

# Animal Humane's History: 1990 – 1999

The first half of the 1990s was a period of considerable turmoil for Animal Humane, with the last five years producing a more structured, financially stable organization under the guidance of Joel Warner and a hard working Board of Directors led by Bob Wolf.

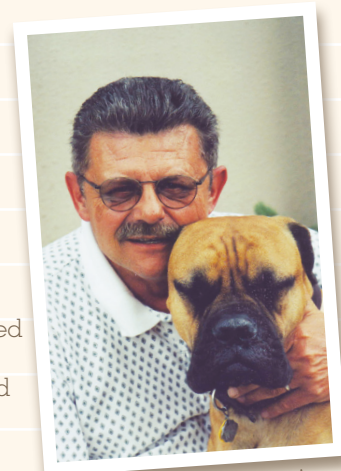
## Organizational Milestones

In 1990, Animal Humane celebrated its 25th anniversary. At 79, Thelma Evans was still very much involved in the organization. She was re-elected to the Board of Directors as President. She was quoted in Sage Magazine as saying, "You can sit at home...or you can get out there and do your best." However, things changed in 1991. In January, Bill Mayhall was appointed acting Executive Director. He had served as Executive Assistant to President Thelma Evans for the two previous years. In July, Thelma "retired" from Animal Humane, with Clyde Dawson, Underwriting Manager of KNME-TV, taking over as President. While the newsletter hailed it as the end of "a golden era," the full story behind Thelma's resignation may never be known. It is clear from various reports that the resignation was not Thelma's choice.

Bill Mayhall continued as Executive Director until September 1995. Susie Blott, Assistant Director became Acting Executive Director in November 1995. By April of 1996, Joel Warner was hired as Executive Director.

## The Joel Warner Era

With Joel's appointment, it was clear there was much to be done to put the organization back on a stable footing. He quickly moved to tighten up policies, procedures and financial oversight of the organization. An employee manual was approved, adoption fees were increased, the number of direct mailings was increased, the spray/neuter reward program retired and the education program which was not cost-effective was to be re-evaluated. Based on the Board minutes, it is clear the organization was in financial difficulty, warranting the withdrawal of some funds from the Trust Fund and delaying several approved purchases and projects. The Board clearly welcomed Joel's leadership and decisiveness. Within a month of joining, Joel reached out to Thelma Evans, inviting her to become involved once again.



Joel & Obie

Joel made many moves to shore up the organization's financial state. He moved quickly, securing a contract with the Animal Control Center (ACC) in June of 1996 to spray and neuter all of their adopted dogs and cats. The contract was estimated to be worth \$100,000 to Animal Humane in the first year. During 1997, he continued to take action to balance the budget. This included reducing headcount, hiring a development manager, taking the monthly shot clinics in-house, and encouraging employees to carry more of the cost of their own health insurance.

Bob Wolf became Board President in November 1996. Major efforts were undertaken to bolster the Board with qualified members, led by Nominating Committee Chair, Maureen Haase. Members added during this period included Don DeCandia, who would later go on to be Board President, Janis Wade, Kim McNulty, Randy Romero, Ellen Louderbough, and Greg Leyendecker. Constituted as a working Board, they revised the By-Laws and Mission Statement, established an investment policy, created a major purchase approval processes, as well as developing a Position Statement document for outbound communication on the organization's stance with regard to animal welfare.

Joel was very cognizant of the bottom line and focused on agreements and programs that would generate revenue, while simultaneously focusing on cost cutting and increased efficiencies. By 1998, the organization was back in the black with a profit of \$53,000. By mid-1999, the Board was considering a \$2 million capital campaign and hired an outside firm to conduct a feasibility study. The capital campaign would fund the construction of a new building that would house 50 kennels, a solarium for free-roaming cat housing, conference room, kitchen, quarantine area and housing for small dogs and puppies and 44 cages for cat intake. In November, the firm of Weinstein determined a capital campaign with a goal to raise \$2 million for the new building would not be successful. Plans for the new building were scrapped.

In June 1999, Dr. Bob Doak was hired as Animal Humane's veterinarian, replacing Dr. Kevin Dill who resigned. Dr. Doak was not only responsible for building a high-volume spray/neuter operation and caring for all the shelter animals, but was the visionary behind what would later become our low-cost veterinary practice for low-income pet owners, a practice ably run by Dr. Neal and his team that serves over 5,000 clients annually.

Joel would continue to lead Animal Humane until 2001.

