

The Wildcat Sanctuary PROA The Wildcat Sanctuary

Tammy Thies Founder & Executive Director

> Julie Hanan Contributor

Carissa L. Winter Graphic Designer

Photography by The Wildcat Sanctuary staff and Pamela Lammersen of PCML Photography

THE WILDCAT SANCTUARY

Mission: Provide natural sanctuary to wild cats in need and inspire change to end the captive wildlife crisis.

Vision: Help create a world where wild animal sanctuaries are no longer needed.

The Wildcat Sanctuary is a tax-exempt charity under the IRS code section 501c3, our federal tax ID number is 22-3857401.







The Wildcat Sanctuary PO Box 314 • Sandstone, MN 55072 320-245-6871

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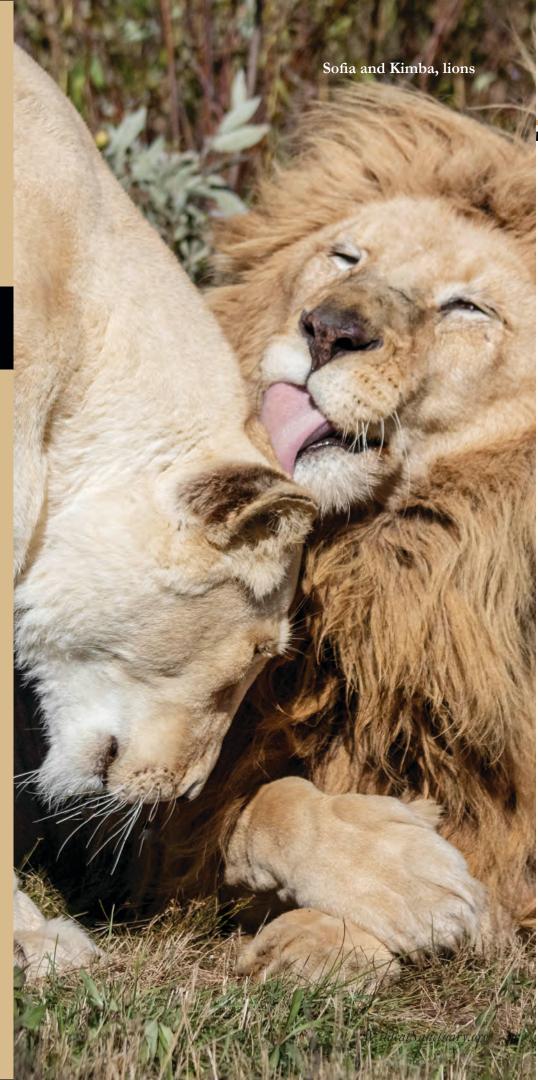








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From the Founder



20 years of saving lives

If you asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up, I'm not sure what I would've answered. But if you asked me again 20 years ago, my answer might surprise you. I would've said a top executive at an advertising agency with a traditional family. Life has an interesting way of working out.

Today, I am CEO of my own company (all be it a smaller non-profit with no skyscrapers or downtown view). My family consists of over 100 wild cats, a handful of domestic furry ones, my close family and of course all of YOU! It's not what some would consider traditional, but it's one I wouldn't trade for any childhood dream.

2019 marks the 20-year anniversary of when my life path took a ninety-degree turn. Deep into the pine tree woods and further from the bright lights and big city. So, it was surreal and timely this past week as I drove the final two Argentinian lions from Florida to Minnesota and passed through Smyrna, Georgia. That's where it all first began.

I can't believe I hadn't been back there since I moved our first 10 cats from the Atlanta area. At that time, I was a marketing executive at The Coca-Cola Company. But, I returned to my home in Minnesota - where I could embrace the support of family and friends, beginning this new life adventure of saving lives.

So many emotions and memories swept over me as I drove down interstate I-75 with two rescued lions. I gave a shout out to my old career and friends at The Coca-Cola Company. I was so excited to receive so many kind responses from former co-workers who remembered the first start-up days with me.

