



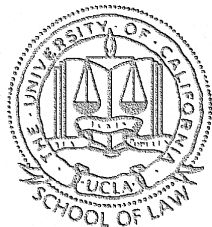
To end the suffering of animals in the United States through the political process, including the support of candidates and elected officials who promote animal welfare, rights and protection.

-- Mission of the Animal Legislative Action Network

Animal Champions



Taimie Bryant



Taimie Bryant: Harvard-trained lawyer, and Ph.D. in anthropology, was a specialist in Japanese Law when she joined UCLA's Law School faculty in 1987. Sitting in her sunny office in Westwood, Bryant recalled a moment that transformed her.

"I went to Japan for a year and there was so much accepted animal cruelty there – dogs on short chains, animals bludgeoned in shelters, fish skewered alive," she says. "One day, I turned a corner, and I saw a monkey in a bird cage. He was for sale. At that moment, I knew that I would never go back to Japan. There is a lot of cruelty in my own country, but as an outsider in Japan, I had no chance at all of addressing the cruelty that I witnessed there."

Quickly tenured, Bryant took a path few followed at that time — teaching her first course in Animal Law in 1993. While a handful of law schools offered the specialty then, today more than 30 do. As such, she became a pioneer in training a new generation of lawyer activists whose skills will be applied to elevate the legal and social status of animals.

"So many people think that animal advocates are driven only by emotion," Bryant says. "Similar criticisms were made of feminists,

environmentalists, and civil rights advocates. I wanted to apply scholarship from those fields to demonstrate the legitimacy of our concerns, and to educate people to listen more receptively to us."

One of Bryant's groundbreaking works describes the significance of the trauma inflicted on humans who observe the massive suffering of animals, in slaughterhouses, factory farms, "shelters" and other institutional settings, and the need for activists to join forces with other traumatized interest groups. And while Bryant honed the field through her erudition, animal law has become increasingly acceptable at schools throughout the country, including Yale Law School, which recently sponsored a two-day conference on the topic.

"The biggest problem animals face is that society views their interests as unimportant," says Joyce Tischler, Executive Director of the Animal Legal Defense Fund. "Animal law won't survive if it's viewed as an outside advocacy movement trying to foist its opinion on the law schools. Taimie is the best of the best — a brilliant scholar who applies rigorous standards to her work. She makes me hopeful that animal law has a very bright future."

Tischler notes that animals will benefit when advocates "mainstream their issues more and more." In addition to her teaching, Bryant has helped propel the movement to the mainstream, as the principal drafter of the landmark "Hayden Shelter Bill." Passed by the California Legislature in 1998, the bill provided unprecedented protections for companion animals in the state's shelters — and raised the public's consciousness about their plight.

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Editors note: This is an ongoing series of features in which A.L.A.N. recognizes civic and political leaders who champion animal causes.



Letter From The Director



“I would never work on a campaign,” said a young, activist friend of mine. “Politicians are corrupt, duplicitous and only represent the rich and powerful. Only direct action — rescuing and liberating animals — will change the way that society operates.”

This is the challenge that I have confronted time and again during a decade of involving animal people in the political process. Many people spend their lives working to save and protect animals. Yet, they find it hard to accept that political activity is the key to achieving their goals.

Demonstrations and civil disobedience have marked the dawning of many great movements. However, ultimately shifts in the legal status of interest groups have only been achieved through the legislative process — as exemplified by the history of labor unions, woman’s suffrage, American farm workers and many others. It is the only way that we will ever improve the condition of animals. Legal protections and rights are political goals.

Elections are the basic unit of social change in this country. It is through the efforts of our elected representatives, and the success they have in revising old laws and creating new ones, that we evolve as a society.

My young friend mocked my suggestion that his involvement could make a huge difference. “Are you

kidding?” he asked. “I am one vote. The pet products, breeder and the farmed animal industries pour millions of dollars into political campaigns. What’s the use of voting?”

