



TRAVIS JOHNSON - In Memoriam

07/17/2004 to 01/31/2018

TRAVIS started life under horrible conditions. He was completely emaciated and had not been socialized at all. TRAVIS had spent that first year of his life in a kennel in a basement, with what little food he did get thrown down to him. Terry heard about TRAVIS through a friend, and made the decision to take custody of him and save his life.

Over the next six years Terry worked with TRAVIS and all of the problems that he had, as a result of the abuse he incurred. He had a habit of eating inappropriate objects and the first one happened to be the seam end of a towel that worked its way through his stomach and intestines. By the time Terry figured out what was wrong with him surgery was required along with six weeks in the intensive care unit. TRAVIS was also unable to be kenneled. He was so stressed by the confinement that he tore up all of his teeth trying to chew his way out. TRAVIS had to constantly be watched, still Terry loved him unconditionally, and kept TRAVIS with him for six years.

In 2012 I met TRAVIS while taking the Assistance Dog Training Program Class 1 at UNCW. I was in such bad physical shape from my disease that I could hardly walk. Terry let me watch TRAVIS as a babysitting assignment and although I had bumped with AIRLIE, TRAVIS and I had just fallen in love and I felt I couldn't part with him. When it was time to return him I met Terry with a long list of reasons of why I needed to keep him and was willing to forfeit AIRLIE. At the time I didn't realize what a huge sacrifice it was on Terry's part, but I do now. He agreed to let me keep TRAVIS with conditions.

For people who have never considered suicide or never felt loved, I don't know that I can explain to you just how much TRAVIS meant to me. He saved my life when I felt as though I was spiraling out of control and I was physically deteriorating. TRAVIS pulled me back from all of that. I was no longer so lonely that I wished to die. I saw how his hips and feet were messed up, and it motivated me to push through my pain. If he could still walk, then I could get up and take him walking. Over the next six years TRAVIS rehabilitated me to where I am now. He loved me so unconditionally and he never complained. He never had any umbilical training, but he took literally

every step I took, when I inhaled he was there to exhale for me. We did absolutely everything together. He made me a better person because I didn't want to do anything to put him at risk. He still had to be watched constantly, so we developed an unbreakable bond.

TRAVIS had been with me through the sickness and death of my father as well as the other ups and downs in my life. He was so loyal that he would just lie quietly by a birthing mother, so I could do my work. Although he didn't care for puppies, TRAVIS would come and lie down by me while the puppies nursed, just so he could be near me. The last six months I could see that he no longer possessed the energy to follow me and was having great difficulty getting around. I had always promised TRAVIS that when he no longer had a good quality of life that I would let him go. During his lifetime he had five surgeries to have his intestines re-sectioned for eating inappropriate items and there were times we didn't think he would make it. TRAVIS was fortunate to grow up with our beloved CHAENEY and BRADIE.

On Tuesday January 30th, TRAVIS refused dinner and his temperature went really high. After speaking with Terry, I knew the most difficult decision I'd ever make was coming, but I had to keep my promise. I spent the night with my most special friend, confidant and special baby. The next morning, I let him go hoping that sweet CHAENEY and BRADIE would be there to greet him. I pray they are all playing in fields of green and dreaming puppy dog dreams.

There will never be another that I love like I shared with TRAVIS. I truly owe him my life.