From the days when the furnace broke and we cried trying to figure out how to pay the repair bill (thanks mom!), to now a dozen specialized temperature-controlled buildings.

From using a piece of plywood on a crate for vet exams, to designing a new state-of-the-art animal care center.

From working a full-time job to pay for food and animal bills on my own, to building an international support system of those who believe all living beings deserve respect and compassion, too.

From our first resident serval Cleo, who also turns 20 this year, to Leo and Mansa who joined us right before our 20th anniversary. Each life is as precious as the next. I'm so thankful to be celebrating our 20 years of saving lives with all of YOU.

Happy Anniversary to YOU, the people who make it all possible! And cheers to the next 20 years of your generosity and the amazing things we can

accomplish together!

Tammy Thies

Founder & Executive Director

This

THE WILDCAT SANCTUARY

20th Anniversary

The Siblings Reunited and Finally Home

n the last issue, I wrote about the emotional and logistical struggles of international rescues. I thought bringing Gino, Kimba, Sofi, Salteña and Chupino here to their forever home was tough. But, clearly, I should've waited to write that. In hindsight, their journey was a breeze compared to bringing Leo and Mansa home!

But, as stressful as this rescue was for us, I never lost sight of how stressful it must be for them.

Leo had to be moved three times in just a month's time. From La Maxima Zoo to La Plata Zoo to join his sister Mansa, then to a temporary facility in Florida, before finally coming to The Wildcat Sanctuary.

Mansa was born and raised at La Plata Zoo, so she'd never known anything else and had never been moved. Sadly, just days before her transport to the US, she lost her father, her main source of stability. Though her sibling Leo had been born at that zoo also, he and Mansa had been separated very young and hadn't seen each other for 11 years.

Animals may not process emotions the same way as humans, but they do process. They know fear, anxiety, pain, and change. I can only imagine what was going through their minds.

Why This Transport Was Different

So why was this transport for Leo and Mansa so different than the first transport for the other five lions?

Each import follows the same process. You'd think the second time would be easier. But, it's the humans who change. You deal with different import and export agents interpreting statute differently, different state agencies and representatives, different trucks and drivers.

What I've learned is, when you introduce the human element, that's when chaos can happen. On the other hand, it's also a different set of humans putting the pieces back together for the animals and never giving up.



As you probably remember, we were trying to have all seven lions arrive around the same time. With winter approaching, we wanted them to have time to acclimate to their new home here. But Leo and Mansa's transport was delayed for many reasons.

The first hurdle was getting Leo moved from La Maxima Zoo to La Plata Zoo, where his sister Mansa was. It took some time to find qualified personnel to move him.

The second hurdle was a broken microchip. The export paperwork requires this microchip number. So a new microchip had to be ordered and new export papers issued by the Argentinean government. This delayed the process, too.

The third hurdle was getting federal import clearance. Thankfully, that was quickly approved.

The fourth hurdle involved Florida authorities. This time, they required a Florida-issued license transporter to transport the lions from Miami to the state lines. This could take several days, and the lions were already at the airport.

Reputable partners offered their services, from Big Cat Rescue, to Forest Animal Rescue to the AZA-accredited Zoo Miami. But the decision was made, without our knowledge, to use a third party the agency had worked with in the past. Luckily, this group worked with big cats and had the proper state license. Now, a new transporter would also be needed.



Coordinating all this felt like an eternity. Yet it was done within 10 hours and I breathed a sigh of relief the lions would finally be on their way. Then, Mother Nature stepped in.

The Midwest was experiencing some awful ice and snow storms. This wasn't a surprise to me since we know how bad the weather can get this time of year. That's why we originally required the lion imports take place prior to mid-November.