My response to such pessimism? By not working politically, we guarantee the success of people who exploit animals!

Politics takes time, effort and persistence. It requires a willingness to work together with other interest groups to build stronger coalitions. It challenges us to act in a new way, to employ a process already in place, in order to improve society. Advocating politically for animals is like lifting a heavy stone. We fail if just one of us tries to lift it. But when we work in unison, we are stronger than the sum of our parts. **Working together, accomplishing the possible, persisting in the face of failure: with these virtues, we can change history.**

It is the responsibility of individual citizens to participate in the “chorus” that is an election to help determine the future of our communities. To not do so is a wasted opportunity. Wealthy interest groups are successful politically because we abandon the process to them.

I could feel the young activist’s passion, his impatience at the prospect of employing a slow, cautious, relentless approach. I feared that his failure to see the need for this would lead to his disillusionment and “early burnout.” I have seen it countless times in the years I have been working for animals. **Animals are where they are, not because politics doesn’t work, but because we, as their advocates, have not worked the politics.**

*For the Animals,
Richard G. McLellan, MD*

Supporting candidates’ campaigns is the most visible and effective way that animal advocates can achieve political power.

Please visit the A.L.A.N. website for our 2005 Los Angeles election guidance and reference information. <http://www.alanpac.com>



“Animal Champions: Taimie Bryant”

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Among its many provisions, the legislation mandated that, as a matter of public policy, California now favors adoption over the widespread practice of euthanasia. It increased the required holding period for homeless animals, and inflicted stiffer penalties on those convicted of animal cruelty.

“Taimie reinvented the way that we think of the shelter system,” says Dr. Paula Kislak, who worked closely with Bryant to craft and promote the legislation, and who is president of the Association of Veterinarians for Animal Rights. “Thanks to Taimie’s expertise and willingness to get involved, the shelters are now more animal-oriented — with more respect, dignity and concern for them.”

Bryant says the attitude of “traditional kill shelters” has always troubled her.

“They will incur the cost of killing because they seem genuinely to believe that it isn’t worth it to find homes for animals, and that life isn’t that valuable to the animals themselves,” says Bryant. “Their definition of ‘humane’ treatment means a ‘humane death,’ not the humane opportunity to live. I have never understood why shelters will kill an animal that rescue groups have put a hold on, or killing those animals who could be treated for a cold. Rescue groups are often ready, willing, and able to offer the assistance needed to heal, rehabilitate, and re-home sheltered animals.”

A.L.A.N. volunteer Heidi Mastrogiovanni works the phones with Los Angeles City Council candidate David Vahedi.



In essence, the legislative architecture of the Hayden law provides the basis for a business reorganization plan that promotes saving lives, saving money and furthering the definition of ‘humane’ in its truest sense of ‘respectful kindness.’ This is not just for the benefit of animals. It is for the benefit of all of us.”

Bryant said the immense public outcry against Governor Schwarzenegger’s proposed repeal in August 2004 of the Hayden Bill, which was then kept intact, was an encouraging sign. She says: “People writing and pursuing scholarship in the field of animal law now have an environment of greater societal support than ever before. These are increasingly hopeful times of transition into greater respect for the lives and interests of the animals who share the planet with us.”

The times are changing

Candidates are now realizing that the humane vote is a key constituency:

“As a City Council Member, I will not rest until Los Angeles is a NO KILL CITY.

I will require the licensing of all pet breeders. As long as there are people profiting from breeding animals, with no meaningful oversight, there will continue to be unnecessary suffering. Those who benefit financially need to bear their fair share of the burden.”

-- David T. Vahedi, Los Angeles City Council Candidate

“No De-Clawing, Bobbing Etc. Sure, looks are everything in L.A., but let’s exempt dogs and cats from our fashion obsessions. Leave their claws, ears and tails alone.

‘No-Kill’ Shelters Immediately. The Killing ends the Day Moore is sworn in as mayor.”