## Advocacy

At the end of 1991, Animal Humane leadership "did the math" and reported to its membership that over the previous 20 years, the organization had taken in 34,000 pets, adopted out 20,000 and euthanizing 14,000. They launched several programs to continue to encourage the public to fix their pets from a rebate program to a "PetFix" voucher program.

Marketing campaigns with hard-hitting messages such as, "Stop us Before we Kill Again—Spay/Neuter your Pet" were carried out during the decade.

Animal Humane remained active on the legislative front, supporting the passage of the new Animal Control Ordinance that required the purchase of a litter permit from Animal Control. In 1994, the Albuquerque Journal joined the fight against pet overpopulation by requiring litter permit numbers to advertise puppies for sale in the classified section of the paper.

By the end of 1994, with the help of Animal Humane's fulltime veterinarian, Dr. Kathy Harris, we began practicing "early age neuter" in our clinic. Endorsed by the American Veterinary Medical Association, American Humane Association and the Humane Society of the United States, early age neutering moved the age at which a pet could be safely spayed from 5-9 months to 6-11 weeks. Animal Humane continues this practice today, using weight of a two pound minimum as the deciding line.

#### Humane Education and Outreach

Animal Humane maintained its focus on humane education programs put in place by the Evans. By the mid-1990s, volunteers were presenting to nearly 10,000 children annually from kindergarten to third grade. The focus was on getting kids to understand pet overpopulation and encouraging their parents to apply for the rebate or voucher programs.

Dr. Jeff Nichol of Adobe Animal Clinic approached Animal Humane to become involved in expanding and supporting his PetSav Program which he had been operating for eight years. The program provided veterinary care for injured stray pets. This program continues at Animal Humane to this day, with all medical treatment provided at our veterinary clinic. Funding is provided by donors.

In 1999, Camp-Love-A-Pet was introduced, with Tami Harboldt as its Director. Tami, as part of her Master's thesis at the University of New Mexico, went on to write a book about the history of Animal Welfare in Albuquerque titled Bridging the Bond.

## Adoption Programs

In the early 1990s, with the addition of several outreach programs, adoption numbers began to steadily increase. The Mobile Adoption Program was started. With the help of Garcia Honda, a used van was purchased to take pets to a variety of adoption events. Called the "Critter-Care-A-Van" the vehicle made appearances at BEEPs, Winrock Mall, PetSmart, TVI, Target and other locations. Volunteer and Board Member Maureen Haase became the Mobile Adoption Coordinator in 1995. Then as now, there were more requests for the Mobile than could be fulfilled and there were ongoing pleas for volunteers to help staff the van. Maureen continued to manage this successful program for five years.



1991: Launched our Mobile Adoption Program with Garcia Honda donating our Critter Care-A-Van

In the fall of 1993, the first Animal Humane Satellite Adoption Center was opened in the Upco Store (renamed New Mexico Pet & Vet Supply) at 11200 Menual Blvd. NE. The store was staffed entirely by highly trained volunteers under the supervision of paid staff. Pat Murphy and Margaret Hawk were amongst the "pioneer volunteers" that helped make the location a success with an average of 30 adoptions per month. Benefits of the satellite were the same then as today—many people are more comfortable coming to the satellites than to the Main shelter. Interestingly, the satellite stores faced the same challenges we have with our Adoption Centers—having enough pets available and having enough trained volunteers. Based on the success of the Menual store, a second Pet-Vet satellite operation opened at the intersection of Coors and Alameda in 1995. Déjà vu all over again!

The contract with New Mexico Pet & Vet Supply was terminated in mid-1997 when PetSmart, who was in the process of opening three locations, offered Animal Humane an agreement for three locations and a minimum of \$25,000 in support. Given the financial issues of the day, the Board approved the change of venue for the satellites to PetSmart.

Better public relations also helped increase adoptions. In March 1992, supported by business card advertising, the Albuquerque Journal began featuring adoptable pets once a month in the Sunday Albuquerque Journal, a program that continues to this day. Joyce Fay, internationally recognized photographer donated her time back then as she does now to help homeless pets connect with new owners through her engaging portraits. Joyce Fay contributed her time to create the photos for the monthly page. The Albuquerque Journal feature was cited as a major factor in increasing adoptions 13% over the previous year, with a total of 2,030 adoptions. Revenues from investments and operations totaled \$487,000 with expenditures at \$356,000.