For the best interest of Mansa and Leo, we decided they needed to stay in Florida a day or two for the weather to clear. They were let into temporary, secure grassy areas to stretch their legs as we scheduled a different transport. Caretaker Elyse and I flew down to meet the temporary Florida caretakers and the lions in person. From there, we'd make final arrangements.

Leo settled in immediately. Mansa was a little more apprehensive and didn't want to eat. Since the cats were fasted for transport, we wanted her to eat before the last leg of her journey to Minnesota. Once she ate, we needed to wait to make sure she processed the food. Receiving a Mansa poop photo was the best photo I received all week!

We were ready to go again. Or so we thought. Then ice storms and tornadoes hit the southern states and there was another delay.



Then, the transporter said they only had one driver available now until the end of December. Would the delays never end?

That's when caretaker Elyse and I jumped on a plane and flew down to Florida for the second time so we could help drive Leo and Mansa straight through. And that's what we did - 30 hours of driving through the night.

A few short months ago, The Wildcat Sanctuary was home to one lion, Miss Shanti Deva. Now, we hear the caroling chorus of eight. They aren't a traditional pride living all together. But, then again, what families are traditional?

We look forward to sharing what their future holds. here at their forever home. Thank you for being part of this memorable journey, too!



Arriving at The Wildcat Sanctuary after 30 hours driving.



Mansa being transferred to her new home.

On Our Way Home

I have to say, I think Mansa and Leo finally knew they were on their way home. Both walked into their crates without any sedation needed. They were calm and relaxed on their long journey to Minnesota.

When Leo unloaded, he was like a kid in a candy store! Playing with his pine branches, tossing his hammock around like it didn't weigh 150 lbs., and rolling on his back with his belly in the air.

Mansa was true to herself and was a bit more cautious. But she curled up in her manger bed, tested out her hammock the correct way (unlike Leo) and came up to the fence to greet us all.

Now, they only have one final journey left. And that's to walk through their guillotine door to their new freeroaming habitats and forever home.

It's a journey I hope we don't have to go through ever again. But in the end, it was worth it.

Our SPONSOR-A-WILD-ONE program lets you feel a special connection to our cats—from a safe distance! As a Sponsor Parent, you'll receive the personal story of your sponsored wildcat along with photos. WildcatSanctuary.org





















Because of YOU, 2018 Was a PAWESOME Year For The Cats!







Habitats and Residents

- 7 lions, 2 servals, 1 bobcat, 1 Eurasian Lynx and 5 hybrids were welcomed to the Sanctuary.
- The sanctuary completed our largest international rescue to date, coordinating with four separate zoos from Argentina. This took years of planning, months of coordination and preparation, and many last-minute adjustments.

Wildcat Pines area was 90% completed

- Removal and expansion of perimeter fence to accommodate the new area
- AmeriCorps, volunteers and interns tore down 8 old habitats with roofs, removed old dens and platforms
- The area was excavated for drainage, trees were planted
- Caves were constructed in each habitat, providing shade and lounging areas for the cats
- Construction of a new temperature-controlled building with 8 indoor cat rooms and one utility room. Septic, electric and water were installed.
- 8 new habitats were completed with more vertical space filled with cat walks for the cats to explore and perch up high.
- This area provides awesome space for up to 24 of our rescued bobcats and lynx.
- Aria, Mondovi, Sebastian, Luna, Copper, Archer, Autumn, Belvedere, Francis, Brianna, Stelter, Zambuca, Shalico and Morgan all moved in during the fall. Their remaining friends joined them this winter/spring.

Pride Prairie was supposed to begin in 2018, but with your help, it was actually finished!

- The entire area was excavated, roads were created around and through the area.
- An indoor temperature-controlled building was constructed with 4 of our largest indoor areas to allow for communal living space for lions. Removable shared walls were also created for possible animal introductions.
- The indoor rooms lead to completed outdoor holding yards for private space and access to large free-roaming habitats with plenty of trees and areas to explore.
- Lions Chupino and Saltena moved in just in time before winter. Mansa and Leo joined in early December. Kimba, Sofia and Gino are living in other free-roaming areas of the sanctuary, as is Shanti Deva.