-- From the campaign platform of Walter Moore, candidate for Mayor of Los Angeles

**Councilman
Bernard Parks**

**Councilman Antonio
Villaraigosa**

**Senator
Richard
Alarcon**

Bob Hertzberg

Walter Moore



On January 9, 2005, Citizens for a Humane Los Angeles (CHULA) sponsored the first political convention for animal advocates ever held in the United States.

Director Richard G. McLellan MD welcomed members of the city's humane community, who braved monsoon-like rains to hear candidates for Mayor of Los Angeles share their views on advancing the welfare, protection and rights of animals. Participants then cast their votes for their favorite animal-friendly candidate.

"The time is long overdue to recognize the power of the Humane Vote," said McLellan, also Director of the Animal Legislative Action Network. Others planning the momentous occasion included CHULA founder Michael Bell, Mary and Steve Cummins, Leslie Hunt, Mary Krasn, Carol Long, Heidi Mastrogiovanni, Greg Shreve, Scott Sorrentino and Sherrie Woodbury.

photos by Elizabeth Amini

Citizens for a Humane Los Angeles Mayoral Convention January 2005

Los Angeles Mayoral Runoff May 17, 2005

A.L.A.N. Endorses Councilman Antonio Villaraigosa To Be the Next Mayor of Los Angeles

"The animals can't vote. They are counting on us to choose a Mayor who will lead Los Angeles into the 21st century of animal care and control. We need to choose a Mayor who has a clear, humane vision for this city."

**--Scott Sorrentino,
President and Co-Founder, Rescue and
Humane Alliance Los Angeles**

In a hotly contested primary election on March 8, a runoff was declared between incumbent Mayor James K. Hahn, and Antonio Villaraigosa. On May 17, 2005, voters can choose four more years of indifferent and callous policies towards tens of thousands of homeless and abandoned companion animals, and towards the wildlife sharing our habitat. Or, they will choose a Mayor whose progressive policies can help to alleviate the needless suffering of those animals.

The choice is clear. Antonio Villaraigosa is the Mayor who will make that difference.

EXCERPTS FROM VILLARAIGOSA'S HUMANE ISSUES PLATFORM:

"It has been said that how a society treats animals is a measure of how it treats people. By that standard, L.A. is in trouble on both counts. I want to see a Department of Animal Services that does everything it can every day to increase spay and neuter, increase adoption, improve conditions in its shelters and eliminate euthanasia as a major component of public policy in this city."

I will demand better performance and real accountability from the Department of Animal Services and the Board of Animal Services Commissioners. It is essential that we reform and strengthen the Department of Animal Services so the department can better provide facilities, train staff, enforce laws to reduce overpopulation, meet service needs and be more customer-friendly. I will appoint knowledgeable problem-solvers to the Board of Animal Services Commissioners to provide the Department with guidance in developing and implementing humane management policies.

I will make the battle against animal over-population a priority.

To help to elect Antonio Villaraigosa in the May 17 Mayoral Race, contact: (323) 262-1724.

Work with A.L.A.N. and maximize your effectiveness:

We create allies and we work for laws at the level of the California state government.

Legislation passed in this most populous state becomes a model for other states. By making real improvements in animal law here, you are potentially helping animals in the future, over the entire nation!

How to Help

All donations to A.L.A.N. will be given directly to support animal-friendly candidates, legislators and legislation. Please send your donations to the:

Animal Legislative Action Network (A.L.A.N.)
2379 Panorama Terrace
Los Angeles, CA 90039-2559

Volunteering and Electioneering

Volunteering to help candidates' campaigns can be as effective as donating to A.L.A.N., and the experience will enrich you and give you a deeper appreciation for the political process.

A.L.A.N. has extensive experience in organizing and assisting campaign volunteers. Please see the A.L.A.N. website for information:

<http://www.alanpac.com/html/volunteering.html>
<http://www.alanpac.com/html/appealletter.html>

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