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Riley – a wolf for all seasons

When I think of Riley I smile to myself, remembering his stunning coat, golden eyes and versatile nature. When I first met Riley, his enclosure fence was being repaired and Siri, his enclosure mate, was hiding in their den. Riley stood outside the den huffing and growling at the “intruders”, hackles up, no doubt protecting his mate and his territory. Despite this show of bravado, Riley was submissive to his companion Siri and showed great affection for her.

He also had a playful and mischievous nature. Riley would lie in a crouched position and wait until animal care staff walked by his enclosure. Suddenly, he would leap up, bound in their direction, then run off as the humans turned around; all the time, he was wagging his tail as if to say “gotcha!”

Riley was very adaptable. He took on a more dominant and mentoring role briefly with two young female wolfdogs after Siri died, before settling in to

a comfortable friendship with Ukiah, a mature female, in the weeks before he died.

Riley’s death was sudden and unexpected and left all of us in a state of great sadness. Even now, as I remember that day, I feel a heaviness in my heart. Then I think about the wonderful life Riley had at Wolf Haven for many years due to the generosity and caring of so many people and I know Riley will always remain in our hearts.

Riley: JULIE LAWRENCE PHOTO.

