

A Brush with Brady

A Tribute To A “Once-In-A-Lifetime” Dog

By: Jim Humphries, DVM

Many of us are so lucky to live our lives with a dog – perhaps several of them. Dogs are so special that Will Rogers once said, *“If there are no dogs in Heaven, then I want to go where they went”*. Dogs are truly man’s best friend. If you’ve experienced the love of a dog then you don’t need me to describe the “most unselfish friend that man can have in this selfish world”. You already know how dogs live for the moment you come home, the sound of your voice and the crazy excitement of an anticipated walk no matter what the weather. Dogs curl up so close with you even if you forgot their birthday, their special treat or to change your socks. Dogs give us so much joy, the entire work of Webster would not contain enough perfect adjectives to describe the love, devotion and the warmth they create in our hearts.



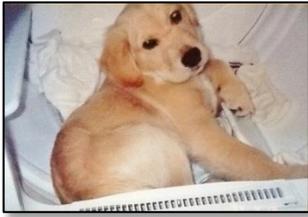
But then there is what I call, the “once in a lifetime” dog. That special creature God loans you for safe keeping for a short time; it is never long enough. He blessed you and your family with the guardianship of this one very special dog that can be called nothing short of exceptional, and everyone knows it.

I've had one of these dogs; so I know the deep feelings, the bond with your soul that few are fortunate enough to feel, but that I wish everyone could.

I met another one of these dogs this week. My only regret is that I met Brady on the last day of his life, but I heard just enough stories of him to know he was the “once in a lifetime” dog for the special couple who entrusted me with his last moments.

Brady was a Golden Retriever who, like so many of them, had his beautiful life cut short because of cancer. Brady was stunning in appearance. He was soft, alert, kind and all I saw was pure love coming from his eyes and his tail. He welcomed me into his home and that seemed to be the very last bit of energy he had left. We just talked and touched and he told me things with his eyes, while his owners told me stories about his great life.



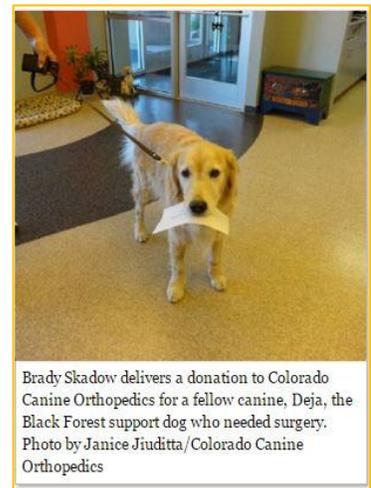


Full of personality and independent thinking from the beginning, Brady made a habit of taking naps in the dryer on the warm clothes whenever a cycle would end. A friend to everyone he met, he loved to ride in the golf cart and greet all his friends at the golf course clubhouse, where everyone knew him by name. He would sit patiently outside in his cart and wait unattended, greeting everyone, until his master and mistress returned.



As a special kindness he would retrieve golf balls for his friends. When an expensive Titleist® would be lost, his Papa would say, *“go get the ball, it is the Pro V 1”*, and sure enough, Brady returned with the Pro V 1.

In November of 2014, the local newspaper published a story about a therapy dog that was providing support for a 5 year-old boy in Black Forest. The dog had an orthopedic problem that was life-threatening and needed expensive surgery. Brady's owner read the story and said to Brady, *“We’ve got to help!”* Brady wagged his tail and ran to the door in complete agreement. In a matter of minutes they were heading to the special veterinary center. This Golden was on a mission. Brady proudly walked into the center, with an envelope clutched between his teeth...a donation to help pay for the surgery.



In the mornings, Brady would run along the houses in the neighborhood, retrieving newspapers off the front lawns and depositing them by the front doors. He waited daily to greet the mailman, Mark. He was everybody's friend. Even after cancer began to take a toll on his body, he lived every day with dignity and grace. He had jobs to do, people to see and love to give and he was not going to let something like cancer get in his way.

Around Christmas time, 2015, Brady's energy began to fade. Even in the face of symptoms he did not understand, he maintained his poise and that steadfast companionship only a dog can offer. It took all he had to continue to “be Brady”.

It was with incredible love and profound pain that his family called me say to say that “it’s time”. These incredible creatures have a way of knowing things, deep things. They communicate on a level we can only imagine. I've seen it so often.

I saw it this week when Brady welcomed me into his home with those loving warm eyes. Interestingly, he put me at ease. He made me feel like we had been friends for years. There was a clear peace and gentle understanding that it was time, he was ready and he told me that - in that most dignified and clear way dogs have.

After talking, petting and loving, I helped ease his pain. He drifted into a deep sleep in Mom’s arms, then deeper still until he had made his final transition. I believe Brady will be waiting for his family, probably with a Titleist V 1 or a morning paper, and I hope I get a lick on the face too.



Photos by:
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