

WIDDEN

PICKWICK

Robert Widden

I was looking for a dog for my daughter to have as a pet and my wife wanted a small dog so we considered Basset Hounds, Pembroke Welsh Corgis and Westies. After going to a couple of shows, we decided on Westies.

I got my first dog from Jim and Nadine Simmons of Covintree Kennels, knowing very little about the breed at the time. I bought Sandy (Ch. Covintree Sandy Hill) because Ch. Elfinbrook Simon appeared in her pedigree. I read about him in John Marvin's book, *The Complete West Highland White Terrier*. When I started looking for a Westie I answered an ad in the local paper and met David Ogg, a Westie breeder who eventually became my mentor. By the time I met David, he had sold all the puppies mentioned in the ad. He sent me to the Simmons who had two female puppies for sale. My wife insisted that the dog should look like the dogs we saw at a dog show, so I had to learn to groom. David was very helpful and made time to give me grooming lessons. He sponsored us to join the California Westie Club and the Parent Club. My wife and I went to our first Montgomery County show in 1978 with David, and a bitch I had purchased from David in 1977. David was always there when I needed help with grooming. David was also a gifted Westie artist. His art work and sculptures were used as trophies at many specialty shows.

Dee Hanna and Bergit Coady Kabel both showed me ways of finishing a coat that made the job easier and quicker. Both Clay Coady and Wood Wornall mentored me without knowing it. I watched them show dogs and learned the skill from them of showing a dog to advantage.

I've had a number of memorable moments in Westies. Winning the California Specialty with my Ch. Clarkcrest Penny of Pickwick topped them all. The Westie I did not own that was my favorite was Ch. Ardenrun Andsome of Purston

My favorite dog show is Montgomery County because there you can see so many great Terriers and especially so many wonderful Westies. You also get a chance to meet breeders from all over the country.

I always groomed my own dogs and as I stated above, my initial instruction came mainly from David Ogg. That being said, I basically taught myself. Three to four nights a week, I would spend one to three hours after dinner, grooming. At first I just pulled hair but it was never enough. Every time I went to a show I would compare my dog to the other Westies, then go home and try to change my dog's outline to look more like the

dogs I liked at the show. It took me three years and 1,200 plus hours of grooming to become what I would consider a good groomer.

I learned to evaluate puppies by observing, not only my own, but all the Westie litters I was able to see. Young puppies were never easy for me to evaluate. The one time I got it right was with my bitch Ch. Clarkcrest Penny of Pickwick who I picked from a photo at five weeks of age. The two dogs I did not own, that I liked a great deal, were Ch. Tweed Take by Storm and Ch. Camcrest Andsurely Trouble.

The two sires that I believe have had a significant influence on the modern Westie were Ch. Donnybrook's George and Ch. Mac-Ken-Char's Irish Navigator.

My most memorable moment at Montgomery came in 1983 when I showed Ch. Clarkcrest Penny of Pickwick myself to Best of Opposite Sex over 108 bitches.

The Westie author that most influenced me was John T. Marvin. My wife and I have a fairly large and diversified collection of Westie artwork, figurines, postcards and assorted "Westiana." I am unable to pick out a favorite piece.

I was active in the West Highland White Terrier Club of California. During the years I was active, I served many times on the Board of Directors. I also served two years as Second Vice President and Match Chairman, two years as First Vice President and Specialty Show Chairman, and two years as Club President.

The future of the breed, as it has always been, is in the hands of the breeders. If they breed the dogs that they believe best represents the standard, the breed will do just fine.