



SPACE COAST THERAPY DOGS, INC.

RAINBOW BRIDGE ALBUM

This album is dedicated to the memory of all the Registered Therapy Dogs who have been a part of our program since its inception in 1987. They are loved and missed by all of us, but most especially by their handlers and the patients who shared their unconditional love. They wait now at Rainbow Bridge until the day when we will be together again.



RAINBOW BRIDGE

When our beloved pets die, they go to a place connecting Heaven and Earth, called the Rainbow Bridge. There are meadows and hills for our special friends so they can run and play together. There is plenty of food, water and sunshine, and they are warm and comfortable. Animals who had been ill or old are restored to health and vigor. Those who were hurt or maimed are made whole and strong again, just as we remember them from days gone by.

The animals are happy except for one thing, they miss someone special-someone they had to leave behind. But the day comes when one animal suddenly stops and looks into the distance. The bright eyes are intent, the eager body quivers. He breaks away from the group, flying over the green grass, his legs carrying him faster and faster. He has seen YOU, and when you and your beloved pet finally meet, you cling together in joyous reunion, never to be parted again. His happy kisses rain upon your face, your hands caress his soft fur. You look once more into the trusting eyes of your best friend, so long gone from your life but never absent from your heart.

Then You Cross The Rainbow Bridge Together

THE FOUNDERS



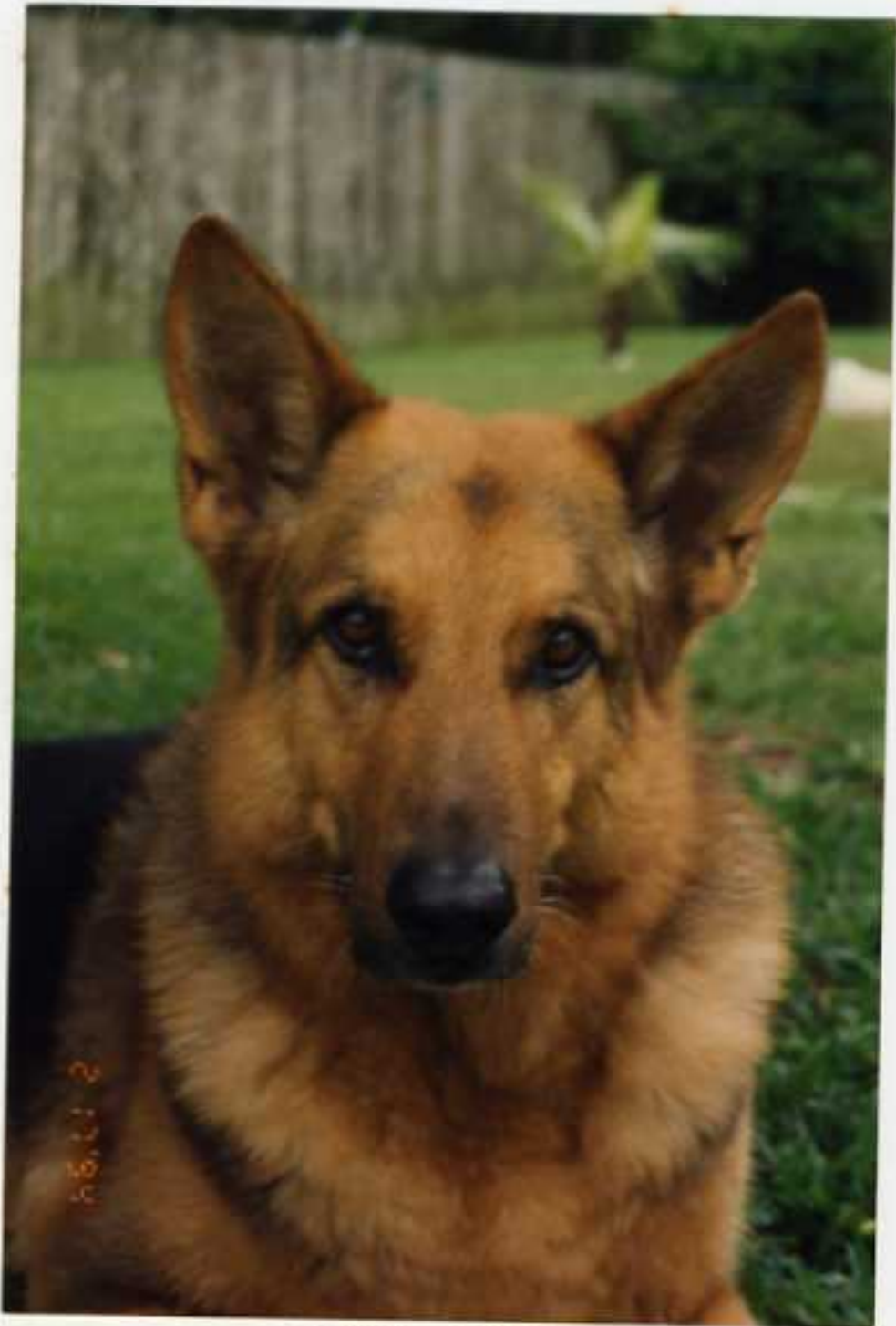
From left, SEGER, PEPPERMINT PATTI, MR. BEAUJANG
SPOT



SPOT AND BASIL (GERMAN SHEPHERD DOGS)
SPOILED AND LOVED BY DAVID AND WENDY
KEIGHLEY

THE FOUNDERS

BASIL—German Shepherd Dog
Owned and handled by Wendy Keighley



4/21/84—7/1/94

THE FOUNDERS

SPOT—German Shepherd Dog

Owned and handled by Wendy Keighley



THE FOUNDERS

SEGER--Rottweiler
Owned and handled by Marie Zeak



3/24/86—10/25/97



THE FOUNDERS

PEPPERMINT PATTI—Golden Retriever

Owned and handled by Louise Curry



**WINNER OF THE FIRST SEGER AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING
THERAPY DOG OF THE YEAR—1998**

1986-1999



Soft brown eyes full of sympathy and
kindness,
Silky ears and downy golden fur,
An endearing lopsided smile that warmed
the hardest of hearts.
A giving soul;
Patience personified.
Family member, friend, ambassador,
healer.....
Peppermint Patti.
Canine and human,
Young and old,
We are all better for the lessons you taught
us
And the Love you gave to us.
Your spirit will live on always.

by Kristine Soares

The Founders

MR. BEAUJANGLES--Miniature Poodle

Loved, owned and handled by Michele and H.T. Everett



1983--2002

The end of an era, our last founding dog.



