



IT'S ALL ABOUT GIBBS: In Memory of GIBBS

??/??/2010 (rescued) to 10/28/2017

Where do I begin about my beloved Leroy Jethro "GIBBS"?

GIBBS was a rescue from NCIS Cherry Point Marine Corps Base in 2010. It's a long story, but GIBBS had been a part of a sting operation at the young age of three months. Long story short, he was brought back to North Carolina and the agents were instructed to find him a home. I was just in the right place at the right time when I agreed to adopt this abused, full of fleas, ticks and skinny dirty pup. What was I going to do I had a ten year old just recently diagnosed with congested heart failure Lasa that wasn't supposed to make it through the next few months and a sickly puppy. Was I nuts?

After a quick trip to the groomers and my Veterinarian office for a medical checkup my fears began to subside. The grooming proved to bring out the most beautiful puppy I had ever seen. It was there I looked into his eyes and said, "Oh my you can see into this dogs soul through these eyes, little guy I do believe you have been blessed by God." By the way my Lasa Boo, lived another 6 years and both GIBBS and Boo were forever buds.

A few years past and GIBBS and I suffered a severe betrayal in our lives and it was at that time I noticed that GIBBS had a gift. I knew he was special but it seems that his gift grew with each day. It was recommended by my physician that I have GIBBS trained as a service dog for myself. But GIBBS was so special that I wanted to share his gift and help others. Research led me to paws4people, another awesome gift in my life.

When GIBBS and I walked into the training center in Hampstead North Carolina we were greeted by his trainers. I was so scared and GIBBS recognized my fear, which made him stressed. I wasn't sure if we would even be accepted into the program but the gentle, kind, and loving staff began our training on that day.

Our training took many months of hard work and soon the final testing day arrived. I remember arriving early to the site. I walked GIBBS around the facility as we had been instructed to do so. I was praying out loud telling GIBBS we can do this! But I was afraid we wouldn't. As I approached the entrance I stopped frozen in fear.

I said out loud, "I can't do this, GIBBS."

It was then GIBBS stopped turned around looked over his shoulders, his eyes seemed to say, "I got this mom, follow me, let's roll!"

"Okay," I said out loud, "let's roll."

GIBBS did really well that day and received his green Therapeutic Facility Vest at the reunion the following month.

paws4people gave GIBBS his command cues, refined him to a well behaved obedient dog, but the gift of recognizing stress and anxiety in people came from within GIBBS. GIBBS loved wearing his vest and knew just what to do when he wore it. GIBBS worked extensively with the Wounded Warrior Battalion at Camp Lejeune in NC. His concentration was on active duty and Veterans that suffered from symptoms associated with PTSD. But GIBBS would also visit and lend a helping, loving paw to anyone that needed him. He could pick out a person, even in a crowd, who needed help. He never ceased to amaze me. GIBBS was invited to many facilities and events throughout the country. He was loved everywhere he went.

Shortly before he died, he was selected to the Thera-paws program at Carolina East Medical Center in New Bern, NC. He went through that training program in the last weeks of his life truly amazing. In his short time there he again won the hearts of everyone who met him.

GIBBS as a pup was rescued from a terrible situation and I was blessed enough to adopt him. I like to think that because he was saved God blessed him with his gift to save others. Together GIBBS and I went through more than most can endure but we came through the difficult times together, side by side helping others get through severe betrayals in their lives. GIBBS was my constant companion, work partner, confidant and furry son.

Suddenly and without warning on October 27th, GIBBS collapsed. His Veterinarian, Dr. Martin and I rushed him to the Veterinary Trauma Center in Wilmington, NC where they tried to save him. Unfortunately, in the wee hours of the early morning on October 28, 2017 when they operated on him he was full of cancer. I had to say good-bye to my Beloved GIBBS. Wrapped in my arms I sang his favorite bedtime song and told him what a great gift he was to so many people and how much I loved him. It was the hardest thing I have ever had to do in my life. My GIBBS showed me such love and devotion. He never let anyone know how ill he was. He just knew he had a mission to fulfill. He loved me that much and I loved him enough to not let him suffer and let him go.

GIBBS gave of himself to everyone he met but his greatest joy came from being with his Wounded Warriors. He so loved being with these men and women who gave it all. GIBBS could wrap his loving paws around them and they would have long conversations. It was amazing to watch. He was a true healer, an Angel Dog sent by God.

The outpouring of grief from his passing was both over-whelming and comforting at the same time. GIBBS received a meritorious citation from the Wounded Warrior Battalion East which hangs in the hall where he worked. They say he's still watching over them. It reads:

Leroy Jethro GIBBS: for meritorious service at Wounded Warrior Battalion East from September 2015 to October 2017. During this time GIBBS played a critical role in the recovery process for all of the Marines and Sailors that he worked with. His Infectious spirit and unconditional love will never be forgotten by this Battalion. He will be missed but his memory will live long in the lives of those that knew him. Semper Fi GIBBS!

“In honor of a true hero who help to heal so many. His love will never be forgotten.”

I will love, honor, and miss my Beloved “GIBBS” the rest of my life.