



# Betty White:

Betty White has captivated television and film audiences for 80 years. She's well known to fans of *The Golden Girls* — and also to the various animal organizations she supports. Now an amazing 98, the prolific star's animal work has contributed to advancements in research and veterinary science, as well as animal welfare policies and practices.

With a career spanning more than eight decades, Betty White is truly a pioneer in television, appearing in numerous sitcoms, game, talk, and variety shows. In 1995, she received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, next to that of her husband, the late Allen Ludden. The seven-time Emmy winner is most famously known as the affable but naïve Rose Nylund in *The Golden Girls*, and as everyone's favorite homemaker and nymphomaniac, Sue Ann Nivens, on the *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*.

## “HALF ANIMALS, HALF SHOW BUSINESS”

But Betty's television career is far from her only accomplishment. She is also a tireless advocate who has worked to improve the lives of both people and animals. In fact, she once turned down an acting role in the film *As Good As It*

*Gets*, because in one of the scenes, Jack Nicholson's character is seen throwing his neighbor's puppy down a laundry chute. “As long as that scene was in the film, I wouldn't do it,” says Betty.

Among the many beneficiaries of her philanthropy are the animals she has supported in her work with the Morris Animal Foundation, the American Humane Association, and the Los Angeles Zoo, to name a few. “I'm the luckiest person in the world,” she says. “My life is divided in absolute half: half animals, half show business.”

Betty serves as board trustee member and president emeritus for the Morris Animal Foundation, which promotes the health, welfare, and longevity of animals through leading research in veterinary science. Over 1,700 studies have received funding from the foundation, which has been at the forefront of advancements in

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*Her show business career has spanned eight decades, but Betty White has been an animal lover even longer than that. The remarkable nonagenarian supports a variety of animal organizations, and works to better the lives of dogs, cats and other critters.*

By Nandini Maharaj

# Golden Girl & animal welfare advocate

diagnostics, treatments, prevention, and cures for animals on every continent.

Betty has also been a trustee of the Greater Los Angeles Zoo Association for more than 40 years, championing the zoo's public education and wildlife conservation efforts. She has also worked with renowned primatologist Jane Goodall to redesign the chimpanzee and gorilla exhibits.

## A LIFELONG LOVE FOR ANIMALS

Betty's passion for animals goes back to her early childhood. As she puts it: "I've loved animals since I was in the womb." She fondly remembers her mother and father as animal lovers too. "It is so embedded in me," she reflects. "There isn't an animal on the planet that I don't find fascinating and want to learn more about." Truly, no animals are exempt from her curiosity and

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compassion, as she works to better the lives of dogs, cats, horses, and wildlife around the world.

In an interview with Oprah Winfrey, Betty was once asked what gifts she most loves giving. Her answer wasn't surprising: "Money to my favorite animal charities."

The gift she was most delighted to receive was a Pekinese puppy. "It was a birthday gift from a man I was engaged to marry," says Betty. "He brought the puppy and put it in my arms." While the dog stayed, the man himself went away. "I never married him but I had that dog for 17 years. I called him Bandit, because he stole my heart away."

"Animals don't lie," writes Betty in her book *If You Ask Me*. "Animals don't criticize. If animals have moody days, they handle them better than humans do."

If animals could speak, they might say to Betty: "Thank you for being a friend." (Sorry, couldn't help *The Golden Girls* reference!) In all sincerity, however, animals can't speak or advocate for themselves...Betty White speaks for them and will continue to do so as long as she can.