President's Perspective

A Tribute to Alice Morgan Wright, 1882-1975

By John A. Hoyt

On April 8, 1975, Alice Morgan Wright, an extraordinary woman, a great humanitarian, and a benefactor of HSUS programs, died. Her life was international in scope, and the range of her activities and interests encompassed both human and animal concerns. She was an aggressive and articulate advocate of women's rights and a crusader for human population control in an era when few persons were aware of the impending consequences of this menace.

Yet it was her dedication to animal welfare and her vision of a truly humane civilization that marks her greatness as a person of compassion. Her legacy to life and her challenge to those who strive for the rights of animals in a world that continues to misuse and abuse them was profoundly expressed in the following personal objectives she wrote in January, 1963. They are as relevant today as they were then.

To oppose cruelty in all its forms.
To strive for an end to bullfighting, rodeo and all cruel sports wherever performed and wherever represented as art or as entertainment.
To strive to abolish cruel trapping. In my (Miss Wright's) estimation there could be no such thing as a "humane trap." The words are a contradiction in terms. Only a box-trap should be tolerated.
To discourage hunting, especially as a sport.
To oppose all poisoning of wildlife.
To protect and conserve wildlife for its own sake and not as a resource for man's exploitation.
To aid or initiate programs for slaughter reform.
To teach humane handling and care of work animals and food animals.
To cooperate in efforts to find more humane methods of catching and killing the fauna of the sea, especially whales and seals.
To advance programs for the humane sterilization of cats and dogs in order to reduce their overpopulation.
To provide for the rescue, housing, and feeding of lost, stray, or abandoned animals, until suitable homes are found.
To urge that when it is necessary to put any tame animal to death, unless some better method of euthanasia is available, it be so arranged that the animal be held in the arms of some human friend while it is being given a painless preliminary anaesthetic, to be stroked and comforted with reassuring words until it loses consciousness, after which the lethal agent should be quickly administered.
To recognize in animals their capacity for friendship and their need of friends. To befriend all earth's creatures, of the land, the sea, and the air; to defend them against ravages by mankind, and to inspire in human beings compassion for all.

HSUS is proud and honored to have known and worked with this outstanding woman and to have benefited profoundly from the thoughts and inspiration she so generously shared.