Brother to Brother mentor program and as a leader in Stafford Hall as part of the Stafford School of Business, in addition to hosting two radio talk shows during his college days.

Cohran credits several individuals with being role models in shaping his life. “ABAC President David Bridges definitely influenced my life,” he said. “And Dill and Susan Driscoll had a tremendous impact on my life. I was going to transfer at the end of my sophomore year, but they believed in me in a way that I just couldn’t leave behind. They would tell me that I was thinking too small about what I could do and what I could accomplish.” He added that the Driscolls, former Co-Deans of the Stafford School of Business continue to be friends and support his work today.

In addition to his business classes, Cohran had a passion for music. “I was involved in so many aspects of ABAC’s music program from the Jazz Band to being the principal chair for trumpet in the Concert Band that people thought I was a music major,” he said with a smile.

Prof. Don Coates was another one of those mentors who positively impacted Cohran. “He instilled the importance of hard work, resilience, and a leave it all on the table kind of attitude in me. He taught me to be very focused as I worked to accomplish my goals.”

Cohran’s interest in giving back and helping others began to grow during his time at ABAC. “I always knew I wanted to do community-oriented work but I didn’t know what it looked like. In 2013 at ABAC, my friend Caleb and I started a men’s ‘Real Talk’ group in his dorm room,” he said. “We would go from 9 p.m. to 1 or 2 in the morning, and called it unfiltered life conversations, with other guys.”

Following his graduation from ABAC, he began work as the Business Coordinator in the Stafford School of Business. His next career step would be revealed early on in his new job. “I met Jim Matney (Chief Executive Officer of CRMC) within the first month of taking my position at ABAC,” said Cohran. “He and his son John came for a tour of campus and the business school. He told me that he would love to have me work at CRMC one day.”

While Cohran’s wife Jessica did become a nurse at CRMC, he said that he kept busy at ABAC and didn’t think much more



about the conversation. "Then one day, Jim called and said he had a job open and it was mine if I wanted it. I took the position in August 2016 and learned a lot about leadership from Jim," he said.

His work in administration at CRMC also opened the door to his most recent position as the Program Administrator for the Georgia South Psychiatry Residency Program, a program he has been part of building from the ground up.

He credits Jim Matney with the idea for the program. "Jim is a disrupter and an innovator. He realized there were no psychiatry residency programs in South Georgia and that the need was great. He said: Why don't we train our own mental health professionals?"

Through his work with this new program, he came to realize that many young people need some form of therapeutic counseling and that there are many mental health disparities in rural areas especially in minority populations. With several significant grants, the program has grown and welcomed its second class of residents this summer.

Those late-night dorm room talks also came back full circle. Friends asked, "Can we do what we did at ABAC for our community?" That conversation was the beginning of Mission 3E, Inc., a minority-focused, transformative personal development experience of which he serves as Founder and CEO.

Cohran said, "We build critical thinkers who become the problem solvers, role models, and leaders within their communities. Our greatest aim is to help young people elevate in school, life, and career. Mission 3E offers character and

leadership development programming designed to engage, enlighten, and empower young adults through financial literacy, promoting civic responsibility and community engagement. What's most satisfying about my work is helping young adults create a life plan that is clear, concise, and attainable. Our goal is to make this world a better place, one person at a time."

From the first chapter at ABAC, Mission 3E now has two high school chapters in Turner and Irwin Counties and a middle school chapter in Turner County while having worked with college students at Valdosta State University, Georgia Southern University, Albany State University, and Howard University to name a few.

"Seeing the impact even a conversation has on someone else's life. Someone who believes in them. You can see a spark or light in their eyes that wasn't there before. Challenge them in a leadership capacity. See them do something they didn't think they could do," he said.

Cohran and his wife have two children – Kristoff II (age 6) and Aliyah (age 5 going on 38). He said his most important job is being a father. "My children have taught me patience. Slowed me down and taught me to enjoy the moment – not to look at yesterday and not worry about tomorrow. Just be."

As a new member of the ABAC Alumni Council, Cohran added: "I love ABAC. It changed my life. When I look back, all roads lead back to ABAC – the experiences, the relationships, and the connections I made. I would tell a prospective student that if you don't have your life figured out, come to ABAC. It is the perfect place – large enough for you to spread your wings and fly and small enough to have people who care about you."