"Tell the boys their grandpa has gone to heaven to live with Jesus. We will be home in a little while." It was January 1984. I was with my ten-year-old and five year old cousin. Me - the one with no kids and no clue. I gave them the message and wondered what to do next. At that exact instant the doorbell rang, and the three of us went to the door. There stood HT with a seven-week old bundle of black fuzz and energy, peeking out his jacket. Tears changed to smiles and giggles.

So you see, from the age of seven weeks, Mr. Beaujangles was ordained to be a Therapy Dog. I had no idea. That is just the way it was. I didn't remember the above incident until about a week before we lost Beau. For the next 18 years I was merely the facilitator. Every challenged child, every nursing home resident, every troubled teenage girl, every person in rehab - they were all his purpose here. What a responsibility and treasure God had in store for me!!

First there were five: Basil, Spotty, Peppermint Patty, Seger and Mr. Beau. The first four long preceded Mr. Beau to Rainbow Bridge. So, I know he had a warm and frolicking welcome. No gravestone or marker to visit for Beau. I have the thriving legacy of Space Coast Therapy Dogs, now over 150 members strong. I have a treasure trove of stories that I will regale you with upon demand!!



Thanks to all of you who loved Beau, who extended special, specific invitations to him to visit your home; who let him sleep in you bed and shower in your shower when Tee and I were gone; who always sent him Christmas toys; who always asked about him as he aged and *fearlessly* persevered; and who realized he was my son as much as any two-legged child.

Michele

A SPECIAL PLACE

You have a special place, Dear Lord
That I know you'll always keep.
A special place reserved for dogs,
To peacefully fall asleep.

A place with fluffy pillows.
And a yard for hiding bones,
With maybe a little babbling creek
That rushes over stones.

With wide green fields and flowers,
For those who never knew
Of running, playing freely
Under sky of perfect blue.

Lord, I know you keep this special place,
And so to you I pray
For one oh so special dog
Who came to you today.

She was full of strength and love,
And so very, very wise.
The puppy look she once had,
This morning left her eyes.

She will be dearly missed, Lord,
This special love of mine.
But now, she'll romp and play
In your land that's so divine.

Speak to my baby softly, please
With a hug and warm hello.
She's a special gift to you, Dear Lord
From me who loves her so.

SHANNON—Irish Setter

Owned and handled by Jay Zigo

December 16, 1981—April 8, 1994





**IRIS—Greyhound
(Sweet Bounty)**

Owned and handled by Jay Zigo
April 1, 1989—June 3, 1996

IRIS was in the “Celebrating Greyhounds” Calendar as the August 1998 calendar girl.



IRIS

OK, dad, whatever you say. Now can we go for a walk?

IRIS is a five year old girl adopted by Jay and John Zigo of Titusville, Florida through **Greyhound Pets of America/Central Florida**. She was bred at the Strickland Farm in Abilene, Kansas, but she got a new name in honor of fateful April 15th, the date she arrived to live with Jay and John. Now that she is retired, she starts the day with a brisk 6 a.m. walk looking for a neighbor to greet, followed by a hearty breakfast before a day visiting the nursing home where she brightens the day for the residents.



IRIS

IRIS arrived at my house with Marie Zeak and a young friend. She knew IRIS needed a home and I had only recently lost Shannon. So, somewhat reluctantly, I opened my heart to a Greyhound.

IRIS turned out to be just as sweet and loving as Shannon but she soon developed into an escape artist. She found out how to unlatch the gate and unless you were looking directly at her she could disappear. IRIS was friendly and trusting and perfect strangers would call to tell us IRIS was visiting. Before we got her she was used to open areas and freedom to roam and so the backyard was small time for her. She was also a winner at the racetrack.

IRIS adjusted to us and loved visiting nursing homes. After only 3 years, one Saturday morning she was walking across the room, collapsed, and died. IRIS was such a sweet, elegant Greyhound—I felt so proud walking beside her!



GYPSY—Great Dane

Owned and handled by Cindy Goss



1993-1996

Dear Family,

"Gypsy" here. Had to take time from my new activities to write a few lines. I know you are very sad today, and I need to tell you that you should not shed tears for me in my passing from this earth plane, but you should celebrate my life with you, and know that I loved every minute that I shared with you. You gave me a beautiful home life, you cared for my every needs, and when it hurt you the most, you made the decision to end my pain. This is the ultimate sacrifice for you, and the beautiful freedom for me. I lived with you, always trusting you in every avenue, and today, you did not fail me.

