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# Owners Create Trust To Take Care Of Pets

## *Pet Owners Want Peace After Death*

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**CLEVELAND --** If something happened to you, what would happen to your pet?

When Leona Hemsley died, she left her dog \$12 million. A court stepped in and decided to reduce the trust fund to \$2 million -- still enough money to provide care for the rest of the dog's life.

Aside from the emotional response, the case has raised awareness of pet trusts and NewsChannel5 discovered they aren't just for the rich and famous.

Many pet owners go all-out for their pets, from massages to baking treats, and to many people, their four-legged friends are well worth it.

"I rescued Teddy three years ago. Actually, I was asked to foster before they could find someone, but I loved him so much and he was such a joy, we decided to keep him, and he has been the best friend anyone could ask for," said pet owner Karen Verespe.

She and a handful of other pet owners went to Forever Friends Pet Care Center in Grafton to learn about how to create a pet trust.

Paula Rausch said it's a real concern to her.

"I had a friend who was single and had no family and he was ill, and his main concern was what would happen to his cats. My husband and I agreed to take them in. So we took the cats for him, but I knew that was the main thing on his mind," said Rausch.

Marc Stolarsky, a Lyndhurst lawyer, said creating a pet trust can do three things. It clearly establishes how you want your money to be spent on your pet's continuing care. He also said creating a trust versus a will keep it out of probate court, which can become costly. It's also flexible.

"You could put in a trust almost anything -- what food to give an animal, what veterinarian to use, who should be the caregiver, what kind of exercise they should get if they should get, a squeaky toy or something like that every month,"

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said Stolarsky.

Pet trusts just became part of Ohio law last year. Before that, states permitted something called honorary trusts.

The problem was the person named as caregiver was not legally obligated to follow the desires of the pet's owner.

"People were sometimes taking the money, using it for themselves, then maybe leaving the animal homeless or euthanizing the animal," said Stolarsky.

Pet owners said pet trusts are something worth considering.

"We don't have any children or anything. Most of our family is older, so if something happened to our pets, there aren't so many people who would be willing to take them in," said Rausch.

Verespe agrees.

"I think setting something up for them brings peace to the family and would bring peace to the animal. I mean, they are precious gifts that we have and we want to make sure if something happens, he's taken care of, and to leave the earth knowing that is a wonderful feeling," she said.

#### For More Information:

- [Estate Planning For Pets](#)
- [Create Free Pet Trust](#)
- Contact Attorney Marc Stolarsky at 440-665-2342 or [MARC@mislaw.Net](mailto:MARC@mislaw.Net)

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