Cat News

- Bobcat Harley moved into a private and quiet space near Wildcat Pines.
- Bobcat Bella moved into a wooded habitat all her own.
- Lynx Ramsey moved into a large area near Roar Ridge. Something he prefers after the passing of his friend Buddy.
- New residents lynx Aria and bobcat Mondovi merged and became the best of friends.
- Hybrids Ty, Ledger, Phoenix and Bronx moved to a larger bungalow with bigger indoor space.
- Serval Scarlet merged in with Mesa and Jaharah and is doing well.
- Serval Sebastian and bobcat Luna were merged successfully and moved into Wildcat Pines together.

Hospital and Vet Care

- Wellness exams took place on 63 residents to ensure their health.
- A new x-ray stand, animal scale and other

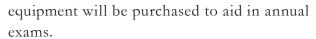












- Cataract surgery gave rescue dog Cookie her sight back.
- Planning for a new educational Animal Care center began.
- The Wildcat Sanctuary had to say good-bye to 11 residents who have joined the pride on the other side.

Equipment

- Two new utility vehicles were purchased to aid in daily feeding of animals and construction.
- Lawn mower, tools for construction, new transport crates were also purchased.

Working for the Cats

- The intern house received a new septic line to the city sewer and water. Growing the program benefits the animals at the sanctuary and helps us inspire future animal advocates.
- The sanctuary began a media intern program, launched with 4 interns who contributed 2,040 hours to help provide support and bring the sanctuary to our supports through photos, videos, social media and an online gift shop.
- Animal Care staff fed 109,500 pounds of food last year.
- Animal Care Interns contributed almost 20,000 hours of work to support animal care and construction.
- We were awarded three AmeriCorps teams who volunteered 55 days or 3,464 total hours!



They made the teardown and rebuild of Wildcat Pines possible in one season.

Inspire advocates at every touch point

- The Wildcat Sanctuary attended the Big Cat Sanctuary Alliance Conference. Executive Director sat on the events, rescue and advocacy committees, as well as presented about how to provide large open habitats for rescued cats at the conference.
- Staff also attended the Captive Wildlife
 Conference hosted by Performing Animal
 Welfare Society and networked with others
 in the industry on how to help wild animals
 currently in captivity.
- The Wildcat Sanctuary reached 2.9 million people through Facebook. We created two new Facebook Group pages that are growing rapidly, too. Fans have become advocates and support legislation, write letters and help educate about the captive wildlife crisis.
- The Wildcat Sanctuary Development volunteers contributed hours equal to 4 full-time employees
- On-site volunteer support was provided by over 26 Volunteer Crew Days who helped with gardening, construction, events and enrichment creation.

Wow!!! This is incredible, isn't it? We couldn't do this without all of YOU!

A look ahead to 2019!



O19 is our 20th Anniversary of saving lives!

As we celebrate all we've accomplished together, we have big plans for this coming year and invite you to be a part of it, too.

New Animal Care Center

- We'll be planning and designing a new Animal Care Center to be built over the next several years. This will enable more space for wellness exams and surgeries, inside recovery area for cats, and upgraded equipment.
- There'll also be safe viewing areas that can be used for veterinary training. This building will

- host our animal care staff, overnight staff, and volunteers.
- Moving the hospital to this new building will enable us to expand our food preparation and animal supply storage. That's something very much needed as so many more big cats have joined our family.

Habitats for the Cats

- Pride Prairie will be completed with caves, landscaping and platforms for the new residents.
- The last habitat in Wildcat Pines will be completed and all indoor and outdoor spaces



will include skywalks and plenty of shaded areas.

