CHAPTER 1

Every Field of Humane Work—EVERYWHERE

In simple terms the founding of The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) in 1954 was the incorporation of a new group by a breakaway faction dissatisfied with the activity, direction, and political weakness of the American Humane Association (AHA), the then-dominant organization in the field of animal protection. Over the years, however, the decision to create a new kind of animal protection organization, established in the nation’s capital, determined to recruit a national membership base, and focused on confronting national cruelties beyond the scope of local societies and state federations, proved to be far more significant. Within several decades of its modest beginnings, The HSUS would eclipse the organization from which it sprang, and many others as well. Five decades later The HSUS was the largest and most influential animal protection organization in the world.

Animal Protection before 1954

Organized animal protection in America dates from the 1860s, when like-minded citizens launched societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals (SPCAs) in one city after another and pursued their goals of kind treatment on a range of fronts. After a period of considerable vitality, however, the movement lost ground after World War I and its concerns dropped from public view. Several generations of leaders failed to match the vision, energy, or executive abilities of the humane movement’s founding figures. Moreover, the period between World War I and World War II proved to be an infertile social context for the consideration of animal issues, and the American humane movement became quiescent and ineffectual. This decline in movement strength coincided with an expansion of animal use in such major segments of the twentieth-century economy as agriculture, biomedical research, and product testing. The magnitude of institutional use of animals overwhelmed a movement whose greatest success had been in stigmatizing and policing individual acts of cruelty. Humane advocates were unable to effect reforms of practices that were increasingly hidden from view and often exempted from extant anticruelty statutes and regulations. By 1950 animal protection, once a vibrant reform, stood mired in a phase of insularity, lack of vision, and irrelevance.

The decision to take on the challenge of municipal animal control did not help matters. During the first decades of the century, the anticruelty societies shifted their energy and resources away from the promotion of a coherent humane ideology and a broad-based approach to the prevention of cruelty. Instead, they focused their attention on the management of animal overpopulation and educational activities tied to pet keeping. The assumption of urban animal control duties by humane societies throughout the country made it difficult to sustain broader educational campaigns about the cruel treatment of animals in other contexts. This was largely thankless work, undersubsidized by municipal governments, which completely engrossed the staff and financial resources of local SPCAs. AHA, the movement’s umbrella association, catered mainly to the interests of its constituent societies, all of which were absorbed with urban animal control issues.

As it turned out, the same activists who parted ways with AHA over its pound release policy (see page 64) found other reasons to chart a new course for the work of animal protec-
tion. They were determined to focus on areas of animal use that their predecessors had either failed to address or had neglected for some time. Although they were in sympathy with the problems and challenges that local SPCAs faced and wanted to enhance the quality of management, services, and impact of community-level animal care and control organizations, they also set their sights on cruelties they felt could only be addressed from a national perspective. They directed much of their energy toward the objectives of federal legislation, regulatory reform, and the amelioration of cruel practices through humane innovation and policy evolution. Among other accomplishments they revived and revitalized early twentieth-century campaigns devoted to humane slaughter, the regulation of laboratory animal use, and the abolition of the steel-jawed leghold trap. They developed in-depth critiques and proposals for reform of animals' treatment and handling in these contexts. Cruelty investigations at both the national and local levels played an important role in advancing this work and helped to place humane issues on the public agenda.

The founder of the American humane movement, Henry Bergh, had hoped to follow the model of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA), establishing branches all around the United States that would work in support of common goals. However, he could not secure a national charter, and, while his own American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) provided inspiration for the formation of numerous societies elsewhere, it had very little actual reach outside of New York City.

AHA, formed in 1877 but not fully incorporated and properly staffed until 1904, could do no more than coordinate a loose federation of autonomous societies following a variety of purposes and policies, often at odds with one another, and ranging from excellent to horrible in their standards of work. The HSUS's first president, Robert Chenoweth, compared the state of the movement in the mid-twentieth century to that of the original thirteen states operating under the Articles of Confederation.1

The most limiting effect of this arrangement was the movement's pronounced inability to develop truly national campaigns against certain obvious cruelties. By 1950 many felt that the broad-gauge approach to the work that AHA and its constituent societies had pursued at the turn of the century had narrowed. Very little was being done about the horrific cruelties of the slaughterhouse, the trapping of animals for fur, the use of animals in laboratories, and the mistreatment of animals in zoos, rodeos, and other entertainment venues. HSUS organizers were convinced that the American humane movement had to develop the capacity to attack national and regional cruelties, which often were beyond the scope of any local humane society or even any state federation of organizations.2

The Formation of The HSUS
A specific grievance rooted in principle and policy—the surrender of animals from municipally run animal shelters and pounds, known as pound seizure—precipitated the transformation and revitalization of organized animal protection in the early 1950s. By that time both AHA and the wealthier local and regional humane societies had largely narrowed their focus to companion animal issues. The general opinion among those who formed The HSUS was that key management decisions within AHA had come under the control of the salaried staff executives of larger member societies, who were more interested in perpetuating their own positions than in expanding the organization's work and unwilling to risk action that might make them appear to be a controversial force in their own communities.3

The postwar boom in expenditures on biomedical research greatly increased demand for animals, and in the mid-1940s, scientific institutions began to devote great energy to the passage of animal procurement laws. The National Society for Medical Research (NSMR) led efforts to gain access to animals from municipally operated pounds and shelters, and these laws generally passed without much difficulty. However, they were a great provocation to local humane society officials in many communities, who felt strongly that forcing such institu-
tions to provide research animals to laboratories compromised their mission and integrity.

In 1954 a determined attempt by reform-minded members to elect a slate of candidates to the AHA board appeared to set the stage for its revitalization. The crucial moment came at the organization’s annual convention in Atlanta. A majority of the members present endorsed the goals of the insurgent candidates, and elected all three—J.M. Perry, Raymond Naramore, and Roland Smith—to the board. However, the reform candidates could not alter the policies of AHA in the face of the majority’s resistance. Furthermore, this campaign drew determined opposition from the old board and resulted in the voluntary or forced resignation of four staff members.4

The central figure of the breakaway faction was Fred Myers (1904–1963), hired for his journalism skills in 1952 by AHA president Robert Sellar. In the years before he joined AHA, Myers had worked as a reporter, editor of the publication of a newspaper employees’ union, and executive director of the American Society for Russian Relief (a World War II charity) and in public relations and administration for the New York Central Railroad and the New School for Social Research. In 1953, when AHA relocated from Albany, New York, to Denver, Myers and his family made the move, too. In the wake of Sellar’s death, as the pound seizure issue heated up, Myers, editor of AHA’s National Humane Review, attacked the NSMR with so much vigor that AHA management began to censor his writing. After the dispute over Myers’s journalism and the clash at the 1954 annual meeting, he and three other staff members—Helen Jones, Larry Andrews, and Marcia Glaser—left the organization.5

The four dissidents decided to form their own organization and to compete directly with AHA for national leadership. Together they founded the National Humane Society, incorporated on November 22, 1954, in Washington, D.C. They borrowed money against their life insurance policies to get the organization started and for some months took no salaries. By 1956 the HSUS’s guiding policy was in place, encapsulated in a statement its membership approved virtually unanimously by referendum: “The Humane Society of the United States opposes and seeks to prevent all use or exploitation of animals that causes pain, suffering, or fear.” While determined to be aggressive in the struggle against cruelty, those who formed The HSUS were equally resolute in their conviction that the organization must pursue a practical, effective course that accepted the path of incremental improvements. They committed themselves to “action that will actually help animals and achieve practical humane education.” 6

While AHA had moved to Denver as part of an effort to extend humane influence to the west, The HSUS’s founders took another tack altogether. They deliberately set up their new organization in Washington, D.C. In the nation’s capital, they believed, they could better serve a national movement and develop sustained efforts to spur action by the federal government.

In its early years, The HSUS benefited from the support and guidance of dedicated board directors, a few of whom had bolted from AHA along with Myers, Jones, Glaser, and Andrews. Some of these directors, like Robert Chenoweth (1954–1976), Oliver Evans (1954–1975), and D. Collis Wager (1955–1974), served for close to two decades each. Other
directors, like Edith Goode, Delos Culver, and Frederick "Doc" Thomsen, pursued their reform interests independently or through organizations separate from The HSUS, moving in and out of direct service over the years.

The HSUS's formation was strongly influenced by the founders' moral indignation at the stockpiling of funds by a handful of major humane societies, as well as by AHA. Although these groups accumulated substantial endowments, Myers and his colleagues judged, they had not been willing to spend their money to effect change in important arenas of animal use. Article IX of The HSUS's bylaws specified that "all available funds of the Society shall be used for the immediate relief of suffering and the vigorous prosecution of humane education." While providing liberal exceptions for the establishment and maintenance of prudent reserves or for meeting the terms of law or a donor's mandate, Article IX embodied the conviction of The HSUS's founding generation that action, not accumulation, should characterize the organization's program and agenda. The HSUS News regularly carried editorials critical of local and regional humane societies that had accrued large sums and failed to search for ways to spend money on animal protection work.7

Those who founded The HSUS also resolved to build an organization of individual supporters rather than one that functioned as a confederation of organizations. AHA had relied primarily on local humane societies for its support, benefiting from institutional memberships and some individual recruitment done through those organizations. The HSUS appealed directly to individuals for its support, not through local organizations. Most agreed that this was a crucial distinction and an important factor in its success.8

The rift between The HSUS and AHA created considerable ill will and even sparked rumors linking Fred Myers to the Communist Party. In March 1956, in the heat of the battle over humane slaughter legislation, Myers appeared before the Senate Internal Security Committee to refute the accusation that he had been a member of the Communist Party while active in a newspaper writers' union during the 1930s. The charge followed Myers, as antagonists both within and outside the movement resurrected it to tarnish both his reputation and that of The HSUS.9

In May 1956 AHA filed suit in federal court in the District of Columbia, asking that the National Humane Society be compelled to change its name on the grounds it was too similar to that of the American Humane Association and its publication, the National Humane Review. The suit alleged that potential donors might not be able to distinguish between the two organizations and that they might give money intended for the use of AHA to the NHS instead. In December 1956 AHA secured a temporary injunction barring the use of the name, "National Humane Society," despite the NHS's claim that the titles only had one word—"humane"—in common and that the word appeared in the corporate names of numerous organizations. Rather than litigate the issue in a costly and protracted battle, however, the NHS renamed itself The Humane Society of the United States.10

Backbiting between AHA and The HSUS continued for many years afterward, as the two organizations worked at cross-purposes in a number of instances. The HSUS was especially critical of the AHA positions on pound seizure and laboratory animal welfare and of its supervision of rodeos, which The HSUS thought highly inappropriate. It also questioned the ability of AHA's Hollywood watchdog office to prevent the mistreatment of animals used on television and film sets. In time, the two organizations would also square off over the humaneness of the Euthanaire decompression chamber for the destruction of unwanted animals (see chapter 3).11

Within five years of leading the break from AHA, two of The HSUS's founders, Larry Andrews and Helen Jones, went their own way. As The HSUS's field director, Andrews had maintained a demanding schedule of travel, throughout the United States, covering 350,000 miles in two years. Working on the road, he helped local organizations to identify and address their needs, sought to support the formation of new societies, and oversaw early efforts
had worked as a hotel publicity director in New York City, while maintaining a significant commitment to the animal shelter in her hometown in Pennsylvania. She had been working at AHA less than a year when the break occurred. Dividing her time between Washington and a New York office, Jones served as The HSUS’s director of educational activities, working on the surplus animal problem and humane slaughter legislation.13

Jones and Fred Myers frequently talked about the deficit of religious support for the humane movement. In the late 1950s, The HSUS staffed a booth at a ten-day convention of the Episcopal Church involving thousands of its officials, and Myers wrote to the Pope and other religious leaders to ask about their positions on the treatment of animals. One of those who replied, Joseph Fielding Smith, president of the Council of Twelve of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints, commended The HSUS’s efforts to “bring about universal love not only between man and his fellow-creatures but between man and all other living creatures.”14

In 1959, wanting to do something more toward establishing greater rapport with the religious community, Jones founded the National Catholic Society for Animal Welfare (NCSAW), with The HSUS’s blessing and a start-up grant of $5,000. At first she continued in her position at The HSUS, working on NCSAW business in the evenings and on weekends. After some years, however, Jones shifted her efforts from promoting concern for animals within the Roman Catholic Church to pursue a full range of issues under a new organizational name, the Society for Animal Rights.15

Although Andrews and Jones had labored long and hard for The HSUS in its first years, their departures had little effect. As the principal leader of the 1954 break, Fred Myers was a more influential figure from the start, and it was his vision and spirit that shaped the organization’s early agenda. Myers was a charismatic man who inspired great confidence, energy, and determination in co-workers, board members, crucial donors, and the individuals and organizations that comprised the broader humane movement. Whatever significance the fledgling organization enjoyed by 1960 was largely a credit to his leadership. He personified the balance of idealism and pragmatism that would become characteristic of The HSUS in the years to come.

**Program and Policy in the Early Years**

The principal activities of The HSUS during the 1950s consisted of aggressive efforts against breeding of surplus animals, the pursuit of national legislation for humane slaughter, focused investigations of specific cruelties, support for local societies and individuals trying to form them, and the conscription of local organizations into broader national campaigns to benefit animals. While determined to raise the quality and extent of humane work at the local lev-
el, The HSUS also sought to instill a broader vision of the importance of nationally organized initiatives and to lead local organizations in setting their sights on the achievement of larger strategic objectives.

