

Obituary for Nicholas (RIP)

April 15, 2009 - September 3, 2025

Nicholas, an orange tabby feline, age 16, died on Thursday, September 3 at the VCA Animal Hospital in Wakefield MA, after a long illness, with his human roommates, Neil Marsh and Beckie Hunter, and Dr. Sun at his side. His brother Humphrey predeceased him on February 2, 2024.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in his name to MSPCA - Angell Memorial Animal Medical Center in Jamaica Plain (<https://www.mspca.org/>), or a no-kill animal shelter in your area.

MEMORIES

Nicholas lived an indoor life in the Hunter/Marsh household for fourteen years, in Cambridge and Woburn. He and his brother arrived on January 31, 2011 from a friend of a friend. They were named after two wacky brothers in the play Theatre@First was producing, "The Lady's Not for Burning." Nicholas was the rather doofy, sometimes clever, humorous fellow, while Humphrey was the sweet, smarter, savvy younger brother. He had a quiet purr, and a distinctive long meow that was only heard when he zipped instead of zagged and ended up under someone's feet.

Nicholas was the older brother, born first, then four siblings, and then 36 hours later, Humphrey arrived as the surprise sixth in the litter! They were adopted by a nice lady in Malden, who turned out to be allergic and, after trying numerous remedies, reluctantly gave them up before their second birthday.

They enjoyed tussling and chasing - Humphrey usually let Nicholas win. He adored being brushed. He enjoyed "people" food - especially shrimp cocktail or steak, and was a great admirer of Wegmans tuna tubes. He was sustained for over 18 months by a nightly dose of a steroid pill and B12 ground up with a probiotic powder in soft cat food that he cheerfully devoured.

Unlike many felines, he had no use for boxes or bags, and toys that cost money were eschewed. He loved to sleep in a sunbeam or help out at his humans' desks, often sprawled near the keyboard, or lounging on the Judgement Blanket next to Neil's desk. He did enjoy a catnip indulgence now and again, and often slept with a felt fishie filled with it.

He did have "thug" moments including chewing on cables that caused his roommates to lose internet connectivity or phone charging, and made them cover every cord with non-chewable mesh. He also bit the ear piece off a brand new pair of B's eyeglasses that cost a lot to replace!

They had different approaches to visitors - Humphrey would come running to be the first to check them out, then retreat to a distance to observe. Nicholas would then know the person was safe and come for pets. Then leave. Then come back for more pets. He loved to stroll the condo hallways accosting neighbors until he met with a dog who, though polite, diminished his urge to wander.

Nicholas had been sick on and off for over five years, being quite ill then rebounding over and over - there was talk of him being immortal! Despite eating voraciously, he recently lost weight. He started having seizures over a year ago that had no particular effect, but over time he forgot basic skills like how to jump down, or going to the litter dome, which required him to "fly" using "Dad Air" or "Mom Air" being carried to the bathroom every couple of hours. He picked up new tricks in recent months, sleeping on Beckie's head at night or sleeping on Neil's keyboard during the day. He adored drinking water from a black coaster on B's desk and would tap her water bottle to request refills.

We asked him not to leave us during Neil's surgery in May, or Beckie producing "The Tempest" in the park in June, and he obliged, but time ran out the first week of September. He lost his balance completely, tipping his roommates off to his worsening illness and his wish to have them end his suffering. Many thanks to the kind staff at the VCA, who were charmed by him even in his diminished state, and did their best to make his passage easier. He died calmly in Neil's arms. Part of his ashes were spread in the orange rose bushes at home, and the rest will be kept in a memorial box on the mantel.

He was a bit of a Facebook celebrity, often shown in his favorite spot in the sunbeam supervising traffic from the sunroom window, or helping his human roommates on their computers. Many thanks to his fans online and visitors who enjoyed his adventures, and consoled his human roommates during these sad days of being catless for the first time in over 14 years.









