

Black hawk

Daniel Curry, *Animal Care Specialist*

THIS POEM IS DEDICATED to the memory of Blackhawk:

It was the 14th of May when we met, a day I will not forget. We were told you were in a sanctuary with others of your kind. It was said to be filled with love and respect. But upon arrival all that we could find was fear and neglect. For all of your pain what was their gain?

We saw that you needed help so we answered the call – that is our duty after all. The only regret was that we couldn't take you all. But what we could do was help the three of you. You, your mate Badger, and your daughter Ladyhawk made a beautiful family. When we first came to where you were held, we saw that the truth was disguised, hidden behind lies. What we found when we looked around was a deep sadness in the souls of your eyes. We got to you just in time, for you were wasting in a jail, though you had done no crime. You were so skinny you were barely there, behind all of your thick black hair. You were very meek in body and mind and your gift of life was limited in time. You were given a chance at life, but it seems all you could find was strife.

The journey home was long and unknown, what lay on this path where you were thrown? You took a deep look into our eyes, and there you found no lies, only compassion and a desire to help. The ones that brought you to this place, this darkness that you had to face. You had no choice, only a voice that you feared no one would hear. Why did we do this you asked, why did we take up this task, that seems so hopeless at times? The answer was simple – you were and always will be our beloved family. All that we asked in



“... You were nobility, and true beauty, you were a pure spirit.” PHOTO BY JULIE LAWRENCE.

return was that you find peace in the space that we humbly offered as a home. So that when you and humans met again, you would look upon them more as friends. And in that connection, you taught others to see the true you and not the misconceptions that construed their view.

When we finally got you here to your home, you found much more room to roam. You were given fresh meat to eat, and puzzles to beat, helping your mind to unwind from the terrible trials that had come your way. Here you were more than just a name on a file that helped us earn our pay. You were our friend and part of our mission. Our goal for you was that you start anew and thrive here with us. And in doing so, we helped you put your very

large feet back where they belonged, holding you up, oh so strong. For you were nobility, and true beauty, you were a pure spirit filled with innocence, which is not the norm for my current form. You had the chance to teach others that we are all spiritual brothers, that there is a connection between everyone here on earth. We were your guardians; we watched over you and insured that you were safe.

There were many fond of your presence some even had the privilege of forming a bond with you. I unfortunately was not one of those few, but you had lessons to teach me too. Blackhawk in your last breath before your awaiting death, I asked only that someday you

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might look down on me and say, I am proud of you. Unto this day I wait and pray and hope that I will hear you say, those five words that mean so much, that carry so much weight with their touch. Like a son to a father I await that moment to come.

When we got you home you were given room to roam, meat to eat, and puzzles to beat. All that we asked in return was for you to find happiness.