Paul and Ann English Turf Business Management Endowment at ABAC

This new degree track is designed to provide an opportunity to ABAC students interested in pursuing a business focus with their turf or horticulture degree.

The endowment honors the life and work of two ABAC Alumni -- Paul English, Class of 1957, and Ann Brown English, Class of 1958 -- and will also provide scholarship support.



Alumni Association Award Winners

The ABAC Alumni Association recognizes outstanding alumni each year during Homecoming, and it is our distinct pleasure to showcase the accomplishments and contributions of these individuals. Alumni awards have been a tradition at ABAC since the Master Farmer award was first presented in 1955. Our 2023 class of award winners are representatives of many different generations of outstanding alumni.



Distinguished Alumnus Award - Dr. Mary Ellen (Dickens) Hicks

Dr. Hicks, a native of Tifton, graduated from ABAC in 1983 with an associate of science in Pre-Veterinary Medicine. She then ventured to the University of Georgia where she earned her bachelor of science in Pre-Veterinary Medicine and her Doctor of Veterinary Medicine. She began her ABAC teaching career in 1989 and has positively impacted students ever since! In addition to teaching, Dr. Hicks has been the advisor for the ABAC Cattlemen's Association since 1991, an academic advisor for livestock-focused students, and the veterinarian for the ABAC beef teaching herd. She has received the Donaldson Award for Excellence in Student Engagement, Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence, Donaldson Award for Excellence in Advising, and numerous other well-deserved awards.



Master Agriculturalist Award - Steve Dixon

Dixon graduated from ABAC in 1979 with a degree in agribusiness. Along with his wife Rhonda, he started Dixon Farm Supply in 1985 and began buying peanuts in 1991. Then, along with their children, opened Dixon Gin Company in 2001. What started with a husband and wife team of two with 1,000 acres and a small farm supply business has evolved. Now the family has an 8,000-acre farming operation managed by their youngest son, Quentin, a growing farm center with a peanut buying point where they buy nearly 40,000 tons of peanuts managed by their son, Carl Mathis, and a cotton ginning operation managed by their daughter, Jaclyn Dixon. His family has received numerous awards including Berrien County Agribusiness of the Year, Friend of the Farmer Award, Berrien Farm Bureau Farm Family Award, and National Peanut Buying Point of the Year Award.



J. Lamar Branch Award for Outstanding Leadership in Agriculture - Stan Hutchinson

Hutchinson graduated from ABAC in 1968 with an associate of science in agricultural engineering. He then received his bachelor of science in agricultural engineering from the University of Georgia. He served in technical service and management as the owner of a John Deere Agriculture dealership and in management of a Case IH equipment dealership. He currently acts as the President of Shepherd Care Inc, a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation, that cares for orphans and outreaches to widows in Nigeria. He has been awarded the high honor and status of "Chief" in the Eku Traditional Council in recognition of his work. Hutchinson has also been faithful in supporting his alma mater and is a member of the ABAC President's Club. His first spouse, Shirley Colston Hutchinson, attended ABAC from 1967 to 1969. After her tragic death in 1999, he created the Shirley C. Hutchinson Memorial Scholarship Endowment. He and his wife, Dr. Marcia Bender Hutchinson, continue to support this scholarship.



Outstanding Educator Award - Dr. L.C. "Buster" Evans

Dr. Evans was a part of ABAC's Class of 1976. He then earned his bachelor's and master's degrees from Valdosta State University and his doctoral degree from the University of Georgia. Buster serves as the Executive Director of the Teachers Retirement System of Georgia. As Executive Director, he oversees the operations of Georgia's 90-billion-dollar teacher pension system, serving more than half a million educators from public schools, colleges and universities, and other covered employers. Under his leadership, the organization has expanded technology-based service delivery processes, expanded its social media presence, completed a strategic plan leading to greater efficiencies, received the Governor's Award for five consecutive years by leading all other state agencies in charitable giving. He is also a Lifetime Member of the Alumni Association, an active donor, and a member of the ABAC President's Club.

