



Sebastian Michael Zimnox

October 10, 2007 - February 19, 2026

Sebastian came into our lives on January 9, 2008. We saw him for the first time that day and placed a reservation to hold him. I remember not sleeping that entire night. I stayed up researching, preparing, already loving this little white creature who somehow felt meant to be ours. The next day we returned, and he came home with us.

He was named after Ryan Phillippe's character Sebastian in *Cruel Intentions*. The name fit perfectly. Mischievous from the start, determined to chew shoes and anything else he could get his mouth on. But the moment you held him, he melted. Gentle. Happy. Smiling. The softest soul inside a playful troublemaker's body.

Sebastian also carried a middle name. Michael. He was such a cool, elite, purebred type of dog that one name simply did not feel sufficient. He deserved two. Though in everyday life he was just Sebastian, he knew that when he heard "Sebastian Michael," it meant business. Both names spoken together meant he needed to listen. And he always did.

I may have been strict with his training, but he rose to it. He learned every command and understood his boundaries so well he could be trusted off leash. One of his favorite tricks he learned early on was "be pretty," where he would stand on his hind legs and spin in a circle, dancing for a cookie. It never

failed to make us smile. Every now and then his typical Sebastian curiosity would push him just beyond the invisible line to sneak a peek, but he always came back the moment I caught him. He always chose to return.

As a puppy he loved chasing bunnies and ducks, so much so that he would dream about it, his paws twitching in pursuit. As he grew, he became our travel companion, making it all the way to Miami multiple times, Chicago, Charleston, Washington, DC, Massachusetts and places in between. He loved the beach, though not the ocean. He did not like to be wet. His royal white coat only needed a bath when he turned dusty yellow instead of his usual bright white.

Music even had its place in his story. His favorite song was Love You Like a Love Song by Selena Gomez. On one trip to DC, when that song came on in the car, he jumped from the back seat onto the center console, tail wagging, dancing his little butt like it was written just for him. It was impossible not to laugh. He brought joy into the smallest, most unexpected moments.

Like all great dogs, he celebrated every homecoming with unmatched excitement. He loved going bye bye. He adored his grandparents, who spoiled him endlessly, except perhaps for the babysitting trip that resulted in him coming home neutered. He might not have loved that visit.

He was incredibly loyal and well behaved. Protective yet welcoming. He would greet anyone who came over to make sure they understood he was the guardian of the house, and then immediately calm once he was acknowledged and petted. He spent countless hours beside me while I worked outside or sat at the computer. He went on bike rides. He loved zoom zooms, games, and solving puzzles. His favorite toys were the ones that made the long dramatic squeak when squeezed and released.

Even in his oldest years, that mischievous streak remained. The bathroom trash can was never safe. Tissue paper was still irresistible, even in his final weeks. At 99 in human years, he was still Sebastian Michael.

He loved laying in the sun, even if it made him overheat. He loved laying in the cold even more, sniffing the crisp air while his thick coat kept him warm. He lived fully in every season.

In his later years, his body began to struggle. He battled advanced heart disease and pulmonary hypertension. He endured seizures and episodes where oxygen was hard to come by. He faced gallbladder disease, chronic gastrointestinal issues, blood clot risks, and the slow realities of aging. With every new diagnosis came a new treatment plan. A new specialist. A new schedule of medications.

He received extraordinary care from VCA Westerville East Animal Hospital and OSU Veterinary Medical Center over the years. Nurses, doctors, neurologists, cardiologists, radiologists, and every specialist in between that he needed treated him with compassion and dignity. He was deeply cared for.

Yesterday, in his final hours, though I did not know they would be the last, he laid on my lap and stared at me with a look I will never forget. It was compassion. It was love. He received every belly rub, every kiss, every cuddle I could give. I am so grateful that his last moments were wrapped in closeness and comfort.

When the show we were watching together ended, it was time for him to go outside to potty. It was raining, but he still knew what he needed to do. As we stepped out, he began experiencing another episode. I carried him back inside and laid him on his bed. He struggled to breathe, even with the oxygen

machine helping him. For a brief and terrifying moment, he stopped breathing entirely. I held him and gave him my own breath, desperate for him to stay.

Then, while I was crying over him, he took one deep breath and began breathing again on his own.

In that moment, I knew he was telling me it was time. But he gave me one more gift. One more car ride.

We drove to The Ohio State University Veterinary Medical Center, where the doctors confirmed he was in heart failure. Fluid had built up around his heart, in his lungs, and in his abdominal cavity. His body was tired. He was beginning to experience pain.

Loving him meant doing the humane thing.

Letting him go was the hardest act of love I have ever given.

Right now, we feel lost. We find it hard to focus. I do nothing but cry because I miss him so deeply. He was with me for almost half of my life. For someone my age, that span of time could have been a child growing up beside you. And though he was a dog, he was my child.

When my father passed, Sebastian helped carry me through that grief. Now I must learn to carry this one without him. Although I know I am not alone, it feels very alone without his kind soul at my feet.

Sebastian Michael gave us eighteen years of loyalty, companionship, travel, discipline, mischief, growth, and unconditional love.

He always came back when called.

And he always will live in our hearts.

Tribute Wall



“ 2 files added to the album *Memories Album*



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