



LUKE AND HIS HUMAN, DAWN CROTEAU

OSU-OKC Paint This Town Orange
2018 PET HERO WINNER

*COMPASSION SAVES A LIFE
COURAGE AND LOVE RETURN THE FAVOR*

One morning in May of 2011, Dawn Croteau, decided to walk down to the shoreline of their neighborhood lake to survey the new dock her family had recently built. Croteau, 51, is a resident of Guthrie and an alcohol and substance abuse counseling major at OSU-OKC and vividly recalls that morning.

"Across the lake, I saw a man throw a plastic bag in the water. I yelled at him for littering but he smiled and laughed," said Croteau.

Croteau and her daughter, Alisha Cook, 22-years-old at the time, used the family's inflatable boat and rowed quickly toward the spot where the bag hit the water. Croteau and her daughter stepped out of the boat and into the murky waist-deep water, where they found the bag on the floor of the lake using their feet. Lifting the bag to the surface, they realized the bag contained three squirming puppies, approximately 8 weeks-old, alive and healthy.

Croteau took the puppies home with her and found forever homes for both dogs. Croteau kept the lone male, Luke, who quickly outgrew the Croteau's house and readily took to his new position as the family farm dog.

FLASH FORWARD TWO YEARS

After working late one night, Croteau returned home and as usual Luke was waiting to greet her. But when Croteau tried to exit her car, Luke pushed so hard against the door she couldn't open it.

"Luke was so big and strong I couldn't force the door open. After what seemed like a good ten minutes he finally moved so I could get out, but then he wouldn't let me near the yard gate. He kept pushing at me so hard he almost knocked me to the ground," said Croteau.

Just as Croteau made her way to the gate, she saw a large rattlesnake coiled and ready to strike. She screamed and Luke jumped in front of her just as the snake lunged forward and struck Luke like lightning twice.

"I remember crying and being terrified that Luke would die," said Croteau.

She and her husband, Sam, rushed Luke to an emergency pet hospital in Oklahoma City where he was treated with anti-venom, rested for a few days, and eventually recovered completely from his wounds.

"Today Luke is just a 187-pound ball of love. He's like a big teddy bear," said Croteau. "He's so good with our grandchildren, loves being outside, except during storms, and is a beloved member of our family. Luke literally saved my life that day. I am forever in his debt."