Outstanding Business Leader Award - Chad Sumner

Sumner graduated from ABAC in 1989 with his associate's degree in business administration and went on to earn a bachelor's degree in finance from Georgia Southern University. During his time at ABAC, he played on the baseball team and was selected as an All-Conference Shortstop. He then attended Georgia Southern on a baseball scholarship. Prior to beginning his career, he played professional baseball with the St. Louis Cardinals for three years. For nearly 30 years, Chad has been the agent and owner of Chad Sumner State Farm Agency in Tifton, Georgia. In this role, he has achieved the coveted award for President's Club status, as well as the Chairman's Circle, which signifies his agency as being among the top five percent of all 19,500 State Farm agencies nationwide. He has achieved this honor ten times. In addition to financially supporting his alma mater and being a member of the ABAC Alumni Association, he has worked with other State Farm agencies to provide internships and other learning opportunities for ABAC students.



Outstanding Young Alumnus Award - Brittney (Gunter) Turner

Turner graduated from ABAC in 2016 with a bachelor of science in diversified agriculture. She is currently the Complex Human Resources Manager for Wayne-Sanderson Farms in Pendergrass, Georgia. In her free time, she is an active participant in the Georgia Farm Bureau, Georgia Young Farmers and Ranchers, ABAC Alumni Association, Georgia FFA Alumni, and her church. She has received several awards including the Larry D. Allen Leadership and Service Award from ABAC School of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Hall County Board of Education Agriculture Community Awareness Award, Agri-Life Council Wagon Wheel Award, American FFA degree, and more.



Family Legacy Award - Dannie Hart Sparks Family

Dannie Hart Sparks and her husband Alton began a tradition in 1954 that built a family that believes in one thing above all else — education is the key to success. Since then, 15 students across three generations have proudly studied at ABAC. Nearly every PhD, master's, and bachelor's degree in this large family began on ABAC's campus. One daughter of Sparks, Tanya Sparks Murphy, and her children attended ABAC. Tanya's husband, Ken Murphy, served as a part-time instructor at ABAC in the biology department. Kyle Murphy's wife, Christie Vickers Murphy, a 2009 ABAC Nursing alumna and successful RN in telemetry and pre-op, tragically passed away in 2013. The Sparks, Murphy, and Vickers families set up the Christie V. Murphy Nursing Scholarship Endowment in her honor which financially supports students in their ambitions to pursue a career in nursing. Beverly Sparks, another daughter of Dannie, majored in agriculture at ABAC, completed her bachelor's and master's degrees in agriculture at UGA and went on to earn her PhD at Louisiana State University. She worked in the field of agriculture for 31 years as an Entomologist and Administrator at Texas A&M and UGA, including serving for seven years as the first-ever female director of UGA Extension.



Miles A. Drummond Rising Star Award - Alexandra Ikner

Ikner graduated from ABAC in 2019 with a bachelor of science in agricultural education and then earned her master of agricultural and environmental education from the University of Georgia. She is currently the Certification, Training, and Licensing Program Manager for the Structural Pest Division of the Georgia Department of Agriculture. She has contributed to the publishing of several magazines and manuals including "Honey Bee Control & Removal: A Georgia Pest Control Certification Manual," Farmers and Consumers Market Bulletin, "Plan for the Certification of Pesticide Applicators in the State of Georgia" and more.



Honorary Alumnus Award - Wayne Jones

Jones joined the ABAC faculty in 1989 as a professor of music after receiving his bachelor of music from Shorter College, Master of Vocal Performance from Cincinnati Conservatory, and doctoral work at the University of Georgia. Jones served as Director of Choral and Vocal Music for ABAC for 15 years before becoming Director of the ABAC Arts Connection. In addition to bringing world-renowned performing artists to our campus and community, he was also responsible for leading "An Evening for ABAC" which raised over \$800,000 during his tenure. He is also a member of the ABAC President's Club and has donated to the ABAC Foundation for 32 consecutive years.



Honor Roll of Donors

The ABAC Foundation acknowledges those who made contributions to the College during the 2022-2023 school year. On behalf of all of the students who benefit from your support, we thank you! Every effort has been made to present a complete list of donors who made gifts between July 1, 2022 and June 30, 2023. However, if we have omitted or misspelled your name, please accept our apologies and contact the ABAC Foundation at 229.391.4907 so we can correct the error.

