

Hemingway House Press Release

Michael Morawski, president of the Ernest Hemingway Home , 907 Whitehead St., Key West, recently announced that the home and the USDA have come to an agreement that will allow the five-toed descendants of author Ernest Hemingway's cat Snowball to roam the one-acre historic property

What was suppose to be a simple licensing process, that should have concluded within 90-days from the Hemingway Homes initial inspection in Oct. 2003, turned into a nightmare of regulatory bureaucracy and a 5-year battle with the USDA, Morawski said.

It wasn't until Morawski met with the Assistant Secretary of the USDA, Dr. Chester Gibson, in Oct. 2007, and the decision was made to hire independent animal behaviorist Dr. Terry Marie Curtis, College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Florida, that he felt the cats would be spared from living their remaining years in cages and the Ernest Hemingway Home's property would keep its historical integrity.

Dr. Curtis suggested a visibly unobtrusive fencing produce called "Purr...fect Fence," from Pennsylvania. The Hemingway Home's contractor, F&W Fencing, worked hand-and-hand with "Purr...fect Fence" vice-president Matt Hough to design a fence that would not negatively affect the historic feel of the property.

Morawski attributes the successful conclusion of his 5-year nightmare to Matt Hough and his patent pending product "Purr..fect Fence."

"Matt was tremendous help," Morawski said. "He donated product, knowledge, guidance, and his personal hands-on visits from Pennsylvania insured that the Ernest Hemingway Home's cats stayed un-caged and allowed to roam the property."

Morawski said the home is an historic landmark that people from around the world visit the home and expect to see the descendants of the author's five-toed cats roaming and often sleeping in the nooks-and-crannies of the property.

"Our tour guides are often questioned about the history of the cats," Morawski said. "I couldn't deal with having the cats caged and I know the visitors wouldn't have liked it, either. The fence solution is a good one and allows us to continue with the historic aspects of the whole property."

Dr. Kathy Hovancsak, Supervisory Animal Care Specialist at the USDA, approved Ernest Hemingway Home's new containment fencing and the installation has been completed, allowing Snowball's descendants to roam the one-acre property.

For more information on the Hemingway Home, go to www.hemingwayhouse.com.