Because one of the urgent points of tension in the AHA schism concerned the pre-slaughter handling and slaughter of animals used for food, the first national campaign that emerged in the post-1954 era focused on that question. Fred Myers, Edith Goode, and others affiliated with The HSUS were leading figures in the campaign for a national Humane Slaughter Act. During 1955 and 1956, The HSUS diverted every available dollar from its budget into the drive for slaughterhouse reform and generated intense publicity concerning the issue. Myers and Goode lined up significant sources of public support for the legislation, and Myers testified on behalf of the Humane Slaughter Act in 1958, the year it finally passed.16

Myers took great encouragement from the fact that, between 1954 and 1958, the movement had really united, for the first time ever, to achieve enactment of a federal humane slaughter law that would spare approximately 100 million animals a year from pain and suffering. The law’s passage was also a vindication of the proposition that had driven the formation of The HSUS, the idea “that hundreds of local societies could lift their eyes from local problems to a great national cruelty.”17

Even before the closing of the Humane Slaughter Act campaign, The HSUS had begun to turn its attention to the suffering of animals in research, testing, and education. This, too, had been an arena of conspicuous failure for the humane movement in the twentieth century. The HSUS set the acquisition of information about the problem as its first priority. By 1958, after identifying and training suitable investigative personnel, The HSUS had launched its first undercover investigations of laboratory use of animals. In 1961 The HSUS hired an investigator to focus special attention on the laboratory animal trade. Subsequently Myers commissioned a statistical study of biomedical experiments that attempted to identify the potential for rapid reduction of animals used. These actions prepared the way for national legislation on laboratory animal issues.

While its founders intentionally launched their efforts in the nation’s capital, The HSUS did not focus exclusively on the Washington scene. Even as The HSUS zeroed in on national solutions to national cruelties, it strove to enhance and extend the work of local societies. All of The HSUS’s founding figures were in sympathy with the problems and challenges that local SPCAs faced. They pursued local and hands-on work for animals as individuals or through other organizations. Andrews had been helping local societies address their needs as AHA’s director of field services before the formation of The HSUS. Jones and Glaser were deeply involved with cat rescue work. Myers served as a humane agent for the Maryland Animal Welfare Association, a federation of humane societies, and carried a euthanasia kit in his car in case he encountered animals beyond the point of saving.18

Newcomers to The HSUS also got “hands-on” immersion. Patrick Parkes, who became assistant director of services in 1961, recalled that when he came to the office for his interview, Myers gave him “a stack of material on the decompression chamber” and asked him to write a report recommending for or against its use. As Parkes later learned, this happened at a time when The HSUS was still working out its position about the humaneness of decompression as a euthanasia technology. After hiring Parkes Myers sent him out for training at a small shelter in Lucerne County, Pennsylvania, that The HSUS had helped to establish. There Parkes euthanized animals, cleaned kennels, and studied the typical methods in the field at that time.19

There was a strong programmatic rationale for such training and commitment. The original bylaws of The HSUS provided for its ownership and operation of shelter facilities through established branches conceived as integral units of the parent organization. Such ownership proved to be impractical on several grounds, but it did not prevent The HSUS from becoming deeply involved with local animal shelters and their problems. Ultimately,
it did so by establishing an affiliates program to forge closer ties to local societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals.20

The regional offices that were such an integral part of The HSUS’s work in 2004 had their origins in a branch and affiliate system envisioned by Myers and other founders. This system dated from 1957, when staff and board members resolved to organize a self-sustaining branch in every state. Myers and others considered the branches essential to membership recruitment for the national office. The first branch, incorporated in Illinois, emerged from the politics of pound seizure in Champaign County. Branches incorporated in New Jersey, Maryland, and California during 1958. In 1960 the organization’s bylaws were amended to allow local societies to affiliate with The HSUS. Eventually this led to the incorporation of branches in five states (California, Connecticut, Minnesota, New Jersey, and Utah) and affiliated societies in eleven.21

According to Parkes, who oversaw the transition from branches and affiliates to the system of regional offices in place today, the branch and affiliate system was the cornerstone of The HSUS’s early program for development. “They wanted the new organization to be the chief instrument of unification in a movement which, at that time, was so badly fractured,” Parkes recalled. The state seemed a natural geographical unit around which to base a program, since state legislatures were responsible for most of the anticruelty laws in place. Other groups, like the American Red Cross and the American Legion, operated through a similar system.22

The branches were not part of a scheme of “empire-building,” Parkes emphasized, but rather a system of “strong, organically related, and unified” entities, self-supporting, each with an independent board of directors. Each branch “had to maintain minimum standards of program and policy, that, in turn, [it] would spread through the local societies nationwide.” Local societies “were considered an essential adjunct to branches,” and, hence, “provision was made for an affiliate connection.”23

Through this structure, Parkes continued, early administrators believed they could “establish an interlocking structure between the national HSUS and its branches, and, through them, the local humane groups—all in a tighter unity than had ever existed before.” A nationwide constituency and an unprecedented unity of purpose and approach could then be harnessed toward the relief of animal suffering, abuse, and exploitation, through the pursuit of legislation, regulation, and education at all levels.24

The branches were expected to help to organize and strengthen local humane societies wherever and whenever feasible. If such societies desired affiliation with The HSUS, they were expected to “operate on sound business principles, have realistic goals with practical approaches, maintain high HSUS operational standards, and pass an on-site inspection by a HSUS field representative.” They were also expected to support national work to the best of their ability.25

From 1955 to 1961, The HSUS combined its annual corporate meeting with a two-day National Leadership Conference, ordinarily held in a large city. In 1962 the organization opted to stage the conferences in smaller hotels in attractive resort locations, to encourage greater personal contact with HSUS officials. Fred Myers wanted the event to be a place where new entrants into the field could meet and learn from experienced hands and where movement leaders could come together in a free exchange of ideas and approaches. “What I want
most—and think most important—is to attract more and more participation in these meet-

ings by those who think. These conferences should be. . . conferences on our biggest nation-

al problems, with our best brains looking for solutions. For practical reasons we must also do

some teaching—how to kill an animal humanely, how to keep financial records, etc.—but I

think that we will be most useful if we think of our national leadership conference as a uni-

versity, not a high school.”26

While The HSUS was a staff-driven organization, its vitality did not depend solely upon

employees. Board directors played crucial roles in the organization’s early years, carrying out

tasks that would have properly been assigned to staff members in a better-funded operation.

The HSUS’s early board of directors was a “working” board whose members participated in

numerous aspects of planning, development, and execution. Some, like Oliver Evans and

Robert Chenoweth, were chairpersons of local humane societies in their own communities.

Others brought special concerns, preoccupations, talents, or celebrity that made them ideal

contributors for a fledgling organization. Alice Wagner (1906–1977), editor of Popular Dogs

magazine, was honored with The HSUS’s Humanitarian of the Year award in 1961 and later

served as a board member for a number of years. William Kerber (d. 1990), a businessman

and onetime official at the War Production Board and the Office of Price Stabilization, was on

the board for almost a quarter-century, serving as treasurer during most of the 1960s and 1970s.

Cleveland Amory (1917–1998), author and social critic, served on the

board between 1962 and 1970. Journalist and nature author Roger Caras

(1929–2001) joined the board in 1970. Amanda Blake (d. 1989) did pub-

lic service announcements for The HSUS and served as a board member

in the 1970s. From the nation’s political ranks, senators Richard Neuberg-

er (1912–1960) and Gaylord Nelson, Representative Gilbert Gude, and fu-

ture governor of Arizona Raul H. Castro served as board members.27

There were other, less celebrated board members who distin-

guished themselves through selfless and substantial service. Jacques

Sichel (1909–1981), of Union, New Jersey, served on the board from 1961

to 1981, led the New Jersey Branch from 1960 onward, and was an early

member of The HSUS’s Program and Policy Committee and the board’s

executive committee. He was the author of History and Handbook of the Humane Movement,

which served as an HSUS operations manual for many years. In 1961 Sichel organized a con-

ference on humane education at Newark State College that helped to chart a course for the

organization’s subsequent efforts in this field. A supporter of state-level efforts to secure sup-

plementary legislation after enactment of the 1958 Humane Slaughter Act, he also worked for

the development of a humane restraining device for the ritual slaughter of animals.28

Another longtime collaborator, Frederick L. Thomsen, Ph.D. (1898–1978), who served as

a board member from 1963 to 1966, offered early scientific and technical advice to The HSUS
in an era when it had no one on staff equipped to provide such input. In 1965 “Doc” Thomsen launched his own organization, Humane Information Services, but he remained close to The HSUS. Thomsen was known for his meticulous research and his refusal to rely on hearsay. His lengthy analyses of humane problems provided sensible explanations of available options and strategies that were widely heeded by HSUS staff and board members.29

A third early board member, Edith Goode (1881–1970), was responsible for some of The HSUS’s earliest and most important international and educational initiatives. Goode, a Springfield, Missouri, native and a graduate of Smith College, had devoted her entire life to public service and to campaigns for women’s rights, peace, and birth control. She was a founder of the National Woman’s Party and a member of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom who worked actively for the passage of the Twentieth Amendment. A charter member of The HSUS and a generous supporter during its earliest years, Goode spent nine years on the board of directors and donated the land for The HSUS’s National Humane Education Center in Waterford, Virginia. She and lifelong friend Alice Morgan Wright (1881–1975) took steps to perpetuate their commitment to concern for animals through the creation of an endowed trust. Since their deaths The Alice Morgan Wright-Edith Goode Fund has supported The HSUS and affiliated organizations in a broad range of activities aimed at the reduction and elimination of animal suffering.30

By 1960 The HSUS was a stable organization whose survival staff and board members had guaranteed through their hard work. Fred Myers’s strategy of “action and fund-raising,” which assumed that if the organization did a “vigorous, effective job,” it would be able to “confidently count on a steadily increasing flow of gifts,” had been amply vindicated. That year, officials estimated, the organization issued two million pieces of printed material, received 11,000 pieces of first class mail, and sent out 50,000 items through the U.S. Postal Service.31

By then, too, Marcia Glaser (1930–2000) and Moneta “Dixie” Morgan were well established in their essential administrative support roles within The HSUS. Both women had a strong regard for animals and, twenty years later, were known to smile knowingly whenever overconfident newcomers would suggest that the organization ought to try this or that approach or that it should not have undertaken this or that campaign in the past. Glaser and Morgan were also legendary in their determination to keep office expenditures down through diligence, thrift, and control over expenses. Morgan, a meticulous ex-Marine, was responsible for accounts and financial reports on the organization’s condition. HSUS investigator Frank McMahon once sent Patrick Parkes an expense account with an unusually large item on it, along with a note that said he was “scared to submit it direct to Dixie.” Parkes returned the form to McMahon with his own handwritten note that said, “So am I!”32

The year 1960 also brought compelling evidence of The HSUS’s legitimacy, in the form of a substantial bequest—$300,000—from Anna Belle Morris of Colorado. The handling of the bequest proved complex, for Morris had imposed certain restrictions on the funds. Two-thirds of the bequest was an outright gift, but both principal and income had to be used for “development of the Rocky Mountain Region.” The other one-third of the principal was earmarked for the support of the Boulder County Humane Society, which would receive the interest income.33
Myers came up with the plan that the HSUS board would adopt for the Morris bequest, designed to honor the intention of the testator while maximizing the benefits that would accrue to The HSUS. Using an AHA definition of the Rocky Mountain region, and a formula based upon its geographic and demographic size relative to the rest of the United States, Myers assigned a fair proportion of the expected annual draw from the bequest to cover headquarters and general field expenses. At the same time, he proposed that The HSUS open an office in Denver, to serve as a “Livestock Department.” Its director would do virtually all of his physical work in the Rocky Mountain region, Myers proposed, but would be detailed for occasional activity outside the region and outside the field of his specialty. Only so many animal shelters could be organized in a sparsely populated region like the Rocky Mountain States, and an effective staff member seeking to promote the humane ethic among livestock producers, educational institutions, 4-H clubs, county agents, and other agricultural interests would do as much to fulfill Morris’s hopes for the spreading of animal protection values. The board of directors adopted Myers’s proposal, and the man he subsequently hired, Belton P. Mouras, began work in January 1961, launching an investigation of livestock transportation in the United States, helping to advance the campaign for state-level humane slaughter laws, and carrying out important field work in other areas of interest.34

In 1961 The HSUS also hired its first full-time investigator, Frank McMahon, setting the stage for its crucial contributions to the laboratory animal campaigns of the coming decade. Apart from his essential role in the investigations that undergirded the passage of the Laboratory Animal Welfare Act in 1966 (see chapter 3), McMahon provided evidence for legislation and reform initiatives concerning rodeos, slaughterhouses, animal fighting, and the clubbing of seals. McMahon also established many of the precedents and procedures that would guide The HSUS’s investigative work during and after his tenure.35

The HSUS’s program agenda as it entered the 1960s included extension of humane slaughter legislation at the state level, the pursuit of federal legislation to regulate laboratory animal use, an end to pound seizure, the improvement of pound and shelter work, and the promotion of humane education. In addition to these goals, the organization worked opportunistically on investigations of rodeos, “soring” of Tennessee Walking Horses, and other issues brought to its attention. While lack of funds and staff precluded the full realization of such a vision, The HSUS sought to address as many cruelty issues as it could, a goal encompassed by the statement printed on every membership card issued during those years: “Every field of humane work—EVERYWHERE.”

In some respects, as HSUS president Robert Chenoweth noted in 1959, the American humane movement had not been especially successful in the twentieth century. In a nation of more than 3,000 counties and 50,000 villages, there were nearly 500 independent societies focusing on a variety of issues, about 350 of which were active humane societies, almost all of them purely local in character. Of these societies, Fred Myers further observed, fewer than twenty-five published regular bulletins or newsletters. “Small wonder,” he suggested, “that the general public is unaware of the staggering amount of cruelty and animal suffering that can be found in every one of the thousands of communities in our country.”36

There was no doubt in the minds of anyone associated with The HSUS during its first decade, however, that the organization had made a crucial difference in the fortunes of the
humane movement. By 1963 Myers was proud to note that, since the formation of The HSUS only nine years earlier, more than 100 new societies had been organized in the United States and 60 new shelters constructed. At that time, The HSUS was focused on six program concerns: the surplus population of dogs and cats, laboratory animal welfare, cruelty to agricultural livestock and wild animals, humane society operating procedures, humane education of children, and financing of both national and local humane work. The HSUS’s main challenge, he thought, was to strike the right balance between serving those local organizations and developing a big-picture approach with strategic thinking.