The Stallion Society

Gifts of \$25,000 and above made during the 2022-2023 school year

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The minimum gift to create an endowment through the ABAC Foundation, that will forever benefit a campus area of your choice, is \$25,000 over five years. It may seem like a hefty price tag, but pooled giving – a method whereby a group of individuals collectively donates funds to meet the threshold – can make it more realistic. Pooled gifts can also be created by smaller groups of siblings, relatives, or friends. Interested? Contact Deidre Martin at dmartin@abac.edu or 229-391-4907.

The Green and Gold Club

Gifts of \$2,500 to \$4,999 and above made during the 2022-2023 school year

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Gifts of \$1,000 to \$2,499 and above made during the 2022-2023 school year

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Georgia Agricultural Commodity
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**\$3.7 Million Raised in
 the 2022-2023 Year**



**\$1.1 Million in
 Scholarships Awarded**



**816 Students
 Received Scholarships**

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 Shayla Johnson
 Traci and Bob Jones
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 Shelbie Jordan
 Sommer Jordan
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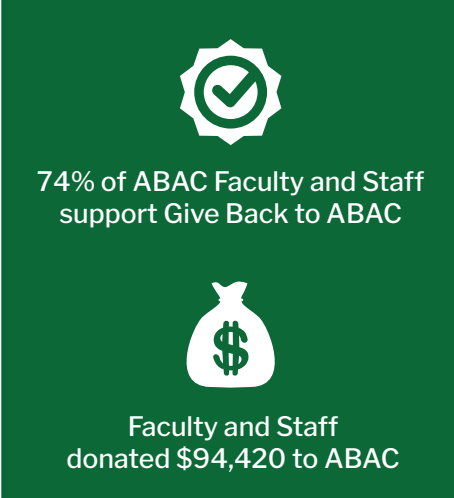
Marie and Dayakar Penumadu
McKenzie Perkins
Judy Perry
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John Anderson

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Carolyn Massey

In Memory of Tom Cordell
Dawn and Christopher Cordell

In Memory of Annie Roberts Day
Sandy and Rick Bostelman

In Memory of Michel Deroy
Virginia Deroy

In Memory of Donna Dickson
Sam Dejban

In Memory of Miles Drummond
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In Memory of George Scott
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Caroline Pruden
Trinity Yogi

Gifts in Honor

Gifts made in honor of individuals during the 2022-2023 school year

In Honor of The Baldwin Players
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In Honor of Jerome Baker
Kathy Baker

In Honor of Rick Bostelman
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In Honor of David Bowers
Margaret and Bob Parker

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In Honor of Deidre Mercer Martin
Anonymous
Julie Bush

In Honor of Zell Miller
Quay and Jimmy Allen

In Honor of Mary Moran
Jodie and Matt Snow

In Honor of Earl Parker
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In Honor of Susan Roe
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In Honor of Rep. Jan Tankersley
Georgia Rural Caucus

In Honor of Jann Thomas and Bill Haag
Meghan Vessel



Did You Know?
ABAC has over 54,000
alumni worldwide!

About Our Alumni President

Melissa Pierzchajlo

Melissa Pierzchajlo, Class of 2001 and 2002, is the new President of the ABAC Alumni Association Board of Directors. A proud ABAC alumnus, she is an entrepreneur and the Co-Owner of Solé Medical Spa.

Pierzchajlo said that her degree in business gave her the foundation for a successful and diverse portfolio that includes hospitality, project development, property management, a medical spa business and medical office management. She has a passion for cooking, design, traveling, hosting events, politics, and exploring different cultures. She speaks French as well as Italian and Spanish intermediately.

Developing her skills and confidence as an experienced pilot has also played an instrumental role in building her business career. "There can be challenges as a woman in business. Early in my career, I realized I had to work harder to make myself heard and to show that I could handle anything put in front of me. With each accomplishment, I set higher goals for myself, like becoming a pilot. Being a pilot has been a good fit for me because business projects can sometimes be an eight-hour

drive or a two-hour flight away. I'd rather fly. Also, pilots have to be observant, make quick effective decisions in the face of adversity, and with great confidence. Honing those skills made me a stronger person personally and professionally."

