

A Message From An Animal Rights Attorney:

My name is Joyce Tischler. I'm a lawyer, and the Executive Director of the Animal Legal Defense Fund (ALDF). ALDF is sponsoring the Students Against Dissection project in two ways. First, we've set up a Hotline to give information and support to students who object to animal dissection in classrooms. Second, ALDF offers legal advice on the student's right to object. I'd like to discuss animal rights with you, as well as your right to stand up for animals and against dissection.

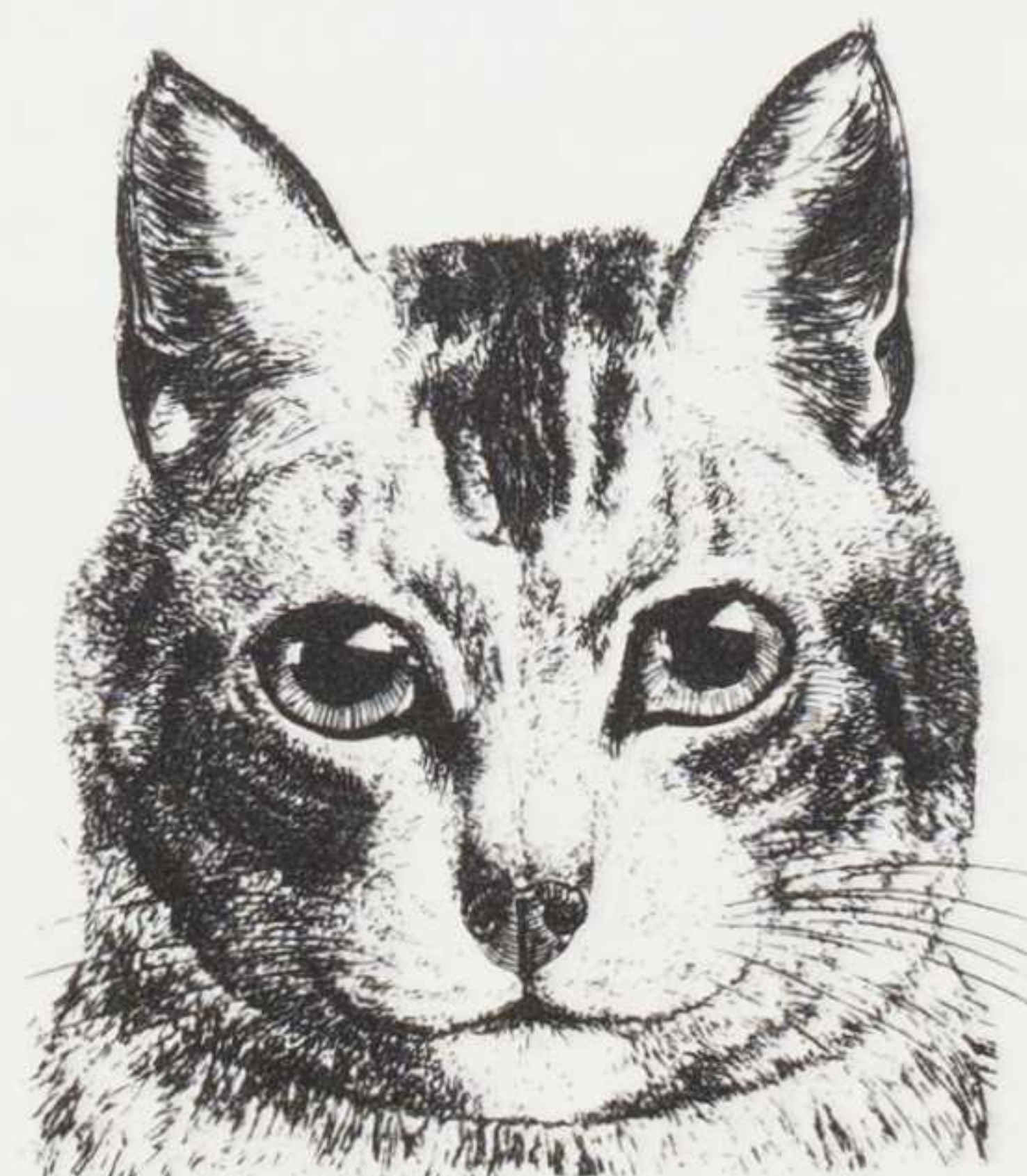
For many people, non-human animals are merely "things" to be used or exploited at the whim of fashion or perceived need. Each year in the United States, billions of animals are slaughtered for food, while another fifty to a hundred million animals die in laboratories and product testing facilities. And each year, an ever-growing number of wild species face extinction because of habitat destruction, hunting, fishing, and trapping.