Years of Transition
By summer 1962 Fred Myers was ready for a change. Eight years of hard work had worn him down, and he publicly fretted that he had not been effective as executive director. Expressing a desire to work more directly on the promotion of humane education, he proposed to let someone else assume his position while he shifted his attention to educational outreach. Myers’s health also motivated his proposal. He had suffered two heart attacks, and a long hospital stay led him to push for changes in The HSUS’s organizational structure.

In 1963 the board responded to his concerns by endorsing a bylaw change, which HSUS members approved in a nationwide referendum, to make the position of president, until then a voluntary position, a full-time office. The president would thus be the principal executive, and the position of executive director was abolished. Myers acquired the title of vice president and took over a newly created department of education. Oliver Evans, who had long been an official of the Animal Protective Association of Missouri, which maintained a shelter and other facilities in suburban St. Louis, became president. Evans relocated from Clayton, Missouri, to Washington with his wife and assumed direction of the HSUS office. Robert Chenoweth, who had led The HSUS as president since 1954, continued to do so under the title of chairman.

On December 1, 1963, just six months after the new arrangements were approved, Fred Myers died of a heart attack at age fifty-nine. The death of the man who had led The HSUS through its first decade of existence was a catastrophic blow. Fortunately, however, Myers had foreseen the necessity of assuring the continuation of strong leadership. Not only had he inspired the restructuring of The HSUS, but he also had recruited Oliver Evans to the presidency and Chenoweth to the chairmanship. As time would demonstrate, Myers had chosen well. Evans and Chenoweth exemplified the exceptional dedication of board members who labored to strengthen and sustain The HSUS in its early years. Chenoweth, president of the Wayside Waifs shelter in Kansas City, Missouri, had also served on the AHA board. Both men, and several other individuals who joined the HSUS board, had made the move with the AHA dissidents in 1954. Thus, they helped to perpetuate the steady determination of The HSUS to differentiate itself from AHA.

Evans carried on in the presidency until 1967, running The HSUS without taking any compensation. In fact, staff members recall that on occasion Evans would write personal checks to cover financial shortfalls in The HSUS’s accounts. He testified on behalf of the legislation that became the Laboratory Animal Welfare Act and supported the organization’s strong efforts to investigate the dog trade that supplied laboratory animals. In another important initiative, Evans commissioned a survey on
the feasibility of introducing humane education into the classroom. The survey, carried out at George Washington University, marked The HSUS’s first serious move into the field of humane education. Evans’s other priority was the completion of the National Humane Education Center at Waterford, Virginia, a training facility that had emerged from discussions among Fred Myers, Edith Goode, and other members of the HSUS family (see chapters 4 and 6).42

Within just a few days of Myers’s death, Evans hired Dale Hylton, who worked with Frank McMahon, Declan Hogan, and others on investigations of the laboratory animal trade and traveled on behalf of The HSUS as a field representative in a range of contexts. Hylton was also charged with responsibility for overseeing the construction of an animal shelter and educational facility at Waterford. Numerous challenges were associated with the project—limited water supply, improper practices by contractors, historically appropriate design for a pumphouse located near an eighteenth-century farmhouse, and the construction of a euthanasia chamber by local talent—most of which fell to Hylton to resolve. It was also Hylton who recommended that Evans hire Phyllis Wright (1927–1992), who had just retired from the Washington Animal Rescue League and—already on a first-name basis with the companion animals of most congressmen and senators in the capital—was then planning to become a partner in an exclusive boarding kennel. Instead, Wright, who had supervised Hylton’s own training when he first joined The HSUS, began to work part-time at Waterford, helping to train staff and conduct workshops with Hylton and other HSUS personnel.43

As it happened, Hylton shared Oliver Evans’s deep enthusiasm for the humane education component of the Waterford project, and as Wright gradually worked her way into The HSUS as manager of the Waterford shelter and training programs, Hylton shifted his energies into the development of The HSUS’s first humane education initiatives. The two worked there side by side for a number of years, and despite the pace, seriousness, and emotional burdens of the work, there was always time to savor the ironies it sometimes generated—like the time Hylton and Wright received a garbled Western Union telegram from a local society, asking them to forward all of the information they had on “youth in Asia.”44

Building upon the organization’s early commitment to field work and investigations, The HSUS employed several individuals during this era as field representatives. These staff members provided advice and assistance to humane societies on their work, investigated cases of animal abuse with national implications, and attended and/or provided testimony at legislative hearings on animal-related issues. Field representatives also traveled to provide direct assistance to local societies, helping to evaluate procedures and recommending program improvements.

In 1966 Evans steered The HSUS through a significant set of bylaw changes, brought on by membership petition. With the endorsement of the board of directors, The HSUS adopted the most important of the proposed changes. Among other things, a referendum of the national membership led to a system by which directors were elected by mail ballot instead of by the members assembled at an annual meeting.45

Despite his sincere dedication and sacrifice, Evans was not able to make a full-time commitment to The HSUS. He came to the office several days of the week to plot strategy, participate in meetings, sign correspondence and documents, and handle other responsibilities. On a day-to-day basis, key staff members like Glaser, Hylton, McMahon, Morgan, and Parkes operated with considerable autonomy, if not with full authority, in discharging their duties. It was not a perfect solution, but board and staff members tried to make it work until 1967,
when family and business affairs made it impossible for Evans to continue serving as president.

At that point, Vice President Patrick Parkes, a longtime employee with a management background, took the reins. Parkes and Marcia Glaser had been writing and editing *HSUS News* since Myers’s death, and Parkes had cultivated extensive contacts on behalf of The HSUS during his years of service. As director of Field Services, he had broad experience in dealing with HSUS chapters and in the provision of services to local humane societies.

In 1968 the HSUS board persuaded Mel Morse (d. 1988) to become president. Morse had begun his career in animal protection in the 1930s, as a kennel man, driver, and humane officer for the Los Angeles SPCA. He served as executive director of both the Humane Society of Marin County and AHA. In the early 1960s, Morse and Fred Myers had repaired their relationship, despite Morse’s role in the political conflict between AHA and The HSUS in the mid-1950s, and the two men corresponded about Morse’s taking a position with The HSUS. Eventually he did, working intermittently for the organization in a variety of capacities until 1974.46

His family’s ambivalence about residing on the East Coast weakened Morse’s tenure as HSUS president, and he did much of his work over the telephone from his home in California. By every account, Morse gave it his best, but no one involved thought this the best arrangement, and members of the office staff felt badly overworked under the circumstances. Eventually Morse decided to relinquish his office and return to the West Coast. The board of directors again faced the challenge of identifying a suitable leader for the day-to-day operations of The HSUS.

**John Hoyt Joins The HSUS**

In the early 1960s, board member Jacques Sichel recalled that, while discussing the search for a New Jersey chapter head, Fred Myers once had suggested that a clergyman was the right sort of candidate. “‘To our members,’ Myers explained, ‘a humane society is akin to a church, dedicated to the improvement of personal attitudes with nothing to sell but a code of ethics and morality.’” The same logic, it seemed, guided those who selected John A. Hoyt to serve as president of The HSUS. When he was hired, Hoyt was serving as senior minister of the First Presbyterian Church in Fort Wayne, Indiana. He was on a successful track as a clergyman, but evolving theological concerns and the administrative burdens of his office—which distanced him from some of the responsibilities he loved most about the pastorate—led him to conclude that a career change was in order.47

Coleman Burke, a New York attorney, was instrumental in bringing Hoyt to The HSUS. Burke had joined the organization’s board in 1967, at about the time that his firm had been asked to administer a trust, one of whose major beneficiaries was The HSUS. The Jeffery Trust accounted for $100,000 a year, almost 25 percent of The HSUS’s annual budget at the time. An official of the American Bible Society (ABS), Burke strongly believed that a minister was the appropriate candidate for the HSUS presidency and focused the search on candidates brought to his attention through the ABS network. On April 1, 1970, John A. Hoyt became president of The HSUS. Mel Morse was appointed vice president in charge of West Coast Operations and allowed to pursue special assignments.48

Hoyt was a total newcomer and brought no knowledge of the animal welfare movement to the job, although he did read Morse’s *Ordeal of the Animals* in preparation for his candidacy. Although Hoyt could not have known this, Morse’s work was largely a collaborative effort involving Marcia Glaser, Patrick Parkes, Frank McMahon, and other HSUS employees. In reading the book, Hoyt was in fact becoming familiar with some of the staff members and program concerns he would inherit.49
Ultimately, Hoyt believed, it was his record as an accomplished institution-builder within the Presbyterian Church that won him the position. Once hired, moreover, he concluded that his clerical background had provided excellent preparation for the job. For one thing, he observed that, while many participants in the field were unchurched, they brought a quasi-religious dedication to their work. While cognizant of the moral energy that drove the organization’s founders, Hoyt nevertheless believed that The HSUS had subordinated its efforts to promote ethical reflection on the status of animals to a program of practical reform. “Coming out of the church,” he recalled, “gave me an opportunity to infuse some of the moral, ethical concerns I felt were appropriate to an animal organization.”

Hoyt was also strongly motivated by the conviction that animal protection had to be consistent in approaching the reconciliation and advancement of human and animal interests with a “both/and” rather than an “either/or” attitude. Rightly or wrongly, the charge of misanthropy had haunted the humane movement for years, and it was one that Hoyt consistently sought to counter in his public statements and writings. He returned to the subject again and again during his years of service.

Hoyt’s first five years at The HSUS were a time of mapping out strategies for building a national organization. A vital step in this process was the establishment in 1970 of a committee to chart a long-range course for The HSUS. The Program and Policy Review Committee consisted of board and staff members who met to develop and refine program objectives for the near and longer term.

At about the same time, The HSUS commenced its practice of periodic and ongoing issue assessment. “Doc” Thomsen had promulgated a scale of measure for evaluating priorities as early as 1968. However, Robert Welborn, Esq., a Denver, Colorado, attorney who served on the board, actively championed the idea within The HSUS after 1970. The goal was to inventory and weight every animal issue as an organizational priority. It was one of the humane movement’s earliest and best efforts to assess cruelty by answering such questions as: how many animals were used in different arenas? In what ways? What was the nature and intensity of that suffering? Where were animals most severely harmed? What were the possibilities of changing that suffering? What were other organizations doing? The assessment conditioned the organization’s reaction to the issues, by providing context for its decisions about how to invest its time, effort, and resources.

One of Hoyt’s priorities was the abolition of the organization’s five state branches. Under long-standing arrangements, The HSUS designated 60 percent of all funds raised from members within the branch states for use by the chapters, with the national organization taking the rest. The state chapters were essentially independent entities using the same name and determining their own program and were in effect friendly competitors with the national organization. Hoyt strongly believed that The HSUS had to be just one entity. Others besides Hoyt had expressed their frustration with the chapter system. While Fred Myers considered it crucial to the expansion of The HSUS, he fretted over the friction that sometimes developed between regional boards of directors and staff members in the branch offices—friction about which he and the central quarters could do very little. When California chapter director Belton Mouro broke from The HSUS in 1968 to found the Animal Protection Institute, he did so partly out of frustration with the cumbersome decision-making processes.
of an organization with both regional and national boards of directors. Under the circumstances, Hoyt had little trouble persuading The HSUS’s national board members to support the branches’ abolition.55

Most of the staff members of the branches supported their consolidation into a system of regional offices. However, branch board members, who were being asked in most cases to disenfranchise themselves, were less enthusiastic. The branches did not all go willingly, and their particular circumstances shaped their response. The Minnesota branch was virtually defunct, so the matter was moot. The Connecticut branch was in debt after building an education center and welcomed the national office’s commitment to absorb its indebtedness as part of consolidation. The Utah branch sought independent identity, as the Utah Humane Society, as did the California branch, which reincorporated as the Golden State Humane Society. New Jersey proved to be the longest holdout, but as the prospect of complete dissociation with the national office loomed, its principal figures came around; in the late 1970s, it would reinvent itself as one of The HSUS’s most successful regional operations.

What Hoyt liked about the branch chapters was the degree to which they gave The HSUS a regional grassroots identity. Hoyt sought to replicate and extend this advantage by establishing five regional offices—Great Lakes (Fort Wayne, Indiana), covering Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois; Southern area (Pinehurst, North Carolina), serving North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, and Georgia; Rocky Mountain area (Salt Lake City, Utah), covering Utah, Wyoming, Colorado, and Idaho; Gulf States area (Corpus Christi, Texas), serving Texas, Louisiana, and Arkansas; and New England (East Haddam, Connecticut), covering Connecticut, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Maine. These offices were in place by late 1972.56

Regional office staff visited humane shelters and public pounds; conducted investigations; reached out to the public through newspaper, radio, and television work; handled inquiries by letter or telephone; and addressed civic and other groups. In time staff members in these offices began to make central contributions to the program, campaign, and development goals of The HSUS. Not only did they provide a regional grassroots presence for advancing the general goals of the organization, however; they also perpetuated the legacy of the state branches by continuing to emphasize regional priorities and opportunities that deserved The HSUS’s attention.

