



#### ASK FOR HELP

If you are struggling with grief, call or text the Texas Lawyers' Assistance Program, or TLAP, at 800-343-8527, 24 hours a day. All contact is confidential by statute.

## *Missing Mollie and* **THE JOY SHE BROUGHT TO OUR FAMILY**

**IN MAY 2008, WE WERE ON THE CUSP OF BEING EMPTY NESTERS.** After so many years of having weekends full of soccer tournaments and the like, we entered this phase with mixed emotions. Shortly before our daughter, Christine, graduated from high school, our dog Duke and his partner in crime, Simba, escaped from our backyard when the side gate was unlatched. Simba was a golden retriever and much easier to see in the dark. Duke was not. We believe he was hit by a delivery truck. He appeared to die without suffering.

We waited until Valentine's Day 2009, when Christine was home from her freshman year at Texas A&M, to find another furry friend. We fell in love with Mollie, a rescue. She had the same white markings on her chest as Duke. Mollie was part greyhound. She was deep-chested and had a smooth S-shaped body and a whip-like tail. Above all else, she was super fast. "Mollie Socks" got her nickname because she had four sock-like markings on her paws.

During our weekend trips to our farm in Winedale, Mollie adored chasing the cows and cutting in and out of the herd at a breakneck pace. She and Simba spent hours entertaining themselves playing with the cows. Not long after Mollie became part of our family, Simba passed. Each time we arrived at our farm gate, we opened the back hatch and let Mollie out to run. Mollie could exceed 20 miles per hour. Mollie spent many a happy day chasing cows and sleeping on our front porch.

Mollie was the perfect dog for our family. As the years passed and my poison ivy allergy required us to sell the farm, we vacationed in Galveston. Mollie adapted and not only learned how to ride in a golf cart and accompany me on long walks on the beach, she also got along with our four grown children's pets and our 10 grandchildren. She quietly endured other dogs eating her food and little hands petting her. She was never territorial.

More than anything, Mollie loved us unconditionally. As she aged, she grew to prefer chicken more than dog food. She became very astute at hearing the noise associated with preparing her food but would wait for me to call her before coming for her meal.

I know without a doubt that the past 14 years with Mollie made my life better. Scientists report that interacting with animals decreases our levels of cortisol, which is a stress-related hormone, and lowers our blood pressure. Animals also can reduce our feelings of loneliness, increase social support, and boost our moods. I know that Mollie did that for me.

In December, Mollie started having what we thought were small seizures. In January, blood work determined that Mollie had a reduced platelet count. The radiologist saw that Mollie had a large tumor in her spleen. Because of the significant risk of the pain she would be in should the tumor burst, we scheduled an appointment for us to say goodbye to Mollie. We were able to feed Mollie a little bit of her beloved steak and pet and comfort her as she went to the other side.

I will never forget how Mollie calmed my stress and boosted my spirits. Or the joy that she brought to my family and me.

#### LAURA GIBSON

President, 2022-2023  
State Bar of Texas