



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### WOMAN CONVICTED OF DOG THEFT IN PENNSYLVANIA RECEIVES 'KEY TO THE CITY' IN FORT PIERCE FLORIDA FOR HER COMPASSIONATE ACT

**Tamira Thayne, founder of Dogs Deserve Better, honored at ceremony in late February 2009**

March 1, 2009, Altoona, PA — Tamira Ci Thayne, founder of the award-winning non-profit Dogs Deserve Better, was granted the Key to the City of Fort Pierce Florida by the Mayor's office at a ceremony in late February. Thayne, formerly Tammy Grimes, was found guilty of theft and receiving stolen property in December 2007 after a three-day trial in Blair County, Pennsylvania. The case, which pitted dogs as property against the inherent rights of animals kept as companions, made headlines nationally and was featured on Inside Edition and in a host of news publications and Internet blogs.

Thayne was presented the Key to the City by Mrs. Donna Benton, wife of Mayor Bob Benton, who commended Thayne for her actions in helping Doogie, telling the audience "When you see a dog in distress, take heart and give it some aid—because they should all have a home with a family."

Thayne was arrested September 11, 2006 after rescuing a dog that had lain on the ground in a yard in East Freedom, Pennsylvania for three days, unable to stand and pleading for help. A distraught neighbor tried repeatedly to convince humane agents to help the dog, but no officer ever returned calls or showed up. Finally, the neighbor turned to Dogs Deserve Better.

Thayne, touched and honored by receiving the key to Fort Pierce, was also amused by the contrast between the actions of Fort Pierce, Florida and the actions of those in power in her hometown of Altoona, Pennsylvania.

"It's a night and day reaction," she explains with a grin. "In Altoona I am treated as a pariah, a criminal, and in fact was termed 'worse than his worst hardened-criminal' and 'a piece of trash' by District Attorney Richard Consiglio. Yet here, and in many other areas, I am honored for my efforts to help the aging shepherd, and people are able to recognize the truth for what it is.

"I want to thank Fort Pierce and Mayor Benton and his wife Donna for their courage in coming to stand behind me. No dog should be left outside for life, and no dog should ever be left to die there, unable to stand, still chained, and flailing about in the mud and his own feces.

"We are still working to bring private cruelty charges against the caretakers of this dog, and will be back in court in June to attempt to override the DA's denial of the case. We will always remember Doogie, and I never, EVER, have regretted for one moment my actions in helping him."

During the case, jurors were permitted to view photos of the dog's emaciated condition on the day of rescue; however video taken at the scene, photographs of the dog's much-improved condition post-rescue, and expert vet and investigation procedure testimony were barred from the courtroom. An appeal is still pending.

To learn more about the Doogie case, visit the website at <http://www.dogsdeservebetter.org/doogie.html>.

Dogs Deserve Better, a 501c3 nonprofit organization headquartered in Tipton, Pennsylvania, is the 2003 First Place Winner of the ASPCA Pet Protector Award. The group has 130 area reps in 35 states as well as in Canada and Hong Kong. Thayne was also a Top Ten Finalist for the 2006 Animal Planet Hero of the Year Contest.