



## Bernice Franklin

March 9, 2010 - March 6, 2025

Written by Bernice's proud mom, Courtney Franklin:

Bernice was born on Tuesday, March 9, 2010 to her biological mother, Angel. Bernice never knew a father. Angel gave birth to Bernice outside in an igloo shaped doghouse on Chicago St. in Logansport, Indiana, which is the street I lived on from ages 1-9. I adopted Bernice when she was exactly six weeks old and moved her to the northside of Indy where she spent most of her life. For the first year and a half we were together, we lived in an apartment, and when she was about 1.5, we moved into our first house. We lived in that house for 9.5 years. As Bernice entered her retirement years, we moved to South Carolina for warmer weather, but we missed our family, friends, and community so much that we returned to Fishers last May.

Bernice loved her Mammy and Pappy (grandma and grandpa), Uncle Jeremy, Aunt Savannah and Uncle Andrew, cousin Luca, and so many extended family and friends. Her Pappy always called her his “girlfriend.” Bernice never spent a single night in a kennel because her Mammy and Pappy took care of her when I traveled.

When I did travel, I spent most of every trip thinking about Bernice. I would often call my mom five minutes into a trip to ask if Bernice was okay. My mom thought it was ridiculous but entertained me by playing along and letting me

know she was fine or sometimes by saying something like “no, she already ran away.”

I usually traveled without Bernice, but the two of us vacationed together several times in Red River Gorge as well as Chicago, Cleveland, Connecticut, Hilton Head, and St. Petersburg, Florida. She was a great road trip buddy and travel companion, and we had so many great adventures together.

When we were at home, Bernice and I spent countless evenings at Beverly’s dog park with many friends, including her best friend and boyfriend, Amos Wirthlin, who preceded her in death. On evenings when we did not visit the dog park, Bernice and I walked for 1-2 hours together. She was usually looking for chicken wings, and I was just happy to be with my girl.

In her prime, Bernice and I hiked frequently. She would often hike off leash for hours. Sometimes I would hide from her and wait for her to realize she may be alone and then I’d reappear and watch the relief on her face as she sprinted toward me.

She accompanied me nearly everywhere I went, whether to the grocery store, on errands, or to pick up take out. We also often ate together on restaurant patios. Once, she accompanied me on a trip to the butcher shop and then to the grocery store, and while I was inside the grocery store, she ate an entire pound of raw ground beef that I had purchased at the butcher shop and left in the car. Bernice loved food as much as her mom. She could and did eat everything without getting sick --- sushi, chili, Indian...

Bernice was absolutely the alpha in our household. She told me when it was time to eat, when it was time to go to bed, and when it was time to wake up. I usually did whatever my baby wanted, but occasionally we got into actual arguments where we would talk back and forth to each other until one of us

apologized and kissed the other one's face.

Many years ago, I began reading the Bible each morning, and since I do not focus well when reading, I began reading the Bible aloud. It became very apparent over the course of time that Bernice was comforted by my reading the Bible. As I began reading each morning, she would curl up next to me and settle in to listen. A few years ago, Bernice's Aunt Savannah, cousin Luca, and I took her to an animal blessing church service where we prayed over her along with other pets and exotic animals. I pray that God has placed her in the eternal home He is preparing for me and that I will see her again one day.

In 2021, Bernice was diagnosed with two different types of cancer while we were on an extended vacation in St. Petersburg. She had surgery during our vacation to remove the tumors, and we hoped she would live out the rest of her days without any other issues. In January of this year, her doctor discovered what he thought was a tooth root abscess and scheduled her for surgery. After putting her under anesthesia, he discovered that it was not an abscess, but she had cancer in her mouth, face, and throat. I had been observing the symptoms of these tumors for months but didn't know the cause until last week. I couldn't bear to watch my baby girl become sicker and sicker, and so, I made the excruciating decision to say goodbye to her.

In early 2010, I wanted to "get a dog." I thought it would be fun to have an animal around, but I was utterly naïve about the deep love and incredible bond I would have with my best friend over 15 years. She was my immediate family, one of my greatest blessings in life, and among my highest priorities. I hope in 15 years from now I will still remember every detail of her furry little body, the way she cleaned my paws and face, her bark, her howl in the middle of the night while dreaming, her moodiness and growls, our arguments, our wrestling matches, our cuddles... Bernice brought an unbelievable amount of

joy to my life, and I will spend the rest of my life missing her.

Thank you, Jesus, for giving me Bernice to love and care for, and thank you, Bernice, for being my best friend during the best years of my life.