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Criminal Justice Program Helps Hawaiian Prosecutors



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Captive Tiger Deprived of Rights by Louisiana Legislature



THE ANIMALS'

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ADVOCATE



Our Battle for Transparency

Fighting to keep public databases open for public defense of animals: Animal Legal Defense Fund vs. USDA

BY ELIZABETH HOLTZ | Contract Attorney

As a country of animal lovers, we want their abusers to be punished. But it just became more difficult to hold owners of

places like roadside zoos and puppy mills responsible for their actions. The federal Animal Welfare Act (AWA) sets standards for the care of animals in the abovementioned facilities along with animal transporters, circuses, and research labs. The standards are too low but they at least create minimal requirements such as providing clean drinking water and shelter for animals.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is the federal agency charged with enforcing the AWA. Despite its mandate, the USDA has not enforced the AWA robustly. There are too few inspectors checking facilities and punishments are rare. Even

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“Animal cruelty cases can be complex or simple, and all cases need to be handled with the same level of urgency and attention to detail as other non-animal related criminal cases.”

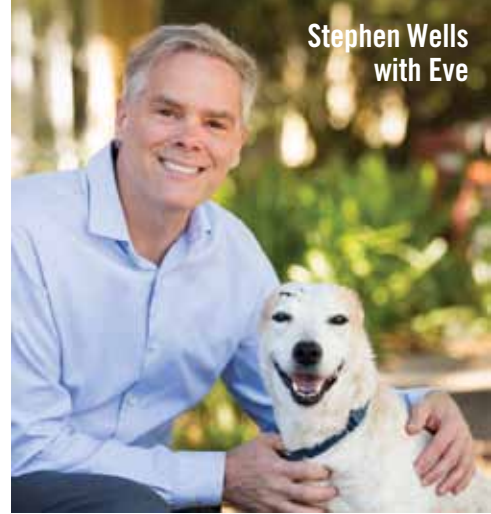
—Harold Han, Field Services Manager,
Hawaiian Humane Society

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Time Ticks by for Tony

Stephen Wells
with Eve



Stephen Wells
Executive Director

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The Animal Legal Defense Fund has been taking animal abusers to court for more than 35 years. In that time, our expert legal team has chalked up a remarkable record of victories for animals. But the legal system can be slow, and winning a case is never a certainty. And when animals’ lives are at stake, the sluggish pace of justice can be excruciating.

Such is the case with our multi-year battle to free Tony, a tiger kept in a concrete and iron bar cage at a truck stop in rural Louisiana. Tony’s cramped cage is surrounded by the near-constant rumble of idling semi-trucks and the stench of diesel. Animal advocates locally and across the country have fought for Tony’s release for more than a decade, complaining to authorities, writing letters and urging Tony’s jailer, Michael Sandlin, to do right by Tony and give him up to a sanctuary where he will have room to roam in a natural environment.

The Animal Legal Defense Fund filed its first case to free Tony in 2011. We won that first case, and animal advocates rejoiced. But Sandlin wasn’t going to give Tony his freedom so easily. He took advantage of the legal system, using litigation and even the state legislature to engage in a series of delay tactics that have kept Tony suffering at the Tiger Truck Stop. You will read more about the epic legal battle in this edition of our newsletter.

We won’t give up on Tony and will fight as long as it takes. But our legal battle for Tony and countless other animals in captivity would not be possible without your support. As a member of the Animal Legal Defense Fund, you are with us in every courtroom, standing by our side and making it possible for us to continue to win justice for animals, like Tony. Thank you.

A handwritten signature of Stephen Wells in black ink.

Stephen Wells
Executive Director

WE HAVE THE EXPERTS!

It takes a village to hold animal abusers accountable

BY LAURA RAMOS | *Writer*

Have you ever heard a terrible story of animal abuse and wondered why no one was charged with a crime, or why their punishment was so lax? Your support of the Animal Legal Defense Fund helps us change those stories.

At the same time that we work to strengthen laws and file high-impact litigation, our Criminal Justice Program works to provide free legal assistance to prosecutors and law enforcement agencies so that more criminal anti-cruelty laws are enforced, and more animals are protected.

We are the only national organization focused on helping animals through the legal system, and we are the premier experts bringing this critical training to communities across the country.

