

Daniel Curry, *Animal Care Specialist*

Denali

WHAT AN HONOR IT IS to be at a loved one's side while they pass from this life to the next. Sometimes this honor is intertwined with relief, for it means an end to a loved one's suffering. This was not the case as Wendy and I watched our friend Denali slip away from this life. He was not ready, but our feeble arguments held little weight with death, as it relentlessly pulled Denali from his body. CPR, respiration stimulants, IV fluids, nothing helped him, not even our prayers.

It was a hopeless feeling not being able to help our friend. If we could have seen that medical efforts were futile, we might have decided to just sit peacefully next to him in his enclosure as he passed on. Instead we fought tooth and nail to try to save him. We had no choice. Our actions the day he passed away were already decided the moment we took Denali on as our responsibility,

so long ago. At Wolf Haven, we vow to give the best care we can to our friends. We promise to fight for them no matter what the arena: whether it be a court room, muddy hole, or an unwelcome death bed.

We walk alongside them as friends every day. They give us gifts of love and trust, relationships and memories. The animals that are our responsibility are also our family. Wendy and I could not just sit by; we had to fight for our friend. We hope Denali knows we fought for him with all the love in our hearts. It was an honor to be next to Denali as he made that journey.

Denali, most of my views of you were obscured by brush. You would use



the vegetation as a cloak around your body to hide from us, flitting in, around and out of the brush like a whisper. I never had the chance to truly get to know you, but maybe in that mystery lay the core of your spirit. You were always one who wanted to be left alone. I hope you know we really respected that and tried to accommodate you in this regard as best as we could. I just pray that you know that love was always the guiding factor in our care for you. See you again Denali.

