



Chai & Myta Jr.

Myta Jr. *Julie Lawrence.*

WE RECENTLY SAID GOOD-BYE TO THE LAST TWO SURVIVORS OF A FAMILY DYNASTY.

Chai and Myta Jr. At 16 years of age, they were two of the oldest wolves living at Wolf Haven. Born under private ownership, Chai was seven months old when she and most of her familial pack, including parents Myta Sr. and Kuani, were brought to Wolf Haven in 2003. You might have heard them referred to as the “Dinos”, a nickname related to their birthplace, San Bernardino, California. Although Chai’s siblings Bart, Cricket, Jinkies and Spruce arrived with her at Wolf Haven, the owner decided to keep one male wolf

pup – Myta Jr. However, three years later we were contacted by the owner again and were able to reunite Myta Jr. with his sister Chai. The brother and sister shared an enclosure with one another for the next 13 years.

These wolves held a deep bond, having been together nearly their entire lives. Many wolves in captivity lose companions due to illness or old age, making Chai and Myta’s story something of a rarity. These two were able to transition to their twilight years in each other’s company.

The siblings enjoyed their daily routines and had their favorite sleeping spots, daybeds for napping, and usual places to wait for the day’s menu.

While food dynamics can be tricky for some pairs at Wolf Haven, food conflicts between these siblings were extremely rare. Their favorite item by far was a deer leg, which gave them something to eat throughout the day and resembled what they would enjoy in the wild.

For a wolf, living into his or her teens comes with its challenges, so animal care staff adjusted as needed to ensure the two remaining Dinos the best quality of life possible. Because Chai and Myta Jr. slowly lost much of their hearing and eyesight, animal care staff clapped their hands and called out their names to prevent startling the pair when approaching their



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enclosure. Due to a weakened bladder, Chai eventually suffered from urinary incontinence, and the staff cleaned the straw in their deckpen daily, so they could sleep on a dry and cozy surface. Near the end of his life, Myta Jr. was given anti-inflammatory medication to ease mobility issues caused by degenerative myelopathy (a progressive disease of the spinal cord in older canines).

This special care and medication allowed Chai and Myta Jr. to continue to live with comfort, free to enjoy a routine in their woodsy enclosure and interact through the fence with neighboring wolves Lakota and Sierra.


In March, Chai suffered what

appeared to be a stroke. Her movement was not good, she seemed weak, and it was evident that she couldn't see and hear well at all. With her quality of life greatly compromised, we needed to help our friend rest. After she was euthanized, Chai's body remained in the deckpen overnight in the hope that it would help Myta process the loss of his life-mate.

Through the following days, the stress of the situation and the impact of the loss seemed to further bring Myta's mobility into a quick decline. Four days after Chai's passing, the time came for us to make the difficult decision to also help him rest.

For gray wolves in the wild, five to

seven years is considered an average lifespan. Although Chai and Myta Jr. were at the higher end of a captive wolf's lifespan, they lived fully until the end – howling, napping and, most importantly, enjoying each other's company.

Chai and Myta's remains will be cremated and their ashes placed in the cemetery, with the rest of the Dinos family. It has been an honor to care for each and every one of them. 

Kurtis Rattay, Animal Care Assistant