

## In memory of Galaxy



**Gigi and Reggie Hunnicutt, Jr. donated a painting of Galaxy to the Veterinary Teaching Hospital. Painted by Hunnicutt's sister Judy Fowler, the artwork is in memory of the Border Collie's boundless spirit and in appreciation of the Oncology Service staff.**

Galaxy was just another of many Border Collies in need of a good home. We adopted her at the age of three from Border Collie Rescue. Her owner, Rebecca, lovingly relinquished her after she realized that her own lifestyle and the uncertainty of her future was not conducive to the personality and expectations of a driven Border Collie.

Galaxy had classic black and white Border Collie markings; her online adoption picture reflected her kind soul and spirited personality. Rebecca was very careful about where Galaxy was placed, and after exchanging pictures and stories, she eventually decided that ours was the best home for Galaxy. My wife Gigi and I drove from Charlotte, North Carolina to Mobile, Alabama to pick her up. As we drove into Rebecca's yard, we found the two of them playing one last game of catch. Galaxy hesitantly but obediently followed us to our truck for the drive home.

Border Collies are notoriously very active, smart and demanding, and my wife and I find their quirky behavior endearing. Galaxy was a very polite and alert dog. She assumed the gentle and quiet alpha to her adopted Border Collie sibling and never abused that power.

I took Galaxy and her sibling Peaches for a romp in the pasture every day. Galaxy would chase the oversized tennis ball and Peaches would catch

the Frisbee. Galaxy would pause only for a cool dip in the creek and then continue to play until she was ready to lead Peaches and I back to the house for cool water and rest.

Galaxy's favorite place was anywhere there was water where she could swim figure eights. Two places she particularly liked were Jekyll Island, Georgia and Jordan Lake, North Carolina. Between trips she would visit the golf course, chase geese, and swim in the lakes. She seemed happy to be alive everyday. She loved spending mornings with my wife and would often sleep in late after I went to work. In the evening, she would see us off to bed, then retire to the other room. Galaxy seemed to positively influence everyone she met and she was a marvelous ambassador at nursing homes. She would go in and visit with total strangers, and bring joy to those who didn't have much of a reason to smile.

In fall of 2005, we noticed Galaxy was not her usual healthy self. Her regularly shiny black nose was dry and she was showing signs of abdominal bloating. We took her to our veterinarian and found that she had liver failure from an unknown cause. Eventually we were referred to the NC State University College of Veterinary Medicine and the Veterinary Teaching Hospital.

Galaxy didn't present her disease in any text-

book fashion. It took weeks of tests and deduction to conclude that she had lymphoma. She was immediately put on a chemotherapy regime that required weekly trips from Charlotte to Raleigh, which we were happy to do.

Twice Galaxy's reaction to the chemotherapy put her in intensive care. She struggled mightily with her cancer at the hospital, but it was finally determined that she was losing her fight. Like her uncharacteristic diagnosis of cancer, her treatment did not react in a textbook fashion. We decided to withhold further treatment and tried to make her last days comfortable and happy.

We were blessed to have her for one more Christmas. She died on January 5, 2006 at the age of six. She remained happy and loyal until the end. We have owned and outlived many dogs before, and I am sure we will have many more to come. For some reason Galaxy stands out among all the pets that we have had. Her spirit and memory will live on in our hearts.

The watercolor of Galaxy was donated by my sister Judy Fowler ([www.judyfowler.com](http://www.judyfowler.com)) of Durham, North Carolina. The painting is dedicated to the loving memory of Galaxy and in grateful appreciation of all who treated her. It is important to us that her memory live on.

— Reggie Hunnicutt, Jr.