

PO Box 12468
Shawnee Mission, KS
66282-2468

Fax: 913.341.4225
www.kcvma.com

BUILT ON THE SHOULDERS OF VETERINARY GIANTS THE CAT WHO LOVED BOOKS

BY: DR. STEVE JOSEPH, KCVMA HISTORIAN

It is said of Dewey (1987 – 2006) that he was “the small town library cat who touched the world”.

His story begins on a freezing winter morning in Spencer, Iowa, when, as a kitten, he was found stuffed into the return library book slot.

Upon finding him, one description reads: “The kitten looked at me slowly and sadly. Then he lowered his head and sank down into a hole. He was wasn’t trying to be tough or hide and he wasn’t scared. He was just hoping to be saved.”

The library staff adopted him and appropriately named him Dewey Readmore Books. It’s said from that moment on he wanted to thank every person he met for saving his life.

Once Dewey had taken ownership of the library he greeted patrons each morning at the front door with a wave of his paw. He entertained them by climbing into their waiting laps. Dewey was a participant in each staff meeting that took place in the library conference room.

Vicky Myron, the library director and author of the book, *Dewey*, asks the question, “How is it possible for an abandoned kitten to transform a small library, save an American town, and eventually become famous around the world?”

“For 19 years,” Myron writes, “Dewey charmed Spencer with his enthusiasm, warmth, humility (for a cat), and above all else, his sixth sense about those who needed him.” He touched the hearts of those who had suffered losses or had special needs.

Dewey was a source of pride for a heartland farming town pulling its way back from a devastating fire that destroyed the business community several years earlier.

As Dewey’s presence became better known not only did patrons show up at the library more frequently and stay longer, but people who heard or read about him made trips to Spencer from across the country and the world to see him.

One of Patrick Roberts’ articles titled *Famous Felines* says: “Over the years he provided the Spencer library with plenty of publicity via the local newspaper, national magazines, in books, on postcards and on television. He was also the star of a video about library cats, *Puss in Books: Adventures of Library Cats* (1997). His fame spread throughout America and beyond, especially after he was chosen as *January’s Cat* on a nationwide calendar.” A Japanese news team visited Spencer and featured Dewey in a documentary.

The library maintains a bio page for Dewey and also a slideshow of images. You can Google *Dewey Readmore Books* to find his website (www.deweyreadmorebooks.com), videos and news articles. Of course, nothing takes the place of reading Myron’s book *Dewey*.

