

## The Woman Who Took Chickens Under Her Wing

Minnie Blumfield never lost her enthusiasm. She believed that with age came courage, vision and a true appreciation of life--all life. That's why, at the age of eighty-six, Minnie became the sole caretaker of a flock of<sup>1)</sup> chickens abandoned alongside one of Southern California's busiest freeways after a poultry<sup>2)</sup> truck mishap. For reasons known only to the bureaucracy<sup>3)</sup> of the day, the chickens were never rescued. Instead, they simply took up residence in the roadside brush, becoming known to locals as the Hollywood Freeway Chickens.

Like many seniors<sup>4)</sup>, Minnie lived alone and survived on a meager pension. But to her, life was precious and not to be callously surrendered or ignored not even the lives of slaughter-bound livestock. Minnie simply saw creatures in need and without hesitation, stepped into action. For nine years, while others sped past unaware and unconcerned, Minnie made two pilgrimages<sup>5)</sup> a day to provide food and water for the abandoned chickens, using what little money she had available.

As the years passed, she worried about the day when she would no longer be able to care for her adopted flock. Who would look after these poor helpless creatures if she could no longer make her journey?

At ninety-five, just when the cruelties<sup>6)</sup> of time began to ravage Minnie's body, a heroine appeared. Jodie Mann, a young actress and a founding member of the organization Actors and Others for Animals, was Minnie's neighbor. Jodie had observed Minnie on her sojourns<sup>7)</sup> and noticed the old woman also fed many of the homeless cats in the neighborhood. Jodie approached Minnie to see if her neighbor could identify the owner of a stray dog that Jodie had recently rescued. A quick and lasting friendship resulted. Learning of Minnie's concern for the fate of her flock, Jodie vowed to "fight City Hall" and find the chickens a new home.

Jodie located a ranch where the chickens would be able to live out their natural lives, and organized a rescue party to capture the birds. This was a daunting task that tested Jodie's patience and determination and Minnie's will to live. As the chickens settled into their new home, Minnie was forced to relocate to a convalescent<sup>8)</sup> hospital after a series of debilitating strokes.

Jodie maintained a close and loving relationship with Minnie, visiting her often. She found a good home for Minnie's cat, Blacky, and made sure that the stray cats that had come to depend on the older woman's kindness were still provided with care.

Later, as president of Actors and Others for Animals, I was honored to present Minnie Blimfield-then ninety-six years old-with our organization's inaugural Humanitarian Award. Inspired by and aptly named for Minnie, the award is a delicate bronze statue of a graceful, straw-hatted woman with robust chickens standing sentry at her feet, and a dozing cat nestled safely in her arms. To all of us in attendance that day, the bizarre plight of the cast-off chickens, superimposed with Minnie's undaunted spirit, was awe-inspiring<sup>9)</sup>. Many were moved to tears by the soft heart of this frail but determined woman, who with tears streaming down her own paralyzed face, managed to whisper, "Thank you."

Minnie is gone now, but her concern for her fellow creatures lives on in the award that bears her name and likeness. Her courage and selfless example continue to be a source of inspiration and strength for me, for Jodie and for everyone within our organization, as we continue our work of caring for all living creatures who share our planet, our homes and our hearts.

□by Earl Holliman

## 庇护鸡的女士

明妮·布卢姆菲尔德从未丧失对生活的热爱。她相信随年龄的增长而来的是勇气、梦想和真正懂得生活—整个生活的意义。所以，在她86岁高龄时，成了一群鸡惟一的看管人。在一条南加州最繁忙高速公路上，一次家禽卡车事故后，一群鸡被遗弃在路旁。出于只有当今官僚作风的原因，始终没有人来救助这些鸡。它们干脆在路旁灌木丛里定居下来，当地人称它们为好莱坞高速公路鸡。

像许多老年人一样，明妮靠菲薄的养老金独自生活。但在她看来，生命是珍贵的，不应轻易放弃或忽视，即使早晚要被屠宰的牲畜的生命也如此。看到动物需要帮助，她就毫不迟疑地采取行动。9年来，其他人驾车不觉察也不关心地疾驰而过，而明妮一天两次虔诚地前来用自己仅有的钱给被遗弃的鸡喂食喂水。

时光消逝，明妮担心有朝一日她自己将不能再照顾这些她领养的鸡群。如果她去不了了，谁能关心这些可怜无助的小生灵呢？

明妮95岁那年，正值无情岁月残酷蹂躏她身体之时，出现了一位值得称颂的女士。明妮的邻居乔蒂·曼恩是个年轻女演员，也是演员和非演员爱护动物组织的发起人之一。乔蒂注意到明妮还给社区内许多无家可归的猫喂食。有一次，乔蒂去明妮家问她能否辨认最近由她救助的一只迷失的狗是谁家的。自此，日久不衰的友谊在她们间迅速建立。乔蒂了解到明妮关心鸡群命运的事迹后，她立誓要和市政厅“进行斗争”，给鸡找个新家。

乔蒂找到一处牧场，鸡可以在那里过一辈子正常的生活。同时，她还组织了救助队去抓捕那些鸡。这是项艰巨的任务，它考验着乔蒂的耐心和决心，也考验着明妮生存的意志。鸡安置在新家后，明妮经过几次中风，身体日趋衰弱，不得不住进疗养院。

乔蒂和明妮保持着亲密和深情的友谊，经常去看望她。乔蒂还给明妮的猫“小黑子”找了很好的人家，确保过去依赖善良的明妮而生存的无主猫继续得到照顾。后来，我作为演员和非演员爱护动物协会的主席，荣幸地将该组织的首次人道主义奖授与已经96岁高龄的明妮·布卢姆菲尔德。这个奖项是受她的事迹启发而设计，并贴切地以她的名字命名的。那是座精制的铜像—一个头带草帽、典雅的妇人，脚下有一群像是为她站岗的健壮的鸡，怀里安详地卧着一只打盹的猫。那天参加授奖仪式的人，无不敬佩明妮为救助身处困境被遗弃的鸡表现出的不屈不挠的精神。许多人被那身体脆弱，但精神坚强的妇人的仁慈心肠感动得落泪。明妮瘫痪的面颊上淌着泪，她困难地轻声说了句“谢谢”。

明妮已经不在人世，但是以她的名字命名，并以她的形象制作的铜像所体现的对世界上另类生灵的关怀，将由后人继承并予以发扬。明妮的勇气和忘我精神的榜样将继续成为我、乔蒂和我们组织的每一个成员动力和力量的源泉。我们将继续关切和我们人类共享一个地球、我们家园和我们心灵的所有生灵。

**NOTE 注释：**

a flock of 一群

poultry ['pɒltrɪ] n. 家禽

bureaucracy [bjʊə'rɒkrəsi] n. 官僚，官僚作风

senior ['si:njə] n. 年长者，年老的人

pilgrimage ['pilgrɪmɪdʒ] n. 朝圣

cruelty ['kru:əltɪ] n. 残忍，残酷

sojourn ['sɔ:dʒə(:)n, 'səʊdʒə:n] n. 逗留

convalescent [kɒnvə'lesnt] adj. 康复期的，渐愈的

awe-inspiring 崇敬的感情