Another benchmark of Hoyt’s tenure was the purchase of permanent headquarters, a step made possible by substantial bequests. For its first seventeen years, The HSUS had operated from rented suites, the last of which was in the Associations Building at 1145 19th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. In 1971 the organization purchased a townhouse at 1604 K Street, N.W., from which to operate. In 1975 The HSUS purchased a building at 2100 L Street, N.W., for use as its permanent headquarters.57

In 1978 The HSUS board also modified the organization’s policy about using every dollar taken in during a given year. When Hoyt accepted the presidency, the budget was approximately $450,000 per year, and The HSUS used 100 percent of every bequest, with no reserve or mechanism for reserve funds. Under the new policy, the organization tried to place a significant percentage of each new bequest in an escrow account, to be spent over the next five years. By that mechanism, The HSUS could develop a budget and make a reasonable guess at its likely income for any given year. At the same time, none of these monies became part of any permanent reserve.58

Hoyt inherited one problem that had marked The HSUS’s history since its first day of operation. To a great extent, when people thought beyond their local organization, it was still to
AHA—not to The HSUS or any other national groups—that they looked. Although this had begun to change by the early 1970s, The HSUS’s leadership continued to face this issue, making determined efforts to underscore the contrasts between its policies and those of AHA. HSUS representatives did so by stressing the policy differences that divided the two organizations on such issues as trapping, rodeos, animal experimentation, and shelter and euthanasia practices. Hard feelings and old conflicts dating back to the 1950s continued to be influential several decades later.59

Cruelty, Values, and The HSUS

The values that informed the organization of The HSUS in 1954 were values its founders inherited from an extant American humane movement whose formal origins lay in the 1860s. The idea of kindness to animals made significant inroads in American culture in the years following the organization of the first societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals. The development of sympathy for the perceived pain of animals, the acknowledged satisfaction that attended the keeping of animals, and concerns over the reflexive impact of cruelty upon the character of its perpetrators all strengthened the movement’s hold on the popular imagination.

Humane advocates also believed that “a universal acceptance of kindness to other forms of life would help develop a better society for all.” True humanitarianism, Jacques V. Sichel contended in an early organizational manual, “believes that kindness is indivisible; it should include all species of animals and birds and man. It may embrace those who love a single species like dogs or cats, but in its purest form it is love and concern for every living thing.”60

This broader legacy notwithstanding, the most immediate philosophical influence on 1950s advocates, including early supporters of The HSUS, was Albert Schweitzer’s concept of reverence for life. Recognizing the “will-to-live” of every living being, Schweitzer concluded that a theory of right conduct must consist of giving “to every will-to-live the same reverence for life that he gives to his own.” Schweitzer’s notion had emerged from years of reflection on the most valid basis for ethics.61

For humanitarians, it was significant that Schweitzer included a notion of regard for non-human life in his cosmology. In his 1952 Nobel Peace Prize speech, Schweitzer noted, “compassion, in which ethics takes root, does not assume its true proportions until it embraces not only man but every living being.”62 Such words buoyed humane advocates laboring to give their concerns a higher profile. Eventually, Schweitzer’s expressions of support went beyond words. He approved the Animal Welfare Institute’s establishment of an annual award in his name, served as honorary president of Aida Flemming’s International Kindness Club (later incorporated into The HSUS), and even sent a letter expressing his support for legislation to regulate animal use in American laboratories in 1963.63

The humane movement did not find similar inspiration in philosophers of conservation like Aldo Leopold, just as animal protection groups did not have much affinity with the major environmental organizations of the pre-1970 era. As Fred Myers put it, “I know of no national conservation organization—including Audubon—that is officially interested in the suffering of animals or in humanitarianism. They are interested only in ecology, conservation of species, etc. In terms of philosophy, most of the conservation organizations are dedicated to ‘management’ of animals for man’s benefit. That doesn’t run very close to our own philosophy.”64

Myers and his colleagues found a highly suitable exemplar of their values in Joseph Wood Krutch (1893–1970), who became one of America’s leading thinkers and literary critics with The Modern Temper (1927). Krutch’s intellectual explorations of Thoreau and his physical experiences in the Arizona desert in the late 1940s and early 1950s sparked a new
level of appreciation for wilderness and for nonhuman life. From that time onward, Krutch sought to articulate a philosophy that acknowledged and celebrated the importance of the natural world and all of its inhabitants.65

With *The Great Chain of Life* (1957), Krutch established himself as a philosopher of humaneness. Krutch was particularly disturbed by the devaluation and demise of traditional natural history education, which, he felt, had alienated many human beings from the natural environment and nonhuman nature. “The grand question remains whether most people actually want hearts to be tenderer or harder. Do we want a civilization that will move toward some more intimate relation with the natural world,” Krutch asked, “or do we want one that will continue to detach and isolate itself from both a dependence upon and a sympathy with that community of which we were originally a part?” In May 1957 a review of Krutch’s seminal work in the HSUS News, almost certainly the product of Myers’s pen, noted with approval, “Krutch believes that if men can be made to feel their relationship with the other living creatures of earth, something akin to Schweitzer’s ‘reverence for life’ will follow.”66

Krutch took a pragmatic role in helping the cause. His blanket condemnation of sport hunting was reprinted regularly in the pages of the HSUS News. In March 1965, as the controversy over animal use in laboratories grew, he wrote a piece for the *Saturday Review*, criticizing various cruelties perpetrated against animals and making an implicit case for proposed legislation that would eventually be approved as the Laboratory Animal Welfare Act. In 1968 Krutch contributed a foreword to Mel Morse’s *Ordeal of the Animals* and received The HSUS’s Humanitarian of the Year award, its highest accolade. In 1970 the award was renamed in his honor.67

The growing environmental movement of the early 1970s also influenced the ethical and practical development of The HSUS. The era’s environmentalism had inspired a “new awakening,” John Hoyt believed, in relation to which the humane movement needed to position itself. As theologian John B. Cobb, Jr., put it, “The environmental crisis is making us aware that we should change our behavior toward other living things. The need for change follows from our traditional concern for human welfare, but it also raises the question of whether our traditional anthropocentric ethics and religion are adequate or justified.”68

As part of its general efforts to impress upon the public both the implications and the value of a philosophy of humaneness toward all life, The HSUS sponsored a 1976 conference, “On the Fifth Day,” bringing together philosophers, anthropologists, biologists, and other scholars. The conference represented the...
culmination of a long-held vision—shared by Oliver Evans and other board members—to bring together scholarly perspectives on the proper relationship of humans to nonhuman animals. A book based upon the proceedings was published in 1977.69

By that time, of course, the treatment of animals had become a topic of serious debate within moral philosophy. That debate spilled over into public consciousness with the 1975 publication of Peter Singer’s *Animal Liberation*. Singer’s book decried the mistreatment of animals as “speciesism” and sought to recast concern for animals as a justice-based cause akin to the era’s better known liberation movements.

Much of what Singer wrote concerning the prevention or reduction of animals’ suffering was in harmony with The HSUS’s objectives. Among other things, Singer’s philosophy did not rest upon the inherent rights of animals. His principal concern, like that of The HSUS, was the mitigation and elimination of suffering, and he endorsed the view that ethical treatment sometimes permitted or even required killing animals to end their misery. Singer’s work also influenced independent activist Henry Spira, with whom The HSUS would closely ally itself from the late 1970s onward.

While acknowledging that the new philosophical discussions differed from earlier notions of animal welfare and concern for animals, many at The HSUS saw them as “old wine in new bottles.” They did not promise to change anything in the organization’s legal strategy, which used wildlife-related, anticruelty, and environmental statutes that afforded relevant protections—without invoking a language of rights.70

The HSUS was concerned with the development of well-conceived policies about what constituted cruelty to animals and what ought to be done about it. Robert Welborn led the way in drafting a revised Statement of Beliefs and Principles, adopted by the Board of Directors on October 11, 1974.71 Hoyt tried to make the statement of principles a “living document” by asking staff members to differentiate carefully between uses of animals when trying to determine whether The HSUS should undertake expenses “to improve the efficiency, humaneness, or respectability of such utilizations.” For example, while it seemed clear to him that The HSUS “should be very much involved in helping to improve technology and procedures (better slaughtering equipment and methods, development and utilization of tissue culture methodologies, improved research facilities, improved livestock transportation, etc.) toward the end of relieving animal suffering both in degree and quantity,” that premise seemed “a self-defeating function” in regard to efforts to make an activity like trapping or rodeo “more acceptable and respectable,” and thus to further perpetuate an “activity we wish to eliminate.”72

**Professionalization, Scientific Proficiency, and Staff Development**

From the first, The HSUS sought to establish a professional identity and stature for itself. Fred Myers and Helen Jones were highly proficient in their respective fields of journalism and public relations, which helped The HSUS to reach millions of Americans with its message in the early years. By the 1960s staff members were making national television appearances, and the organization’s program of media outreach was robust. Jones’s publicity work on humane slaughter was crucial to passage of the Humane Slaughter Act in 1958, and Myers’s efforts to identify The HSUS with the debate over laboratory animal use resulted in his appearance on NBC-TV’s *Today* show in 1962.73

At the same time, The HSUS had attracted some very good people to work in educational outreach, field activities, investigations, publications, and office management. In an era when everyone was expected to demonstrate multiple competencies and to be ready to as-
sume any task, Marcia Glaser, Dale Hylton, Frank McMahon, Dixie Morgan, Patrick Parkes, Phyllis Wright, and others wore many hats in the service of the organization.

In its early years, The HSUS also relied on the voluntary assistance of technical specialists, like “Doc” Thomsen, a retired agricultural economist with a commitment to scientific detail and a penchant for accuracy. The organization’s dozen or so staff members were very dedicated people, yet there were no staff scientists. The charge that The HSUS was driven by emotion rather than the facts of any given issue—a common accusation in that era—drove the push toward professionalization of its technical staff.74

By 1970, when Hoyt assumed office, The HSUS had begun to reap the benefits of its hard work during the 1950s and 1960s. By the late 1960s, some of its early supporters had begun to pass away and leave bequests. This gave The HSUS of the 1970s an advantage that the organization had not enjoyed in past decades—substantial testamentary gifts with which to build and expand programs and staff. Important bequests from early supporters like Luella Jeffery, Mrs. Jay S. Hartt, and Elsa H. Voss laid the groundwork for the successes of the new decade.75

Hoyt was determined to deploy these new assets in areas outside The HSUS’s traditional concerns—such as wildlife issues—and to strengthen its capacities with additional professional and technical staff. In the 1970s, under his leadership, The HSUS became the most talent-rich organization in the history of animal protection. Having taken root under the direction of Fred Myers, it blossomed under the leadership of John Hoyt.

In 1971 Hoyt hired naturalist Guy Hodge (1944–1999) to assume daily responsibility for handling technical inquiries from the public and from government and other authorities. Hodge also performed a lot of the data research needed to make The HSUS’s inventory and assessment process credible. As director of data and information services, Hoyt recalled, “Guy was our encyclopedia.” Hodge developed special knowledge of emergency relief measures to help animals during disasters. In addition, he served as the organization’s point man on dozens of “orphan” issues, penning articles on poisonous substances that could hurt companion animals; providing advice on how to remove raccoons, bats, and other animals from chimneys and attics; and offering hints for helping orphaned wildlife. He provided information on travel with companion animals, consulted with local governments and societies on the control of pigeon populations in urban areas, and campaigned against inhumane mousetraps. He also wrote the pioneering edition of The HSUS’s book on careers working with animals.76

Hodge was one of several people Hoyt hired that year for technical and/or scientific expertise. Hal Perry, a well-known opponent of predator control programs, and Sue Pressman, a zoo expert, joined The HSUS in 1971 as well. These appointments marked the beginning of The HSUS’s commitment to expand its activity into wildlife problems. Hoyt used the occasion of Perry’s hiring as wildlife representative to articulate The HSUS’s three objectives in the field of wildlife protection: “to prevent cruelty to all wild animals, to preserve all species still in existence, and to help restore the balance of nature that man has thrown out of kilter.”77

Robert Bay, a veterinarian and early winner of the Animal Welfare Institute’s Albert Schweitzer Medal, joined the staff in 1972 to work on a wide variety of concerns from the West Coast Office managed by Mel Morse. Among other duties, Bay accompanied HSUS investigators to the site of the seal harvest on the Pribilof Islands. In 1973 The HSUS created a
veterinary advisory committee under Bay’s authority, comprised of eight veterinary scientists.78

Not all of the crucial hires during this era involved scientific specialists. Ben Hayes, who had served The HSUS on behalf of an outside membership fulfillment company for more than five years, came on board in 1971 to centralize that operation in-house. John Henderson also arrived in 1971, eventually overseeing publication fulfillment and mail room operations. John Dommers, a science teacher with an interest in developing educational materials on animals and the environment, came to work in the New England Regional Office in 1972. In 1973 Hoyt hired Dommers’s friend and collaborator, Charles F. Herrmann, III, an editor of children’s publications for Xerox Education Publications, to coordinate HSUS education programs. In time Herrmann would assume editorial responsibility for The HSUS’s major publications, including *HSUS News, NAHEE Journal*, and *Shelter Sense*.

Hoyt also engineered some significant reassignments within The HSUS in these years. After Frank McMahon died in 1974, Frantz Dantzler assumed principal responsibility for investigations. In 1975 The HSUS’s longtime general counsel, Murdaugh Madden, agreed to direct a new legal department full time, to expand The HSUS’s role in prosecuting cruelty cases, litigating in state and federal courts to ensure enforcement of animal protection laws, and participating in administrative proceedings of importance. John Dommers served sequentially as an educator in the HSUS Connecticut branch, director of The HSUS’s humane education division, the National Association for the Advancement of Humane Education (NAAHE), director of the HSUS New England Regional Office, and after 1980 as coordinator of multimedia materials.

It was the Bicentennial Year of 1976 that would prove to be the annus mirabilis of staff recruitment for The HSUS, however. During that year, Hoyt brought Patricia Forkan, Paul G. Irwin, and Michael W. Fox, D.Sc., Ph.D., B.Vet.Med., MRCVS, into the organization. All three would come to play important roles in The HSUS’s long-term evolution.

