



Congressional Record

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In Honor of Patricia "Pat" Derby,

March 13, 2013

House of Representatives

The Honorable Sam Farr

of California

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Patricia "Pat" Derby, a world-renowned advocate, champion of animal rights, and a dear friend.

Patricia Bysse Shelly was born June 7, 1942, in East Sussex, England, the second of two children born to Charles Boswell Shelley, a Cambridge University professor, and Mary, a homemaker. Pat's father died when she was 12, and at the age of 15 she immigrated by herself to New York City to pursue her dream of theatre and ballet. She enrolled at New York's Columbia University but later dropped out to pursue her Hollywood dreams in California.

While living in San Francisco, she met future husband and animal trainer Ted Derby and began working with him as a team, training animals for television and movies. Throughout the 1960's and 70's, Pat trained many exotic animals for Hollywood TV shows like "Flipper," "Lassie," and "Gunsmoke."

However, after many years of witnessing widespread abuse of exotic and performing animals, Pat quit the business and quickly became one of the most vocal critics of animal abuse in Hollywood.

In 1975, Pat wrote her best-selling book, "The Lady and Her Tiger," which documented her time working with animals in the entertainment industry and brought to light the negative aspects of the industry's practices, which invariably made her an enemy of many Hollywood elite.

In 1984, Mrs. Derby and her lifetime associate, Ed Stewart, founded the Performing Animal Welfare Society (PAWS). Her hope was that this organization would serve to advocate for, and protect, the animals we see on a daily basis in TV shows and movies.

Pat's first, and most important, mission was always to educate others regarding animal rights and how organizations should approach caring for captive wild animals.

Pat also worked closely with government agencies, and kept her USDA and California Fish and Game permits up-to-date as there were few facilities to aid animals when she first started. These permits were initially used to start a sanctuary that has since grown from 30 acres to 2,300 acres in Galt, California which has housed everything from lions and wolves to a sick baby Elephant. Each of which lived out the entirety of its life in full health on Pat's sanctuary.

Pat's long time associate Ed Stewart wrote that when some people die they are unduly given "hero" status, and yet that is not Pat. She was a true hero in the animals rights world whose sole crusade was aimed at helping animals that could not protect or advocate for themselves. Pat realized that even wild animals need someone to look out for them, and she dedicated her life to that belief.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Patricia "Pat" Derby for her lifetime commitment to protecting the welfare of performing animals.