

# The Lancaster News

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## Big Thursday splits \$34K between USCL, Clemson

BY ZACHARY SUMMERS

USC Lancaster student

It's uncommon for Tiger and Gamecock supporters to come together under a common cause.

But this year's common cause — the Big Thursday check presentation — was bittersweet after the death of founding member Frank Ferguson.

"This is our way of honoring Ferguson, honoring all the hard work and dedication he put into this organization," said Clemson Club President Rodney Thomas.

The Big Thursday effort culminates with a golf tournament, auctions and dinner. But it involves a year's worth of special events and hard work soliciting donations from corporate and individual sponsors.

The theme comes from the early days of the Clemson-Carolina football rivalry, when the teams used to play on Thursday during State Fair Week.

On Wednesday, March 16, Big Thursday Scholarship of Lancaster presented checks for \$17,000 each to USC Lancaster and Clemson University.

"We are very excited for this year's Big Thursday check presentation," said USCL Dean Walt Collins. "This is something that can get everyone here excited."

Since 2000, the Big Thursday Scholarship has raised \$807,000. That money is split



Zachary Summers for the Lancaster News

From left, Shana Dry and Dean Walt Collins with USCL Partner, Partners for Youth Executive Director Sharon Novinger and Evan Scott, Rodney Thomas and Chad Catledge with the local Clemson Club display the big checks presented to USCL and Clemson University for scholarships for local students who attend those schools.

equally between USCL and Clemson University for \$4,000 scholarships to Lancaster County students from all four high schools — Andrew Jackson, Buford, Indian Land and Lancaster — who will attend one of the universities.

"This scholarship is one of our biggest ones. People don't realize how much of a difference this money makes," Collins said. "It makes a big difference in helping a student pay for things like tuition or even books. The fellowship of everyone working together is amazing."

Lancaster County Partners for Youth Executive Director Sharon Novinger is a part of the selection process for students who plan to attend Clemson. USCL selects its recipients through its scholarship committee.

"Our effort here really helps students to further their education," Novinger said. "It's honestly a huge honor to

be a part of it."

This year was bittersweet as both USCL and Clemson supporters remember Ferguson. The past president of the Lancaster County Clemson Club, he helped establish the Big Thursday Scholarship.

"Ferguson worked very hard to get this scholarship started," Thomas said. "It took a lot to get this off the ground, because we all know Gamecocks and Tigers aren't the best of friends."

Ferguson died March 9. For everyone in the Lancaster County Clemson Club, this year felt a little different. But they didn't let that stop them.

"This year was for Frank," Thomas said.

Students in Lancaster County who plan to attend either USCL or Clemson University have until March 25 to submit their applications for the scholarships. Applications can be found at [www.lcpartnersforyouth.org](http://www.lcpartnersforyouth.org).