Forkan came from The Fund for Animals, where she had worked as national coordinator. She brought six years of experience as a campaigner against whaling and thus became The HSUS’s first specialist on the issue. However, her background in trapping and fur and wild horse and tuna/dolphin concerns brought additional assets to The HSUS. As program coordinator, reporting directly to Hoyt, she oversaw a broad range of program areas, coordinated the organization’s interactions with government officials, and expanded its capacity for responding to legislative opportunities and challenges. Her appointment was a timely one, because changes in the federal tax law in 1976 permitted organizations like The HSUS to exert greater pressure and influence on the passage of legislation, without jeopardizing their tax-exempt status. In 1977 Forkan launched the Action Alert Program, a means for informing HSUS member participants of the need for quick action on legislative and other matters. The following year, she was named vice president for program and communications.79
Irwin joined the organization after an outside consultant, The Oram Group, examined The HSUS’s management and administrative structure. The Oram review identified membership growth as one of the organization’s most urgent needs. A United Methodist minister with a background in the nonprofit sector, Irwin became vice president of a newly formed Office of Development that sought to coordinate and enhance fund-raising activities. His hiring marked the advent of a new era in long-range development planning for The HSUS.80

There were signs of Irwin’s willingness to set high expectations and then work hard to reach them in his first full presentation to the HSUS board. At the time, in April 1976, The HSUS had about 30,000 constituents. Irwin proposed to triple the number by January 1978, within just eighteen months. He did it by pursuing a judicious but intensive direct mail campaign, bringing The HSUS into the universe of direct mail solicitation at precisely the time it was coming into its own as a membership recruitment and retention strategy for nonprofit organizations. Irwin’s development program would undergird many of The HSUS’s subsequent successes, by facilitating its extraordinary growth in the quarter-century to follow.81

Hoyt’s decision to hire Fox marked The HSUS’s transformation from an organization of well-intentioned humanitarians into a credible professional advocacy group. An Englishman who graduated from the Royal Veterinary College (1962), Fox earned a doctorate from London University and came to the United States in 1962. His research on animal behavior, especially in relation to wolves, earned him a serious academic reputation, and he was an associate professor of psychology at Washington University in St. Louis. In addition to his scholarly work, Fox gained a wide public following with books like *Understanding Your Dog* and *Understanding Your Cat* and a regular column in *McCall’s*, “Ask Your Animal Doctor.”82

By 1975 Fox had grown increasingly uncomfortable with the politics of the university and was looking for ways to become a more effective voice for animals and nature outside of that setting. He knew very little of The HSUS and other organizations, although he had begun to write on animal protection issues while still a college professor. The movement did know him, however. Fox’s published work and public commentary had made him a celebrity, and he made dozens of appearances on the *Tonight Show* with Johnny Carson.

Even before Fox’s arrival, The HSUS had taken steps to seek financial support for the creation of an Institute for the Study of Animal Problems (ISAP). A major proposal for such a center had been part of the organization’s submission to the executors of the Whittell estate in 1972, orchestrated by Mel Morse and Murdaugh Madden. This extraordinary competitive process began in 1970, after a testator’s vagueness in specifying a proper beneficiary (George Whittell had left $6 million to the “National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals”) led a California court to solicit proposals for support from qualified organizations. The HSUS’s plan for ISAP was approved to receive $1 million.
more than any other humane organization that qualified.83

Upon joining The HSUS, Fox became ISAP director. ISAP’s mission was to harness the work of scholars and scientists to address specific problems in animal welfare. Under ISAP’s aegis, The HSUS would try to apply technical and practical knowledge to the real world of animal pain and suffering. From its inception ISAP became the center of The HSUS’s research activities.

As Hoyt later recalled, The HSUS received a lot of criticism for hiring a veterinarian. For a variety of reasons, the veterinary profession did not have a good reputation among humane advocates. For his part Fox suffered the disapproval of professional colleagues in ethology and veterinary science, who disparaged his decision to join his talents with the humane movement—whose concerns and policies they often dismissed or resented.84

By his very presence, Fox insulated The HSUS against the charge that there was no one on its staff who really knew what he or she was talking about. “We now had someone who knew the language, we now had the competency,” Hoyt recalled. This was particularly valuable as the organization moved into such new arenas as wildlife protection and the campaign against intensive rearing of animals for food.85

Several years later, in 1978, The HSUS hired Andrew N. Rowan, D. Phil., a Rhodes scholar and Oxford-educated South African biochemist who had spent four years at the Fund for the Replacement of Animals in Medical Experiments (FRAME), a nonanimal research methods charity and think tank in Great Britain. Rowan joined Fox as associate director of ISAP. Under their direction, ISAP prepared reports on euthanasia of companion animals, factory farming, and the attention accorded to animal welfare in federal grant applications for animal experiments.86

In January 1980 ISAP launched the International Journal for the Study of Animal Problems, to disseminate the results of scientific work directed toward the promotion of animal welfare. This included engagement with some of the most urgent issues facing animal protectionists, including appropriate euthanasia technology, intensive farming of animals, nonanimal methods in research, and species extinction. The community of scholars that coalesced around the journal helped to legitimize animal behavior as an applied science for evaluating animals’ welfare and behavioral needs. Recognizing the validity of emerging philosophical arguments about the rights and interests of animals, ISAP’s journal also became an important forum for discussion of the legal and moral implications of animals’ treatment. Both the ISAP journal and its successor, Advances in Animal Welfare Science, extended the organization’s commitment to provide a forum for the dissemination of ideas and research concerning animal welfare science. What most distinguished them was their direct attention to animal welfare issues, which were still receiving mostly peripheral coverage in existing veterinary and animal science journals. By creating outlets for publication, these journals helped to stimulate further research and analysis.

**Development and the Shift to a Divisional Model**

With the addition of more technical and scientific staff, an expanding workload, and a growing membership and budget, The HSUS began to improvise new organizational arrangements. By 1977 there were separate departments devoted to sheltering and animal control issues, wildlife protection, field service and investigations, research and data services, legislation and program coordination, communications, youth activities, development, and legal affairs.87

These were exciting times, too. Not only were the issues coming to occupy greater media attention, but there were also signs that humane concerns were being taken more seri-
ously. “The barometer of this country’s sensitivity can be seen in the legislative process,” investigator Frantz Dantzler remarked in 1977. “Whereas one or two animal welfare bills were introduced twenty years ago, sixty to eighty measures may come before Congress now.”

It was also an exciting time to work at The HSUS. Michael Fox, Patricia Forkan, Charles Herrmann, and others were grateful for the latitude their positions provided. It was easy to get hired, it sometimes seemed, because of the enthusiasm Hoyt demonstrated whenever he encountered someone he thought would be a good addition to the staff. Longtime employees joked that one might bid Hoyt farewell on a Friday afternoon as he left for a weekend engagement and then return to the office on Monday to find someone the HSUS president had met the day before on an airplane or at an animal protection conference sitting at the next desk. At the same time, Herrmann recalled, “You had to make your position,” and those who succeeded in doing so went on to long careers at The HSUS.

By 1978 The HSUS was providing national leadership for campaigns to promote spay-neuter of companion animals, to eliminate the high-altitude decompression chamber for euthanasia of companion animals, to address the cruelties of farm animal husbandry and slaughter, and to end the choke hold hunters and trappers had on federal and state wildlife agencies. That year Hoyt enumerated some additional cruelties then occupying The HSUS’s organizational agenda:

The HSUS has called for a boycott of Russian and Japanese products because of the extensive killing of whales by these two countries. We have urged you and others not to purchase tuna products because of the killing of large numbers of porpoise by the tuna industry. We have urged that no fur products be purchased because of the extreme cruelty to animals associated with trapping. We have and shall continue to oppose rodeos, animal coursing, hunting for sport, roadside zoos, cockfighting and dog fighting, bull fighting—bloodless or otherwise—and many other uses of animals which involve a suffering and abuse negating the economic or social benefits when viewed from a moral-ethical perspective.

The agenda Hoyt articulated was an ambitious one and involved the development of robust program work on all of the major issues. Trying to do more meant having to raise more funds, and the right methods for meeting that goal were important topics at staff meetings during the late 1970s. One of the most successful instruments for recruiting members and gaining membership reports was the Close-Up Report, a four-page, full-color publication that targeted one specific cruelty in great detail and provided the reader with a list of suggested actions. Paul Irwin had first proposed the Close-Up Report in 1976 as a solution to The HSUS’s need for refined fund-raising material. It turned out to be much more, however, as Patricia Forkan and other program staffers found that a four-page, full-color publication featuring detailed accounts of specific cruelties could also serve the organization’s evolving needs for better program and campaign material. The Close-Up Report neatly tied together the imperatives of membership development and fund-raising with The HSUS’s programmatic mission of education and outreach. Between the late 1970s and the late 1980s, The HSUS sent out the Close-Up Report four times a year.

In composing the Close-Up Report, staff members could draw upon the several hundred animal cruelties addressed by The HSUS, highlighting the results of a new investigation, taking advantage of a rise in public concern about a specific issue, putting the publication in the service of an ongoing legislative campaign, or creating an activist tool. Each Close-Up Report attempted to draw the reader toward action on behalf of animals. Forkan usually decided upon the topics and oversaw content development for the reports. In the early years, Forkan and Charles Herrmann wrote them; after Deborah Salem joined The HSUS in 1981 as editor of the HSUS News, she and staff member Julie Rovner also played important roles in their production.
By 1979, Hoyt estimated, The HSUS was mailing out one million pieces of literature and other material annually. The HSUS had eighty employees, and Hoyt was proud to note that since his assumption of the presidency in 1970 not one person with program or administrative responsibilities had left the staff for other opportunities. HSUS membership had reached 115,000, its annual budget approached $2 million, and its board had grown from fifteen to twenty members.93

Another sign of The HSUS’s coming of age came in September 1980, when ten staff members traveled to Great Britain to meet with their counterparts at the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA), the world’s first and largest animal welfare society. While noting many differences in structure, tactics, and style, HSUS participants were pleased to find it such a meeting of equals.94

Nineteen eighty was the first year of the Reagan administration, which would prove alternately indifferent or hostile toward humane concerns and whose deficiencies Hoyt and others would cite frequently in their writings. Most significant, the new administration stood on the principle of opposition to government interference in the lives of citizens. This approach, as applied to animal welfare concerns, seemed to spell the end of any effort to control the use and abuse of animals by government agencies and private enterprise. Such a philosophy ran counter to the programmatic goals of The HSUS as an organization that saw and understood the need for government involvement in a number of areas where animals were under serious threat.

Hoyt devoted a substantial portion of his 1981 President’s Report to the adverse impact of the Reagan administration, which brought with it the threat of reduced funding for enforcement of existing animal protective legislation and regulatory measures. This lack of support threatened the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) as well as legislation protecting wild horses, marine mammals, and endangered species. The HSUS spent a significant amount of time in the decade building congressional alliances to thwart the administration’s lack of commitment, best exemplified by the president’s fiscal year 1986 budget, which zero-budgeted the AWA.95

Recognizing that the battle over programs that either helped or hurt animals would be fought on the basis of budgetary lines, not on the authorization of new programs, The HSUS went so far as to employ legislative staff with special experience and expertise in the intricacies of Capitol Hill funding processes. Moreover, realizing that the funding game could cut in two directions, The HSUS launched its first efforts to eliminate subsidies for programs that resulted in animal suffering and abuse during this era.96 The organization also enhanced its legislative capabilities outside the nation’s capital, appointing a coordinator for state legislation, Ann Church, a former Hill staff member, in 1983. In an inhospitable federal climate, it was all the more important that The HSUS make a stronger commitment to promoting state-level initiatives.97

At the same time, The HSUS tried to penetrate the policy networks that would allow staff members to influence decision making in the federal government. In 1981, for example, Fox and Hoyt met with the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to discuss farm animal welfare concerns. All five regional directors of USDA’s Animal Plant and Health Inspection Service (APHIS), along with their Washington supervisors, visited HSUS headquarters to meet staff specialists and to learn about the evidence that had developed concerning enforcement problems.98

The selection of James Watt to head the U.S. Department of the Interior was a particular provocation. Watt’s apocalyptic, “Earth-rejecting” personal theology—which Hoyt learned
about firsthand in a dinner conversation with Watt—fueled the brash and relentless appointment of unapologetic representatives of the hunting, trapping, mining, lumbering, and ranching industries to positions of influence in the government. Watt and his confreres posed special threats to the humane movement’s hard-won gains in wild horse protection, predator control, and marine life.99

By the time of the Watt-led offensive, the six main sections of The HSUS (under four vice presidents) were Program and Communications (Patricia Forkan), Cruelty Investigations and Field Services (Patrick Parkes), Finance and Development (Paul Irwin), Legal Affairs (Murdaugh Madden), the Institute for the Study of Animal Problems (Michael Fox), and Administration and Education (John Hoyt).100

Although staff members like Forkan, Guy Hodge, Sue Pressman, and others had all worked on select wildlife concerns during the 1970s, and it was obviously a matter of great interest to HSUS supporters, the organization lacked a well-focused effort on behalf of wild animals as it entered the 1980s. By then, however, with wildlife concerns rapidly expanding beyond the relatively limited scope of the humane movement’s traditional activity, and membership and broader public interest in such issues rising, The HSUS moved to cover the field more thoroughly. In January 1982 The HSUS incorporated all of its wildlife programs and environmental concerns (with the exception of marine mammals and legislative affairs, both of which remained in the portfolio of Forkan) into a new section for Wildlife and Environment. Hoyt chose John W. Grandy, Ph.D., formerly executive vice president of Defenders of Wildlife, to head the section as vice president for Wildlife and Environment. Grandy’s appointment marked the transition toward the modern divisional structure of The HSUS. He came into the organization at a senior level and was given oversight of an entire program area, with the charge of expanding its influence and stature both within and outside of the organization.

In the coming years, The HSUS would follow this model in establishing new program divisions and transforming older ones. The Department of Sheltering and Animal Control, descended from one of the major founding programs of The HSUS, became the Companion Animals section in 1983. In an extended process that was not complete until the late 1980s, ISAP gave way to divisions devoted to animal research issues and the welfare of farm animals. Field Services, Education, Marketing, Publications, Public Relations, Government Affairs, and Administration and Data Services eventually were organized along the same lines.

