

FOHO lost two dedicated animal advocates on 1.24.24. Both passed on the same day. They both started FOHO WV years ago in 1994 and have worked tirelessly over the years in their dedication to animal welfare throughout our state.

Sylvia Shafer was an advisor to FOHO WV for several years prior to officially joining the FOHO board in 2010. She helped to start FOHO in 1994. She became part of the animal welfare movement in 1982 by joining a local group called Kanawha Action for Animals. In the year 1984, she became a member of the board of directors of the Kanawha/Charleston Humane Association (KCHA.)

She retired from Bell Atlantic Phone Company in 1988 and two days later became the executive director of KCHA. This is the largest animal shelter in WV. For several years this shelter had not prosecuted cruelty to animals: this became a priority for Sylvia.

She soon realized how terrible animal laws were in this state, when five horses were returned to their owner after she had been found guilty. Sylvia knew what she must do, and that was change the law.

Sylvia has worked with the legislature since 1989 and, with the help of FOHO and many private citizens, has been effective. More laws need to be changed: with the help of many caring people this can be accomplished. Sylvia retired as executive director in the year of 2000 of KCHA and in 2001 rejoined the board of directors and was the treasurer for many years. Sylvia served as the main lobbyist for West Virginia Voters for Animal Welfare for many years. Sylvia also served on the Dept. of Agric. Advisory Committee for the WVSNP program since 2017 to the present. Sylvia lived in Charleston with her dog and until one year ago she had her beloved husband Vaughn with her until he passed. He always supported her effort in animal welfare.

Betty Burkett was on the board of FOHO since 1994 and was president of FOHO for many years. This lifelong WV resident was married with two grown children. Her list of contributions to animal welfare in West Virginia is lengthy.

Betty was founder and chair for three years of the annual Rescue League dog walk, March for Mutts, which is still ongoing and highly successful. A 25-year member of the Marshall County Animal Rescue League, she held the positions of secretary and treasurer in the past. She was chair of the Moundsville Animal Task Force, which was successful in getting a cat leash law and a regulated anti-tethering ordinance for dogs passed into city code. She also serves on the board of the Olive Branch Animal Rescue and Refuge in Sistersville, Tyler County.

Betty coordinated two cat spay and neuter programs: one sponsored by the city, called Moundsville SNAP, and one for the Rescue League, called CAT-SNIP. She ran the

FOHO SNAP/WV program and sat on the WV Veterinary Licensing Board as a lay member. She also did a small amount of animal transport. For several years Betty visited elementary schools with one of her dogs to present a Safety Around Dogs Program to the students.

Betty worked as a Licensed Practical Nurse for 28 years in a hospital setting. An Elder in her church, she was active on several other committees. She loved to read, work in her flower garden, and take walks with her dogs. She also has had several cats and dogs over the years. All of her animals have been adopted from the animal shelters where Betty has volunteered.