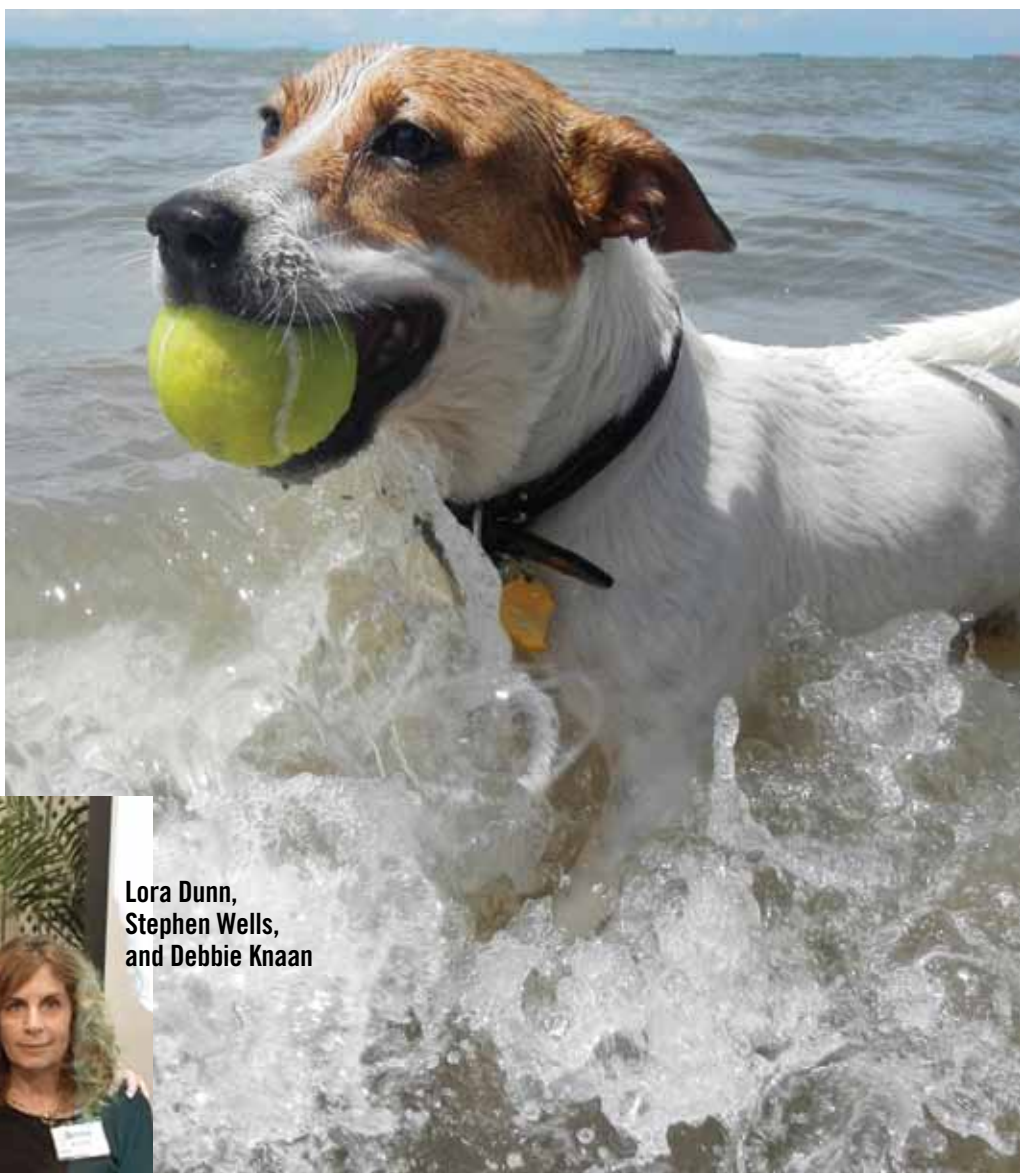
We collaborated with the fantastic Hawaiian Humane Society to sponsor a training session in Hawaii where we brought together prosecutors and law enforcement from around the Hawaiian islands, including the Honolulu Prosecuting Attorney's office.

The animal cruelty training, "From Crime Scene to Courtroom," featured Lora Dunn, the director of the Animal Legal Defense Fund's Criminal Justice Program, and Debbie Knaan, former Deputy District Attorney for the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office.

During this intensive session, we instructed attendees about practical strategies for responding to criminal cruelty complaints, gathering evidence, taking cases to trial, and ensuring meaningful sentences for animal abusers.

