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## **Americus Couple Who Both Survived Cancer Will Light Phoebe Sumter Lights of Love Tree**

**Americus, Ga.** – Scott and Sherry Ivey’s wonderful life together began more than 40 years ago when they met as students at Georgia Southwestern. In the years since, they raised three children, spent decades as members of Americus First Baptist Church and built a strong connection to the community they love. One thing they never expected to share was a cancer diagnosis.

“It was a shock,” Sherry said of the day before Christmas Eve in 2013 when she found out she had breast cancer. “You’re scared to death,” Scott said about his diagnosis with non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma five and a half years later.

From the moment of her diagnosis, Sherry was determined to try to live her life as normally as possible. “The whole family was at our house for Christmas, and I didn’t have time for a pity party,” she said.

They went ahead with all their Christmas plans, then after the holidays, she put her full energy into her treatment. Dr. Kristen Tott at Phoebe Sumter ended up performing a double mastectomy and removing 13 lymph nodes. Sherry then underwent six rounds of chemotherapy with Dr. Chirag Jani and seven weeks of radiation therapy led by Dr. Jay McAfee at the Phoebe Cancer Center in Albany. “I cannot say enough about my doctors. They were wonderful, all of them,” she said.

Scott was able to receive all his care – except for one bone scan – at the Phoebe Sumter Oncology & Hematology Clinic in Americus where Dr. Jose Tongol led his care. “Dr. Tongol is amazing, but it’s the nurses that run the ship out there. They’re amazing. It’s a real family environment there,” he said. “I don’t know why anyone would go out of town for treatment. We’re blessed. The hospital is beautiful. It’s got a top-notch staff, and you can tell they genuinely care about you.”

Scott continues with immunotherapy treatments and Sherry gets regular CT scans, but they have both remained healthy and cancer free. They are honored to be the 2024 Phoebe Sumter Lights of Love tree lighters. The Iveys say speaking at the lighting ceremony will give them an opportunity to thank their family and friends for their support through their cancer journeys. “I don’t know how people do it without that support,” Scott said.

Lights of Love will also give them a chance to highlight their faith. “You just have to give it to God. Our faith played a big part in our recovery,” Sherry said.

They also want to thank their care teams. “The doctors who cared for us are world class,” Scott said. “We’re very fortunate to have doctors of that capability here in southwest Georgia.”

But most of all they want to uplift others battling cancer and encourage people to get appropriate cancer screenings. “If it helps one person, if one lady will go get her mammogram, it’s meaningful,” Sherry said. “Any time we can help somebody know what to expect or tell them what we went through, we try to do it,” Scott added.

Scott and Sherry will share their journeys and that encouragement at the Lights of Love ceremony on Thursday, Dec. 12 at 6:00 PM. Donors can pay for a light on the Lights of Love tree with all the donations going to support local cancer patients. The Phoebe Sumter Foundation is accepting donations at [www.phoebehealth.com/sumterfoundation](http://www.phoebehealth.com/sumterfoundation).

Scott said, “It’s just a way that we can tell the people at Phoebe how much we appreciate them and how much they did for us. It’s just gratitude.”

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