With such a differentiation of labor and talent available, The HSUS was able to provide most of the guests for Pet Action Line, the weekly television program it began to co-sponsor in 1984. Accepted for broadcast by 150 of 180 public television stations the year it debuted, it represented a new chapter in the history of The HSUS—its breakthrough into mass media markets.101

By the early 1980s, with many of the previous generation’s disputants retired...
or deceased, and the two organizations closer to agreement on many issues that had once divided them, the deep-seated animus between The HSUS and AHA had also faded away. Hoyt made a special point of acknowledging AHA President Martin Passaglia as a special guest at the 1984 annual conference of The HSUS. By then, too, there was an established pattern of employees leaving one group to join the staff of the other.102

The HSUS and the Animal Rights Movement

The 1980s witnessed an extraordinary flourishing of concern about animals and a proliferation of new organizations. Many of them were grassroots groups motivated by the philosophies of Peter Singer, Tom Regan, Ph.D., and other thinkers who had helped to raise the question of animals’ treatment within the fields of moral and environmental philosophy. With the flourishing of an animal rights philosophy, which in its purest form rejected any human use of animals, and with the emergence of groups motivated by animal rights and animal liberation ideologies in the 1980s, The HSUS faced new challenges. The organization born in antiestablishmentarian politics now found itself broadly acknowledged—and sometimes criticized—as the “establishment” group of record.

There was hardly any animal organization that did not have to come to terms with the influence of the new approaches. For the most part, Hoyt saw them as a positive force, providing new energy and urgency to the struggle for animals, recruiting countless new persons to the cause, sparking the formation of new organizations at all levels, and helping The HSUS to better identify its own goals and priorities. Growing interest in animals and their well-being also promised to bring unprecedented social power, with philosophers, attorneys, educators, politicians, scientists, and other influential professionals coming into the work. Hoyt wanted to place The HSUS at the heart of the effort to channel the interest of these new constituencies into further progress for animals. He was enthusiastic about Richard Morgan’s Mobilization for Animals, and The HSUS was a major supporter of the primate center rallies staged by the Mobilization in 1983. At least one staff member, Michael Fox, frequently expressed his philosophical affinity with animal rights, and Tom Regan received the Joseph Wood Krutch Medal in 1986, in recognition of his outstanding intellectual contributions to the work. The HSUS benefited in many ways from the extraordinary spread of concern for animals, and Hoyt was comfortable talking about the potential for collegial endeavors, referring to the groups collectively as those “in the animal welfare/animal rights” movement.”103

At other times and in other respects, however, the complexity of the new landscape was less encouraging. HSUS staff members shared in the broader disillusionment that followed in the wake of the Mobilization rallies, which saw virtually no follow-up. Hoyt admitted to some uncertainty about The HSUS’s proper relationship to the thousands of grassroots activists taking to the streets and participating in direct action rallies. He was, moreover, skeptical about the degree to which the new dogmas would take hold within the broader society and deeply concerned about the implications of acts like the direct liberation of animals and civil disobedience. Among other things, he believed, widespread alienation of possible allies and a wicked backlash from opponents were sure to result from extralegal tactics.104

At the same time, cooperation with avowed animal rights groups was not always produc-
Some of the groups with which The HSUS forged temporary alliances proved to be difficult partners, and this also shaded opinion within The HSUS concerning the wisdom of cooperation with such organizations.

Finally, Hoyt admitted, in the era of the animal rights movement’s rise, it was important for The HSUS “to pause, assess, and define just where, as an animal-protection organization, we are.” With the rise of challenging new philosophies, he told the audience at The HSUS’s 1988 conference,

Those of us who had been working for the protection of animals for decades were [now being] viewed with both suspicion and disdain. We were castigated because the change we were seeking was not all-encompassing; we were censured for our willingness to accept compromise, even though such compromise often resulted in achievement; and we were condemned for being successful, for realizing both organizational growth and financial success. We were made to feel guilty and, all too often, we permitted ourselves to feel guilty.105

In such a changing environment, Hoyt told another audience, it was important for The HSUS “to continue to be The HSUS.” Perhaps the organization would “not be the shining star in the new dawn’s light, nor the darling of those who would alter the course of history in a moment’s time.” Nevertheless, for decades The HSUS had been “affirming loudly and clearly the ethical and moral dimensions of animal protection.” It would continue to do so, “growing both internally and externally, both spiritually and materially, while ever maintaining a compassion for both animals and people.”106

While The HSUS did not embrace the philosophy of animal rights, its articulation helped to prompt a shift toward holism in The HSUS’s language and perspective. Hoyt supported Fox’s efforts to synthesize environmental concern with regard for animals in a worldview Fox termed “humane stewardship,” an antidote to the misconstruction of Judeo-Christian stewardship and the dominance of Cartesian thought that many believed had harmed animals’ situation in the world. An ecologically sensitive humaneness would include consideration for all nonsentient creation as well as for animals. Fox sometimes framed the argument as a question of rights. In a 1978 interview, entitled “Animal Rights—An Ethical Examination,” Fox told a reporter that animals had three rights, “the right to exist,” “the right to minimal or no suffering,” and “the right to fulfillment,” by which he meant the opportunity to indulge their most basic behavioral and biological requirements. At the same time, Fox continued, “Rights are always relative; they can never be absolute.” When the interests of animals and humans conflicted, animals’ rights ended.107

While staff members stopped short of arguing that animals had a legal personhood, they clearly expressed their belief that animals were “entitled to humane treatment and to equal and fair consideration.” There was an “ethical imperative to work toward the legal recognizing of their rights and respect for their intrinsic worth and interests.”108 The organization’s approach was encoded in a new mission statement drafted in 1997 and revised in 2002: “The HSUS envisions a world in which people satisfy the physical and emotional needs of domestic animals; protect wild animals and their environments; and change their interaction with other animals, evolving from exploitation and harm to respect and compassion.”

One place Hoyt sought to spread the message during these years was the veterinary community. For a time he served on the Board of Managers of the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine, and the school’s dean served on the board of The HSUS. At a gathering held at the school, Hoyt admonished future members of the profession that [if] the veterinarian should imagine that he or she can ignore or remain isolated from this movement and its implications for human/animal relationships, it is a delusion pure and simple. For it is you, and especially you as the healers and ministers to animal suffering, who will be called upon to stand front and center in the challenges this movement will ultimately generate.109
As it happened, this attempt to forge a closer relationship with the veterinary medical profession foundered when Dean Robert Marshak, D.V.M., proved himself to be an opponent of reforms espoused by The HSUS. A better bridge emerged after ISAP Associate Director Andrew Rowan left The HSUS to accept a dean’s position at Tufts University School of Veterinary Medicine. There, under Dean Franklin Loew, D.V.M. (1939–2003), a veterinarian with a strong commitment to scholarly and technical approaches to improving animal well-being, a climate conducive to cooperation emerged. At the Tufts Center for Animals and Public Policy, Rowan sponsored Anthrozoös, an academic journal devoted to animal welfare concerns; tried to enhance the network of scholars and scientists who had once worked mainly through the now-defunct ISAP journal; and initiated a master’s degree program in animals and public policy that by the 1990s was regularly placing students within the junior-level staff ranks of The HSUS and other organizations. When Loew joined the HSUS board in 1999, it marked the culmination of a long-standing goal to recruit a suitable and committed veterinary professional into The HSUS at the board level.¹¹⁰

Without question, the most serious liability posed by the explosion of concern for animals in the 1980s was the willingness of some people to pursue illegal and even violent actions against users of animals. Here, The HSUS faced the inevitable hazard of guilt by implication, as critics from the medical, agricultural, millinery, and outdoor recreation fields sought to tarnish the reputation of The HSUS with unfounded claims about its affiliation with the perpetrators of illegal action.

The HSUS met this threat in 1981 by articulating a set of antiviolence principles, as Hoyt stressed the need to “do battle in ways that will not only serve the well-being of animals, but at the same time preserve and advance our own dignity and decency.” This conviction guided The HSUS’s response to many of the tumultuous events of the 1980s. In 1991, Hoyt collaborated with the ASPCA’s John Kullberg and MSPCA President Gus Thornton, D.V.M., on the development of a set of “Joint Resolutions for the 1990s,” inviting five thousand animal advocacy groups to ratify them; the document included a prominent endorsement of nonviolence.¹¹¹

The rise of the animal rights movement certainly helped to transform the landscape in which The HSUS had to operate. “We had to identify against what they said and did,” Hoyt recalled, speaking of the challenges posed by the newer groups. There were, moreover, a handful of staff resignations or dismissals that reflected differences in opinion about the way forward. There were also changes in emphasis brought about by the fact of robust competition and more aggressive campaigning by other groups. There were some instances, as in the decision to develop a stronger response to Project WILD (see chapter 6), where the activities of other groups spurred The HSUS to commit itself more seriously to a given campaign. Such a shift in emphasis also occurred in relation to the HSUS position on vegetarianism. Although many vegetarians had supported the organization throughout its history, the majority of its constituents were not vegetarian. Until the 1990s the organization was very reticent on the topic, and it received only the most halting endorsement or mention by HSUS officials. The HSUS moved beyond this impasse by including vegetarianism broadly within the pluralist framework of a Three Rs (reduction, replacement, and refinement) approach to the pain and suffering of farm animals (see chapter 2).¹¹²

Generally, however, in the midst of the philosophical and practical firestorms that characterized the 1980s and 1990s, The HSUS hewed to its basic, long-term strategies, seeking to bring substantive, long-lasting change in the ways that animals were regarded, used, and cared for. Board and staff navigated the challenges raised by the advent of the animal rights movement well. Changes in program and policy followed the evolution of scientific and practical insights about animal welfare and strategic determinations that took account of the broad landscape of opportunity in the political, social, and cultural realms.
Heightened competition for the animal protection dollar from the early 1980s onward certainly drove The HSUS to nurture an increasingly public campaign strategy. The organization created staff positions for monitoring the AWA, coordinating the Henry Spira-led Draize test initiatives, and other specialized assignments. In 1983 The HSUS enhanced its legislative alert system through the introduction of the Animal Activist Alert, a quarterly publication designed to reach motivated advocates with timely news concerning legislation for animal welfare. The following year The HSUS launched a campaign department to organize its staff resources around selected issues of interest. As Patricia Forkan, who oversaw many of the relevant sections, observed, program experts were not always practiced or adept at mounting campaign-based initiatives. The organization of a campaigns department with such longtime personnel as Kathy Bauch and Pat Ragan made it possible to bring together the knowledge, experience, and assets of staff members from different sections, for the purposes of mounting targeted campaign initiatives. Over the years, this would result in such actions as Peter Lovenheim's shareholder resolution on foie gras, the Beautiful Choice™ campaign on cosmetics testing, and The Shame of Fur™, all of which showcased The HSUS's growing ability to project itself more forcefully into the public eye, while cultivating a dignified but morally energized posture of disapproval toward some of the era's most conspicuous cruelties.113

Defining Cruelty
One of The HSUS's most historically significant contributions has been its instrumental role in the development of a modern understanding of cruelty. In its early years, The HSUS board and staff were burdened by a dilemma that still endures—the fact that the term cruelty could encompass “a broad range of human behaviors and motivational states,” including sadism, neglect, expedience, lack of knowledge, and “normative” juvenile behavior (like harming insects). Having to advance the cause within the framework of hundred-year-old anticruelty statutes—sometimes quite rudimentary, and often unchanged since the nineteenth century—complicated the work of 1950s-era advocates just as it continues to frustrate the goals of their successors today.114

Nowhere was this more challenging than in the case of broad-scale institutional uses of animals, like those that occurred in agriculture and in research, testing, and education. Quite often, these arenas of use were explicitly exempt from coverage under anticruelty statutes, so that there could be no resort whatsoever to the law in securing any measure of protection for the animals used. It was not a coincidence that The HSUS made its first legislative priorities the passage of a humane slaughter law and an act to regulate the use of animals in research. Even so, as an early copy writer for the HSUS News put it, echoing the adage of Matthew 10:29, “The HSUS concentrates on major national cruelties to animals but finds time almost every day to see the sparrow’s fall.” While The HSUS had no police powers or law enforcement authority of its own, years of experience with crimes involving animals, and the fact that they could be deputized as agents of a local authority if need be, gave regional and headquarters staff substantial expertise and credibility that made them valuable partners for police, prosecutors, magistrates, and judges. From the 1950s, when Fred Myers and other staff members swore out complaints against rodeo cowboys, Tennessee Walking Horse enthusiasts, pound keepers, and medical scientists from Washington, D.C., to Los Angeles, California (see chapters 3 and 7), to the early twenty-first century, when headquarters and regional staff members testified as expert witnesses in judicial trials and legislative proceedings in literally every state, The HSUS was at the heart of evolving conceptions of cruelty in law, psychology, biology, philosophy, history, religion, sociology, and other fields. Between 1954 and 2004, HSUS investigators, field workers, attorneys, and program specialists were involved in hundreds of cases where they helped to explain to judges and juries the nature of the cruelty charge at hand, to clarify the evidence presented in its support, and to provide advice and assistance in postconviction and postacquittal hearings whenever the custody
of animals was at issue. During its second quarter-century, the organization became an internationally important source of data and information concerning the many forms of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of animals that come under the designation of cruelty.115

Like their predecessors as far back as the nineteenth century, post-1954 advocates were forced to acknowledge the numerous contradictions in the social, cultural, and legal definitions of cruelty and to face the inevitable clash of interests that could occur whenever animal protectionists sought to resolve them in favor of animals. For The HSUS, at times, this involved negotiating the meaning of cruelty in some very sensitive contexts, most notably in the cases of ritual slaughter for food and ritual animal sacrifice.116

An important development in this decades-long effort to advance public conceptions of cruelty was the appointment of Randall Lockwood, Ph.D., an assistant professor of psychology at the State University of New York, Stony Brook, as head of a new HSUS division, Higher Education, in 1984. Lockwood had earned his Ph.D. under Michael Fox at Washington University in St. Louis and shared Fox’s deep interest in ethology. At The HSUS, Lockwood pursued his corollary interests in the epidemiology of dog attacks, the interaction of people and animals in child-abusing families, and the association between cruelty to animals and violence against humans. In ensuing years, he became the key player in The HSUS’s interactions with law enforcement and social work agencies. In the late 1990s, this resulted in the formation of The HSUS’s First Strike™ initiative (see chapters 4 and 6), a signature HSUS program that raised awareness of and provided empirical evidence for the links between cruelty to animals and harmful and violent interpersonal relationships. Lockwood and other HSUS staff members firmly established the link—which had been an anecdotal perception since the early modern era, when John Locke, among others, noted its significance—as a demonstrated truth of modern social science. In doing so, they did more than validate the importance of cruelty to animals as a marker of human social deviance—they also led social service, law enforcement, prosecutorial, and judicial personnel to think about and treat cruelty to animals more seriously because of the harm it did to those animals. This directly buttressed efforts to upgrade a variety of cruel behaviors to felony status throughout the United States.117

