



Pictured:
Proud octogenarian – Joan Gulledge – at the SPCA Pet Adoption Center in mid-2017. After helping establish the SPCA of Wake County, she continued to dedicate herself to the organization’s success for the next five decades.

VOLUNTEERS MOVE THE WORLD

Profile of an SPCA Founder

by Beth Schulman and Mondy Lamb

Joan Gulledge is a frequent visitor to the SPCA of Wake County’s two animal shelters.

She walks around the cat and dog areas to see who was adopted and who is still waiting. She stops to catch up with volunteers and staff. Joan is one of many visitors who makes routine trips to the SPCA’s Pet Adoption Center in Raleigh. Some regular visitors come every few weeks, and some have been coming for years.

However, what sets Joan’s visits apart from most other visitors to the adoption center is her perspective. Joan is looking at the SPCA of Wake County through the eyes of someone who helped shape and grow the organization into a state leader of animal cruelty prevention and animal welfare.

Joan’s love for the SPCA is contagious. Spend just a few minutes with her, and you’ll see how proud

she is of the organization she helped build. Joan is more humble about her contributions than she should be, so we thought we’d speak up about her role as a founding mother.

Over the years, Joan has done it all, from cleaning windows to serving on the board of directors. Joan was chairman of the SPCA membership committee, and she sold stationery to raise money.

No task was too small, and Joan never said, “That isn’t my job.” Joan also served as the SPCA’s archivist, collecting hundreds of newspaper articles over the years that documented the organization’s activities and impact on the greater Raleigh community.

We cherish these pieces of history and wouldn’t have the detailed understanding of the organization’s history if Joan hadn’t been thoughtfully recording it.

The SPCA of Wake County was founded in Raleigh, NC in 1967 by a



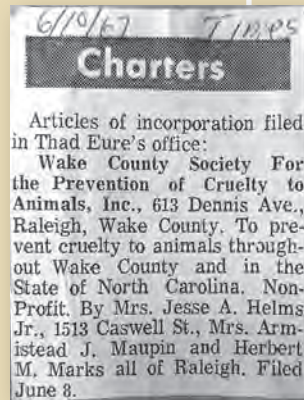
small group of concerned citizens who believed the world could be made a little better if we could improve the treatment of the community’s most vulnerable – the homeless animals. In the 50 years since, SPCA volunteers, supporters and advocates have indeed changed this community for the better, helping over 320,000 animals in need and hundreds of thousands of people who care about them.

A Trip Down Memory Lane

Recently, Joan sat down with us and chatted about life and the SPCA’s early days. In early 1967, Mrs. Martha Gappins passed away and left \$5,000 of her estate to the Raleigh SPCA. The trustee called

A timeline of the SPCA's history

1960s



1967

The Wake County Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals was founded in Raleigh, NC. Over 200 people showed up for the first interest meeting.

Armistead Maupin incorporated the agency on June 7, 1967, and Harry Johnson served as the first president. Pets were housed on farmland in North Raleigh while volunteers raised money to build a shelter.

1971

The SPCA's first shelter opens on US-70 in Garner.



1970s - 1980s

1974

The privately-operated kennels that the City of Raleigh used to impound stray animals came under criticism for the inhumane

conditions at the facility. Public outcry prompted an investigation, and the kennels were shut down.

SPCA to require spaying when animals are adopted

The Wake County Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has announced a new policy. All dogs and cats adopted from the SPCA will be spayed or neutered. This is a mandatory requirement for all animals adopted from the SPCA. Spaying or neutering a dog or cat is a humane and responsible thing to do. Many people are injured or even hospitalized...

Raleigh leaders turned to the SPCA for help with a sheltering program that involved a focus on the humane treatment and rehoming of the animals.

The SPCA entered into its first animal sheltering contract with the City of Raleigh. This contract continued through mid-2010.

1974

The first issue of Critter Chatter, the SPCA's regular newsletter, is published.

1975

SPCA adopts a mandatory sterilization program. This change increased adoption fees, but included the cost to have the pet spayed/neutered at a local veterinarian.

1979

SPCA expands building on US-70. Kennel space increased five-fold, and the new clinic used for sick or injured animals increased from 6'x6' to 12'x20'.



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around in search of an animal welfare society in the state capital – only none existed. The call eventually found two leaders in Raleigh's philanthropic community: Dot Helms and Diana Maupin. Both women had a love for animals and knew that the city of Raleigh desperately needed a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

The women placed a public meeting announcement for the new group in the *Raleigh Times*, and it caught Joan's eye. More than 200 people attended the first interest meeting, held in downtown Raleigh at the S&W Cafeteria.

That meeting gave the fledgling group the volunteers it needed and the SPCA's articles of incorporation were filed just days later on June 7, 1967. Four women emerged as those who would be most involved in charting the course of the SPCA's early history: Dot Helms, Diana Maupin, Cookie McGee, and Joan Gullledge.

A 1971 Grand Opening

When the SPCA built the region's first animal shelter on U.S. 70 in Garner, Joan was part of the team setting up the shelter ahead of its opening.

Joan recalls the very first animal who arrived at the new shelter – a full week before it even opened. On this particular day, Joan and Cookie were at the facility making preparations for a truck full of supplies that would arrive later that week. The windows were still covered with paper, and the women had locked themselves in the building, knowing they weren't expecting deliveries that day.

They were quite surprised to hear a knock at the door. Joan opened the door, and the woman standing outside said, "I need to get rid of this thing," referring to the golden retriever at her side.

Joan explained that the shelter wasn't even open, that they were still getting the building ready and didn't have bowls or dog food or any supplies needed to care for the dog. Joan asked the woman to take the dog home and if in a week she still felt the same way, the shelter would be open and could help.

Joan and Cookie went back to work but heard a scratch at the door a few minutes later. The woman had driven off and left the dog behind.

They decided that Cookie would take the dog home until the facility officially opened, but Joan says the dog never needed to look for another home after leaving with Cookie that evening. 🐾

Thank you Joan, for being the cause of so much good. And thank you to all the SPCA volunteers who continue to care for the animals with nowhere else to turn.