

2009 LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Barbara Heller

Barbara Heller and her husband Herb, residents of Nantucket, MA & Manhattan where Herb worked on Wall Street, became involved in field trials in the early 1960's with a bitch they bred, Dual Ch Pine Grove Farms Brunhilde. They were members of the Yankee Weimaraner Club and very active in putting on field trials for the club. In 1964 Barbara won the National Amateur Championship with "Bruni ". In 1966, at 6 years of age, "Bruni" finished her bench championship to become a Dual Champion. One year later, 1967, "Bruni" won the National Open Championship handled by Chet Cummings.

Their bitch, Ch Flottheims Gretchen was bred to FC Elsmere Baron von Wehman and produced 3 champions under the Tannenhof prefix.

They moved to Sanibel Island, FL and after Herb's death, Barbara was appointed to replace Herb as AKC Delegate from the WCA. She moved from Sanibel Island to Sarasota and became active in the Sarasota KC. She started her career as a conformation judge and judged Best In Show at Westminster KC in 1993. She was one of the first judges willing to consider the Weimaraner as a competitive member of the sporting group and to award them a best in show. It is her willingness to forge ahead and work at this acceptance that has resulted in the success that many of us experience in the conformation ring.

Once she started judging, she became involved in rescue and always had two rescue dogs in her home who she over indulged because she felt they deserved to be spoiled.

Barbara was dedicated to the breed and an avid supporter of the Weimaraner Foundation Fund.

Dorothy Derr

It may be part of some master plan or just plain destiny, but it seems like all successful organizations are fortunate to have one key person who virtually runs the whole show. That person seems to have their finger on the pulse of everything going on in the organization and makes it all work, someone who is the definition of the phrase “multitasking.” In the WCA for 24 yrs this person was Dorothy Derr.

Dorothy began her service career to the WCA in 1982 as the Volunteer Chair of the rapidly expanding Futurity/Maturity program while living in Des Moines, Iowa. When the Executive Secretary position became available in 1984, based on her outstanding performance organizing the Futurity Program, she was the unanimous choice for the contracted position.

Dorothy immediately recognized the need to get computerized as she inherited the job with no more than a Rolodex file, some old WCA magazines, and an antique mimeograph machine, which Dorothy left behind and the WCA donated to a Scout Troop. She charged into the computer age and took us with her. By 1997 she was on the fifth equipment upgrade (that she provided all on her own) and began to layout the magazine on a desktop publishing system. Dorothy wore many other hats. She handled all Futurity litter nominations, individual forfeits, eligibility lists and payouts. She handled all local events for Parent Club approval and processed all membership applications and renewals for the club and attended all Board meetings and National events as well. In between all that, she answered all club correspondence and maintained a weekly Q & A telephone line, WCA email and fax facilities.

Just to add a little more difficulty to the job, Dorothy found it necessary to relocate the national office on a regular basis. Her husband Charlie, a very understanding person in his own right, worked for the Dept. of Veteran Affairs, overseeing all VA facilities, renovations, expansions and new construction all over the USA. This required moving every three or four years. Dorothy routinely packed up all of the

club records and equipment and in very short order was in full operation in a new city.

One of the things that made Dorothy so special was that she was always up front with people. She wanted what was best for the breed and she went after that with great gusto. Dorothy would “heartily recommend” that you send a different picture of your dog for the magazine, a famous quote from Dorothy was that the dog probably wasn’t the most beautiful Weim she had ever seen but he sure was not as ugly as the picture that the club’s photographer had submitted.

Dorothy was a tireless worker and set a high standard for herself and the Board of Directors that she worked with through the years, the 3 jobs that Dorothy held (Secretary, Futurity Administrator and Magazine Editor) were so large that it currently takes three different people to perform these jobs.

Clearly, Dorothy’s training and experience as a schoolteacher were evident in her willingness to help members with problems. If you missed a deadline and were foolish enough to think you could get it fixed and skip the fine, you quickly found her about as flexible as an Israeli hostage negotiator. No matter who you were, there were no exceptions. Once in the early days of email, someone received an email back from Dorothy with punctuation and spelling corrected. That was our Dorothy, she was always a great watchdog for the WCA and truly the heartbeat of our club for 24 years.

