



## Wolf Haven

### *NAKOMIS - Daughter of the moon (Iroquois)* *and* *NIMROD - The mighty hunter (Biblical)* *A TRIBUTE*

This is a love story as passionate and devoted as if written for a romance novel. It involves so many human emotions and qualities that some may say it is too subjective to believe these emotions could be demonstrated by wild animals. The staff and volunteers have witnessed the true love that these wolves had for each other, and for life itself. No one could ever convince us otherwise, we have seen it day after day, year after year. I thought at first I would write about each wolf individually, but when you talk about Nakomis and Nimrod, it is singular, they were as one.

The story of Nimrod and Nakomis is not totally unique to our other mated pairs of wolves. Nimrod and Nakomis lived long lives in happiness and security which they had known since coming to Wolf Haven in 1982. They were born April 26, 1982, from the second mating of Blackfoot and Kyra. Four littermates, two full sisters from the first breeding, mother and father, were among several wolves that needed housing after the shut down of Wolf Country in South Prairie, Wa. Blackfoot was the founding wolf at Wolf Haven.

In the early years, both of these wolves were involved in public education. Their gentle, loving nature helped to educate people about what wolves are really like. From their sparkling eyes of amber to their glistening coats of cream, gold and gray, they made a lasting impression of nobility, strength and intelligence to all that met them. At a fairly young age, they retired to their large, grassy enclosure, secluded from the main tour route. They had performed their duties well and were rewarded with all the romping, playing, nuzzling and sunning themselves they could muster. It was a rich and full life of total devotion to one another. Nimrod was always the protector; if he sensed anything unusual, he would give her a warning growl to stay put while he investigated. Often Nakomis would awaken Nimrod from a nap with a pounce, then take off running, with a glance back to make sure he was chasing her. Nimrod loved water. You could often find him playing in a puddle or even his water bucket. Nakomis cuddled and pampered Nimrod. He was her "knight in shining armor," always courageous and strong, she, his "Lady Guinivere," beautiful, loving, devoted companion. To think of them was to think of one together. A completeness that is seldom achieved by their human counterparts.

Nimrod starting showing signs of a sinus problem last fall. He was treated with antibiotics in case there was an infection. Unfortunately, by the end of December, a growth was forming on his forehead. We knew it was a tumor. It progressed very rapidly and debilitated him more as each day went by. The devotion and love our Animal Care staff showed to Nimrod was demonstrated every day. If he was not wanting to eat what they had brought, they would go and get a wide array of tempting morsels. Many times it was a one shot deal, the next day, that morsel would no longer be the choice of the day. Medication is very difficult to hide when the patient is so picky about what he is willing to swallow. Nakomis at first, was very pleased to take anything that Nimrod didn't want, it was a feast of grand proportions to her. Yet, we knew that she was sensitive to his every mood. How would she ever be able to live without him? It was unfathomable to even think about. Nakomis without Nimrod, that could never happen, they were as one.

In mid February, it seemed like it happened overnight, Nakomis was depressed and not very responsive. She was unsteady on her feet, refused most foods offered and just lay in one place, most of the day. As each day passed, the fire in their eyes lost a little more of the life that used to burn so bright and intense. Each day brought more frustration to the Animal Care staff as there was nothing more they could do for them. The circle of life was slowly closing for the two wolves.

**"Celebrating 15 Years of Working for Wolf Conservation!"**