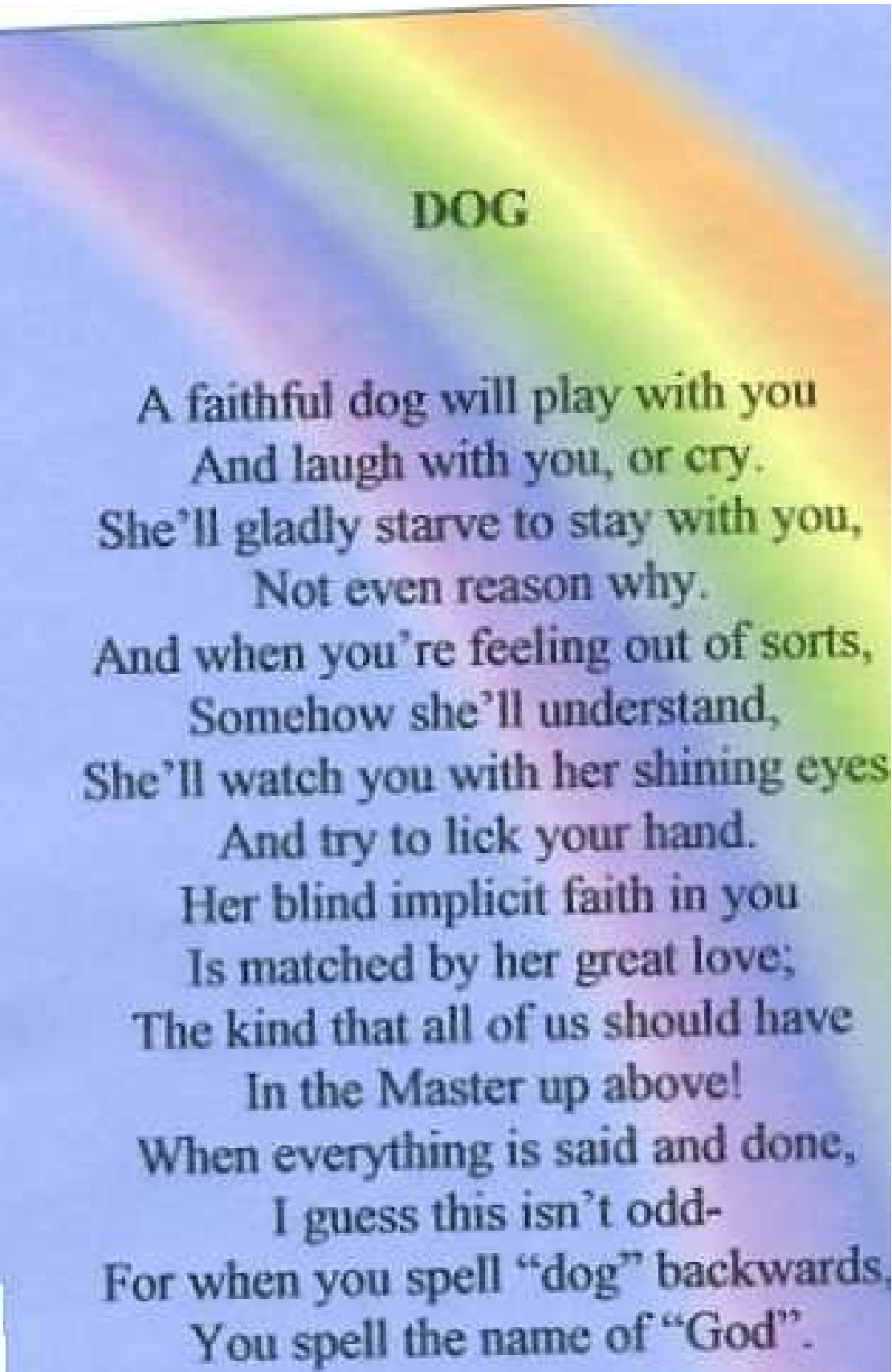
My pain was great, and I did my very best to not let you know, but you did know. So today, I drifted into a deep and pleasant sleep.....And shortly, I awoke in a strange and wonderful place. I saw the most beautiful blue sky, smelled wonderful aromas of baked bones and garlic boiled liver...saw very high grass swaying in the gentle breeze...and WOW, I had no pain! Then, very slowly, I realized something was approaching me, the grass was parting, and before I could blink my eyes, a black dog appeared, leaping out of no where...I thought she was to devour me in her powerful jaws, I froze. Then, she stopped before me and said, "Welcome to Rainbow Bridge, Gypsy. I have been waiting to receive you. You are to be my companion in leading the pack here. I am very tired of this awesome responsibility, and I need your help. Come race with me, I will introduce you to so many that will follow you. I know all about you and you are truly the one to rule with me in this beautiful place. Sometimes, the angels drop in for a visit, and this is always great fun...we nip their wings, and grab their halos, great frisbees, those haloes, and this is only the beginning of what is in store for you here. You will race, leap, play, eat, drink the nectar of the gods...anything you want is yours. And, you will meet your humans someday...then you will cross that bridge to an even greater place, in the mean time a Rottweiler and a "Great" Great Dane will keep order here. Oh, almost forgot to introduce myself, back on earth, a lot of folks knew me as "The Iron Maiden", but the name is "Zillah".

So, now I race with the black dog, and I have discovered some of my friends that I knew on earth. We are having great fun together, and they have all accepted my role as "Leader" at this beautiful place.

Celebrate my life, and know that I am safe, awaiting to be united with you someday. Tell Cody, Shasta and Stryker that I love them and I know they will help you through the earthly troubles you are having.

Until we meet again,





DOG

A faithful dog will play with you
And laugh with you, or cry.
She'll gladly starve to stay with you,
Not even reason why.
And when you're feeling out of sorts,
Somehow she'll understand,
She'll watch you with her shining eyes
And try to lick your hand.
Her blind implicit faith in you
Is matched by her great love;
The kind that all of us should have
In the Master up above!
When everything is said and done,
I guess this isn't odd-
For when you spell "dog" backwards,
You spell the name of "God".

KENDA—Toy Poodle

Owned and handled by Nay (Nadylis) Wood
February 27, 1992—October 11, 1996

**FOUNDING DOG OF THE PET THERAPY PROGRAM
AT HOLMES REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER**





Kenda TDI, CGC
(Therapy dog, canine good citizen)

KENDA'S STORY by Nay Wood

Kenda was an 11" light apricot poodle, born as a single puppy to a bad backyard breeder on Feb. 27, 1992, I rescued her at seven weeks. She had never been allowed outside the two-foot square box which she shared with her mother, because "she peed on the floor every time we let her out". She had never been outdoors and no attempt had been made to wean her. When I took her to my vet, he would not believe she was older than three weeks because she was so weak and uncoordinated. I had insisted the breeder give her her first shots, however, so I had proof of her age. She had no papers, but her parents were on the premises and APPEARED to be in good health.

Born with a serious liver defect that was undiagnosed for over three years despite frequent trips to the vet for vomiting inexplicably, she nevertheless graduated from Basic Obedience at Indian River Dog Training Club, earned the Canine Good Citizen title, and qualified with Space Coast Therapy Dogs. She made many nursing home visits before becoming the Founding Dog of the Pet Therapy Program at Holmes Regional Medical Center, serving both on the Oncology floor and in the Radiation Oncology waiting room. Later, as more dogs joined the program, she confined her visits to every Wednesday on the Oncology floor. At this time the Pet Therapy Program at HRMC was restricted to Oncology. It did not expand to the rest of the hospital until a year after Kenda's death.

Her deteriorating health necessitated a retirement of several months but, put on a special protein-restricted diet by a specialist in Ft. Pierce, she rallied and was able to return to "The Floor" and the work she loved; giving love to everyone she came in contact with.

Alas. It was but for a few more months. She developed Cushing's disease and other complications which quickly eroded her quality of life. She died in my arms at the Vet's on October 11, 1996.