- We plan to renovate our outdoor quarantine habitats for better drainage and flexibility for new residents, as well as geriatric cats that need specialized care.
- The Tiger Trio, Daisy and Ekaterina will also receive more shade structures and landscaping.
- Several cats will receive updated platforms, including the servals and the '4 Wild' cougar group.
- Plans for renovating areas of Hybrid Haven will begin, if timing permits.

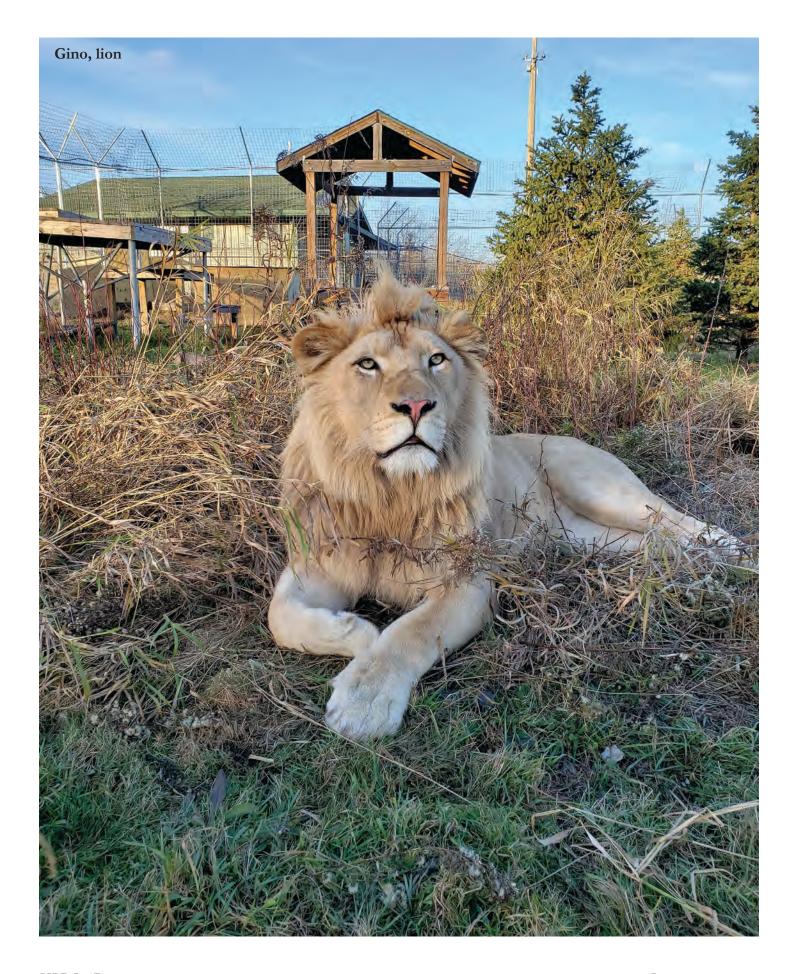
Equipment

- An SUV or truck is needed for daily supply, food runs and cross-country rescues. The vehicle will need to pull our rescue trailers, too.
- New mowers are needed to maintain the habitats and grounds.
- Ongoing maintenance is always necessary; including new siding on the current intern bunkhouse, concrete ramps for animal buildings

to move transport crates, tiger pool repairs, etc.

Building for our Future

- Bringing the sanctuary to our supporters through:
 - New website
 - More live posts and videos
 - More photos
 - Investment in new high-speed internet, if accessible in our area (cross your fingers!)
 - Adding a Communications position to support these efforts
- Developing our strategic plan for the next three, five and 10 years.
 - Including Development and Finance staff/resources
 - Expanding leadership
 - Continuing Education for all staff
 - How we impact the Captive Wildlife Crisis nationally and internationally.









In the middle of rescuing the seven lions from Argentina, I got another urgent message about a cat in need of rescue. This time a Bengal cat.

I've heard this story countless times before. Gabby had been returned two times to a domestic animal shelter after coming to them from another overcrowded shelter. She'd been bounced from place to place, home to home.

