

Former White House Cat Battles Cancer

Socks the cat also suffers from kidney problems, weight loss.

Posted: Dec. 20, 2008, 3 a.m. EST

Socks the cat occupied the White House from 1993 through 2000.

Socks the cat, who served as “first cat” during the Clinton administration's eight years, has been diagnosed with cancer and is not expected to survive.

The 18-year-old black-and-white feline was adopted by Chelsea Clinton in 1991 in Little Rock, Ark., where he lived in the governor's mansion before moving to the White House in 1993, according to news reports. The news about Socks was first reported in a recent U.S. News & World Report's Whispers blog.

In addition to cancer, the blog reports, Socks also suffers from weight loss and kidney problems, and is not expected to live much longer. Socks has been living with Betty Currie, President Clinton's former personal secretary, in southern Maryland since 2001.

The Whispers blog said that Socks has been perhaps “the most photographed presidential kitty in history.”

Presidential historian Barry Landau — a longtime friend of Currie's — told ABCNews.com that the Clintons have been made aware of the situation and were trying to schedule a visit to see him.

During his years in the White House, Socks was the subject of the book "Dear Socks, Dear Buddy: Kids' Letters to First Pets." In his "retirement" years with Currie, he has made public appearances with her at animal-welfare events and at events for military families.