**GEORGIA'S HE'S THE BOSS CDX, CGC, TD Inc.
"BOSS"**

Owned and handled by Georgia Randall
October 1991-May 7, 1997



*A precious little angel
has left this world today.
What was only mine to borrow
Is now with God to stay.*

Owned and handled by Jack FitzGerald
February 25, 1990—September 25, 1997



IN MEMORY OF "RUSTY" SIR RUSSELL FITZGERALD

Yesterday He stood bright and tall and all aglow
Like a thousand winds that lightly blow.
Do not pine that I had to make this flight,
For I will be one of the stars that shine all night.

I was placed here by the man up above
to spread joy with all my love.
Do not stand at my grave and cry,
For I am not there. For I did not die.

"Rusty" was a beautiful, full of love 7 1/2 year old "Sheltie" that was put on this earth to spread joy and love wherever he went. He fulfilled his destiny by being a Class "A" Therapy Dog. He was only with us a very short time but he made so many friends and soothed so many others in all walks of life, he will never be forgotten. I will miss him so very much.

Rusty developed a nasty kidney infection that by the time it was discovered his kidneys were 2/3 to 3/4 beyond complete return to normal use. Eventually, he would gradually develop very painful medical care and I would lose him in the end. I could not let this happen to my wonderful friend of 7 1/2 years, so I made the decision to end his life peacefully. Somewhere, someplace, I will see him again and pick-up where we left off here on this earth. I know he will be waiting for me.

KLAUS—Rottweiler

Owned and handled by Elena Miller



IN MEMORY OF "KLAUS"

When you first came into our lives, you were so small and adorable. Your bright eyes were shining and your tongue ready for a lifetime of kisses and licking. You were such a special boy. Puppyhood went fast, and before we knew it, you were all grown up, so smart and eager to learn, yet we learned much from you, as well.

People had so many nicknames for you—Pfeffer, Pfeffie, the Pfeffermeister, Klausy Mouse—it's a wonder you responded to all of them! In your prime, you went Best in Show, even though you were never very fond of the show ring. Finally, we got our Companion Dog title, and you went to work, where so many came to love you. You taught people that your breed isn't all bad, and that there are great dogs that serve us well. You even showed people how to get their own dogs to behave. You were such a comedian, always using your "best material" to get a laugh out of humans.

But your specialty was therapy visits, especially those with children. Klaus and kids. It was a natural mix. You would spot children in wheelchairs and tug at your lead until you got to lay down beside them, getting showered with attention. We'll never forget the time they laid on you, a child who could not see, hear, or express himself. When he embraced your big, soft neck, his little body relaxed and he smiled as big as he could. It still gives us chills!

You got sick, and could no longer do the visits you so looked forward to, but you learned to be content staying at home, where no harm could come to you. We hope you know we only wanted the best for you.

Then came that frightful day that you passed on. I can't express how much we miss you and how much we love you. Just to hear your bark while your dinner was being prepared, and your happiness when the words, "pig ear" were uttered. Who could forget your happy dance? Your stubby tail wagging fiercely? You seemed so happy and healthy, we really thought we had won. But we lost you, along with your kisses, snuggles, warmth and love. We'll always cherish the memories and keep you close to our hearts. Rest now, our sweet boy, for you're at peace. Remember, we love you and miss you, and one day, we hope to be with you again, our precious angel.

With all our love,
Mom and Dad and your loving family,
especially, your little pal, Blue

A GIFT OF PAWS

by Terri L. Onorato

In the silence of the morning
my heart begins to break
as feelings from the day you left
dawn slowly with daybreak.

I say a prayer of grateful thanks
for the life that I've been blessed.
And ask for strength so that I might
through pain find happiness.

God sent you as a present
though not received on Christmas day.
A gift of paws that reached down deep
and stole my heart away.

Tears are part of healing,
each one shed will ease the pain
so that the memories will come to mind
in a most dynamic, ardent way.

I doubt that you would want me
to spend this day in tears,
I know you'd rather see me smile
as from atop a cloud you peer.

Though a time or two I've lost the way
since the Keeper called you Home,
now faith restored by angel paws
will never come undone.

A loving aura fills the sky
as you rest on clouds of fleece,
and as angels gently tuck you in
may you sleep in heavenly peace.

**INTERNATIONAL, PUERTO RICAN, SOUTH AMERICAN,
CHAMPION OF THE AMERICAS, CANADIAN AND
AMERICAN CHAMPION LAKILANNI FULL MOON
FEVER, T.D.INC. known as "TOMMY"**

Owned and handled by K. Dale Winchester-Baer

6/13/90—4/26/98



A wonderful show dog, an excellent example of the greyhound show dog standard, an enthusiastic and gentle therapy dog, and most of all a comical and loving friend.

TOMMY—deeply loved and greatly missed by so many.



Afterglow

I'd like the memory of me to be a happy one.
I'd like to leave an afterglow of smiles when day is gone.
I'd like to leave an echo whispering softly down the ways
Of happy times and laughing times and bright and sunny days.
I'd like the tears of those who grieve to dry before the sun
Of happy memories that I leave when life is done.

The echo of Tommy whispers to us constantly, to those of us who miss him so—those of us left standing in Tommy's afterglow.

Love,
Dale

TWIT—Beagle

Owned and handled by Marilyn Hulme

1982/1998



I will always think of you as my "all around" pet. You were just over a year when you became a breed champion, and then you quickly earned your obedience title, and your CGC. With your sweet and gentle nature, you were a "natural" for therapy dog work and here you were a trailblazer and teacher.

When you began your work in Miami, there were no organizations like Space Coast Therapy Dogs. You and I had to work solo, and I had so much to learn. I remember how nervous I was, how difficult it was for me to go to the nursing home, but I took my cue from you. You were so accepting of all the residents and you genuinely enjoyed visiting with each one, even if they hadn't wanted to see you the previous week. That was ok with you! I learned to enjoy the visits as much as you did. Thank you, my teacher.

You had been a therapy dog for ten years when we moved to Brevard County and how you enjoyed being part of Space Coast Therapy Dogs. Unfortunately, within six months you were diagnosed with congestive heart failure and the visits became too much for your little heart. After eleven years, you had to retire but what a legacy you left. Your daughter and great-granddaughter were certified and continued your work. Even Sassy, the latest therapy dog, carries your genes.

It gives me comfort to know that Daiquiri, Pinta and Patty were there to meet you at Rainbow Bridge. You were always part of the "pack" and I'm sure they have showed you all the fun, "beagle-things" to do, while you're waiting for the rest of us. Until we meet again.

All my love,

Mom

MIKKI—Eskimo Mix

Owned and handled by Tammy Farrington

September 16, 1986-May 15, 1998

Therapy Dog since 1992
Canine good citizen
my best friend



You slipped away, I held you close,
your soul flowed through my heart,
I felt your last breath through my tears
I felt your pain depart.