Why was she returned so many times? Because Gabby is like so many bengals. She doesn't use a litter box.

You can understand how hard it is for us to keep taking in so many hybrids. People buy them for their wild looks, but can't tolerate their wild instincts. But to us, these cats are just as important as the big cats we rescue. They deserve a home for life, too.

So, once again, we're opening our hearts to another Bengal. We're one of the few sanctuaries in the country that will take in these cats stuck between two worlds. They are sold by breeders as domestic but then become unwanted when they display wild instincts and territorial urination. So where do they go?

I hope you'll join us in raising awareness about hybrids and their behavioral and medical issues. We have to stop the breeding for profit. It's a very lucrative industry. But Gabby is the face of those who pay the ultimate price – the cats themselves.

Thank you for making it possible for us to say yes to this sweet little girl, too.





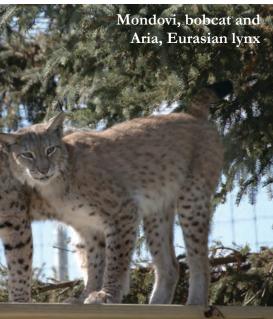








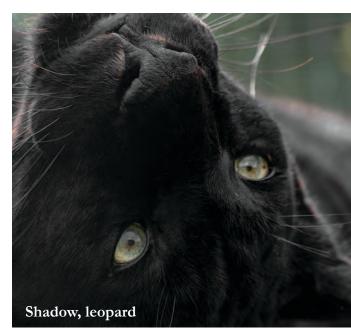












In Honor & In Memory Gifts through December 20, 2018

In Honor

In honor of Alexandra's birthday from Uncle Don & Aunt Stephanie Alexandra Wenzler

In honor of Amy Carlson's and Aaron Moe's wedding celebration.

Gordon and Helen Carlson, Michael and Jill Carter, Corinne Dawson, D'Lee Dreyer, Craig and Susan Grefe, William and Lisa Lundberg, David and Cindy Matalamaki, Annika Moe, Larry and Cheryl Moe and John Thrasher

In honor of Barbara Sharpe's birthday Paula Nelson, Rosalind Annen

In honor of Bravo and Tom Jerome and Gayle Pikus

In honor of Calliope Ruth Conley

In honor of Courtney Dooley's birthday! Linda Pons

In honor of Daisy Cathy Ryan

In honor of Dana K Melching Steven Melching

In honor of Eddy Cindy and Scott Wetzel

In honor of Emily Gomez Susan Pritchett

In honor of Emma Shalom Morris Cheryl Goldstein

In honor of Ima's birthday!
Jennifer Seidel and Nicole Trebil

In honor of Julie Hanan's Birthday! Sandra Fleischman

In honor of Kathie Anstett Renee Howell

In honor of Kymm Thomas' birthday! Shelly Carter

In honor of Margaret Gilmer Janet Hoben

In honor of Auntie Gennie. Love, Maeve and Franki Molly Kelly

In honor of Michelle Friessen Elaine Luelf

In honor of Mitsy, Peyton, Sammi, and Don. Happy Thanksgiving!

Donald Ludewig

In honor of my cat Ninja de La Noche Pantera Ali'i O Pele Dore Dokos-Loewenthal

In honor of My cat Vajra Bodhisattva Lightning Lord Dore Dokos-Loewenthal

In honor of my furbabies Boo, Shadow, Shine, and Sundance Carole Chapman

In honor of Paula Nelson's birthday Barbara Sharpe and Rosalind Annen

In honor of Rosalind Annen's birthday.
Paula Nelson

In honor of Tammy, the staff & volunteers who keep the cats healthy, giving them the chance to live wild at heart

Kathleen Jackson

In honor of Terry & Judy Hultzen Robin and Terry Williams

In honor of the marriage of Barbara Hensler and Patrick Heffernan on Oct. 13, 2018

Etta, Peter, David and Robin Hensler

In honor of Mike and Cherie Hanson's 50th wedding anniversary.

