

# Pawprints On Our Hearts... Forever

## Compassionate Pet Memorial Services

By Michelle Mantor, Photography by Evin Thayer



*I shall pass through this world but once.  
Any good thing therefore that I can do,  
or any kindness I can show, let me do it now.  
Let me not defer it or neglect it.  
For I shall not pass this way again.*



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Our pets introduce a dimension into our lives that cannot be filled by a human. Many of us find this element “unexplainable” but we just “know” that we get a sense of comfort from our pets. They love us no matter what, they give us something to love in return...and they are loyal to the end.

For all of the immense joy and love that our pets bring to our lives, enduring their passing can be equally as painful. After years of companionship, one day our furriest family member is gone from our daily routine. No more evening walks, no more cuddling on the sofa, no more endless ball throwing sessions. Where there was once affection and laughter, there is now emptiness and sorrow.

It seems unjust that we must face death in our lives but through our own spiritual or individual reasoning, we accept this inevitable element of passage. Acceptance, however, does not make for less pain. We grieve in our own way, look to others for support and seek to preserve the memory of our beloved in some special way.

In the not so distant past, the bridge of support needed to help us through the process of our pet’s passing was virtually nonexistent. After euthanization, we struggled with what to do. Mostly, we shed tears at the veterinarian’s office and then made a sad journey back home

and that was the entire process. We were expected to simply “get over it” quickly and get back to our routine. Or, if a pet died at home, perhaps they were buried in the backyard and we suffered in silence and went on about our lives.

Today we have a new reality as a pet owner that is changing the practices surrounding our pet’s passing. New services in “aftercare” embody the more integrated role of pets in our families.

Enter Catherine Dalrymple, founder of Paws Memorial Service, a crematory and aftercare facility that offers the compassion and dignity a pet deserves in their final journey. In response to Catherine’s own experiences of loss and suffering, she knew in her heart that this distinct moment of loss for a pet owner was a moment she wanted to offer empathy, comfort and peace of mind in knowing that one’s pet was treated with the utmost care.

Not only did Catherine strive to create a memorial service that is an outstanding facility with a warm, welcoming environment... but she succeeded beautifully. Situated on a peaceful property in Richmond, Texas just south of Sugar Land, Paws Memorial Service offers a lovely setting, a sympathy garden and a premier facility replete with a comfort room, books and grief support materials and a wide selection of urns and keepsakes to honor the

memory of a pet.

When I first traveled to Paws Memorial Service to meet Catherine, I was intrigued by what type of person would have the ability to deal with such a sad process. I must admit I was a bit uneasy on my way to the facility to learn about cremation and the realities of transitioning a once vibrant family member to the finality of ashes. With my dog in her final chapter of life as well, I couldn’t help but think of myself going through this situation in the very near future.

Meeting Catherine is like meeting sunshine when you expect rain. Her smile and kind demeanor belie her true gift for comforting a troubled soul. There is not a shadow of a doubt that her motivation for helping us through a difficult time is empathy. All I could think was “thank God for people like Catherine because without this invaluable service in our community, our choices and thus our experience would be very diminished.”

Catherine’s story is one of life leading us to destinations that we don’t plan or foresee. With many joyful years of showing horses and dogs, her love for animals led her and her husband Alick to fulfill their dream of owning and operating a dog training and boarding facility. In 1997, the dream became reality when they opened Parkland Kennels in Richmond. Just a mere two months later, Alick became ill and lost his



“We try to focus on the help we can give to pet owners in dealing with their loss. It is very devastating. People want to know they have provided the best for them to the last; they want to know someone is handling them with care. So often, they want to tell us their story and we are here with ears to listen and shoulders to cry on. Giving that time and lending a helping hand is what makes our work meaningful to us. We want to help make a difficult journey a little easier, preserving their good memories forever.”

**Paws Memorial – Catherine Dalrymple**



life to a brain tumor.

Now a single mom to a 3 year-old son named Ross, Catherine was on her own with the demanding schedule of operating a 7-day a week business. Though a very tough decision, Catherine eventually sold Parkland Kennels in 2006 so that she could devote more time to Ross.

Thus began the next chapter of Catherine’s life. With a love for animals in her blood, Catherine knew her calling was still in the animal realm. She also had a huge understanding and compassion for people during a time of loss...she had been there so many times herself. “After the loss of my second border collie, Ellie, I knew for sure that I wanted to build an aftercare facility above and beyond what I had found available; I wanted to build the nicest, most welcoming facility with an open door environment in support of the pet owner. It was a long process, but we are finally here,” notes

Catherine.

Paws Memorial Service is dignified assistance for pet owners but Catherine is very quick to point out that “our service is also in support of the veterinary community. We may never meet some of our clients and on behalf of veterinarians, we provide top quality service and returns that exceed expectations.”

I was curious to understand how the “process” unfolds and what a pet owner could expect in this time of grief. Catherine explained that Paws Memorial Service is available for picking up pets either from a personal home or from veterinary clinics 7 days per week and they are diligent about returning the remains within 24-48 hours, helping to give closure to bereaved pet owners.

She also went on to explain that a pet owner can choose to come to the facility and wait during the cremation and that their doors are always open to the community to be present for cremation, witness cremation or to even discuss arrangements in advance of a pet’s passing. In addition to the state-of-the-art facility and equipment, Paws Memorial Service offers an array of options for preserving the memory of pets from beautiful and unique urns to stones and other keepsakes. Some options include a pet’s pawprint in



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clay or one-of-a-kind individually turned wooden urns signed and numbered by the artist.

If you are ever in need of cremation services, Paws Memorial is ready and waiting to ease your pain and give you the peace of mind that you have done the utmost for your pet to give them the dignified memorial that they deserve. Not only is the service high quality but it is also very affordable. They are available whether you are planning or your needs are immediate. You can call them directly or let your veterinarian know your wishes and Paws Memorial will facilitate arrangements with you and your doctor.

Saying “good-bye” is never easy but with a service like Paws Memorial, you can gain comfort in knowing that you can trust them to handle your pet as if it were their own. They adhere to a strict code of ethics and they understand the special bond that exists between a person and their pet.

Catherine, thank you for all you do... thank you for your understanding, your strength that holds us up as we falter in sorrow and the tears on our behalf that you can’t deny. And, thank you for giving a little piece of your heart to everyone that passes through your doors, both human and animal.



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