

## In Memory of Clementine

1979 - 1996

TOM McMAHON



For years, one of the first sights to greet visitors to Wolf Haven were two beautiful white wolves, Lucan and Clementine. Brother and sister, they had spent their lives together, first at a small wildlife facility in Yelm, Washington, and later at Wolf Haven after the couple that cared for them passed away. While here, they spent the majority of their time perched atop a mima mound in their enclosure. This small hill afforded them a view of the entire sanctuary, as well as a good view of all the visitors that came through the gate for a tour.

While neither Lucan nor Clementine were ever acquainted with the vast tundra that should have been their home, they were ambassadors for others of their species who are dependent upon human protection of their home and habitat. They

performed their work admirably, being two of the most-often-adopted wolves. The sacrifices that they were forced to make (hand raised wolves can never be released into the wild) provided countless benefits to both people and their brothers and sisters in the wolf world.

As they aged, Clementine's eyesight began to fail, and she became more dependent on Lucan's support. Closely following him around their home, she relied on him to help keep her aware of her environment. Lucan never failed to meet that challenge, and the bond that held them together drew tighter than ever. It was heartwarming to watch these two stately old friends exhibit this kind of compassion for each other.

In the fall of 1994, when Lucan was 15 years old, his body finally gave out. After refusing food and medications for four days, Dr. Jerry Brown of Yelm Veterinary Hospital came to the conclusion that there was nothing else to be done for Lucan. In what he describes as one of the most painful decisions of his career, Dr. Brown euthanized Lucan on September 9, 1994.

Wolf Haven's staff was now immensely concerned for Clementine. She was the same age as Lucan, and although her general health seemed fine, she was now alone for the first time in her life, and her deteriorating vision could cause difficulties for her. Clementine immediately showed us that our fears were unfounded. During the last years of her life, she maneuvered quite well by feeling the trails that she and Lucan had worn into the enclosure. While she did mourn the passage of Lucan for several months, she never lost any of her spirit. Clementine joined in with the howling songs of the rest of our "pack," and always waited atop her hill to greet her keepers each morning (and usually receive a special treat!).

As we at Wolf Haven watched Clementine gracefully age, we noticed the development of a growth on her muzzle. After several months, the growth began to grow. Again Dr. Brown was called in to determine the problem. Clementine was anesthetized, and the growth was removed successfully. Unfortunately, biopsy results revealed that the growth was a cancerous tumor. Within weeks, Clementine was starting to show signs of other problems. Veterinary examinations now revealed that the cancer had spread to other parts of her body, and her condition was invariably terminal. On the morning of April 23, 1996, the decision was made to give Clementine peace and rest—the one last gift we could give her. She died quietly and with dignity in the enclosure that had been her home for so many years.

Saying goodbye is never easy. Clementine had spent the last 13 years of her life at Wolf Haven and held a special place in all of our hearts. Oftentimes as I walk past her now-vacant enclosure, I think I see the faint shadows of two wonderful white wolves, wolves that are no longer concerned with mere physical boundaries such as enclosure fences. At last, Lucan and Clementine run together again in a place where they are finally and forever free.