"The training facilitated networking amongst all involved throughout the state and the topics covered will promote effective collaboration when investigating animal cruelty cases."

Harold Han,
Field Services Manager,
Hawaiian Humane Society



Lora Dunn,
Stephen Wells,
and Debbie Knaan



Fighting for Tony



Captive tiger deprived of rights by Louisiana Legislature

BY ELIZABETH HOLTZ | Contract Attorney

Our campaign to free Tony started more than six years ago. But we will stand by his side no matter how long it takes to secure his release. Recently the Animal Legal Defense Fund initiated two new actions to help Tony. First, we filed an amended petition to intervene in an ongoing lawsuit against the state of Louisiana with the ultimate goal of having Tony transferred to a reputable sanctuary.

In 2006, Louisiana banned the private possession of big cats like Tony. But

Michael Sandlin, the owner of Gross Tete's Tiger Truck Stop, convinced the state legislature to exempt him from the ban in 2014 – years after we had already won our case to have Sandlin's permit revoked.

We're arguing that this exemption violates the state constitution because it was created solely to benefit a single person, Michael Sandlin. The law should apply to everyone equally, and it certainly shouldn't be twisted so that a private citizen can keep an exotic animal in abysmal conditions for personal gain.

In April, we sent a letter to the U.S.

Spreading the Word

Animal Legal Defense Fund Speakers



Student Animal Legal Defense Fund (SALDF) chapters frequently host speakers and events to educate the law student community about emerging issues in animal law. The Animal Legal Defense Fund supports these efforts through grants, available at aldf.org/grants. This past spring, the Golden Gate University SALDF chapter hosted the California Animal Law Symposium on Marine Life. The



Department of Agriculture (USDA), urging the agency to inspect Tony after receiving reports of his potentially declining health. Tony may need immediate veterinary treatment, and it's the USDA's responsibility to enforce the Animal Welfare Act. Tony lives in a noisy gas station, breathing in diesel fumes daily, held in a cage that does not meet his psychological and physical needs. As Tony gets older, the stress gets even harder to bear.

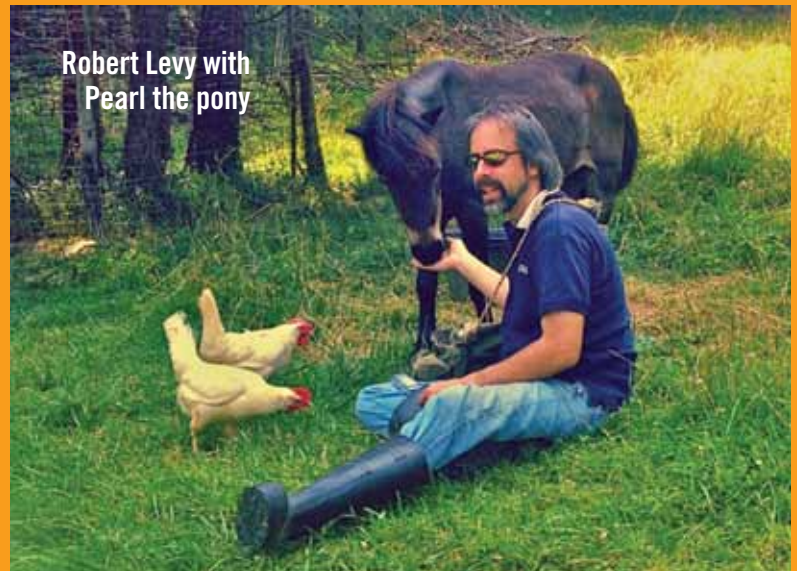
The Animal Legal Defense Fund will continue to monitor Tony's condition and fight for Tony's release to a reputable animal sanctuary. Read more at aldf.org/Tony.

LEAVING A LEGACY

Let your compassion for animals be your everlasting gift

Robert Walter Levy gifted the Animal Legal Defense Fund over \$35,000 upon his passing—we are honored to be trusted with his legacy.

To learn more about planned giving opportunities, email estates@aldf.org.



Law Students Coast to Coast

symposium included a panel on captive orcas featuring Animal Legal Defense Fund Staff Attorney Chris Berry and Student Programs Attorney Kelly Levenda.