Building Bridges with Environmentalism

During the 1980s The HSUS very consciously initiated steps to place the question of animals’ well-being and treatment within the broader context of environmental concern. One impetus for The HSUS’s attempts to position itself vis-à-vis the broader environmental movement flowed from its many years of experience on whaling, sealing, and wildlife trade issues. Its concerns in these areas frequently brought staff members into close interaction with representatives of environmental groups.118

At the same time, The HSUS began to focus on the deepening crisis of rainforest destruction, which, among other consequences, was eliminating millions of acres a year of animal habitat. Its campaign
against the international trade in wild birds, and its concern about the use of rainforest acreage for raising cattle for the American fast-food market, also heightened awareness of the general plight of the world’s tropical environments. The HSUS became a supporting member of the Rainforest Action Network and active in its efforts to press for reforms at the World Bank and other institutions whose policies often resulted in rainforest destruction.119

Such concerns led to the creation of the Center for the Respect of Life and the Environment (CRLE) as a division of The HSUS in 1986 to promote regard for nature and an ethic of compassion toward all sentient life. Similar commitments inspired the decision of The HSUS to affiliate with the Interfaith Council for the Protection of Animals and Nature. Through these organizations, The HSUS sought to sustain initiatives aimed at religious institutions and institutions of higher learning, to promote the philosophical and practical foundations of a humane and sustainable society. As it developed CRLE provided secretariat support for a set of global initiatives sponsored jointly with other institutions. It also promoted commitments to sustainability in academic institutions and attempted to lead organized religious institutions to embrace eco-centric, as opposed to anthropocentric, thinking.120

In 1989 The HSUS’s humane education division, NAAHE, took a new name consonant with the broad strategy of realignment in relation to environmentalism. It became the National Association for Humane and Environmental Education (NAHEE), a name that not only acknowledged the interdependence of concern for animals and environment, but also accurately reflected the division’s long-standing integration of environmentalism and humaneness in its program materials.

In 1991, one year after playing a major role in the celebration of the thirtieth annual Earth Day, The HSUS launched another spin-off entity, EarthVoice, as its global environmental arm. “Part of what we wanted to do [by creating our own environmental group],” Hoyt recalled, “was to get the environmental movement to be more animal protection conscious.” Under EarthVoice’s auspices The HSUS tried to promote an ethic of the earth to decision makers and institutions in the United States and elsewhere, to position the organization as a global environmental leader, and to ensure its participation in environmental diplomacy.121

When Paul Irwin assumed the presidency of The HSUS, he pressed to establish the organization as one that would protect land. Having observed the importance of protecting land in Africa, he was convinced that The HSUS should create an affiliate to preserve land for wildlife both domestically and abroad. In 1993 the board of directors approved the establishment of the Wildlife Land Trust (WLT), which allowed donors to extend protection to animals through the creation of “shelters without walls,” another sign of this expansion of scope. To head the division, The HSUS chose John F. Kullberg, Ed.D. (1939–2003), formerly president of the ASPCA. By 2003 the WLT owned or held protective covenants for seventy properties in twenty-one states and four foreign nations, encompassing approximately sixty thousand acres.122

The HSUS also placed its weight behind the Earth Charter, launched in 1994 as a post-Rio Earth Summit initiative to promulgate a set of principles for guiding human relationships with other forms of life on the planet. To the Rio Summit’s efforts to promote global support for a sustainable devel-
opment and environmental conservation program founded on holistic principles, the Earth Charter sought to add, in John Hoyt’s words, “a concern for the value and integrity of individual animals in the larger Earth community. For the first time within such a document, individual animals are accorded appropriate recognition and consideration.”

At the turn of the twenty-first century, The HSUS’s successes in building bridges with the environmental movement lagged behind the organization’s demonstrated accomplishments on behalf of animals. Despite The HSUS’s outreach program, mainstream environmentalism still generally rejected the concern for individual animals and their suffering that gave birth to organized animal protection and remained aloof from the broad range of humane concerns. There was no major environmental organization seriously or consistently committed to the humane treatment of animals. It was not for lack of effort on the part of The HSUS, however.

The result was a staff of unparalleled strength, comprised of professionals from a variety of backgrounds, including animal behavior, wildlife science, public policy, social science, trade economics, veterinary medicine, disaster relief, the legal profession, law enforcement, and the private sector. By 2003 The HSUS constituted a virtual “learned faculty” of animal protection, with more than fifty professional staff, some half of whom had either doctoral or other higher degrees. The organization encompassed over three hundred animal issues within its remit. In the case of larger issues—like the incorporation of poultry under the protective aegis of the Humane Slaughter Act, the reduction of pain and distress in animal research, or the continuing encroachment of hunters and trappers on America’s National Wildlife Refuges—not so readily resolved, The HSUS’s engagement was durable and continuing. Even so, staff members kept their eyes open for the “silver bullet” issues—like the use of cat and dog fur in garment production or the distribution of “crush” videos catering to the fetish for stiletto-heel animal deaths—where quick, well-timed, or assertive action could either cripple or extinguish a specific cruelty.

By the 1990s the HSUS headquarters could no longer accommodate a rapidly expanding staff, and the organization began to explore the prospects for a move to a larger building. A generous bequest from board member Regina Bauer Frankenberg (d. 1991) made it possible to relocate most of the staff to a suitable facility in the outlying Maryland suburbs in 1992. At the same time, The HSUS was able to retain ownership of 2100 L Street, in Washington, D.C., which remained the principal place of business for key executive, legal, legislative, and other staff.

Of the many personnel changes that occurred during the decade, the most important centered on the HSUS presidency itself. In 1992 Treasurer and Chief Financial Officer Paul G. Irwin became president, while John Hoyt retained the title of chief executive officer. At the same time, longtime Vice President for Program and Communications Patricia Forkan be-
came executive vice president. In 1997 Irwin assumed the mantle of CEO when Hoyt retired. That same year Andrew N. Rowan returned to The HSUS as senior vice president for Research, Education, and International Issues after almost fifteen years as a dean at the Tufts University School of Veterinary Medicine. Nineteen ninety-seven was also the year that Tom Waite joined The HSUS as treasurer and chief financial officer. The era’s other important hires included Wayne Pacelle (Fund for Animals, 1994), Dennis White (AHA, 1995), Martha Armstrong (MSPCA, 1996), Neil Trent (WSPA, 1997), Mike Appleby (University of Edinburgh, 2001), and Gretchen Wyler (Ark Trust, 2002).124

Change was occurring at the board level as well. In 1989 K. William Wiseman succeeded Coleman Burke as chairman. In 1995 Wiseman was followed by O.J. Ramsey, Esq. In 2000 David Wiebers, M.D., succeeded Ramsey as chairman. A professor of neurology at the Mayo Institute, Wiebers was a founding member of the Scientific Advisory Board created in 1991 to assist the work of the Animal Research Issues section.125

The major growth of The HSUS took place in the heyday of direct mail solicitation, and as the architect of The HSUS’s membership expansion for over a quarter-century, Irwin had facilitated its steady incorporation of strong talent from both within and outside the organized animal protection movement as well as the creation of the organizational infrastructure necessary to sustain staff members’ work. In 1994, under Irwin’s leadership, The HSUS set its sights on having five million constituents within five years, a goal it would realize ahead of schedule. Between 1994 and 1997, its constituency grew from 2.2 to 5.7 million supporters, and by 2003 The HSUS’s constituent base reached 7.6 million people. Between 1983 and 2003, The HSUS’s annual budget grew from $3.5 million to $70 million, and the number of full-time staff increased from about 60 to 280.126

As direct mail fund raising became more expensive and less effective by the mid-1990s, The HSUS, like other organizations, began to search for other ways to produce income. A catalog featuring popular animal-related items—artwork, calendars, clothing, crafts, scarves, ties, and more—proved to be especially successful, as did licensing agreements that placed The HSUS’s name on a select few items sold in commercial outlets. After The HSUS went on-line in 1996–97, it began to explore the potential of e-commerce as a revenue-building source as well.

After assuming the positions of CEO and president in 1997, Paul Irwin launched an intensive strategic planning process designed to strengthen The HSUS’s performance in all respects. Staff members at all levels participated in the development of mission statements for their respective departments and analyzed their work in light of identifiable assets, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The HSUS relied on focus groups to refine its outreach to members and other supporters. This resulted in the decision to replace the HSUS News, which had carried substantial reports and updates on the organization’s activities, with All Animals, an AOL Time Warner-produced publication that better served the organization’s interest in reaching those who wanted to help but who did not necessarily want to receive detailed and sometimes graphic reports of The HSUS’s cruelty and investigations work. In 1999 The HSUS introduced the Humane Activist to replace its Animal Activist Alert. This and a series of newsletters published by specific divisions helped to deliver timely action notices to supportive individuals.

As might be expected in the case of an organization in the midst of rapid and unprecedented growth, The HSUS had its share of personnel-related challenges. In the mid-1990s, Irwin initiated an employee evaluation program, assigning staff members Kay Benedict and Randall Lockwood to devise a system appropriate to The HSUS. In 1996 the necessity for a modern scheme of performance review; complaint administration; recruitment and retention; employee development; wage, salary, and benefit structures; and employee training and development led to the establishment of a human resources division.
In the 1990s The HSUS began to experiment with new media. Among other things, it moved to create a department for video technology projects, with in-house production capability, to produce and distribute broadcast-quality programming, to assist staff members with their videotape and photographic documentary needs, and to further the organization’s educational mission. After 1997 the department was also involved in enhancement of The HSUS’s website, making background literature and videotaped material available to the public in accessible and instant formats. The HSUS’s collaboration with RealNetworks and the Glaser Progress Foundation resulted in Animal Channel (1998), which permitted The HSUS to reach millions worldwide with broadcast-quality webcast material.

In 2002 The HSUS gained another valuable avenue for promoting its visibility and program concerns within the major media by incorporating the Ark Trust and its annual Genesis Awards ceremony. Founded by Gretchen Wyler and annually televised (first on Discovery Channel, then on Animal Planet), the Ark Trust event recognized outstanding work in electronic and print media that contributes to the advancement of animal protection. As The HSUS’s Hollywood office, it would continue its efforts to promote and recognize animal-sensitive programming in a variety of cultural forms.

As the century came to a close, The HSUS also made plans to strengthen its stature and influence in the field of animals and public policy. In 2001 the organization launched The State of the Animals, a biennial series from The HSUS’s new book imprint, Humane Society Press. Its goals included the development of new perspectives on particular issues, the identification of ways to measure progress in the field, the dissemination of better statistical analysis and assessments of current trends and proposed strategies, and—broadly conceived—the maturation of a public policy wing of the society. The inaugural volume included essays on the history of animal protection, changing public policy perspectives on cruelty, a survey of social attitudes toward animals, reviews of program areas involving the use of animals in agriculture and medical research, the status of captive and urban wildlife populations, the science of wildlife contraception, and the impact of the World Trade Organization on international animal welfare concerns. The essays in The State of the Animals II: 2003 reflected The HSUS’s increasing focus on the appraisal and resolution of problems of international scope.

By 2004, to a significant extent, day-to-day management within The HSUS had passed to its vice presidents, who covered four program areas (companion animals, wildlife, laboratory animals, and farm animals), investigations, research, education and international concerns, communications and government relations, research and educational outreach, field and disaster services, administration, information services and technology, and human resources. In fact, the organization’s growing complexity necessitated the creation of a class of senior vice presidents, reflecting not just longevity of service but also added responsibilities, including supervision of other senior staff.

There was an increased differentiation of responsibility and function at other levels of the organization as well. Program specialists worked on a variety of issues, and it was rarer for them to be involved in discussions...
about policy and approach in areas for which they were not responsible than had been the case as late as the mid-1980s. At the same time, while individual divisions tended to be focused more inwardly, they continued to collaborate on specific issues or campaigns calling for a multidisciplinary approach. In 1996, for example, the Farm Animals, Investigations, and Wildlife sections collaborated on a report on the promotion of an exotic meats industry in the United States. Similar cross-departmental collaboration occurred in campaigns to restrict federal monies for experiments on wild-caught primates (Animal Research Issues and Wildlife), and on the SafeCats™ program, which addressed the long-standing issue of the harm outdoor cats caused to bird life (Companion Animals and Wildlife).127

Ballots over Bullets
An important hallmark of Irwin’s tenure was the revitalization of The HSUS’s Government Affairs department. Once constrained by the limits of financial and staff resources, the department came into its own during the late 1990s, and by 2000 it was leading the animal protection field in its provision of information and services to constituents, grassroots activists, community leaders, and government officials and their staffs. In the early years of the new century, HSUS government affairs staffers were responsible for securing increased funding for enforcement of the Humane Slaughter Act and the AWA and were beginning to succeed in efforts to “de-fund” objectionable programs like animal damage control and the mink farmers’ subsidy.

