

Stronger together

Quarterback Skylar Thompson rallies support for K-State cancer research

By Marcia Locke and Heather Straffuss

K-State Quarterback Skylar Thompson's goal for his last year at K-State was to finish on a high note, and not just in football. He wanted to have a positive impact on people. So, he took his team mentality off the field to support cancer research at the university he loves.

Thompson's mother died of breast cancer when he was just 6 years old. Seven months later, his grandfather died of pancreatic cancer. Throughout his life, and especially when he was young, he was very troubled by this loss.

"They were two of the most influential and meaningful people in my life, and I had a really hard time wrapping my mind around that loss," Thompson said. "I now believe a big reason I've faced these challenges is so I can have the ability to impact others while honoring my mom and grandfather."

In October 2021, he and his family established the Thompson Family Cancer Research Fund for the Johnson Cancer Research Center in memory of his mother, Teresa Lynn Thompson, and grandfather, John Walter Thompson.

"I have a deep love and passion for K-State," Thompson said. "To be able to support a cancer research center at my university is very special to me. It means a lot to work with those so passionate about this cause."

Thompson pledged to the fund all proceeds from October sales of his "Stronger Together" apparel in honor of Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Additionally, he used a personal email message and social media to invite K-State supporters to donate to the fund.

The K-State family's response was extraordinary. By January, donations to the fund totaled \$21,590. Every donor received a thank-you video from Thompson and a letter from the center.

In April, the Skylar Thompson Family Cancer Research Award will be presented to an undergraduate student doing breast cancer research in the chemistry department.

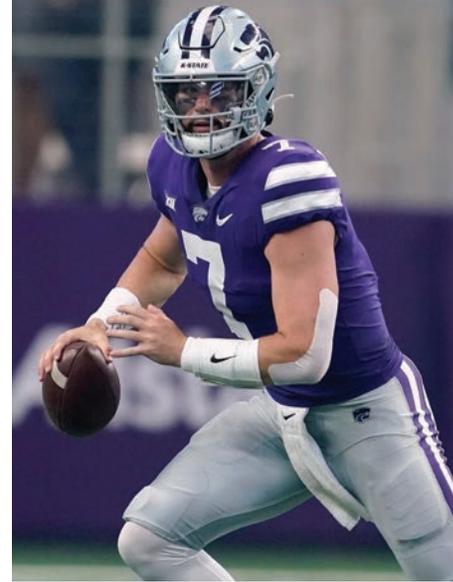
Thompson is a proud Wildcat who takes the university slogan of "family" to heart, and he is grateful to everyone who joined this effort.

"Thank you for your support, both throughout my years as a Wildcat on the football field and in this aspect of my life that means so much to me," Thompson said. "I have a great feeling that if my mom and grandfather knew what we are doing, they'd be very proud."

Thompson definitely finished on a high note. On top of all his football, academic and other accomplishments, he raised thousands of dollars to help K-State fight cancer.

"Although my time at K-State is complete, I'll continue to be dedicated to supporting cancer research at the Johnson Cancer Research Center."

To donate to the Thompson Family Cancer Research Fund, go to cancer.k-state.edu/support/thompsonfund.html.



Every gift helps, and generally more than **95%** of gifts are less than **\$1,000**.