



# What Do You Do When You Lose a Beloved Pet?

Kennesaw's Pet Dreams Memorial Center Offers a Gracious Solution

By Karen Hutto

Kevin Marcy knows a lot about funeral services. He learned by growing up in Conneaut, OH, watching his father, Bob Marcy, who owned and operated Marcy Funeral Home, a family business founded in 1868—a business that carries the distinction of being one of Ohio's oldest funeral homes. Following in his father's footsteps, Kevin became a fifth-generation licensed funeral director.

But Kevin didn't stop there. He relocated to Cobb County in 1986 and earned his stripes managing funeral homes and crematories. Later, he launched an entrepreneurial venture called FuneralStaff, a placement service for funeral directors—the first of its kind in the country.

With FuneralStaff's success and a lifetime of funeral experience to his name, Kevin Marcy had done just about everything possible in his chosen profession...or so it seemed.

## A New Opportunity

Three years ago, however, a new opportunity presented itself when his mother, Jane, lost her beloved Shih Tzu, Baby. "When Mom's little dog died, she wanted so much to give her a meaningful tribute," Kevin recalls. "She was terribly upset and grieving over Baby's loss; but there were no resources available to give Baby any kind of dignified farewell."

That's when the idea came. Kevin, his wife, Gina, and their two sons, Wade

and Reed, were avid pet lovers, too. Being in the funeral business, they knew grieving over a lost loved one was a long process—one that should start with a proper good-bye. So, why not offer pet owners an alternative to leaving their departed pet at their local veterinarian for cremation or disposal? Why not provide them with a full-service funeral home—just for pets?

Kevin began to research the possibility of opening such a business. "I really prayed about it," he says. "I liked the idea, but wanted to make sure we did it right. I think I needed a little confirmation."

One day last fall, Gina drove past a charming Queen Ann style house in Kennesaw's historic district with a 'for rent' sign stuck in the front yard. "I looked at that house and just had a feeling," Gina recalls. "It had real old-fashioned appeal, with a front porch and stained glass windows, just like neighborhood funeral homes of days gone by."

Kevin had the same feeling when he saw the house. Upon checking, the couple learned that the quaint old home, originally built in 1885, was owned by a local veterinarian. "We liked that. It gave us the confirmation we needed," Kevin states. In addition, an attractive barn sat behind the house—a perfect place for the crematory.

In April 2007, Georgia's first pet

funeral home, Pet Dreams Memorial Center, opened for business. "Our goal with every family is to help them say 'good-bye' to their pet in the same manner they would to a human family member—with dignity," Kevin says. And he means it.

## With the Utmost Respect

In June, Pat Vaughn, mayor of Power Springs, found herself losing her thirteen-year-old Westie, Doogie, to bladder cancer. Pat knew the end was near, but didn't know what to do.

"Doogie was like my child," Pat says. "He was a Christmas present from my husband the year our son went off to college. I knew I couldn't just leave him with the vet."

A close friend told Pat about Pet Dreams. She called at 7:30 p.m. "I figured I'd get voice mail," Pat admits. Instead, Kevin answered the phone.

When the veterinarian came to Pat's house to put Doogie to sleep, Kevin was there. "He treated Doogie with the utmost respect and compassion. I felt comfortable with how he handled everything. Very classy," Pat shares with emotion.

Later, Pat also took advantage of Kevin's 24-hour care service. "One night I really needed to talk to someone," she says. "It was 10:30, and again I thought I'd get voice mail." Instead, Jane, Kevin's mother and Pet Dreams' office manager, answered. The two talked for a long time about losing a beloved pet—just what Pat needed.

"They truly understand how people feel," Pat adds.

"When we started Pet Dreams," Kevin says, "I knew I wanted to help people like Pat through the grief process. Pet owners experience grief, just like anyone does when they lose a loved one. It can be devastating, even months after the death. We are here to help."

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For further information or for 24/7 Care Assistance, please contact Pet Dreams Memorial Center, 2950 Moon Station Road, Kennesaw, GA 30144 toll-free at 1-866-236-1388, or visit their web site, [www.petdreamsmemorial.com](http://www.petdreamsmemorial.com).

*Kevin Marcy and his family attend NorthStar Church in Kennesaw. NorthStar is led by Senior Pastor Mike Linch.*