Another way in which the department distinguished itself during this period was its successful use of referendum and initiative to address the failure of democratic process in state and federal legislatures. After Wayne Pacelle joined the staff in 1994, The HSUS began to reassess the viability of referendum and initiative campaigns in select states. While working at The Fund for Animals, Pacelle had been involved with three initiatives, two of which had succeeded. At The HSUS, however, memory ran long concerning the Ohio antitrapping referendum loss in 1977. Saturation advertising campaigns by the hunting and trapping lobbies in the 1970s and 1980s led to humane movement losses in Oregon and South Dakota in 1980 and in Maine in 1983. More recently, the ProPets coalition, of which The HSUS was a principal supporter, had lost a number of local referenda concerning pound seizure. Resistance to the referendum process within The HSUS was strong.128

That resistance faded, however, as Pacelle guided The HSUS through two successful ballot initiatives in 1994. In the first Arizona voters banned trapping on their state’s substantial public lands. In the second Oregon voters supported a prohibition of black-bear baiting and the use of hounds in hunting black bears and cougars. In the wake of these successes, the referendum and initiative movement hit its stride, and the proliferation of ballot measures leading up to the 1996 election cycle led the Los Angeles Times to declare 1996 the “Year of the Animal.”129

Sympathetic voters certainly delivered, supporting animal-friendly measures in six of eight states, in the face of a $4 million spending frenzy by the National Rifle Association and other hunting and trapping organizations. In supporting the measures, citizens eliminated several kinds of egregious hunting and trapping practices at the state level, introducing an unprecedented element of democratic process to wildlife management, long dominated by parochial interests that rarely denied hunters and trappers their demonstrated wishes and still more rarely honored the wishes of those who objected to repugnant and unsporting practices.130

The majority of the initiatives focused on wildlife issues. Polling attitudes about specific practices in hunting or wildlife management, The HSUS built local and regional coalitions that drafted initiative language, gathered signatures, and pressed for public and political sup-
In most of these campaigns, as distinct from many similar organizations working through the referendum and initiative process, The HSUS spent almost no funds on professional signature- and petition-gathering services.131

In response to the setbacks they suffered, consumptive use interests worked with legislators to place countermeasures before the electorate in some states. The HSUS did not bother to contest the handful of hunter-supported initiatives that simply added “the right to hunt” to state constitutions, regarding these as symbolic and vacuous measures. On the other hand staff members vigorously contested four antidemocratic proposals that attempted to make it virtually impossible to use the initiative process, defeating three of them.132

The HSUS’s successes even inspired a backlash campaign from the U.S. Sportsmen’s Alliance, a consumptive exploitation lobby that originally formed as the Wildlife Legislative Fund of America during the 1977 Ohio antitrapping campaign. In 2003 the Alliance launched efforts to interfere with The HSUS’s commercial partnerships with major corporations. It was a campaign born of frustration, for the Alliance had suffered crushing defeats in the referendum and initiative campaigns in which it sought to intervene, despite spending millions of dollars in the affected states.

The initiative and referendum process brought tangible benefits to the humane movement, benefits that went well beyond the ratification and implementation of reforms and the alleviation of animal suffering in specific contexts. It brought tens of thousands of citizens into the movement’s scope, as petition signers, voters, volunteers, and campaigners. It also helped to shape coverage of organized animal protection at a time when some observers worried that the cause was drawing less, and usually less sympathetic, attention. It was, finally, a vital new outlet for the idealism and energy of those who cared about making a difference for animals.133

Between 1990 and 2002, humane advocates involved in statewide ballot efforts triumphed in twenty-four of thirty-eight campaigns. In campaigns where The HSUS was centrally involved, Pacelle estimated, the record was seventeen wins and five losses. Animal protectionists won five of eight measures on trapping, four of six on hound hunting and baiting, three of three on cockfighting, and two of two on airborne hunting. They had also won measures to prohibit gestation crates, canned hunts, and horse slaughter.134

One of the most encouraging aspects of the referendum and initiative campaigns was their reliance on direct democracy—the clear expression and fulfillment of the public’s desire to protect animals from cruelty. While the post-World War II humane movement frequently benefited from strong and fair-minded cooperation of politicians of every political persuasion, there were also many instances of heavy-handed and disingenuous sabotage of legislative, judicial, and administrative decrees favorable to animals. In the U.S. Congress and the state legislatures, such subterfuge typically involved the obdurate members of wildlife and agriculture committees—legislators deeply vested in or committed to the commercial, political, or ideological interests that encompass the broad universe of animal exploitation. In 2002 such interests demonstrated both their potency and their readiness to thwart public opinion and the equitable procedures of congressional politics by “skinning” the federal farm bill, which contained an unprecedented number of amendments that members of both the House and Senate had approved. In defiance of stipulations that conferees work only to reconcile the differences between House and Senate versions of the bill, members of the House “agrigarchy”—a handful of farm-state legislators working behind closed doors—scuttled House-approved amendments that would have closed serious loopholes in federal laws restricting animal fighting, requiring the euthanasia of downed animals at stockyards, and compelling proper enforcement of the decades-old Humane Slaughter Act. They also gutted a Senate-approved amendment that would have brought an end to the trade in ursine gall bladders and parts, at the time taking a terrible toll on North America’s bear population. The House conferees also forced the abandonment of the Senate-backed Puppy Protection Act,
which called upon commercial breeders to permit their dogs greater socialization and to limit breeding practices according to animals’ age or estrus cycle.\textsuperscript{135}

The House conferees did not stop there, either, moving to dilute and undermine existing statutory and administrative regulations that ensured animal welfare. Acquiescing to his proposal to amend the AWA, they helped their retiring Senate colleague Jesse Helms (R-NC) make his final public legacy the permanent denial of the AWA’s minimal-care protections to birds, rats, and mice. In doing so, they ignored entreaties from former Senator Bob Dole (R-KS) and other legislators who had long been constructively engaged with the issue as well as from major corporations with strong commitments to animal welfare science in their own corporate testing programs. It was an abrupt and bitter end to more than thirty years of negotiation, legislation, administrative and judicial rulings, and public debate about the desirability of extending such protection to all of the species used in research, testing, and education.

Through hard work and intense political engagement with legislators from both major parties, The HSUS had hoped to make the 2002 farm bill the vehicle of unprecedented good for animals. Instead, in the hands of a few unrestrained legislators determined to impose their will not only upon their colleagues but also upon the American public, it became emblematic of the breakdown in democratic process that left the United States lagging behind other developed nations in efforts to address some of the worst examples of indifference to the pain and suffering of animals.\textsuperscript{136}

The Globalization of Humane Work

The HSUS began participating in international campaigns for animals in the 1950s. From an early stage, the organization operated from the assumption that many issues—and their solutions—transcended national boundaries. In their turn, Fred Myers, John Hoyt, and Paul Irwin all served in official capacities within WSPA, supporting campaigns that sought to project the collective influence of member societies into situations where animals suffered or died as a result of human cruelty or neglect. Especially after 1980 staff members were far more active participants in meetings of international bodies such as the International Whaling Commission (IWC) and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

This said, the determination to make The HSUS an internationally significant organization and to project its influence globally coalesced in the 1990s and gained ever-increasing importance within the organization’s program areas. Issues once thought of as wholly or mostly domestic rapidly acquired international dimensions and necessitated the revision of conventional lobbying and political techniques to meet the emerging challenge. In a few instances, The HSUS had to recapitulate—on a worldwide basis—public awareness and political campaigns undertaken years earlier in the United States.\textsuperscript{137}

In 1991 the organization enhanced its capacity to address such concerns and to actively promote humane work in other nations by establishing its own international arm, Humane Society International (HSI), to provide direct relief to those trying to assist animals in other nations.\textsuperscript{138} The idea was not to replace WSPA, but to go places where WSPA was not going—to places where there was great need, as in Russia, Romania, and Mexico. “We wanted to be an ally for WSPA, not a competitor,” John Hoyt recalled.\textsuperscript{139}

By 1998 HSI had developed a full program agenda that concentrated on extending The HSUS’s existing assets—resources, personnel, and expertise—toward the resolution of iden-
tifiable needs in other nations. At the same time, The HSUS continued its support for WSPA, with Paul Irwin and Andrew Rowan serving on the WSPA board and HSUS/HSI staff supporting WSPA colleagues in a variety of situations.

In 2001, following several years of exploring such a partnership, The HSUS came together with Professor David W. Macdonald of Lady Margaret Hall (LMH) and the Wildlife Conservation Research Unit at Oxford University to establish a center at LMH focusing on wildlife welfare and the political, economic, and cultural barriers that prevented concern for wild animals’ well-being from becoming a subject of wider discussion in most of the world. The central aim of the initiative was the development of ideas and arguments that would allow organizations like The HSUS to press constructive animal welfare proposals (incorporating a recognition of human needs) in the many countries where people also struggle for survival and minimal personal security and welfare standards. The center, intended as a multidisciplinary venture, was situated within a college—LMH—rather than as an academic department at the university. While The HSUS provided seed funding for the project, on the eve of its golden anniversary, The HSUS was still trying to develop a long-term funding base and a roster of partners to support a more substantial budget for the center.140

Even as The HSUS committed itself to an expanded role in the international arena, a revolution in global political and commercial affairs was underway. Animal protection work that once had had a national focus now became deeply embedded within international agreements, the complex workings of multinational corporations, and free-trade perspectives. Opportunistic nations now sought to evade or eviscerate legal restrictions against the wild-bird trade, the traffic in ivory, the capture of dolphins in purse-seine nets used in tuna fishing, and the leghold trap. Decades of humane progress were in jeopardy.141

Together with such threats, the necessity of monitoring developments concerning the array of treaties, including the IWC, CITES, the Law of the Sea (LOS), the International Standards Organization (ISO), and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), led The HSUS to create a U.N. and Treaties department. The department assumed responsibility for the analysis and observation of international legislation, regulations, and agreements and coordinated appropriate organizational action when necessary. The HSUS gained consultative status at the United Nations, permitting it to develop its ties further with nongovernmental organizations in other nations. In the era of the Global Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT) and the World Trade Organization (WTO), it was necessary for The HSUS to cultivate a global strategic consciousness.142

In 2003 the HSUS board of directors approved the first strategic plan for facilitating expansion of The HSUS’s international outreach and advocacy. In keeping with The HSUS’s steadily expanding commitment to international work, the plan adopted a goal of $10 million for allocation to international programs. The HSUS was one of the few organizations whose work encompassed concern for both animals and the natural environment, and its senior leadership viewed its entry into international campaigns as essential to the safeguarding of animals’ well-being within decision-making bodies worldwide. As Paul Irwin, perhaps the strongest supporter of such positioning, observed, “Many times we are the sole voice in defense of animals, even when environmental groups are lobbying in the same forum. We are not deterred when we must stand alone, however. Any international agreement is a bad one if it perpetuates animal exploitation and cruelty.”143
The HSUS at Fifty

In 2002 Irwin charged new Senior Vice President and Chief of Staff Andrew Rowan with responsibility for coordinating The HSUS’s second strategic plan. The objectives Irwin identified were the need for increased visibility, the expansion of the HSUS constituency, the desirability of more “hands-on” relief work, a heightened emphasis on companion animal issues, the promotion of greater program integration, and the extension of educational and public policy outreach. Staff participation included the furnishing of data concerning the number of estimated contacts with the public through personal interaction, press coverage, HSUS publications (including *All Animals*, *Animal Sheltering*, *HumaneLines*, *Kind News*, and *Wild Neighbors News*), websites, and direct mail. This process revealed a rapidly diversifying range of HSUS outreach efforts.

In some ways the plan laid the groundwork for important transformations in management structure and style as well as for changes in The HSUS’s program priorities. However, while it included important new strategic and programmatic innovations, the plan sought to build upon the organizational strengths that hundreds of HSUS staff and board members had helped to cultivate during five decades of work for animals: The HSUS’s credibility as a source of information, expertise, and action; its ability to reconceptualize and resolve the perceived conflict between human and animal interests in a variety of situations; its capacity to acquire, harness, and disseminate knowledge and advice as a stakeholder in public policy debates concerning animals; and its ability to mobilize staff members, partners, and constituents for concerted action to reduce animal suffering in the world.

A core element of the strategic plan involved the designation of signature programs that would transcend departmental boundaries and become identifiers of The HSUS’s capacities and major themes. The programs chosen by the staff to represent the organization were: Pets for Life®; Wild Neighbors™: Living with Wildlife; Animals in Crisis; and Humane Leadership: Taking Action, Shaping Change. These programs encompass, respectively, protection of and regard for pets, the humane management of human-wildlife interactions, a focus on rescuing animals from cruelty and disasters, and attention to The HSUS’s role in influencing and promoting policy initiatives and humane education programs.

As The HSUS neared its fiftieth anniversary in 2004, it could count two staff members from the 1960s still in its ranks—Frantz Dantzler (1962) and Dina McDaniel (1968). Personnel from the 1970s and early 1980s—Nina Austen berg, Kay Benedict, John Dommers, Patricia Forkan, Janet Frake, John Grandy, and Fred Myers’s daughter Tamara Myers Field and Patricia Forkan in spring 2003, at the HSUS operations center in Maryland.
Ben Hayes, Paul Irwin, Roger Kindler, Murdaugh Madden, Andrew Rowan, Eric Sakach, Deborah Salem, and Ellen Truong—were still with The HSUS as well. While The HSUS was in many ways a different organization from the one that had first employed them, the crucial elements of its founding vision were still in place. It was fully engaged with significant national cruelties, seeking to extend its influence throughout the United States and beyond, and promoting the highest standards of animal care in every conceivable context. The founders’ early blend of selfless and pragmatic idealism, nurtured by many others in successive decades, was still the guiding ethos of The HSUS.

Fifty years after its modest beginnings, The HSUS was also the most successful organized expression of humane values in North America, providing virtually unmatched service and expertise and helping to make innovative approaches and technologies available to hundreds of animal care and control organizations throughout the nation and the world. Its encouragement of a moral and spiritual ethic for industrial and postindustrial society; its contributions to the professionalization of concern for animals through the recruitment of qualified, dedicated, and resourceful staff; its steadily expanding participation in relevant policy networks; its encouragement of a sophisticated and modern conception of “cruelty”; its embrace of a responsible, fact-based pursuit of advances in animal protection; and its reliance on an applied science of animal welfare to the issues—all of these characteristics made it an outstanding example of voluntary association in the United States. That it was dedicated to the extension of human moral concern beyond the limits of the species barrier made its success all the more striking.