

Featured Felines: Cat Statues and Memorials 3 (2020)

(page checked July 2026)

Ramskells Den Haag, Netherlands



This is the story:

'In the summer of 1922 a stray cat, a black Bombay, turned up outside the Peace Palace in Den Haag (The Hague), and was looked after by a groundsman. Named **Ramskells** – I'm not sure by whom – the cat would accompany him around the grounds as he did his work, but the poorly paid man couldn't afford to feed him. So Ramskells began frequenting the Palace in search of food; some accounts say he introduced himself by filching food from the lounge! Whatever the truth, over time he became known to, and welcomed by, the justices of the Permanent Court of International Justice, and he was given food and allowed to sleep in the lounge.

'Early in the morning of 22 March 1924 a fire, cause unknown but no doubt accidental, broke out near the Palace front entrance and quickly spread. The Palace staff were away at the time, with only Ramskells and the justices – still asleep – in residence. Ramskells awoke to the danger, went upstairs and eventually managed to gain access to the president's bedroom via a window, jumping on him and meowing until he was awake. By the time the men were all up, the fire had spread and cut off their escape route – but they had reckoned without the cat, who from his wanderings around the Palace knew another way out. There was a small, hidden corridor leading from one of the bedrooms, which had been constructed to allow builders access when they were working on that floor; the justices didn't know of it. But Ramskells did, and when he'd managed to persuade them to follow him, he led them all to safety.

'The story had a sad ending. When the justices looked outside for their saviour, they eventually found him weak, coughing and wheezing in nearby bushes, suffering from smoke inhalation. Despite best efforts to save him, he lapsed into a coma and died three days later.

'The grieving justices determined that a memorial would be created for their loyal friend and, after a long search, found a local artist named Brettamore Higgs who was renowned for his cat sculptures. Higgs constructed the statue from rare local granite, over the protests of some townspeople who felt that such a valuable material shouldn't be used – but the justices were insistent. The 7-foot-high statue still stands today and is maintained, nearly a century later, although it seems that it's no longer surrounded by grass, as in one of the photos below.'

<https://ramskells.weebly.com/> (undated)

HOWEVER,,, it seems that the whole story, appealing as it is, is a fabrication! It was apparently compiled by some Public International Law students, and posted on the Weebly site (*above*), where it became widely distributed and believed – rather like the mythical Oscar/Unsinkable Sam cat tale. The statue is in bronze, not granite.

The sculptor Brettamore Higgs never existed; the real sculptor is the Dutchman Henk Visch from Eindhoven, and the statue was placed in 2007. Its official title is 'The Witness'. Henk said this about it: 'I didn't want to make a human figure, because that would have personified Law. Law is practised and is a public affair. The cat is a domestic pet and that befits the law, which applies to everyone individually. This animal can see in the dark, and there at the Peace Palace it is the watchful onlooker and witness to everything that we humans don't wish to see.'

[Adrian Pratt blogspot](#) (Nov. 2018)



* * * * *

Featured Felines: Cat Statues and Monuments 4 (2020)

(page checked July 2026)

Panteleimon
Kyiv, Ukraine



The restaurant Pantagruel in Kyiv (Kiev), Ukraine is opposite the Golden Gate – the main gate in the eleventh-century fortifications of the city. (Although little remained of the original gate, it was controversially rebuilt by the Soviets in 1982.) In the mid-1990s the restaurant's owner thought to acquire a cat, which he felt would please customers, and so a beautiful, large, grey Persian cat, **Panteleimon**, joined the team, became very popular and indeed was a favourite of customers and local residents.

One day, unfortunately, there was a fire at the restaurant, although I haven't been able to establish when that was. Sadly, Panteleimon died from smoke inhalation; why he didn't leave the building is unclear, but maybe he thought he was protecting his territory. Restaurant workers, clients and visitors wanted him to be remembered, and so clubbed together to collect money for a sculpture. The resulting bronze, by Bogdan Mazur, dates from 2009 and stands on a plinth in the park near Pantagruel; originally it also included a bird, but after several attempts by tourists to take it as a souvenir of Kyiv it was removed.

These days Panteleimon has thousands of visitors every year, and parts of his body, particularly the ears and tail, are shiny from being rubbed. It's a striking and worthy memorial to a beautiful cat.

I hope Panteleimon's sculpture has survived the brutal Russian attacks on Kyiv.



[Kyiv Maps](#) (undated) | [Dobovo](#) (Oct. 2013 – archived copy)

* * * * *