

Barney Amon

1996-2004



In May of 1999, we decided to get a dog. Not just any dog, mind you, but a Bullmastiff. We applied through the American Bullmastiff Association's Rescue Program, citing our ideal companion as a brindle male that was at least 3 years old. Somehow, the only dog available for adoption at that time was Barney, a 3 yr old brindle boy. On May 28, 1999 we became Barney's people.

Being a double-income, no kid family, Barney was our baby. We enrolled him in private obedience classes and walked him every day, honing his obedience skills. Barney quickly became a favorite of the neighborhood and Steve and I soon became known only as "Barney's Mom and Dad." Everyone knew Barney. They might not have known us, but folks throughout the neighborhood would come out of their houses as we walked by to pet and love on Barney. Cars would stop in the middle of the road to tell us how beautiful our boy was. We'd smile, and say "thank you," so proud and grateful to have this boy as a part of our family.

What people didn't know was that Barney's heart was as beautiful as his coat. Barney was perfect. Yes, he got in the garbage a lot when we first got him. Once, he grabbed an entire pan of double fudge brownies off the stove where they were cooling and ate the entire batch. Another time, he ate an entire bag of cough drops and I had to make him vomit them up. And yet another time, he got his head stuck in the cover of a cat litter box and couldn't get it off. But, these little quirks fixed themselves with time, and some discipline. And we quickly forgot about anything less than stellar that Barney may have done.

Barney loved everyone. He adored kids, adults, other dogs, cats and anything else that might look his way. Never once did Barney growl. Not on single time in the years we were together did he so much as lift his lip into a snarl. Barney was tolerant almost to a fault. We joked that you could beat the poor dog and he would so much as whimper. He was dignified and stoic. He was a cuddle bug without being obnoxious. He was well behaved; he didn't dig, didn't bark and never thought of leaving our sides, even off lead. Barney was a true ambassador for the breed and all doggies, especially those that have been disposed of by previous owners.

On December 13, 2004, our old man was diagnosed with mast cell sarcoma, an aggressive form of cancer not uncommon to the breed. He had definitely been aging over the past 2 years; his hips had started to deteriorate, he wasn't as active, he did a lot of

sleeping on the “Barney couch,” an old loveseat we got for him back in the beginning. The average lifespan for a Bullmastiff is between 7-9 years. At 8 and half, we knew we’d be facing losing Barney very soon. But we never dreamed it would be so fast. He was diagnosed on the 13th and we had to rush him to the vet again on the 17th. He displayed signs of having a stroke, or some form of neurological damage, and his kidneys weren’t doing great. Being a Friday, we had hoped to make it through the weekend with him, but that wasn’t meant to be.

Barney grew weaker and sicker as each moment passed. Our friends and family came to pay their respects to our darling boy and after we put our children to bed, with my sister to watch them, Steve and I took Barney to the closest emergency clinic. Barney was definitely struggling and was looking at us, as if he were asking for something. We knew it was time. The emergency clinic was only 2 miles from the house we lived in when we first adopted Barney. And Steve and I were with him, just the 3 of us, like it was back then too. In the wee hours of the morning on December 18, 2004, one week before Christmas, we held his great and tired body as his spirit leaped over the Rainbow Bridge.

Barney was with us for everything important in our lives. He was with us when we bought our first house and moved. He was there for our wedding. He was there for the birth of our 2 children, 3 years apart. He was young with us and he grew old with us. It’s so hard to imagine the first 3 years of Barney’s life, as we feel like he was ours forever. Someone dumped him at Dearborn Animal Control because they’d had a baby. While I think they are fools, to let a dog go because they had a baby, when we had 2 while Barney was with us, I am so grateful that Barney was given the opportunity to be a part of our family. Because of that gratitude, we started fostering for Bullmastiff Rescue in 2002 and I am currently the State Coordinator here in Michigan as well as Treasurer for WSSH. It’s because of Barney that Sarah got involved with rescue as well. He has started a legacy of love, second chances and forever homes that has blessed hundreds of people and dogs, and continues to grow. Barney is the perfect example of why we rescue, why we do what we do. That love, the kind that only comes from a rescued dog