Being involved with ABAC is a family tradition. She is married to Richard Pierzchajlo M.D. who is often in attendance at ABAC events, is the mother of twins Noah and Garret (ABAC alumni) and the bonus mother of triplets Joe, Katie and Carol (one who is an ABAC alumnus) as well as a bonus mother to her nephew Elijah (ABAC alumnus).

Pierzchajlo is also a person who realizes the importance of giving back. "Coming full circle to be a part of the things at ABAC as an alumnus is so important because I have realized more fully how awesome ABAC was for me then, and how important ABAC is now for so many others. I would encourage alumni to find ways to reconnect with their alma mater. I love being a part of the things that are happening here at ABAC, and I always walk away feeling energized and inspired."



Melissa, Noah, Garret, and Richard Pierzchajlo

The President's Club: Honoring Cumulative Giving

The ABAC Foundation gratefully acknowledges the faithful support of our donors over time through cumulative giving. Members of The President's Club include those individuals who have made cumulative gifts of at least \$10,000. There are several levels of achievement within The President's Club:

- President's Club Platinum Achievement Level
Contributions of \$250,000 or more or planned gifts of \$750,000 or more
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Contributions of \$100,000 to \$249,999 or planned gifts of \$250,000 to \$749,999
- President's Club Silver Achievement Level
Contributions of \$50,000 to \$99,999 or planned gifts of \$150,000 to \$249,999
- President's Club Bronze Achievement Level
Contributions of \$25,000 to \$49,999 or planned gifts of \$75,000 to \$149,999
- President's Club
Contributions of \$10,000 to \$24,999 or planned gifts of \$25,000 to \$74,999

Every effort has been made to present a complete list of The President's Club members as of June 30, 2023. However, if we have omitted or misspelled your name, please accept our apologies and contact the ABAC Foundation at 229.391.4907 so that we may make the necessary corrections.

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Estate of Vera Conger Bailey
Estate of Herbert Bynum
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Estate of Sara B. Gibbs
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Estate of Stellanova B. Osborn

Golden Achievement Level

Estate of Rosalie Lennon Shepherd

Silver Achievement Level

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Estate of Joe M. and Ann Stanford
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Bronze Achievement Level

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President's Club Level

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Do you have ABAC in your estate plan? Learn more about how you and your family can have a lasting impact on ABAC students through your planned giving.

Contact Jodie Snow at jsnow@abac.edu or 229-391-4900 for more information and a confidential consultation.

Gifts from Corporations, Foundations, Trusts, and Organizations

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President's Club Level

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Greenview Farms Donates Calving Simulators

Longtime supporters of ABAC, the Harris Family of Greenview Farms provided exciting new teaching tools -- two bovine simulators -- to the ABAC Beef Unit. One simulator, the compact dystocia simulator, allows students to simulate the birthing of a full-size calf, while the other, the bovine theriogenology model, will allow them to practice artificial insemination. Greenview Farms is a diversified, 150-year-old family farm in Screven, Georgia comprising of 3,500 acres divided almost equally between pastures for cattle, timber and row crops. They raise Polled Hereford cattle and F1 Braford and have recently added Grey Brahman bulls to their herd. The donated simulator's coloring is Polled Hereford in honor of Greenview Farms. Jonny Harris and his two sons, Jon and Paul, and grandson Wesley, all attended ABAC. "The educational value of both simulators is priceless," said Dr. Mary Ellen Hicks, professor of animal science at ABAC's School of Agriculture and Natural Resources. "They will allow us to work with students in a slower manner to ensure the students understand the principles we are trying to teach, using the simulators before we take those principles out into the barn to work with the live animal. Every student -- regardless of previous experience with cattle -- can feel comfortable with the learning process."



Jonny and Toni Harris, President Brundage, and Winton Harris

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Our Mission

Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College is a State College within the University System of Georgia. ABAC's mission is to provide excellent education by engaging, teaching, coaching, mentoring, and providing relevant experiences that prepare the graduate for life.

Our Vision

ABAC aspires to be an institutional destination of greatness, a college where committed students seek a life-changing experience and are prepared to contribute positively to the communities in which they live and work.



**Abraham Baldwin
Agricultural College
Foundation**

2802 Moore Highway, Box 13
Tifton, Georgia 31793

229-391-4900 • foundation@abac.edu • abac.edu/foundation