



Susan Mustoe and Dundee



Dundee came to me at the at the age of 10 weeks from the Golden Retriever Rescue of the Rockies (GRRR) where I volunteered. I already had a Golden from GRRR with whom I did Canine Freestyle (“dancing” with your dog) and wanted to teach Dundee the same. We would do performances at nursing homes, assisted living, even Alzheimer’s units. To begin, Dundee just did a few tricks but gradually he became quite the dancer with his own unique style. Dundee is a typical Golden who cannot get enough hugs and so became a bit hit with everyone at these performances.

When the dance group folded, I decided to look for something else to do with Dundee. He has always loved children and would stop whenever we passed them on our walks as he wanted to greet them. In my search for another outlet, I came across the reading program offered by Denver Pet Partners. I decided that Dundee and I were going back to training school in order to qualify for this program. With the help of Carole my good friend and dog trainer, Dundee and I prepared ourselves for the test. I was very nervous on the day of our test, but Dundee saved the day and we passed! This was a turning point in our lives as we both discovered how rewarding working with children could be. Dundee would get excited when his vest went on as he knew he was going to get many hugs. Often, he would lie with his head in the child’s lap while they read to him. Of course, if they stopped petting him while reading, he would look up at them as if to say, “Why have you stopped?”



We spent many wonderful hours at libraries, at school, and at other events usually involving children. I hadn’t realized how much patience Dundee had until I saw him at



the Batten Disease conference lying on the floor with several children all petting and hugging him at the same time. He was in his element.

A new turning point in our lives was about to happen. My daughter and her husband moved to Northern Ireland. With our first grandchild on the way, my husband and I decided that we wanted to be close to them and that we would make the move too. We started making preparations and were well underway. Then one day after playing ball in the yard, Dundee came into the house and lay down under the kitchen table. I thought this was odd as I was about to get his dinner and he

always sits beside me waiting for his food. When he wouldn't get up to eat, I knew something was wrong. I rushed him to my vet. They took one look at him and told me to go straight to Wheat Ridge Animal Emergency. Dundee had a ruptured spleen and was diagnosed with hemangiosarcoma. I was told if they did surgery, he would have about 2-3 months to live, probably a month or so longer with chemotherapy.

Dundee is only 7, and I wanted to give him the change to fight this, so I opted for both. The oncologist was wonderful. She suggested giving Dundee mushroom capsules which have been used in limited trials for this type of cancer. It was a long shot, but here we are, nearly 5 months later, and Dundee is in complete remission!

We went ahead with our plan to move to Northern Ireland. Dundee, my other Golden Retriever, Bojo (also a GRRR rescue), and I arrived safely in Northern Ireland at the beginning of March. We now live very close to my daughter and her family, and Dundee gets to see my granddaughter (21 months old) every day. He had his first visit to the beach and absolutely loved it! He chases Bojo around the garden every morning and loves the wind blowing through his fur. Dundee may be living on borrowed time or, maybe, he has many years ahead of him...who knows. One thing is certain: with the wind in his



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ears, the sand from the beach in his paws, and Bojo and my granddaughter running beside him, he intends to live life to the fullest!

