

A TRIBUTE TO COLORADO

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To some, he was called Radish and, to others, he was known as Little Buddy, but his name was Colorado—a small, narrow chested reddish wolf with the heart of a giant.

May 18 started the same as many other days at Wolf Haven, until it became obvious that something was seriously wrong with Colorado. That Wednesday, during morning rounds, Colorado was seen having a seizure. Wolf Haven's veterinarian, Dr. Jerry Brown, was called and asked to come out. Colorado, like other members of his family before him, had been showing signs of increased arthritis and lack of control over his back legs, and he was on medication. Dr. Brown felt that what we were seeing was the result of continued deterioration and neurological damage. The prognosis was not good. We could not allow our friend to suffer any longer. So, with sad hearts, the decision was made to give Colorado the last gift we could and let him go.

Colorado had been a part of Wolf Haven since its beginning. Born in the spring of 1982 to his father Dakota and mother Cheyenne, he is survived only by his life-time companion, Kathleen, who was by his side to the very end. Although very different in personality as well as appearance, Colorado and Kathleen always complemented each other with their own unique distinctions.

"Personality Plus" was a perfect description of Wolf Haven's smallest wolf, Colorado. Colorado only weighed 60 pounds, but he made up for his small size with a whimsical and dynamic personality. Wolves have very expressive faces. Their black nose, dark eyes and ears, and mouth outlined in black make it quite easy to read their expressions. Colorado had one of the most expressive faces of any of the wolves at Wolf Haven.

Kathleen, always much larger than Colorado, didn't seem to mind if he was in the spotlight. Kathleen prefers the solitude at the back of the enclosure, while Colorado enjoyed interacting more with staff and volunteers.

In the wild, wolves mark their territory with urine. This signpost lets other wolves know that the area of land is already occupied. Colorado, on many occasions, decided to scent mark our volunteer tour guides while they were attempting to provide a tour for our visitors. We are not sure if he did this because of a territorial dispute, an unusual sense of humor, or out of boyish fun. For whatever reason, when this behavior occurred, it seemed to add a sense of fun and spontaneity for our guests.

Although different in size as well as personality, Kathleen and Colorado made delightful companions for one another.

It has often been said that "death is hardest on the living." Where there once was a wolf waiting for his morning treat, now there is only an empty place. Although someday another wolf may move in, and he will be cared for and loved, that wolf will never take Colorado's place. Will those of us who work for the wolves at Wolf Haven ever get used to walking past the enclosure where Colorado lived and not see him there? Probably not.

As we write this, it has been five days since we let Colorado go, and still Kathleen howls for her mate. One cannot help but wonder how many wolves in Alaska are crying out for their lost mates killed by the Alaska wolf kill.



COLORADO

May 12, 1982 to May 18, 1994