Virginia Alexander

When writing a summary of the accomplishments and contributions of our first Lifetime Achievement Award individual, there was so much information that it would take several pages to list them all and we would still only be able to briefly touch on them. It was evident that quite a few WCA members agreed, six nominations were received for this same person and numerous telephone calls from people wanting to make sure that she was nominated. It is a great honor to announce that the first WCA Lifetime Achievement Award recipient is Virginia Alexander.

Ginny was born on June 9th 1928, her beautiful mother was busy in the social world, her father was a physician and Ginny was interested in literature and genetics. Ginny learned to pollinate lilies and cultivate roses as soon as she was able to walk and one of her favorite things to do was teach their Dalmatian “Jenny” new tricks.

Ginny’s first experience with the AKC was when she was 10 ½ yrs old and she took her dog to an AKC Obedience class. Before she was 15 yrs old she put a CD, CDX and UD on her dog. Competing against adult handlers she placed number nine in the trial awards ratings and her Dalmatian was the first Dalmatian to receive the title of Utility Dog. Ginny and Jenny spent lots of time “giving back.” Even at this early age they did a lot of demonstrations in elementary schools, senior centers and war veteran homes resulting in the mayor of Atlantic City giving Jenny a lifelong ticket for all public transportation within city limits. Ginny still had to buy her own ticket. She was also featured in Seventeen Magazine with an article about Ginny and Jenny.

Ginny lost Jenny to an inherited kidney disease while in graduate school, losing her beloved companion to an inherited disease made her think about going into physiologic research. In the following years, Ginny published many articles dealing with genetic problems, genetics of corn and other grain and certain liver diseases in mice and humans, this research resulted in her doctorate degree and to her becoming a decent for psychology with the medical facility at the University of Pittsburgh. As a member of many honorary fraternities and also as an associate

authority, more than 16 special publications followed. Ginny met her husband while teaching at the University of Pittsburgh.

Ginny has accomplished everything that she has set out to do, the Reiteralm kennel has bred top dogs for over 50 yrs and many breeders can thank Ginny and her genetic background for the good genes of their dogs. During the “dark days” of the WCA when the club teetered on financial bankruptcy, Ginny and a small group of individuals worked very hard to save the organization.

Ginny has been very active in rescue and has placed hundreds of Weims in perfect homes. Ginny and Jackie Isabell worked together for many years doing research which resulted in the publication of Weimaraner Ways which is considered the bible of the Weimaraner breed and a must read for any serious fancier.

We are very lucky to profit from Ginny’s immense knowledge and what she has contributed to the Weimaraner and the WCA. Some of what Ginny does is well known to all, Weimaraner Ways, Chair of the Standards Committee, her many years of service to the WCA and the Weimaraner in various ways. However, Ginny also does many things to benefit the Weimaraner and the WCA behind the scenes both financially and otherwise that she does not ask to be recognized for. It is these acts of thankless and anonymous devotion that we are recognizing Ginny for tonight.

Ted and Lori Jarmie

Lori passed away several years ago but Ted is still a member of the WCA. He is retired and has enough health issues that he is no longer able to be active with the breed.

Ted Jarmie was an AKC Weimaraner breed judge who was also licensed for the Sporting Group and Best In Show and who also judged field trials. Ted wrote the article "Why Own a Weimaraner? What can I do with one?" which was first published in the WCA Rules booklet and in Volume I of the WCA History of the Weimaraner and was published for many years in the Blue Ribbon edition of The Weimaraner Magazine. Ted also served as WCA delegate to the AKC and as WCA Field Trial Chairman and was responsible for locating the Ardmore field trial grounds which have become a permanent location, centrally located for both National field and show events.

Ted was president of the WCA during a very difficult time. During his administration, the standard was changed to include the disqualification for "A distinctly blue or black coat." Regardless of ones opinion on blues, this is still part of the Weimaraner Standard today.

