

Biography of David R. Flagler

I developed my first loyalty to animals when I was serving as a military working dog handler for the United States Air Force. As a law enforcement specialist, I learned that a dog makes an excellent partner and close friend. I spent many hours on patrol with my dog in the Philippines during the Viet Nam War era. Upon returning to the United States, I decided to specialize in utilizing dogs for narcotics detection; a skill that convinced the US Customs Service to gain me an early release of my military duties to become a narcotics dog handler on the Mexican Border.

With my GI Bill about to expire, I traded my job with the US Customs Service to become a student at the University of Idaho, studying Wildlife Management. As a student, I took a job as the Animal Control Officer for Pullman Washington. Since Pullman is the home of the Washington State University's Veterinary College, it proved to be the perfect place to learn animal control skills. When I wanted to learn about chemical capture drugs, I was trained by the head of anesthesiology. In my desire to learn how to handle birds of prey, I was trained by the head of ornithology. I could not have picked a better place to develop my skills as an animal control officer.

With my degree in hand, I began working my way up the ranks of the animal control profession. My next job was the Field Supervisor in Eugene Oregon. Then, for several years, I served as Chief Field Supervisor until I was later promoted to Director in Multnomah County, serving the Portland Oregon area.

Over the next several years, I had the opportunity to oversee the operations of the largest animal control organizations in five states. I enjoyed serving the community and creating programs to increase pet adoptions. I believe the success of an animal control program is to develop community partners and maintain a positive relationship with the media. I have come to enjoy the diversity that is brought to an animal shelter through our volunteer programs; volunteers are a cherished resource.