

Island  
Life



# Remembering Jay

A heart defect did not stop Jay Bon Salle from living life to the fullest.

By: ORLANDO RODRIGUEZ  
orodriguez@islandernews.com

Jay Bon Salle entered the world with a heart defect that assured him an uneasy life filled with illness and surgery, with the end likely to come as a teenager.

Jay suffered from transposition of the greater vessels. Simply put, the transposition is when oxygenated blood from the lung flows in the wrong direction. This causes poor oxygenation to the body resulting in a bluish-purple coloration of the skin and shortness of breath.

During the era in which Jay lived, this almost always meant a life of severely restricted activity and early death. Jay is the longest known survivor of this type of heart defect.

But the Chicago native beat the odds, becoming an avid fisherman and surviving to age 37, thanks, in part, to a close inner-circle of friends and family and the tropical climes of Key Biscayne.

along with the sense of community and all the friends Jay had on island, which gave him something to live for," said Andrew, a Fannie Mae portfolio manager in Arlington, Virginia.

Jay underwent his first remedial open heart surgery when he was two. His next major surgery was a brain operation when he was nine to remove a cerebral aneurysm, a result of his heart condition. When Jay was 21, he survived another life-saving operation to combat respiratory failure.

As a young man, Jay landed a job delivering food for Sir Pizza, consequently impressing the community he served with his positive attitude and good nature.

"He didn't have a very good deal coming out of box, but you would never know that because the kid was always smiling," said Sir Pizza owner Barry Swartz, noting that he roomed with Jay for awhile.

"He wasn't just an employee, he was a friend," Swartz added. "He was a very special person who wasn't given the gifts everybody else had, but who did the best he could and who was very dependable."

Jay's reputation as a talented angler grew over the years, as he won several fishing competitions including the Bimini Native Fishing Tournament.

He later took up billiards and captained his team to a regional qualifying tournament in Las Vegas.

Through his love of athletics, Jay became the commissioner of several



fantasy sports leagues. When fishing became too tough for him, Jay turned to designing saltwater aquariums.

"He wandered into my store one day," said George Giampetro, owner of Gables Aquarium, who quickly befriended Jay and watched him graduate from a simple 40-gallon tank to a complex, 250-gallon saltwater coral reef aquarium teeming with "at least 50 different species of corals, clown fish, anemones, giant clams, and of course typical angel fish and ornamental reef fish."

Jay spent a lot of time during the later years of his life, at least 15 hours a week, working on aquariums, Giampetro noted.

"It takes a lot of talent to manage a tank like that on your own, and he really did prolific job on it."

Jay displayed a propensity for rare fish like "the purple tang from Red Sea" that roamed his aquatic wonderland, said Giampetro, noting that Jay loved tending to his fish.

"The calming effect of watching fish is very beneficial; there are actual studies that say it brings down the heart rate, the tranquility of watching fish swim."

Giampetro and many others plan to remember Jay on November 7, when the Jay Bon Salle Memorial Golf Tournament takes over the Golf

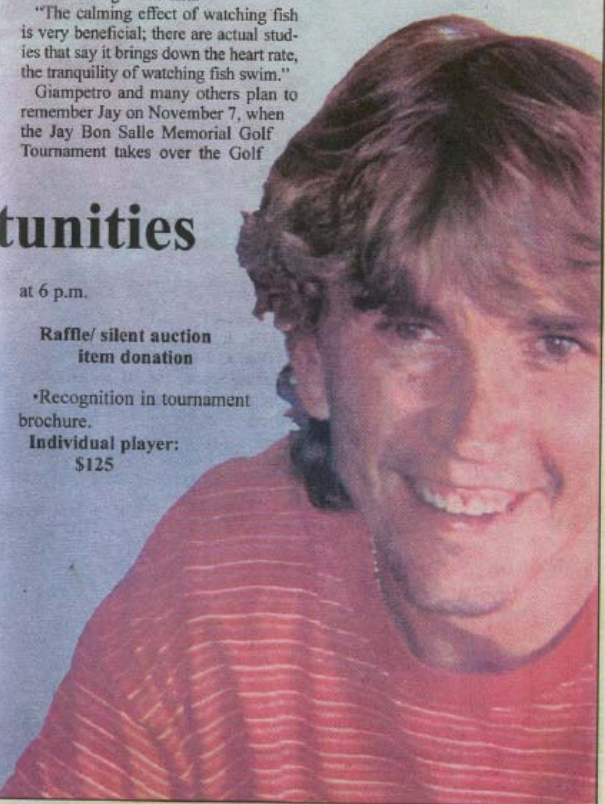
Course at Crandon Park.

The entry fee is \$125 per person, which includes a round of golf, lunch and dinner.

Earnings will go toward the fight against heart disease through the formation of the Jay Bon Salle Foundation. This year's proceeds and donations to the foundation will go to the University of Miami Cardiovascular Center.

So far, the tournament prizes include: Miami Heat Tickets, University of Miami Football Tickets and memorabilia, a Dolphins signed football, Weekend Stay at Sonesta Beach Hotel, a baseball autographed by pitcher Dontrelle Willis, two foursome passes to Melreese Golf Course, Ping Pong, Melreese Golf Course, Ping Irons with Bag, TaylorMade 560 Driver, NASDAQ Tennis Tournament tickets, and Kenneth Cole his/her watches.

For additional details or to register online, visit [www.thejbsfoundation.org](http://www.thejbsfoundation.org).



## Sponsorship opportunities

**Platinum Sponsor: \$1,250**

- 8 player spots
- Player appreciation gifts
- Recognition in the tournament brochure
- Personalized tee sign

**Gold Sponsor: \$750**

- 4 player spots
- Player appreciation gifts
- Recognition in the tournament brochure
- Personalized tee sign

**Silver Sponsor: \$500**

- 2 player spots
- Player appreciation gifts
- Recognition in the tournament brochure

ment brochure

•Personalized tee sign  
**Event Sponsor: \$500**

- Sponsorship of on-course beverages, lunch or dinner
- Recognition in tournament brochure

**Hole Sponsor**

- Personalized tee sign
  - 1 player spot
  - Player appreciation gifts
- All player spots include lunch and an evening buffet

**Dinner only: \$50**

- Buffet dinner at course starting

at 6 p.m.

**Raffle/ silent auction item donation**

- Recognition in tournament brochure.
- Individual player: \$125**