

Late Journalist Receives Winn Feline Foundation Award

Cat advocate Kari Winters receives the Winn Feline Foundation 2009 Media Award.

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Kari WintersThe Winn Feline Foundation recently announced its 2009 Media Award winner — the late Kari Winters, writer and advocate for animals, cats in particular.

Before she passed away earlier this year, Winters wrote feline health stories for multiple publications including The Pet Press. She helped to promote Winn's Ricky Fund, which supports research for a common heart disease in cats, and Bria Fund, which supports research for feline infectious peritonitis, a fatal disease mostly affecting kittens.

The Winn Feline Foundation is a nonprofit organization that was established in 1968 by the Cat Fanciers Association to support studies for medical problems affecting all cats.

"The moment we established the Ricky Fund, Kari asked, 'How can I help?' " said Winn board member Steve Dale in a press release. "Kari walked the walk, personally rescuing many dogs and cats."

Winters was the California Siamese Cat Rescue Coordinator, and authored "Princess Fiona: My Purrsonal Story," dedicating the proceeds to help re-home abandoned cats. She also wrote "Wuffy: The Cat Rescuing Dog."

Winters received many awards, but was particularly proud when Dr. James Richards of the Cornell Feline Health Center presented her a special honor for a story she wrote about feline infectious peritonitis (FIP), according to the Winn Foundation release.

"We organized a symposium on FIP at the Western States Veterinary Conference, and instantly Kari asked, 'How can I cover this?' " said Dale in the release. "It turned out she won that award for her coverage, and deservedly so. Since Dr. Richards was the king of advocacy for cat health, she later told me that receiving this particular award, and from him, was one of the great thrills of her life."

According to friends and colleagues, Winters was known for her modesty, despite the accolades she received.

"Kari never sought credit or fame; she was truly modest about her own work," said her colleague and good friend, Darlene Arden, in the release.

When Winters passed away in May, one of the charities she stipulated to receive donations was Winn's Ricky Fund.