

## Hero to strays, inspiration to all

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By JACQUIELYNN FLOYD / The Dallas Morning News

This is a eulogy for a saint. I don't know the strict theological definition of the word, but if it encompasses boundless compassion, absolute selflessness and devotion completely unsullied by ego, then Pat Arnold qualified.

Pat quite simply could not endure the sight of a hungry stray dog wandering by the roadside or scavenging in a garbage can. The more sentimental among the rest of us might experience a moment of sadness, might be moved to spare extra attention for our own pets that day or even mail off a check to an animal shelter.

But Pat Arnold literally couldn't stand it. Her dream – hopeless, far-fetched, counterintuitively illogical – was a happy, lifelong home for every dog, even the sick ones and the ugly ones, the ones half-crazed by fear and starvation.

For the last 10 years, Pat and her husband, Bill, lived a rural, almost monastic life entirely devoted to stray dogs they rescued and cared for. They lived in a cramped mobile home in Eustace, about 100 miles from Dallas, surrounded by a sprawling complex of kennels housing a population of orphan dogs that averages about 70 or so at a time. They hired a small staff to maintain their strict goal that every dog receives food and shelter, exercise – and affection.

Donations
Donations may be made to: Straydog P.O. Box 1465 Gun Barrel City, TX 75147 <a href="http://www.straydog.org">www.straydog.org</a>

Pat, 63, died Sunday morning. Her final hours were spent in the same enterprise that commanded her life: caring for the dogs.

"She had had a headache Friday night, but it went away," Bill Arnold, still stunned by the terrible loss, told me Monday.



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**Pat Arnold died Sunday at age 63. She and husband Bill devoted the last 10 years to taking care of dogs they rescued.**

On Saturday, Bill left for Dallas to pick up a dog that was being treated by a local veterinary surgeon. While he was on the way, he got a call from the staff back home telling him that Pat had suddenly collapsed, that an ambulance was on the way.

"I turned around and headed back home," he said. "Then they called again and said, 'Pat wants you to go ahead and get the dog.' " It was characteristic.

Still conscious but weak and failing, Pat told the staff, as she was being loaded into the ambulance, "Take care of my dogs while I'm gone."

They took Pat Arnold to a hospital in Athens, and from there, she was flown by medical helicopter to East