Lori was also a Weimaraner Breed judge. She and Ted were very active in Southland Weimaraner Club specialty shows and field trials as well as working on National Specialties hosted by Southland.

Lori was a good mentor, used a lot of common sense, was very open and honest, and believed that desire was a gene and to use it in pedigrees. She believed a Weimaraner needed to have a good temperament and be a family dog first before you could do any of the rest of it.

Together, Ted and Lori produced and owned many well-known Bench Champions, Field Champions and at least 2 Dual Champions under the kennel name of Redhill. Many of the Redhill dogs are in pedigrees of our show and field dogs and Dual champions. You'll see the name Redhill on many of the dogs that were National Derby or Futurity winners.

While this award is not based on wins, it is because of their accomplishments on the bench and in the field that it can not be denied that they contributed to the future of the breed with these versatile dogs being behind many pedigrees. It should also be noted that they devoted time to local and National club activities until they were no longer able to do so.

Thomas Wilson

Tom is responsible for quite a few people's devotion and love of the Weimaraner. He served the WCA and the Weimaraner for over 50 yrs before his death in July of 2007.

Tom began his love affair with Weimaraners when he was a 19 year old seaman apprentice in the Navy stationed at Quonset Point, RI. One Saturday night he was out with his barracks buddies and as they returned from a night on the town he met Rex, the Weimaraner, owned by a Commander that lived on the base and was totally overwhelmed by his beauty. Several months later the Commander let Tom know of a litter of Weimaraners with puppies available and Tom got his first Weim, Baron.

Tom started out in obedience to get Baron under control and they began to compete and obtained his CD with very high scores. He was also talented in the field and made Tom look good at his first field trials. Tom joined the WCA in September of 1959 sponsored by Mrs. Overton Ogilvie of Cotuit, MA who was one of the charter members of the WCA. Tom was initially very active in field trialing where he had some success with Baron. He had an awakening when he took Baron to a specialty show and got a serious lesson about the difference between back yard bred and show quality dogs. Tom watched in awe as Dorothy Remensnyder of Shadowmar fame went Winners Dog, Reserve Winners Bitch and Best Of Breed with three beautiful dogs that looked nothing like Baron. That was when Tom made a commitment to do whatever it took to reach that level of competence as a breeder. Tom said for the rest of his life that this was a pivotal moment, not just in regard to Weimaraners but in his life.

Tom felt that one of the smartest things that he ever did was to secure a show puppy from Virginia Alexander. He co-owned his dog with Ginny and gained a valuable mentor and friend. Tom's first show dog was named "Gretel" (Tom wasn't the most original thinker when it came to names) and she and Ginny were responsible for introducing Tom to Ann Kepler and Peggy Roush who assisted Tom in finishing her.

Tom benefitted from a lifetime friendship with these wonderful ladies. He also credits his association with Lou Schnegelberger and Joan Valdez as being responsible for his success in the breed.

Tom's ultimate goal was always to breed a Weimaraner who could win the National Field Championship and the National Specialty. While he never achieved this goal, he continued to strive for this until he died. Tom was a great believer in the versatility of the Weimaraner and, while most of you probably remember more about his success in the show ring he was always a field trialer at heart.

While Tom was very successful in the show ring, he was a great believer in giving back. He worked tirelessly to place rescue dogs, he never turned away a dog, whether it was from his breeding or not, whether he had room or not or whether he could afford the sometimes very costly veterinary care that the dog needed. Tom spent many years serving on the Board of the WCA and as its President for 6 years. He also held numerous offices with the WCA and as a charter member of the Weimaraner Assoc of Greater Pittsburgh. He was involved in the Big Brothers program and several local organizations that were not dog related.

Love him or hate him, Tom loved the Weimaraner and dedicated his entire life to the breed often putting its needs ahead of those of his family. Those in his "inner circle" knew that he was a man with a good heart, he always had a funny story or some wisdom to impart that could help with a situation, dog related or not.

Tom loved to win, as many of us know, make no mistake about it. However, he also worked very hard and dedicated a lot of his time and love to the Weimaraner.