

Ralph Syracuse Campbell

June 14(?), 1992, adopted August 20, 1992
RIP June 15, 2006

Saint Theresa, the Little Flower, once wrote: "Perfection consists simply in doing God's will and being just what He wants us to be." I think those words sum up the life of Ralph Syracuse. He was a good cat, and that is what he was meant to be.

Ralph joined our family of then three cats in August, 1992. He was about ten weeks old. Barry videoed Ralph's entrance into the house. I watch it every now and then, and am amazed how tiny he was! Despite numerous mishaps, Ralph grew up to be a handsome fellow.

When Spunky developed asthma, Ralph became his sub for pet therapy visits. His style, while totally different from Spunky's, was just as effective in calming an agitated patient or just being company for someone in a wheelchair. Ralph was the 86th cat that was certified by the Delta Society in 1993. Ralph and Spunky both received the Delta Society's Cat of the Year Award: Lifetime Achievement in 1995 for their therapy work. That was a very proud day!!!



Ralph was the top cat in the house until the day he died. No one has taken over that position yet. Ralph loved to play ball, chase Spunky, and had quite an extensive taste in food! NEVER leave tomatoes, kidney beans, broccoli rabe, asparagus, cauliflower, carrots, or corn on the cob out. If you did, you would find them half eaten, and I knew immediately who it was: Ralph!!! When Pope Benedict was elected last April, Ralph had a new role, the OPW (Official Papal Watcher). Whether the Pope was on the television or on the computer (we watched the Wednesday General Audiences), there was Ralph. His head was cocked as if not to miss a single word His Holiness was saying. It was amazing to watch.



We had a tough decision to make when we found out that Ralph had lymphoma in April. We decided to forgo the chemo and put Ralph on prednisone. I read that a cat on prednisone would have 45-60 days. We tried to make each day of Ralph's time left with us as peaceful as we could. There were some days, when the old Ralph was back; stealing tomatoes and broccoli rabe as it was cooling. But then there were terrible days, and we were lucky they were so few. Ralph and I spent a lot of time sitting on the bridge that is over the creek next to the house. Those times were so special.

Ralph Syracuse was a true participant in our lives. He shared joy and sorrow. We miss our Orangeman, but we know we will meet again, one fine day. Sleep softly, my sweet Orangeman...