Christine Anderson

In honor of Sascha Blu Rowena Lachant

In Memory

In memory of Abby Stephanie Wittenberg

In memory of Abigail Kathy Higgins

In memory of Anne Vranek of Faribault, MN Alicia Oliveras

In memory of Berdell A. Schmidt Tim and Karen Schmidt

In memory of Bryan Mockros, an extraordinary person Marilynne Roberts In memory of Charles and Kay Clausing Miriam Bisbing

In memory of Ellen Buchholtz's beloved cat, Cricket.

Jhane Marello

In memory of Elskede (Elli) Devi Book

In memory of four beautiful souls who crossed the Rainbow Bridge this year: Sonny Bono, Samys, Pumpkin Puss, Bitty Girl

Carrie and Wayne Peterson

In memory of Fuzzy Christine Francis

In memory of Lefty.
Lizbeth Dobbins and Jon Leonard

In memory of Libby Jed Hardy, Stephanie Wittenberg, Deborah Kerr, Margaret Owen Thorpe

In memory of Libby. A piece of our heart is at the rainbow bridge Joanne Manning

In memory of Mason Sally Thornton

In memory of Munchie and Lokai, and in honor of Smoky
Peggy Smith

In memory of my beloved feline son who got his angel wings on Nov 3 of 2008
Ravelyn Blackbird

In memory of my beloved Princess, the Tabby Tiger of her backyard Julie Ronning

In memory of My cats who are in Cat Heaven: GRACIE, SOPHIE & SNICKERS

Patricia Bartch

In memory of my father, he always had a very tender heart for animals. Cynthia Carter

In memory of my feline friends that have passed on, Claudius, Tiberious and Vesta Eirik Rasmusson

In memory of my kitty, Frisky. Maureen Ykema

In Memory

In memory of my late friend Gaye Prestwood

Lakiesha Smartt

In memory of my mom, Rose Hoffman Jane and Chad Filley

In memory of our adored neighbor, Butch Cassidy

Mrs. and Mr. James Whitten

In memory of our dear Columbo and Biteybite that passed away.
Linda Meyer

In memory of our little rescued panther Effie.

Jennifer Lunday

In memory of Ron Phillips
Maureen Phillips

In memory of Sansa, feline friend of Christopher Pierce.

Tom and Lori Calhoun and Milo Calhoun

In memory of Tasha II

Linda Kanuch, Donald Ludewig, Lauren Lynn, Janet and Dan Davis, Joan Oprian, Julia Bulbulian Wells, Paula Rust

In memory of Tasha II and Paul Joseph Crecca

Paul and Michele Crecca

In memory of The Clemente Family's beloved cat Whiskers.
Kimberly and Robert Coffey

In memory of Tigger and Tabby.
Brenda Spearman

In memory of Yvonne Kelly Patricia Deraney

In memory of Shazam Kimberly and Robert Coffey



Now, instead of walking past you, our bright shining star each day, you are shining down on us. We feel blessed to have had you in our lives Tasha and thankful for all the new friends you introduced us to.

Gone But Not Forgotten

Make a memorial or bonorarium gift at WildcatSanctuary.org.



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Ways You Can Help



Miracle Match

Just think of how many big cat lives you can help when your gift is **DOUBLED!!**

With spring just around the corner, our Miracle Match fundraising campaign couldn't come at a more needed time!

It costs approximately \$10,000 every year to care for a tiger.

Mark your calendars! Miracle Match is March 1st through April 30th.

During this Miracle Match campaign, your gift will go twice as far for cats. A gift of \$35 becomes \$70, \$100 becomes \$200 and so on.

So please, won't you send your most generous gift when it counts the most? Then, why not share this opportunity with your friends, too?

email: info@wildcatsanctuary.org phone: 320-245-6871

Details can be found at WildcatSanctuary.org