



Photo by Todd Cooper

## Remembering Doc

ROBERT WILSON AND HIS TINY DOG CHICA WERE FIXTURES IN DOWNTOWN EUGENE

By Donny Morrison

**R**obert “Doc” Wilson moved to Eugene only in 2015, but he and his cowboy Chihuahua, Chica, were soon ubiquitous downtown.

You probably saw them in Kesey Square or at Saturday Market, Doc in his wheelchair and veteran’s garb, Chica in the array of outfits he dressed the small dog in. He and Chica had been unhoused off and on for the past 10 years. The square was where they’d hustle for change and be with those who loved them — and everyone seemed to love them.

Doc embodied the very best part of Eugene, his friends say — that no matter who you are, you can find a sense of community here.

Doc passed away in his apartment on Nov. 11, Veterans Day, from a heart attack.

He got his nickname “Doc” after serving as a medic in the U.S. Army in the ’80s. Although he had no next of kin in the area, his Eugene friends considered him family.

Following Doc’s death, Chica was held at the Greenhill Humane Society shelter for two nights and then found a home with Doc’s close friend Andrea Martinez.

By all accounts Doc was never seen without Chica by his side. Doc always said he saw Chica thrown from a moving car while he was driving on a California freeway

10 years ago. He pulled over, scooped her up and nursed the little dog back to health.

*Eugene Weekly* profiled Chica and Doc after the city implemented a dog ban that made it illegal for people to have their dogs with them downtown unless they lived there. The ban excluded service animals, but many unhoused owners like Doc don’t have the resources or money to get their animals certified.

The Eugene City Council approved the downtown Eugene pilot ordinance in early 2017. It was updated to ban all dogs — including puppies — without a license and rabies shots. Opponents to the dog ban say that it’s a way for the city to discriminate against the unhoused in an attempt to push them out of downtown.

Doc also found community with the Rainbow Family of Living Light, a loosely knit community of people who come together annually to camp at the Rainbow Gathering. The movement sprouted from the ’60s counter-culture, as an attempt to be free of consumerism and capitalism. Rainbow Gatherings now happen all over the world.

“One of the best cooks and bakers around,” Coleen Clark, known as Momma Bear to her Rainbow Family, says of Doc. “He could whip up something out of nothing, and it’d be delicious. But what he was really famous for was his ‘Zsu Zsus.’”

Zsu Zsus, as Momma Bear describes them, were any sweet treat made from whatever you had on hand.

“And in the woods, that ain’t much,” Momma Bear says. “But he’d stay up all night making Zsu Zsus for hungry hippies.”

Another one of Doc’s specialties was “Goo Balls,” which, according to Momma Bear, are a mix of chocolate, oats, chopped up fruit or raisins and peanut butter, all mixed together into little round balls. He’d use THC butter for those who wanted “Ganja Goo Balls.” He also made cinnamon rolls.

Doc’s friends remember him for his kindness and sense of humor. He had a passion for music and particularly loved the Grateful Dead.

Close friend Chris Ordway will miss Doc’s dirty jokes and infectious laughter.

“The worst thing you could say about him would be that he sometimes laughs too loud,” Ordway says. “He was just a good soul. There wasn’t anything bad about him.”

For the past couple years, Doc sold homemade buttons from his wheelchair on the weekends. His friends say that those lucky enough to see Doc at the Saturday Market would have definitely noticed his sense of humor.

Martinez, who Doc said should have Chica if anything were to happen to him, says you’ll still be able to see Chica around the Saturday Market next year.

“Yes, we will be going every so often to keep up appearances,” he says, “and to keep Doc’s button business going.” ■