On the other side of the country, the Vermont Law School SALDF chapter held a symposium on captive wildlife with speakers Rob Laidlaw from Zoocheck Canada, Mary Lee Jensvold from Fauna Foundation, and Kate Dylewsky from

Born Free USA. Afterward, the speakers hosted a panel discussion on transparency or lack thereof in the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Executive Director Stephen Wells recently spoke at SALDF sponsored events at Stetson University College of Law, Florida A&M University College of Law, and Florida International University – covering captive wild animal issues and how law students and attorneys can use their skills to help animals inside and outside of the courtroom.





USDA TRANSPARENCY | FROM PAGE 1

if a punishment is levied, it usually amounts to a slap on the wrist. Organizations like the Animal Legal Defense Fund have had to intervene to hold poorly-run facilities accountable in the absence of rigorous enforcement. To accomplish this, we relied on a huge database of animal welfare records, including tens of thousands of inspection reports and enforcement records of facilities across the country. The database, formerly maintained on the USDA website, was abruptly taken

down in February, plunging animal abuse back into the dark.

The removal of the database was also a big step backward in terms of government transparency. Government transparency is essential to holding government agencies accountable for their actions, exposing corruption, and ensuring tax dollars are spent efficiently. Open government is a hallmark of democratic countries like the United States, and there's no justification to hiding these kinds of records.

We used the database to find crucial information about owners and facilities regulated under the AWA and to identify



EXPOSING ANIMAL CRUELTY IS NOT A CRIME

Transparency is important at all levels of government which is why the Animal Legal Defense Fund continues to challenge state Ag-Gag laws. In 2015, a federal district court struck down Idaho's Ag-Gag law, holding that the law violates the free speech rights of groups like the Animal Legal Defense Fund. Idaho appealed and the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit is scheduled to hear oral arguments. In October 2016, the Animal Legal Defense Fund argued for summary judgement in our lawsuit challenging Utah's Ag-Gag law—we are awaiting a decision by the judge. Our lawsuit challenging North Carolina's Ag-Gag law was dismissed on procedural grounds, but we will be appealing to the Fourth Circuit. Finally, Arkansas recently passed a new Ag-Gag law despite serious opposition. We are determined to challenge the law in court. Read more at aldf.org/Ag-Gag.

the worst violators. Relying on this information, we developed campaigns and strategies to protect animals being held in horrific conditions.

In response to the information blackout, the Animal Legal Defense Fund is leading a coalition of animal protection organizations in a lawsuit to compel the USDA to restore the documents. The coalition argues that the removal of the database violated the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and constitutes an arbitrary and capricious action under the Administrative Procedure Act (APA). Under FOIA, agencies must proactively publish certain types of records, including frequently requested records. The USDA itself has recognized that enforcement action records, which were included in the removed records, are frequently requested and a vital resource for animal advocates. Enforcement

actions are taken against facilities not in compliance with the AWA and are usually issued only after the facility receives multiple verbal and written warnings to correct the violation. Oftentimes, enforcement actions stem from violations that create a direct risk to an animal's well-being or human public health and safety.

The animals cannot wait while a lawsuit works through the court system at the usual pace. Accordingly, in March, we moved for a preliminary injunction that would require the USDA to re-post the database immediately. While litigation is pending, coalition members will be irreparably harmed unless access is quickly restored. It will hinder our ability to protect animals and carry out our mission. Regardless of the outcome, we will pursue every avenue available until the database is back online. Read more at aldf.org/USDA.

The database was abruptly taken down in February, plunging abuse back into the dark.



DON'T LEAVE DOGS IN HOT CARS

If you see a dog locked in a hot car, call 911. To order a “Don’t Leave Dogs in Hot Cars” sunshade and learn more about your state’s laws and how you can help protect dogs this summer, go to aldf.org/hotcars.



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Rest in Peace, Candy

We are heartbroken to report that Candy, the chimp held alone at an amusement park, passed away April 21, 2017.

In 2015, we filed a lawsuit against the amusement park under the Endangered Species Act for inhumanely keeping Candy in isolation and neglecting her well-being. Unfortunately, she passed away before the lawsuit could save her.

In her honor, we will continue to fight for other animals in captivity, including Tony, the 16-year-old tiger held at a gas station less than an hour away from where Candy was held.

THE ANIMALS' ADVOCATE A NEWSLETTER FOR THE SUPPORTERS OF THE ANIMAL LEGAL DEFENSE FUND



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Student Animal Law
Attorneys Speak
Coast to Coast



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Animal Legal Defense
Fund Continues Fight
Against Ag-Gag Laws