

# Simmons Bank to Sponsor King Cotton Holiday Classic - September 12, 2018

PINE BLUFF, Ark. – Go Forward Pine Bluff (GFPB) announced Wednesday the December return of the King Cotton Holiday Classic, sponsored by Simmons Bank. The event is a high school basketball tournament that placed Pine Bluff in the national spotlight in years past. GFPB CEO Ryan Watley made the announcement during a news conference at the Pine Bluff Convention Center.

The tournament's eight-team lineup, which includes nationally ranked teams and players, was also revealed.

"We are incredibly proud to bring this famed event back to Pine Bluff and are eager to see the positive impact it will have on our city," said Watley.

Simmons Bank, headquartered in Pine Bluff, is the title sponsor of the tournament.

"Simmons is committed to providing opportunities for our communities, especially for our hometown of Pine Bluff," said Daniel Robinson, Simmons Bank Pine Bluff community president. "We are honored to be part of a tournament that gives young athletes a platform to pursue excellence and celebrate sportsmanship."

The tournament will be held December 27-29 at the Pine Bluff Convention Center.

Ahead of the event, the Convention Center will receive a new video scoreboard, along with renovated restrooms, dressing rooms and concession stands. Fresh paint and a new exterior marquee will also be part of the renovation.

The tournament's reputation for star talent extends to its earliest days, when the tournament garnered national attention and a televised ESPN segment in the 1980s.

2018 teams include:

Columbus High School – Columbus, Mississippi

- 2018 6A champion
- Ranked #1 in Mississippi, #35 nationally
- Reached final four in the state last four years

Houston Math, Science and Technology Center – Houston, Texas

- 2018 6A semifinalist
- Ranked #16 in Texas, #91 nationally
- Two top 50 players for 2019 in the state

Landry Walker High School – New Orleans, Louisiana

- 2018 6A runner-up
- Ranked #4 in Louisiana
- Reached state finals last three years

Gulliver Preparatory School – Pinecrest, Florida

- Two players ranked in the top 75 National Class of 2020
- Players ranked #5 and #7 in Florida

The Park School of Buffalo – Snyder, New York

- 2018 state champion
- Ranked #4 in New York, #102 nationally
- Top 10-ranked player in the state

#### Polytechnic High School – Long Beach, California

- 2018 conference champion, state quarterfinalist
- Named “Sports School of the Century” by Sports Illustrated in 2005

#### Mills University Studies High School – Sweet Home, Arkansas

- 2017-18 5A state runner-up
- Ranked #4 in Arkansas, #104 nationally

#### Jacksonville High School – Jacksonville, Arkansas

- 2013 5A state champion

#### Pine Bluff High School – Pine Bluff, Arkansas

- 2015 6A state champion
- Host team

#### About Go Forward Pine Bluff

Founded in 2017, Go Forward Pine Bluff is a nonprofit organization with a vision to positively impact local government, education, economic development and quality of life. Go Forward Pine Bluff’s mission is to increase the revenues of the city government, enabling it to provide services expected by citizens.

#### About Simmons Bank

Simmons Bank is an Arkansas state-chartered bank that began as a community bank in 1903. Through the decades, Simmons has developed a full suite of financial products and services designed to meet the needs of individual consumers and business customers alike. Simmons has grown steadily to approximately \$16.2 billion in assets (as of June 30, 2018) and today operates approximately 200 branch locations throughout Arkansas, Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Texas. Simmons is the subsidiary bank for Simmons First National Corporation (NASDAQ: SFNC), a publicly traded bank holding company headquartered in Pine Bluff, Arkansas. For more information, visit <http://www.simmonsbank.com/>.

###

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

RYAN WATLEY

Go Forward Pine Bluff

Chief Executive Officer

870.939.6900 (office)

[watleyryan@goforwardpb.org](mailto:watleyryan@goforwardpb.org)

SARAH SHAFER

Simmons Bank

Communications Specialist

501.223.4282 (office)

501.612.8412 (cell)

[sarah.shaffer@simmonsbank.com](mailto:sarah.shaffer@simmonsbank.com)

---

<https://newsroom.simmonsbank.com/Simmons-Bank-to-Sponsor-King-Cotton-Holiday-Classic-September-12,-2018>