

Good Counsel remembers Madison Smith, 16, who golfed through cancer battle - The Washington Post

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A photo of Madison Smith outside the room where her memorial service was held. Smith died Oct. 22 after a battle with metastatic colorectal cancer. (Jakob Bowen/TWP)

Hundreds gathered at Good Counsel on Tuesday to celebrate the life of former Falcons golfer and swimmer Madison Smith, who died Oct. 22 at 16 after a battle with metastatic colorectal cancer.

Wearing a tie that was Smith's favorite color, yellow, her father, Jimmy, opened the service with words of remembrance.

"Do the things you love with the people you love," he said, "as Madison would have wanted."

Good Counsel students and community members also took the stage to honor Smith. Golf team captain Thomas Margison gave the first reading, and a group of friends and classmates presented yellow flowers.

Smith was diagnosed with cancer in August 2021, with her family receiving the news while on vacation in Hawaii. From there, the then-freshman underwent chemotherapy treatment while still attending school and playing sports. Her battle and promising golf career were documented in a [story by The Washington Post in May 2022](#), shortly after she finished 12 rounds of chemo.

"She never let cancer define her," said her mother, Molly. "Teachers told us they wanted to give Madison breaks on assignments, knowing that she was going through treatments, and she would ask them, 'Don't I owe you more?'"

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In March 2022, the last treatment was completed and the cancer went into remission, just as Smith's freshman season of golf at Good Counsel was ramping up. By December, however, doctors confirmed her cancer had returned.

Throughout the process, the Good Counsel community was there, supporting Smith and her family any way it could.

"I have seen in the last week or so since Madison's passing something very special, and I'm not surprised," Good Counsel golf coach Daniel Booth said. "One of the things that struck me the most is how people talk about how sad they are but also that they are going to take her memory and have it influence their lives positively moving forward."

Despite continued treatment and the pain associated with it, Smith continued to play the sport she grew up loving, earning [All-Met second-team honors](#) in her sophomore year. Her season concluded with a girls' division second-place finish at the Washington Catholic Athletic Conference tournament in May. In a conversation with The Post last week, her father described the grit it took for Smith just to complete the round.

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"It was 18 holes that she had to walk in the midst of treatment. By the time she got to the 16th hole, she was ready [to pass out]," Jimmy Smith said. "But she was still able to push her cart the

last three holes and lost by a stroke. I don't think there's a better way to characterize her other than through that sheer will and determination."

Even with so much to deal with, physically and mentally, Smith kept the same positive demeanor she always had, staying engaged with her teammates and competing at her highest level.

"She was the teammate that you would always want to be next to on the bus, and she was the teammate that you would always want to be paired with in a match," Booth said. "People gravitated toward her because she was friendly, fun, approachable and always smiling — all this time while battling cancer."

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Smith's parents, who live in Rockville, asked for donations to the [pediatric colorectal cancer and rare tumor research fund](#) in her memory to benefit research at Children's National Hospital, where Madison received her treatment. So far, more than \$14,000 has been raised.

"It would mean the world to us if we can save just one family from having to go through what we've been through," Jimmy Smith said. "It gives us something positive to focus on in her honor."

Tuesday's service concluded with a performance of "Over the Rainbow," sung by Good Counsel student Jamison Akers.

"Her light, her love, her strength," Jimmy said. "Those are the things that I will remember about Madison."



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