



## *CASPCA Statement Regarding Niko*

**Charlottesville, VA**—As a result of court proceedings, the CASPCA became the custodian of Niko in our capacity as the Pound. In addition to functioning as a non-profit animal shelter, the Charlottesville-Albemarle SPCA serves another important community function by providing Pound services to the city of Charlottesville and Albemarle County. In our role as the Pound, from time to time, our local courts deem the CASPCA as the custodian of animals subject to court action. The wheels of justice turn slowly and Niko has been with us for approximately two years. During this time he has received the same quality care as all animals in our shelter.

Niko has been declared "vicious" by two courts (Albemarle County General District and Circuit Court). The CASPCA was not involved in either court proceeding, and therefore cannot comment on the evidence. We were not a party to the court proceedings and did not provide any evidence. Dogs cannot be declared "vicious" under Virginia law unless established beyond a reasonable doubt. We can only say that two courts found Niko "vicious" as Virginia law defines that term. It is our understanding that Niko's owners were represented by an attorney in both proceedings.

Under Virginia law The Albemarle Circuit Court ordered that Niko be humanely euthanized. Again, the CASPCA had no role in that decision. The owners appealed that decision to the Court of Appeals. When their appeal was denied, they then appealed to the Virginia Supreme Court and they were turned down.

During the approximately two years Niko has been in our care, we have done everything possible to manage a very unfortunate situation for everyone involved. The care provided has exceeded what Niko would experience at many pounds throughout Virginia as we awaited a court's decision. We are doing everything possible under the circumstances to care for Niko while observing all legal requirements imposed upon us as the result of a Court Order.

Jackie Bright

Executive Director