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Memorial Gift To Recognize Legacy Board Member Marvin Dean Rhodes, And His Years Of Service And Leadership To DBL

Central Point, OR – Longtime Dogs for the Deaf (now Dogs for Better Lives) board member Marvin Dean Rhodes passed away on February 14th.

In honoring Marvin Rhodes extensive commitment and compassionate support for Dogs for Better Lives (DBL), the board of directors is currently creating a memorial fund to support the completion of running yards next to the North Kennel Building on DBL's southern Oregon campus in Central Point. One of the running yards will be named in Marvin's honor, to include his name and photo. Marvin served on DBL's board of directors from 1987 – 2016.

"I consider myself fortunate to have served with Marvin on the board of directors for Dogs for the Deaf, stated former board member Susan Bahr. "His dedication to the organization and his leadership skills allowed the organization to move forward as a highly rated non-profit organization serving all of its clients, those with two legs as well as four legs. "

Marvin was born April 21st, 1954, in Eugene, Oregon, to Cecil and Alice Rhodes. From a very early age he was interested in records, radio, and television. While his peers enjoyed forts and sports, his fort was equipped with a turntable, a microphone, and plywood call letters KMDR. He and a classmate managed to jump through FCC hoops, and started a local high school radio station.

After graduation, he enrolled at Lane Community College, while working at an FM station in Springfield. His LCC teacher encouraged him to seek full time employment in the field. So he landed a job as a DJ, at KMED radio, in Medford, where he was very well received by his employers, and his listeners. He thrived and excelled at all aspects of the business, but was especially talented at programming.

Since the owners of KMED also had a television station, they made the smart move of putting him in charge of television programming. He hosted the local segments of the Muscular Dystrophy Association Telethons, every year, while in both radio and television, at KMED.

In 1981, he married Davona Gibson, who survives. They enjoyed raising their two wonderful children, Brandon and Kathleen, who also survive.

"Marvin was working at KTVL in the early '80's, and I first met him while doing some interviews about DFD for the local news," stated former CEO, Robin Dickson. "He was always interested in the stories about how the dogs were helping people with hearing loss, and he loved that we rescued the dogs from shelters."

Marvin was also very involved with the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) and headed their telethon every year, Robin recalls. In October 1986, KTVL was doing a special Halloween event at the Rogue Valley Mall (Medford, OR), and Marvin (knowing that Robin was a professional clown) asked her if she would do his clown make up for him and then clown with him at the mall. In 1987, Robin asked Marvin if he would be willing to serve on the DFD Board of Directors, and he accepted.

Robin and Marvin developed an excellent working relationship because their priorities were exactly the same--highest quality care and education for the dogs, donors, staff, and volunteers, and, equally important, wise use of donor dollars.

When he was hired as the Program Director of KPTV, Portland early in 1993, he continued his key roles of service with both MDA and Dogs for Better Lives. Marvin enjoyed challenging leadership roles, and saw the staff he managed as family, and strove to mentor and nurture employees. He inspired excellence by example and focused training, which drove the bottom line, rather than the other way around.

In the early spring of 2019, a massive benign brain tumor was discovered, which forced an early retirement. The miraculous removal of the Meningioma gave him a quality of life that was more than one could hope for. He and Davona were able to move back to Salem in late August of 2019.

“Marvin, along with Robin (former CEO) had a shared vision of providing trained dogs to assist children with autism,” stated board vice chairman, Ron Holzkamp. “They left DBL in a better place with that vision and the financial ability to accomplish that goal. Marvin was instrumental in helping to leave us with a wonderful legacy.”

Questions about supporting this memorial gift should be directed to Development Director, Harvey Potts, at (541) 826-9220 or harvey@dogsforbetterlives.org.

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Dogs for Better Lives is a nationally recognized 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization focusing on the professional training and placement of Hearing Assistance Dogs, Autism Assistance Dogs, and Facility Dogs. Accredited by [Assistance Dogs International \(ADI\)](#) and recognized by [Charity Navigator](#) as a top 4-star nonprofit, Dogs for Better Lives has been rescuing dogs, bettering lives, and providing Assistance Dogs since 1977.

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