

Animal Humane's History: 1980 - 1990

The 1980s were the early days of enlightenment for humane pet care and population control in Albuquerque. Roaming packs of dogs regularly attacked livestock and children in Bernalillo County and surrounding areas. Various municipalities considered and often passed animal ordinances to provide a safer environment.

Animal Humane continues to pay tribute to our founders & our history during our 45th Year Anniversary.

Animal Humane and Colonel Edmund and Thelma Evans were at the forefront of educating the public— influencing animal-related legislation and providing services such as low-cost spay/neuters to improve pet population. In the mid 1980s, Albuquerque's Animal Care and Control took in 27,000 animals, euthanizing 80% of them. Animal Humane was justifiably proud of our 54% adoption rate with intakes just over 2,500. Nationwide 22 million pets were being euthanized in shelters. By comparison, national euthanasia rates have decreased to 3–4 million annually today.

Growth

Several major construction projects took place. In 1982, the Adoptions/Intake Building was built, providing a better environment to care for pet residents. Gift "n" Thrift, (now Super Thrift) was expanded to include both floors of our current Administration Building. The Charlie Black Memorial Kennels were built (Greg Hicks, architect), providing indoor/outdoor runs (now our cattery/pet processing building).



The construction of our adoptions building

Programs

In the ongoing quest to increase adoptions, 1988 saw the introduction of two programs: Purina's Pets for People, which subsidized adoption fees for citizens over 60, a program that continues to this day. Interestingly, 1988 was declared "Year of the Cat" in an effort to increase cat adoption rates. Sound familiar?



Charlie Black, Animal Humane's Mascot

Funding and Community Support

In addition to membership dues, other fundraising initiatives included the first "Fun Run" (1982), sponsored by Gil's Runners Shoe World with 108 runners. The "Family Fun Pet Show" (1984) was organized by Dr. Tim Fitzpatrick for several years, growing each year and netting a cool \$1,010 by 1987. Another popular way to support Animal Humane was through the annual Pet Photo Contest which drew hundreds of photo entries each year at \$5 each.

Other community support came from: the Weems Artfest, monthly shot clinics by Dr. Richard Bolton, and children's dog obedience classes. The classes were taught at the Acoma Training Center, with services donated by the owners, the Spradley Family. Additional in-kind support came from Rick Johnson & Co. with the design of a high-end brochure to promote community awareness of Animal Humane.

The veterinary community supported Animal Humane by volunteering their time performing spay/neuter surgeries and providing medical care for pet residents. In particular, Drs. Glenn and Richard Bolton, Tim Fitzpatrick, and Dain Lochridge contributed countless hours. In the early 1980s, Dr. Richard Bolton also wrote a column on pet health in the quarterly newsletter, "Kind Words."

Organizational Milestones

In 1985, Animal Humane celebrated its 20th Anniversary, commemorated by a congratulatory letter from President Ronald Reagan. That year, we hired our first Executive Director. Following Edmund's death in 1988 and the resignation of George Wayland as President, Thelma was elected President in 1989.



Thelma & Dr. Fitzpatrick

In 1988 our By-Laws were amended to reduce the number of Board members and modify members' voting rights to prevent special interest groups from taking control of the organization. Board members and officers would now be elected by the Board, not the membership.

The end of the 1980s saw the organization positioning itself to increase adoptions and membership growth by proposing the building of a Westside satellite location. Sound familiar? Stay tuned for the 1990s, coming up in the next issue.