More and more people around the world are coming to the realization that this carnage—and the attitudes that seek to justify it—are both cruel and outdated. There are relatively few legal restraints today on human exploitation of animals; anti-cruelty laws that protect some animals against the worst kinds of abuse are often not enforced. It ultimately falls to individuals like you and me to

promote rights for animals and ensure them the protection they cannot give themselves.

Dissection is a widespread and institutionalized form of animal exploitation. One way you can personally affect the way animals are mistreated in our society is to speak out against dissection in college classes.

The issue of required dissection for college students has not been fully tested in the courts. But the lawyers of the Animal Legal Defense Fund believe that under federal and state law, you have a right not to dissect. In test cases, we will argue that this right arises from the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, state constitutional protections, civil rights laws, and in some cases, from contract and tort law principles. If you want more information on your legal rights, the Dissection Hotline (800-922-3764) can put you in touch with a lawyer at the Animal Legal Defense Fund.



Saying No To Dissection: *An 8-Step Plan*

1 *Know Yourself*

Examine your motives and decide how far you are prepared to go in order to establish your right not to dissect. Are you willing to present your case to professors, department heads, and deans? Find your own alternatives? Take legal action? Drop a class? Change your major? Accept your own limitations given the risks involved and adjust your goals accordingly.

2 *Ask Questions Early*

Before the term starts, or as soon as possible thereafter, ask your professor whether you will be required to dissect or use live animals. Find out precisely what you will be required to do. Don't rely on your professor to give you advance warning.

3 *Voice Objections Early*

Tell your professor of your intention not to participate in dissection experiments as soon as possible; do not wait until the day of the dissection lab to voice your objection. This will give both you and your professor enough time to work out an acceptable alternative.

4 *Be Firm, Be Calm*

State your objections calmly and clearly, and be prepared to discuss your reasons for refusing to dissect. Never approach your professor in an arrogant, self-righteous or confrontational manner. Presume that he or she has a different belief system on the issue of animal use, and it is unlikely that you will change those views. On the other hand, stress that you do not wish this value system to be imposed upon you, as it conflicts with your ethical or spiritual beliefs.

5 *Suggest Alternatives*

Suggest reasonable alternatives that will meet the teaching goals of the course by some method that doesn't involve the harmful use of animals. This could include writing a paper, preparing anatomical charts, or studying diagrams, videos or models. The alternative project should take an equivalent amount of time and effort. Be prepared to be tested on the same material as other students, as long as the test itself does not include a practical dissection, or the use of dissected specimens.

You should not be penalized for doing an alternative project. If you need specific suggestions for alternative course work, check "Alternatives to Animal Dissection" on pages 8-10 of this booklet, or call the Dissection Hotline.

6 *Ask for a Straight Answer*

Ask your professor to respond promptly to your request for an alternative project so you'll have enough time to complete it. If you get a non-committal or negative response, don't hesitate to take your request to the appropriate department head or dean.

7 *Organize Others*

Another approach is to organize like-minded students and approach your professor or department head as a group. Student animal rights organizations are being organized on campuses throughout the country to oppose the use of animals as educational "tools." Use the school media, especially the campus newspaper and radio station, as a forum for discussion. Introduce the ethical issues surrounding dissection at student government meetings.

8 *Get Legal Advice*

The Animal Legal Defense Fund has had great success in negotiating with educational institutions on this issue. If you want legal advice or need to take legal action to defend your right to object to dissection, the Dissection Hotline can put you in touch with an ALDF attorney.