

## Woman allowed cat's injured leg to fall off

By KEVIN MARTIN, CALGARY SUN

Last Updated: October 21, 2010 7:46pm

Leaving her elderly cat's broken leg untreated for months, until it became gangrenous and fell off, has landed a Calgary woman a \$2,000 fine.

And provincial court Judge Bruce Millar on Thursday also slapped Marlene Payne with a lifetime ban on owning pets, despite a Crown request for only a five-year prohibition.

"It seems simple to me that if people can't look after, or care for a pet, they shouldn't be pet owners," Millar said.

"In my view you should never own a pet again so there will be a lifetime prohibition."

Payne, 57, pleaded guilty to a charge under the Animal Protection Act of allowing an animal to suffer, in this case her cat, Simone.

Crown prosecutor Gord Haight said Payne first brought the feline to a veterinary clinic on July 18, 2009, suffering a leg injury.

She was told by staff the animal likely had a broken leg, but there was no technician present to do an x-ray and she should make an appointment to have it checked later, said Haight.

But Payne never got the injury checked, misunderstanding the instructions and believing the cat's diagnosis of untreatable diabetes was the greater concern, he said.

But by March 3, of this year the injury had become so badly infected Payne brought the pet in for further treatment and it had to be euthanized, said Haight.

"The cat was in poor body condition, but most significantly was missing its right hind leg," Haight told Millar.

He said the untreated broken leg from eight months earlier had "become gangrenous and fallen off."

Defence lawyer Danusia Bourdon, who agreed to speak for the unrepresented Payne, said the city woman believed the diabetes diagnosis on her earlier visit was the greatest concern.

"She understood that the vet's main concern was not the leg injury, but the diabetes," said Bourdon, adding the 18-year-old feline was considered a family member.

Payne was told that at that age it would be useless to treat the diabetes with insulin and believed the lost limb was as a result of the disease.

"Looking back now Ms. Payne recognizes that she could and should have gone to a vet sooner."

Outside court, DAISY Foundation spokeswoman Heather Anderson applauded Millar's decision to hand Payne a lifetime ban on owning pets.

"A leg falling off, that's not just an abscess that wasn't taken care of," Anderson said.

kevin.martin@sunmedia.ca

Copyright © 2010 Calgary Sun All Rights Reserved