You were my angel on this earth,
you're my angel in the sky.
Wait for me, someday you'll see
our names shine side by side.

loved dearly by Tammy Farrington



It was a crisp night in November 1992 at Courtney Springs when I first met the white, fuzzy dog. His beautiful coat shone so brightly it glowed like silver making his coal black eyes gleam like jewels. This was his first visit and he was so happy he never stopped BARKING! I left thinking there was no hope for this guy.

How wrong I was! In a matter of weeks he was everywhere, giving laughs and pleasure. He suffered the indignity of wearing bunny ears, mouse ears, halos, angel wings, goofy hats, sunglasses, a multitude of Halloween costumes, even spots glued on his coat. Yet, his fines was the red harness that he proudly wore.

He bowled, he danced, he leaped, he cuddled. He traveled thousands of miles, served thousands of hours and yes, he still barked, only "on command" now. Then as time went on, his leaps were not as high, his dance was slower. His last parade, he rode. Then a well-earned retirement. He gave the mantle of Therapy to his Greyhound and he was content.

In March 1997, he was called out of retirement for a "command appearance" to visit an old friend on her 100th birthday. His final visit was at Courtney Springs where it all began.

To his mistress, Tammy Farrington, "I shall never forget him and will forever love him. Now when I hear thunder I know the sound is an echo from Rainbow Bridge, the barking of a great Therapy Dog. His name is MIKKI and he lives forever in so many hearts."

By Marie Zeak

REQUEST FROM RAINBOW BRIDGE

by Consta Jenkins

Weep not for me though I am gone
Into that gentle night.

Grieve if you will, but not for long
Upon my soul's sweet flight.

I am at peace, my soul's at rest

There is no need for tears.

For with your love I was so blessed

For all those many years.

There is no pain, I suffer not,

The fear now all is gone.

Put now these things out of your thoughts,

In your memory I live on.

Remember not my fight for breath

Remember not the strife

Please do not dwell upon my death,

But celebrate my life.

LAURI J'S LA BELLE COCOA, CD, CGC, TD INC.

"COCOA"—Cocker Spaniel

Owned and handled by Marilyn Russell
December 18, 1987—March 10, 1999



Cocoa (9 weeks)

Cocoa was active as a Therapy Dog around 1993-1994. She officially retired soon after that due to heart problems. Mostly we visited the children at Lockmar and Ocean Breeze schools. Cocoa was always eager to visit. She would walk ahead of me with head held high as we entered the schools. She was always so patient even when mobbed with children and reaching hands.

As a puppy, Cocoa was wild. I was afraid that we had gotten the wrong puppy—one with a bad temperament. Cocoa was very dominant, not the usual submissive Cocker. With training, (remarkably easy to train) and loving handling she became a very important member of our family. She was the nanny when my daughter Grace was born.

It is important to note that at the time that we were active members, the top three breeds that had a reputation for dog bites were Rottweiler, Akita and Cocker Spaniel, (probably not in that order). It says a lot for our organization and the three particular dogs, that we had three dogs representing those breeds doing therapy work together at that time: Marie Zeaks's Seger (Rottweiler), Tasha (Akita) owned by Betty Coates, and Cocoa. I know there were several visits when two of the three were working together.

IF I SHOULD GROW FRAIL

By Diane Wright

If it should be that I grow frail and weak
And pain does keep me from my sleep,
Then will you do what must be done
For this, the last battle, can't be won.

You will be sad I understand,
But don't let grief then stay your hand.
For on this day, more than the rest,
Your love and friendship must stand the test.

We have had so many happy years,
You wouldn't want me to suffer so.
When the time comes,
Please let me go.

Take me to where my needs they'll tend,
Only stay with me until the end.
And hold me firm and speak to me
Until my eyes no longer see.

I know in time you will agree,
It is a kindness you do to me.
Although my tail its last has waved,
From pain and suffering I have been saved.

Don't grieve that it must now be you,
Who has to decide this thing to do.
We've been so close, we two, these years,
Don't let your heart hold any tears.

MUNCHIE—Pembroke Welsh Corgi

Owned and handled by Betty Bost
September 12, 1993—November 12, 1999



Munchie came to live with us on April 5, 1996. She already had her CGC and one leg toward her CD before coming to us, and completed her CD soon afterward. She then became a registered therapy dog. But her health started failing in the summer of '98 and after suffering two strokes in '99, we helped her to the Rainbow Bridge. Although her life was too short, she will always be remembered and will always hold a place in our hearts.

Betty and George Bost



I SAW YOU AGAIN TODAY

by Sally Evans

I saw you again today, my love, as you gently crossed my mind.
I saw you with my heart and was with you one more time.
You were waiting for me near the apple tree.
You were waiting there for me.

Loneliness quickly vanished as I walked out my kitchen door.
You came to sit beside me like so many times before.
Treats we shared and memories, days and nights of old.
We looked ahead to springtime, to stories not yet told.

And when the wind blew in so suddenly I looked into your eyes.
The promise of a springtime with no more goodbyes.
I held you in my arms then, if only with my mind.
I saw you again today my love and was with you one more time.

GAMBIT—Beagle

Owned and handled by Marilyn Hulme
April 28, 1987-December 27, 2000



Gambit's philosophy on life: Each day is a wonderful adventure, with each experience to be enjoyed to the fullest. It goes without saying that she missed nothing and therefore got into more trouble than any dog I have owned. My next door neighbor thought her name was "Damnitgambit" because she would often hear me in the back yard, yelling, "Damnit Gambit, ..." But even when I was mad she would make me laugh by looking up at me with those big eyes, saying, "Gee Mom, I had to check it out!" I would yell at her but secretly enjoyed her antics and naughtiness because I was so impressed with her creativity and intelligence. That little brain was always working. Living with Gambit was such fun because she was always up for anything, even when I wasn't. And she was usually successful in getting me to cheer up.

Gambit was a therapy dog for seven years, five years in Miami and two years with SCTD, before she had to be retired for health reasons. She was like the energizer bunny when she worked and she had this wonderful ability to communicate with people. She would cock that head and give that look. People would say, "she's talking to me" and I would think to myself, "She's saying, got food?"

Gambit, continue to have fun at Rainbow Bridge-I'd say, "Stay out of trouble" but that wouldn't be you. I know things will definitely be livelier with you there and things are much quieter here. I miss you!

