



## Smokey Ludlow

January 15, 2019

It was Friday, November 6, 2015.

I was at my desk at WSYX ABC 6 and I looked up at the noon news just in time to see the face of a senior dog that was being featured on our adopt-a-pet segment with the Franklin County Dog Shelter & Adoption Center. His name was Smokey. They said his previous owners had moved and left him behind. They thought he was 12. There was something about him and his back-story that just grabbed my heart.

It had been two years since we lost our “soul dog” Snickers. We’d been talking about opening our home to another dog - maybe a senior dog - to join Karma and all the cats.

I called Laura at home and told her to turn on the TV. As soon as she saw him she said, “Should I go get him?”

And that’s how Smokey became Smokey Ludlow.

He immediately got along with Karma. But it wasn’t until we got him home that we discovered Smokey didn’t like cats. And that was a problem because we had three of them. They seemed to trigger his prey instinct. Dog experts told us we’d never be able to trust him around cats and we were putting the cats at risk. So we developed a plan to keep everybody safe. Smokey could roam the house during the day while the cats were sequestered in the sunroom. The cats could roam at night while Smokey was penned or crated near us.

We did this for two years until we noticed that he no longer seemed to care about the cats. When we finally allowed Smokey and the cats to be together, we watched in amazement as they would rub on him, or even sleep with him. They were pals. And we never ever worried about Smokey and the cats again.

He was a happy dog. He let us know every day how much he enjoyed living with us. And

oh how he loved Laura. She was the one who pulled him from the shelter that November day and the way he looked at her every day after that made it clear just how grateful he was to her for rescuing him.

Don't get me wrong. He could be a booger at times. It took him awhile to warm up to other dogs. He liked to bark every time the neighbors came home. And when we'd pass people or dogs on our walks his hackles would go up and his bark could be frightening.

But there was so much about him to love.

We always knew that taking in a senior dog meant that we wouldn't get as many years with him as we'd like. But other than slowing down a bit at age 15, Smokey seemed to be in good health.

Until the morning of Sunday January 13, 2019.

I noticed Smokey had been restless overnight. He kept waking me up by getting up and down and walking in and out of the bedroom. After getting dressed, I called him to go downstairs with me and he walked out of the bedroom going the wrong way and bumping into things. We quickly realized he seemed confused, couldn't see out of his right eye, and his right legs were weak.

He'd suffered some sort of neurological episode. It was likely a stroke.

Smokey was admitted to Avery Animal Hospital where we were told dogs can often recover from strokes. So they said we should hope for the best, but prepare for the worst. In fact, Smokey didn't get better. His condition deteriorated. Whatever had happened to him was not something from which he would recover. And we were faced with that terrible decision that confronts so many pet owners.

Smokey, we loved every minute of having you in our lives. We'll miss everything about you. We'll especially miss playing fetch with you while Karma herded you like a sheep. How you howled when the tornado sirens were tested. We'll miss the way you followed Laura everywhere she went. And how excited you were for rides in the car. How you liked to sleep in a chair with your head dangling over the side. We'll even miss your horrible dragon breath. You were special. You were a good boy. You gave us nothing but unconditional love.

There's not a pet owner out there who hasn't been through what we're going through. Our compassionate vet Dr. Ed Huschart reminded me that "Having a pet will bring you a

lifetime of wonderful memories. And one of the worst days of your life.”

And so January 15, 2019 will be added to the list of our worst days.

It's amazing how one less heartbeat can change a home. Our hearts are shattered. We can't stop crying. But even though we had him for just over three years, we would do it all again. Smokey brought us so much joy. He knew how much he was loved right up until his last breath.

I reckon one day, after the tears stop, we'll start looking for the next furry friend to join our home.

Until then, we will hold Karma and the cats closer. And remember all those wonderful memories that Smokey left behind...

Smokey, we love you.

# Comments

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“ Very Sorry



**Arnek Erath** - January 28, 2019 at 01:49 PM

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“ Lillian Watson lit a candle in memory of Smokey Ludlow



**Lillian Watson** - January 27, 2019 at 11:08 AM

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“ Sorry for your Loss



**Barbara Sailor** - January 25, 2019 at 09:51 AM

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“ Kurt and family im very sorry about ur loss he's happy and never be in pain rest easy

**Eeva Ricketts** - January 25, 2019 at 07:07 AM

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“ I'm so sorry for the loss of your beloved baby. He wasn't with you a long time, but he's left a lifetime of wonderful memories. Our pets always leave an empty spot in our hearts when they cross the rainbow bridge, but a life full of beautiful memories. God bless you. I'll bet he's romping in doggie Heaven with our Sasha, who passed two years ago.