1993: First satellite location opens at New Mexico Pet & Vet Supply

It is interesting to note that at this time, Animal Humane did not have the resources (humane or financial) to fix every pet that was adopted. Part of the adoption contract included a spay/neuter agreement requiring new pet owners to get their pets fixed by a certain date and bring proof to Animal Humane. In a 1994 Animal Humane newsletter, it was reported that our volunteer attorney, Candace Welch, had to follow up on approximately 5% of adopters or

100 cases at that time to enforce the contract. By 1995, all pets were "NBA" or Neutered Before Adoption, solving the need to track down scofflaws.

The most successful Animal Humane Adopt-a-thon was held in conjunction with the City shelter at the Renaissance PetSmart. The event held in May 1998 was part of an international adoption competition. Animal Humane placed second to North Shore Animal League with 182 adoptions. Together with the City, 364 pets found new homes at the event. The following year 515 pets found new homes at this event.

It is interesting to note that in 1998, neither Animal Humane nor the City shelter allowed adoptions during the "Christmas Season." Even with that limitation, 5,267 pets were adopted into loving homes that year.

## Campus Improvements



1995: Newly constructed kennels begin housing pets

In the fall of 1992, after six years of trying to raise \$750,000 for the "Kennel Fund," Board president Kevin Reilly wrote that they had raised only \$100,000 and asked the donors to let them redefine the monies as the "Kennel and Clinic Improvement Fund." Most donors acquiesced, enabling Animal Humane to use the monies for improvements and repairs to the current kennels and clinic. With the receipt of a gift of \$85,000 from the Eleanor Shearer estate, Animal Humane management begins to revisit building a new kennel in 1994.

The architects engaged for the project were Jim Lewis and Don Schlegel, who modeled our kennels after the ones they built for Academy Kennels in the 1980s. By June of 1994, enough money had been raised including major gifts from Polle Engle and James and Virginia Boyd to break ground. In December, the new kennels were formally dedicated with a ribbon cutting ceremony, though not ready to fully open until mid-1995. The memorial plaque that

stands in front today acknowledging the donors was thoughtfully restored in 2009 by Donna Stumpf, Development Director, so all the names would once again be legible.

The old kennels were renovated into the current Kennel Processing Building and Cattery as part of the overall project.

In November 1999, the Board unanimously voted to purchase the property at 607 Virginia Street SE for up to \$250,000. The site's existing building is now the home of our Super Thrift Store.

## Funding and Community Support

In 1993, Animal Humane's relationship with VCA began when Dr. Tim Fitzpatrick sold his practice on 9901 Montgomery Blvd. to them. For 10 years, Dr. Fitzpatrick had organized and run the annual Pet Show that benefitted Animal Humane. VCA agreed to continue to host the event which raised \$500 that year. By the end of the year, VCA had acquired West Mesa and Wyoming Animal Clinics. They began hosting monthly shot clinics at Animal Humane and did several dog washing events to benefit the shelter.

During a time when the need for cash was high, Bingo was added to the funding portfolio in 1994 on a trial basis after receiving a license from the State Gaming Commission to operate several sessions in conjunction with Rick and Diane Archuleta's bingo parlor. First quarter earnings totaled \$7,500. The Board expressed the need to audit the bingo transactions on a monthly basis. After the state Supreme Court made video gaming illegal, the Board determined that bingo would no longer be profitable and opted out of their contract with Archuletas.

In 1997, the Memorial Brick Wall fundraising project was launched and the collection dog house boxes made their first appearance. The first Art for the Animals was staged in 1996, generating just \$2,000 in profits. The second Annual Art for the Animals took place at the Casa Vieja Restaurant in Corrales, with proceeds more than doubling to \$5,000. By 1998, Art for the Animals became a live auction, held at the State Fairgrounds. Laurel Westman was Event Chair, recruiting higher quality art. The event generated \$8,700. By 1999, the proceeds had grown to \$15,000 and the event was now a silent auction.

Under Joel's direction, direct mail became an increasingly important source of funding during this period, with approximately \$143,000 generated with net profit of 50%. Animal Humane continued to use the services of Grizzard & Co. for their direct mail program and Mike Monk makes his first appearance presenting to the Board of Directors in 1999.

## Other Milestones of the 1990s:

**1994:** Marked the advent of the microchip with Animal Humane's guard cat "Sam" receiving the first implant.

**1997:** Lost and Found Service computerized Foster Program introduced

**1998:** Every adopted pet is microchipped  
PIMA moves Vet School to the Clinic  
Emergency Shelter Program for victims of domestic violence begins  
Animal Humane's webpage goes on-line

**1999:** Street Cat Companions use of our Clinic for feral cat Trap-Neuter-Return program begins