Love,
Mom

HANS AND FRANZ—Borzois

Owned and handled by Beverly Osborne



Both went to Rainbow Bridge in 2000.

DOG HEAVEN

When dogs go to Heaven, they don't need wings because God knows that dogs love running best. When a dog first arrives in heaven, he just runs.

Dog Heaven has clear wide lakes filled with geese who honk and flap and tease. The dogs love this. They run beside the water and bark and bark and God watches them from behind a tree and smiles.

There are children of course. Angel children. God knows that dogs love children more than anything else in the world, so he fills Dog Heaven with plenty of them. There are children on bikes and children on sleds. There are children throwing red rubber balls and children pulling kites through the clouds. The dogs are there, and the children love them dearly.

And, oh, the dog biscuits. Biscuits and biscuits as far as the eye can see. God has a sense of humor, so He makes His biscuits in funny shapes for his dogs. There are kitty-cat biscuits and squirrel biscuits, Ice cream biscuits and ham-sandwich biscuits. Every angel that passes by has a biscuit for a dog. And, of course, all God's dogs sit when the angels say "sit".

Every dog becomes a good dog in heaven. God turns clouds inside out to make fluffy beds for the dogs in Dog Heaven, and when they are tired from running and barking and eating biscuits, the dogs each find a cloud bed for sleeping. They turn around and around in the cloud.....until it feels just right, and then they curl up and they sleep. God watches over each one of them and there are no bad dreams.

Dogs in Dog Heaven have almost always belonged to somebody on Earth and, of course, the dogs remember this. Heaven is full of memories. So sometimes an angel will walk a dog back to Earth for a little visit and quietly, invisibly, the dog will sniff about his old backyard, will investigate the cat next door, will follow the child to school, will sit on the front porch and wait for the mail. When he is satisfied that all is well, the dog will return to Heaven with the angel. It is where dogs belong, near God who made them.

The dogs in Dog Heaven may stay as long as they like and this can mean forever. They will be there when old friends show up. They will be there at the door.

Angel Dogs. Everytime you get sad, read this and remember your pet is always with God running and playing with Angels and children until you arrive.

MAGGIE, CGC, TDInc.—Shetland Sheepdog

Owned and handled by Liz Damas
July 27, 1992—April 15, 2000



When I was asked if I wanted to choose a photo of Maggie and write a few words for the Rainbow Bridge site, I looked at all the many photos I have of her and chose this one. This photo shows Maggie as a “good little witch”, right after a Therapy Dog visit to Sea Pines in Melbourne during Halloween. Everyone there loved to see all the dogs dressed up for the different holidays and our dogs always tolerated these indignities just to please everyone. The dogs always walked in so proud, tails up, heads held high. This photo was also selected for the 1998 Best Pets of Brevard calendar for our local humane society. Maggie was “Miss October” that year. We were so proud of her. Maggie was such a joy and loved her Therapy dog work. She was perfectly suited for this program. Every week, for almost 5 years, when I put on my red Therapy Dog shirt, she knew it meant that her “Auntie Jane” would be coming to pick us up and we would be going to visit the patients. Maggie would dance for joy!

Everyone in the therapy program was very supportive when they heard we had lost Maggie due to a sudden illness. It was so fast I still find it difficult to believe she is gone. We have received over 30 cards of condolences, many calls and visits and several donations to Therapy Dogs in her behalf. This is a true testament on how Maggie was loved by all.

(over)

I truly believe I will see Maggie again someday. She is with our other dogs who preceded her, and with all the great Therapy Dogs on these pages in Rainbow Bridge. I also believe that on some rare occasions, when we need it most, God lets our dogs do a special visit just for us. If you ever lost a special dog, you know what I mean. Once in a while you will feel something brush by you but when you look, there's nothing there. And if you are really lucky, on very rare occasions, for just a quick moment, you will catch a glimpse of your dog, lying in their favorite place and looking at you. But, don't blink, because it will vanish right before your eyes.

Maggie was cremated wearing my red Therapy Dog shirt that she loved so much. Her ashes are located in a special place in our house, along with those of our other dogs who have passed to Rainbow Bridge. There they wait for us to join them. Maggie is greatly missed by our other dogs: Zeus, Nikki, and Cindy. But most of all, she is sadly missed by her Mom and Dad and her Auntie Jane.

We miss you Maggie.

By Liz Damas





PAW PRINTS IN MY HEART

by Jacqueline Chalmers

Every night I think of you and wonder where you are.
Sometimes I look at the sky and think you are a star. You are lost but not forgotten, just remember that. You were my baby and you know you still are. I just don't know if you're near or far. I just wish for one more time I could hear your bark. But you will always be, paw prints in my heart.

KATHLEEN'S TORNADO THOMAS

Basset Hound

CDX, CGC, TDInc.

Owned and handled by Kathleen Kessel

April 1986—April 9, 2001



I took this beautiful tri-colored, male Basset Hound home with me from Jacksonville, Florida in April, 1988. He was approximately 2 years old at the time and was found sitting alongside a busy road, with no collar or other identification. He was filthy and covered with fleas and flea dirt. My sister, who lives in the area, told me about him when she saw a note posted about him at her veterinarian's office. I decided to name him Thomas. It was like taking in a new puppy. He was into everything, grabbing whatever he could get his teeth on and shredding it. When I would come home from work at the end of the day, his handiwork was evident throughout the house. He chewed numerous shoes of mine, and various articles of clothing, as well as books and magazines. His favorite book to shred was the T.V. Guide. I decided that his AKC registered name would be "Kathleens's Tornado Thomas", because the house looked like a tornado hit it when I came home each day. The crate I ordered for him was going to take about two weeks to arrive. I could not wait until it got here!



THE BEST PLACE TO BURY A DOG

By Garth Mawhinney

There is one best place to bury a dog. If you bury him in this spot, he will come to you when you call—come to you over the grim, dim frontier of death, and down the well-remembered path, and to your side again. And though you call a dozen living dogs to heel, they shall not growl at him, nor resent him coming, for he belongs there. People may scoff at you, who see no lightest blade of grass bent by his footfall, who hear no whimper, people who may never really have had a dog. Smile at them, for you shall know something that is hidden from them, and which is well worth the knowing. “The one best place to bury a dog is in the heart of his master.”

