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CONTACT: BARBARA HERMAN PHONE: (954) 801-6625

BENJI HOGAN, ADORED STAR COMPANION OF THE DENNIS WALTERS GOLF SHOW, DIES OF CANCER

Benji Hogan, one of the most beloved attractions in the golf entertainment industry while serving as a 12-year sidekick to The Dennis Walters Golf Show, died Thursday, May 1, 2008 to cancer at a Georgia Veterinary Hospital in Atlanta.

Benji Hogan was adopted in 1996 by Walters, a PGA Honorary Member from Jupiter, Fla., who was confined to a wheelchair since 1974 after suffering an accident while driving a golf cart. From that tragedy, Walters developed a nationally acclaimed golf trick shot program, starring Benji Hogan, the third pet dog he trained over the past 34 years for the show.

Walter had rescued Benji Hogan, a 24-pound terrier mix, from the Miami-Dade County Animal Shelter.

Dubbed by Walters as ""The Best Opening Act" in golf, Benji Hogan - a twin image of the famed star of the 1974 motion picture "Benji" - quickly earned his signature status in the world of golf by barking out answers to questions posed by Walters and members of the audience.

Benji Hogan became adept in mathematics and also barked answers to certify his expertise in golf trivia, including correctly barking that Jack Nicklaus owns six Masters titles.

Benji Hogan appeared in more than 1,000 golf shows and traveled over a million miles at Walters' side. He was also a trained service dog and helped Walters by picking up items Walters may have dropped during the daily struggles of being a paraplegic.

Benji Hogan was named the Florida Dog of the Year in 2002, made eight commercials, appeared on Animal Planet's Pet Star, where he won first place in his segment, sang with Grammy Award winning legend Vince Gill and also was credited with defeating Tiger Woods in a foot race.

Walters said that he would continue his program commitments despite the loss of his faithful companion. Walters requested that all friends and pet lovers make a donation in honor of Benji Hogan at their local Animal Shelter, and to consider what he did in 1996 - to adopt a pet.

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636 White Pelican Way Jupiter, FL 33477 (954) 232-5410 www.denniswalters.com