

Abbey Gage

Abbey completed our family. She wasn't the cutest, youngest, and I am certain she was not the smartest. No, she was not the "pick of the litter" by any means at the Humane Society that day, but she was the perfect pick for our family.

I had called the Humane Society in mid-December of 2002 to inquire about a three legged dog they had on their website. Having a young boy and in the process of adopting another, I figured they could possibly outrun it if they had to. I told Marge that my son was becoming afraid of dogs. Being a dog lover, I wanted my boys to enjoy growing up with a dog as I had. Marge said that the three legged dog was not suited for a family but that she had a dog in mind that was wonderful with kids. They were using her for their Molly's Friends Program ~ bringing her to preschools to educate the young kids about her breed. She also told me to keep an open mind.

Later that day we went to see her. She was white with brown spots, a medium sized dog and definitely not what most would call a "looker." She immediately went to my son, loving every minute of him fawning all over her.

My husband had her lay down and he handled her in all the wrong places, attempting to elicit a bite, nip or growl. Instead she licked and wagged her tail more. You see, this was not a decision we could not make with our hearts. She was a 2-year-old, fully grown pit bull named Deja. That day we took her home, named her Abbey, and never regretted our decision.

Sure we had friends with small children who were apprehensive, but once they saw how she was around their kids, their concerns quickly disappeared. A neighbor girl often came over and read Abbey books. Abbey loved to listen, hanging on every word, even though neither of them could actually read. One day my son and a couple of his friends were laughing in his room. I looked in to see what all the fun was about. Abbey was laying on the floor with a bicycle tire pump in her jowl and they were pumping her cheek up. Abbey just laid there, loving all the attention.

When our second son came home from Korea at 14-months old, his favorite hobby was anything to do with Abbey. She was his horse when he played cowboys and her tail was his lasso.

She was my shoulder to cry on and my “protector” when home alone with the boys. We never really knew if she would actually bite someone, but she could look pretty tough and bark as loud as the best of them.

Over the years, we learned more about Abbey. In summer her favorite place was a patch of black asphalt in the sun; in winter it was by the fire at grandma's house. She wasn't cuddly looking, but she loved to be cuddled. My son thought she was the bestest pillow. She didn't like thunderstorms. She enjoyed long walks in the park with Dad, but wasn't much of a jogger; laying down in the middle of the street was her way of saying she had run enough. She would occasionally wander off, spending time with the construction workers up the road on their lunch break or next door with a neighbor working in his garage. My mother-in-law called her a disgrace to her breed, having to step over her as she lay on our front stoop to get into our house. Being a white and brown dog, usually wearing a pink collar, strangers would always ask if she was pit bull. We loved to tell them; “Shhh, don't tell her she doesn't know.”

Abbey loved going to the vet. Everyone there knew her by name and the groomer always said she was a sweetheart during her bath and nail trimming. There I was always Abbey's mom, and it saddens me to think that one day I will visit there and no longer be Abbey's mom.

We will get another dog in the near future, who knows maybe we'll get two right away. Right now we just know we want a dog like Abbey. She had the strength of an ox, the patience of a saint and a heart of gold. Of course we'd prefer another pit, but as Marge said, we will keep an open mind.

Rest in Peace Abbey, knowing that you touched the hearts of all, changed the minds of many, and to us you completed our family.

A friend of mine said it best in a condolence note; Abbey was a gentle soul.

Tracy L Gage (aka- Abbey's Mom)