JASPER

Loved, owned, and handled by Mark and Kristin Tinker



Jasper died five days shy of his 8th birthday. He passed from this world the same way he lived every day—peacefully and without complaint. Large by Golden Retriever standards, this gentle giant epitomized the popular characteristics of the breed and of the species we all hold so dear. All who knew Jasper also knew his counterpart, Kiana. In fact, this is the first time his name has ever been written without it being immediately followed by hers.

Jasper was involved with Space Coast Therapy Dogs for only three brief years, and his usual visit was Wuesthoff Progressive Care Center. Jasper's gentle spirit touched many, but on one occasion he truly shined. While walking through the halls, we passed a patient who recently had experienced a stroke. She was always slouched over in her wheelchair, and we had always thought she was unaware of our presence. As we passed, Jasper was close enough to quietly walk next to her wheelchair and place her hand on top of his head. What we thought was an immobile arm began to scratch his head. For several minutes, Jasper and this patient communicated with each other. Though unable to talk, and eyes closed, we looked under her sunken head to see her smiling. This visit captured Jasper's spirit; he was a gentle and kind boy who loved everyone.

Without a doubt, Jasper and Kiana's favorite Therapy Dog experience was the 2000 Melbourne Christmas parade. They walked virtually the entire way and were probably touched by thousands of hands that evening. This was Jasper's element; he was outside, able to explore and greet all who lined the street. Although battling the condition that ultimately took his life, he never complained.

In spite of his enjoyment as a Therapy Dog, we will always remember Jasper with Kiana on the trail of another adventure. They were raised backpacking through the mountains of Arizona, sleeping by the fire, and frolicking in the streams. While doggie heaven may be filled with milk bones and slow cats, for Jasper, it is loaded with tennis balls, lakes with lots of fish, and plenty of open country.

WHEN TOMORROW STARTS WITHOUT ME

By Mary Schneidt

When tomorrow starts without me and I'm not there to see,
If the sun should rise and find your eyes all filled with tears for me.
I wish so much you wouldn't cry the way you did today,
While thinking of the many times we didn't get to play.
I know how much you love me as much as I love you,
And each time that you think of me, I know you'll miss me too.

But when tomorrow starts without me, please don't be in awe
That an angel came and called my name and took me by the paw,
And said my place was ready in heaven far above
And that I'd have to leave behind all those I dearly love.
But when I pranced through heaven's gates I felt so much at home
When God looked down and smiled at me from His great golden
throne.

He said "This is eternity and all I've promised you"
Today your life on earth is past but here it starts anew.
I promise no tomorrow for today will always last
And since each day's the same way, there's no longing for the past.
So when tomorrow starts without me, don't think we're far apart
For every time you think of me, I'm right here in your hear.

HOOCH

Loved, owned, and handled by Phyllis Manning



A TRIBUTE TO HOOCH

I have many fond memories of Hooch. He was always a favorite of mine. I have only to close my eyes to see him standing there. Hooch had a commanding presence—large, powerful, alert, and elegant—he was a beauty. Then, he would open his mouth and start yodeling with joy at seeing his friends, both dog and human! We would all collapse into giggles while Phyllis apologized profusely for his lack of manners and tried to make him hush. He did it to her on every visit. Nothing Phyllis ever said or did could suppress Hooch's sense of humor or keep him from bursting out in song! He was the most sociable Doberman I have ever known.

Hooch's heart overflowed with love. I have seen him stand quietly, trustingly, with his head in a patient's lap while she hugged him around the neck with a vise-like grip that would have panicked most ordinary dogs. Not Hooch! He was totally relaxed and comfortable, freely giving love and comfort until her need was satisfied. Hooch was one of a kind and I will think of him every time I see a Doberman.

Hooch, along with Phyllis had the honor of founding the new Canine Assisted Reading program to be known as "The Hooch Reading Program" at Riverview Elementary School in Titusville. He leaves behind a legacy and a standard to which others can aspire. He is in the company of all the great therapy dogs who have gone to Rainbow Bridge before him. I give thanks for the privilege of sharing in a small way, the heart and soul of a great dog.

Ann Holder

LOSS OF A DOG

By Pamela Hardimon

If you've ever known the welcome of a barking ball of hair,
A sloppy kiss, a friendly paw, a quiet adoring stare,

If you've ever had a special friend to share a tear or two,
Or maybe just a wagging tail to lift you when you're blue,

If you've ever lost your troubles in a joyful romp outside,
Or shared your fears with listening ears that never left your side,

If you've ever felt the wrenching pain that only death can send,
Then you have lost not just a dog, you've truly lost a friend.

A loving God would not destroy the love that He creates.
So rest assured that you will find your dog at Heaven's gate.

That joyful bark, that sloppy kiss will greet you once again,
And share your love forever more; your dog—your precious friend.

“Cappy”

Rocarra White Cap of Venckus, CDX

October 22, 1985 – October 1, 2001



Cappy was a very happy dog and did a very good job of making people happy. He went to work in nursing homes, hospitals and at Cancer Care. In the hospital, he would walk down the hallways, greeting people on his way. Then he would go upstairs to the waiting rooms. People were sad, waiting for news of their loved ones. Cappy would make them smile and even gave them a kiss if they asked. They would pet him and you could see some of the tension leaving their faces.

He was a very well behaved dog as he had obedience training since he was six-months-old. He was doing therapy work since he was one-year-old. That means that Cappy was a working dog for fifteen years!

I retired Cappy in 1998 and bought a motor home so we could travel together. We went to many parks and campgrounds and he was a good traveler until 2000. Then, he didn't want to travel anymore so I sold the motor home and we enjoyed life together at home. We took morning and evening walks together and he greeted all the neighbors. Everyone knew Cappy!

I will miss him very much and will never forget the love he gave me.

Betty Venckus

Clubs: Indian River Dog Training Club
World Wide Kennel club
Orlando Poodle club
Therapy Dogs, Incorporated

ONE MORE DAY

By Diane Pedrotte

If I could have just one more day
To tell you that I love you,
To hold you close and stroke your head
And tell you that your special.

Another day to be with you,
To play our favorite game,
To have you come just one more time
Because I called your name.

One more day I could come home
And know that you'd be there,
To snuggle with you one more time
And tell you that I care.

Where you are now there is no pain,
That does bring me some peace.
I see you in my dreams, my love,
You're happy and you're free.

We always think we'll have more time
To love those we hold dear.
Before you know it, it's gone by,
A day, a week, a year.

You have a place now in my heart,
Until we meet again.
But I still wish for one more day
To love you well, my friend.