**shirley clark** - January 25, 2019 at 09:43 AM

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“ I am sorry for the loss of Smokey! Sending thoughts and prayers! You gave Smokey love and happiness the last years of his life! R.I.P. Smokey!

**Jo Anne Rouse** - January 24, 2019 at 11:23 PM

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“ So sorry, Your family is in our prayers May he Rest In Heaven ♡♡



**Amanda Lane Wise** - January 24, 2019 at 09:56 PM

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**Linda Stickney** - January 24, 2019 at 09:54 PM

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“ We're so sorry that Smokey has gone Over the Rainbow Bridge. I believe he knew how much he was loved by you and Laura. It takes special people to adopt senior pets and you opened up your hearts knowing that heartbreak was going to come sooner rather than later. Smokey loved you unconditionally for those three years and you gave him the best life a dog could ever have. Thank you for being the best dog and cat parents ever. The Cincinnati Kitties, Arie, Taz, Oliver and Charlie Noodles



**Paula** - January 24, 2019 at 08:39 PM



“ Smokey knows he was loved... You will see him again,.. He will have plenty of four legged friends to play with until then... Condolences to the family.... <3

**Pamela** - January 25, 2019 at 10:38 AM

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“ Thinking of the Ludlow family. I know it will get easier as time goes by. Until then, know that you are being surrounded by love and light.



**Joi Andre** - January 24, 2019 at 07:36 PM

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“ So very sorry for your loss. You most likely gave Smokey the best three years of his life. May you find comfort in the memories you have and let them reassure you that Smokey loved you as much as you did him.  
RIP Smokey.



**Sherrie** - January 24, 2019 at 07:36 PM

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“ One day with a great dog , stays forever in your heart. RIP, Smokey Ludlow.

**Diane Gerhardt** - January 24, 2019 at 07:31 PM

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“ Christi Houseworth lit a candle in memory of Smokey Ludlow



**christi Houseworth** - January 24, 2019 at 07:23 PM



“ So very sorry for your loss praying for both of you  
**christi Houseworth** - January 24, 2019 at 07:25 PM

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“ So sorry for the loss of your sweet Smokey. Hold on to all the good memories.Hugs to you and Laura. <3 R I P Sweet Smokey.

Sharon K. Cooper



Sharon Cooper - January 24, 2019 at 07:22 PM

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“ Heartfelt sympathy to you all. My heart aches for you.  
Linda Meier



Linda Meier - January 24, 2019 at 07:20 PM

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“ Ruth Ann lit a candle in memory of Smokey Ludlow



Ruth Ann - January 24, 2019 at 07:18 PM

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“ In ho or of Smokey Ludlow and all other animals who have crossed the rainbow bridge.



**Britney R Martinez** - January 24, 2019 at 07:11 PM

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“ Lisa Fravel lit a candle in memory of Smokey Ludlow



**Lisa Fravel** - January 24, 2019 at 07:09 PM

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“ Dorothy Bray lit a candle in memory of Smokey Ludlow



**dorothy bray** - January 24, 2019 at 07:02 PM

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“ You have always been here for the community and now we are all here for you!  
Bless the Ludlow Family!

Doug, Maria, and Nikki (GSD) Tussing

**Doug Tussing** - January 24, 2019 at 06:58 PM



“ I am so sorry for the loss of your loyal beloved Smokey. One of the hardest thing's ever. They are never with us long enough. Run Free sweet boy. <3

Rita Young - January 24, 2019 at 06:58 PM



“ I'm so sorry to hear about your beloved Smokey, I have been in your shoes, and no it is NEVER the outcome we as pet parents want to go thru. My baby went to the "Bridge" on Jan 14, 2005, I had him 11.5 years, he was my heart dog, my fur-child, Yes, I miss him everyday, it took me 6 years after he passed to get up the guts to wash his nose prints off the front room window. He will forever be in my heart. I pray that you & Laura adopt another shelter pup soon.

Michele Wilson - January 24, 2019 at 06:51 PM



“ 6 files added to the album Memories Album



Schoedinger Pets Memorials & Cremation Services - January 23, 2019 at 01:16 PM