

In Memory of Murphy-Pat Gallagher

Murphy was my first feral cat adoptee. In the spring of 1990 I captured the first of many litters of feral kittens born to "Mama Cat", a feral female who had the good sense to know my backyard was a safe haven for animals.

Murphy captured my heart from the beginning. He was so handsome with his soft flame points and blue eyes. We often referred to him as "Mr. Murphy".

Mine was (and still is) a multi-cat household. Murphy was gentle; not assertive enough to lead the pack. But as a companion, he was perfection. And as a surrogate father to "Cassidy" one extremely shy, deaf orange kitten he was a gentle giant. He groomed his friend and cared for him through 15 years together. Cassidy depended upon Murphy for all his creature comforts.

As Murphy aged, he developed diabetes. At some point, the balance of power between him and Cassidy changed, with Cassidy taking over the protectorate role. They continued to share their sleeping spots...a favorite chair in the living room, a sunspot coming in the south window, my bed.

Murphy died on November 20, 2006. Cassidy and I mourn him still. Of my three cats (Hillary, Cassidy and Murphy) Murphy was the one who purred when I read aloud; he was the one I could fold into my arms and cradle like a baby; he was my soul mate; and he will always have a special spot in my heart.

P.S. "Mama Cat" was eventually trapped and neutered. "Cassidy" is beginning to learn (at 16) that the human touch is almost as soothing as Murphy's.