“KATIE”

1989—2001

Loved, owned, and handled by Ruth Merrill



On January 23rd, 1993 my first sight of Katie was an emaciated, neglected, smelly, two year old Golden/Lab mix (with its owner) at my door that almost immediately attached herself to me. Within an hour, arrangements were made that she'd be groomed. By mid afternoon, I picked her up and we bonded. From the start, she was so laid back—always willing and eager to please ME.

The second week she was groomed again and at this time I was introduced to the Therapy Dog Program. Within weeks she passed the tests with flying colors, was certified and very active in as many visits to Nursing Homes, Schools (involved in helping an autistic child out of a temper tantrum) etc. that could fit on the calendar. She was a constant companion of mine—praised by complete strangers for her gentleness and obedience.

In 1994 Katie earned her CGC Certificate and was one of the original dogs at Holmes Regional Medical Center Radiation/Oncology waiting room. In 1997 The Space Coast Therapy Dogs were allowed to do visits on the floors, waiting rooms and even in the MICU and CCU units and Katie was there. She received the High Hours Medallion the same year. In 2000, she was the recipient of the Segar Award, known today as the "Outstanding Therapy Dog of the Year" and in the spring of this year received the Excellence Award .

Of course, I'm biased, but all that knew Katie (car washers, bank tellers, and even church choir members) thought the world of her and of course the family adored her. Perfection comes to mind, as I write this. Some have even compared her to "Mother Teresa".



She'll be missed, but the ten years of joy that she brought to me and all others that knew her will remain utmost in my mind.

Ruth Merrill and Miss Daisy

MY GIFT TO JESUS

by Susan Hill

I wish someone had given little Jesus a dog, as loyal and loving as
mine,
To sleep by his manger and gaze in his eyes, and adore Him for
being Divine.

As Our Lord grew to manhood, His own faithful dog would have
followed Him all through the day;
While He preached to the crowds and made the sick well, and knelt
in the Garden to pray.

It is sad to remember that Christ went away, to face death alone
and apart;
With no tender dog following close behind, to comfort its Master's
heart.

And when Jesus rose on that Easter morn, how happy He would
have been;
As his dog kissed His hand and barked it's delight, for the One
who died for all men!

Well, the Lord has a dog now; I just sent him mine, the old pal so
dear to me.
And I smile through my tears on this first day alone, knowing
they're in eternity.

"PETE"

February 14, 1989--November 30, 2001
Loved, owned, and handled by Tony and Marie Zeak



Pete had been retired from Pet Therapy for several years. She was the 2nd of her breed (Standard Bull Terrier) to be registered with a national organization in 1990. She was never the brightest light in the harbor, but she loved her work with children. Devereux and Hacienda girls ranch were her favorite visits. She also loved the parades. The crowds, noise and lights seemed to make her so happy and excited.

Just looking at her made people laugh. She was a loveable little girl, not a brain in her head, yet this was part of her character. She is greatly missed by:

Magic, Aijo, Tony and Marie Zeak

MIRACLE AT RAINBOW BRIDGE

By Char Haas

On the morning of September 11, 2001, there was an unprecedented amount of activity at the Rainbow Bridge. Decisions had to be made. They had to be made quickly. And, they were. An issue, not often addressed here is the fact that many residents really have no loved one for whom to wait. Think of the pups that lived and died in hideous puppy mills. No one on earth loved or protected them. What about the many who spent unhappy lives tied in backyards? Or the kittens that were turned out and left to fend for themselves, unwelcome in their mothers homes? And, the ones who were abused, who are they to wait for? We don't talk about that much up here. We share our loved ones as they arrive, happy to do so. But we all know there is nothing like having your very own person who thinks you are the most special pet in the Heavens.

Last Tuesday morning a request rang out for pets not waiting for specific persons to volunteer for special assignment. An eager, curious crowd surged excitedly forward, each pet wondering what the assignment would be. They were told by a solemn voice that unexpectedly, all at once, over 4,000 loving people had left Earth long before they were ready. All the pets, as all pets do, felt the humans' pain deep in their own hearts. Without hearing more, there was a clamoring among them, "May I have one to comfort?" "I'll take two, I have a big heart." "I have been saving kisses forever." One after the other they came forward begging for assignment. One cozy-looking, fluffy kitten hesitantly asked, "Are there any children coming? I could be very comforting for a child 'cause I'm soft and squishy and I always wanted to be hugged." A group of Dalmatians came forward asking to meet the Firemen and be their friends. The larger working breeds offered to greet the Police Officers and make them feel at home. Little dogs volunteered to do what they do best, cuddle and kiss. And the many cats offered to sit quietly for hours, purring and comforting their newfound friends. Pets who on Earth had never had a kind word or a pat on the head, stepped forward and said "I will love any human who needs love." Then all the pets, wherever on Earth they originally came from, rushed to the Rainbow Bridge and stood waiting, overflowing with love to share—each tail wagging and curled around an American Flag.+ ·

DIGGSTOWN "DIGGER"--GREYHOUND

**Loved, owned and handled by Kathie and Richard Soper
January 7, 1992-February 25, 2002**



WE who choose to surround ourselves with lives even more temporary than our own live within a fragile circle, easily and often breached. Unable to accept its awful gaps, we would still live no other way. We cherish memory as the only certain immortality, never fully understanding the necessary plan.

Digger (January 7, 1992 thru February 25, 2002)

Diggstown, alias Digger, came into our lives one rainy afternoon at a Greyhound Pets Of America picnic. He was three and a half years old, aloof, and would not even look at us, as we checked over several other Greys up for adoption. He was our last choice, brindle in color (we wanted a fawn female), short tail and male, but what a choice we made!

Digger was an exemplary Therapy Dog for seven plus years, and has set the standard for other Greys within SCTD, plus the many other groups that he was part of. He did not win awards, but rather was content to make his visits. He was the Reverend Diggstown at the mock wedding of Tommy Springs and Noble Curry, performed for the Courtney Springs Nursing Home residents. He played his part as if it was a real wedding, standing proudly at the alter waiting for the bride and groom to approach.

When pets share their life with people they develop a special bond. This bond is blended with the individual personalities of pet and owner. Pets play different roles in our lives, from friend to member of the family. They become a main focus in our lives. Sadly, the loss of Digger is more than just losing a pet, it is losing a family member and part of our life.

**Another Greyhound will fill Diggers spot, but will never replace this most
Regal Greyhound.**