

For Immediate Release

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Memorial Event for Columbia Man Pushes 3-year Local Donations Past \$100,000

*Jonathan Bankhead Memorial Smash Cancer tennis tournament
Surpasses 3-year goal of \$100,000 to Benefit SCOA Cares Foundation*

COLUMBIA – The 3rd Jonathan Bankhead Smash Cancer Memorial Tennis Tournament has surpassed its 3-year target of raising \$100,000 for cancer patients and their families. Donations are still coming in as the tournament prepares to open Friday and runs April 26-28, 2024, at Rockbridge Club in Forest Acres.

Bankhead died in 2020 after a 15-month battle against glioblastoma. The tournament, which was created in his memory, was organized by a group of friends in 2021. It has become the largest tennis event in the Columbia area and a key social event in the City of Forest Acres. With a message of hope, this year's tourney honors all cancer survivors.

The 2024 volunteer event committee has raised significant contributions in the form of sponsorships, donations, in-kind and silent auction items. In addition, the group has received a generous grant from the City of Forest Acres to help underwrite the cost of running the event.

100 percent of all sponsor dollars and donor dollars are paid directly to SCOA Cares Foundation. Those funds, raised to benefit SCOA patients and their families, are unrestricted and intended to be used to help relieve the day-to-day burden of living with cancer's devastating effects. The tournament committee estimates the 3-year total donated will reach approximately \$110,000.

"We wanted the money to stay in South Carolina and be used to help both the cancer patients and their families," said Vanessa McAlister Bankhead, Jonathan's widow. "SCOA Cares Foundation provides the best conduit between the patient's care and the patient's ongoing needs. My family continues to be blessed with a special kind of support. Not everyone has that."

The tournament's operating costs are covered by the tournament player registration fees as well as the Forest Acres grant. More than 200 players are expected to compete throughout the weekend. Another several hundred are expected as spectators.

Play begins Friday afternoon at 5:30 pm. Saturday play begins at 8 am. A Saturday presentation is scheduled at approximately 12:45 pm on Court 2 at Rockbridge to recognize those honored and those remembered.

- Event Dates: April 26-28, 2024.
- Location: Rockbridge Club. 4135 Rockbridge Road. Columbia SC.
- The public is invited. Food, beer and other beverages available.
- Learn more: <https://www.therockbridgeclub.com/jbmsct> & via Instagram @smashcancertourney
- *Media is invited throughout the weekend. Please contact Sheryl McAlister to coordinate. (843.441.3265) or smcalister25@gmail.com*

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