

For \$1,000, hero dog was deal, says owner

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LOS ANGELES — A stray German shepherd who used his own body last week to protect a severely injured dog from traffic on a busy street got a home yesterday when a retired man paid \$1,079.50 for him at an auction.

The dog also received a new name. From now on, he will be called Hero, vowed Mark Marlatt, 65, who bought the animal in frenzied bidding at a Los Angeles animal shelter.

The name fits, according to the passer-by who discovered Hero March 31 shielding an injured Doberman pinscher from cars.

"He was sheltering his little mate," said Estelle Dvorin. "He came over and led me to the Doberman and then he went back and lay down and sheltered her again. He put his head right over hers."

Shelter officers were unable to save the Doberman, which was severely injured after being struck by a car.

But they held an auction when no owner showed up to retrieve the dog.

Marlatt outbid 40 others in a wild 10 minutes.

"We live on Social Security and our savings, and we'd figured on spending a hundred or two at the auction. But the bidding kept going up and I just kept going," said Marlatt.

"I just wish the bidding had stopped at \$200 so I could've spent the other \$800 on dog food," said the retired recreational vehicle salesman. "But we'd rather have a beautiful dog than, say, a new car any day of the week."



Mark Marlatt gets a big dog kiss from Hero. Marlatt said the dog's courageous actions inspired him and his wife, DeSetta, to pay more than \$1,000 to get Hero out of a Los Angeles animal shelter.

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