Animal Legal Defense Fund Encyclopedia Article

Animal Legal Defense Fund

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Animal Legal Defense Fund

Originally established in 1979 as Attorneys for Animal Rights, this organization changed its name to Animal Legal Defense Fund (ALDF) in 1984, and is known as "the law firm of the **animal rights** movement." Their motto is "we may be the only lawyers on earth whose clients are all innocent." ALDF contends that animals have a fundamental right to legal protection against abuse and exploitation. Over 350 attorneys work for ALDF, and the organization has more than 50,000 supporting members who help the cause of animal rights by writing letters and signing petitions for legislative action. The members are also strongly encouraged to work for animal rights at the local level.

ALDF's work is carried out in many places including research laboratories, large cities, small towns, and the wild. ALDF attorneys try to stop the use of animals in research experiments, and continue to fight for expanded enforcement of the Animal Welfare Act. ALDF also offers legal assistance to humane societies and city prosecutors to help in the enforcement of anti-cruelty laws and the exposure of veterinary malpractice. The organization attempts to protect wild animals from exploitation by working to place controls on trappers and sport hunters. In California, ALDF successfully stopped the **hunting** of mountain lions and black bears. ALDF is also active internationally bringing legal action against elephant poachers as well as against animal dealers who traffic in **endangered species**.

ALDF's clear goals and swift action have resulted in many court victories. In 1992 alone, the organization won cases involving cruelty to **dolphins**, dogs, horses, birds, and cats. It has also blocked the importation of over 70,000 monkeys from Bangladesh for research purposes, and has filed suit against the National Marine Fisheries Services to stop the illegal gray market in dolphins and other marine mammals. ALDF also publishes a quarterly magazine, *The Animals' Advocate*.

Resources

Organizations

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