

**Robert D. Black**

1. Why Westies?

Why *not* Westies? If you love terriers, a Westie is the perfect choice in all respects.

2. From whom did you obtain your first Westie?

My first Westie came from Mrs. Anthony (“Polly”) Walters, whose Tyndrum Kennels were located in Wycombe, Pennsylvania. The year was 1968.

3. Was this Westie purchased as a pet or show dog?

The first puppy was originally supposed to be a pet and was chosen about six weeks before pick-up, but it didn’t work out so another was chosen as a substitute and this one was “better.”

4. Who was your most important mentor and why?

5. What do you remember most about this mentor?

6 Who were some of the other mentors that influenced you? How did they do so?

The question of early mentors is interesting. Polly Walters had a profound influence. Our relationship quickly developed to the point where we eventually became quite close; I helped with breeding and whelping. I would drive her to local shows and generally became a part of her household. Polly was a member of Montgomery County Kennel Club. Bee & Jack Marvin were frequent guests in her home and I have early, fond memories of talking with them both. Tom and Kay Gately lived close by and were also frequent guests. The Gatelys had been accomplished professional handlers and Tom’s grooming and handling skills were amazing. Barbara Keenan and Polly also were close and she too had an early influence. Being frequently exposed to such important people in the wonderful Westie world had an important influence.

7. To date, what has been your most important/ memorable moment in Westies?

I handled my first Westie in a “real” show (not a match) under Jack Marvin and we walked out with a three point major...such a thrill! Yet, in retrospect, a small beginning. All journeys begin with a small step.

8. What is your favorite dog show? Why?

Over the years, Montgomery County is consistently the highlight of each year. I am a member and I play a small part. And, of course, my own show, Hatboro Dog Club, plays a part in that wonderful weekend as well. The weekend as a whole is an amazing showcase of the country's best terriers.

9. Who taught you to groom?

My first professional handler was Cliff Hallmark. Cliff's "tricks of the trade" have stayed with me for many years and I am proud to have called him and his wife, Lois my friends.

10. Who taught you to evaluate litters and young stock?

Without question, that would have been Polly Walters.

13. What was your most memorable Montgomery County moment? Roving moment?  
No response furnished.

14. If you attended the Centennial in 2009, what were your greatest experiences from it?

I thought the 2009 Centennial show was a grand experience. The organizers deserve lots of credit for producing a suitable showcase to that was a week long tribute to our breed.

Congratulations on a job well done!

15. What Westie author/artist influenced you the most?

Jack Marvin's writings stand the test of time. His books and *AKC Gazette* articles are still relevant today and should be read by today's breeders and show exhibitors.

16. Do you have a favorite Westie collectible(s)?

My commissioned works (mostly oils) by Barbara Hands (UK) take pride of place in my home. I have a few oils by Dorothy Hardcastle as well that are also wonderful.

17. Are you or were you active in any regional Westie Clubs?

No. I was a longtime member of the local Philadelphia club but somehow my membership got dropped. I give all my time and effort to being the Show Chair of the Hatboro Dog Club (now in my 24<sup>th</sup> year!) and am a member of several other all-breed clubs as well. In addition, I am a member of the Montgomery County

Kennel Club.

18. What do you think the future holds for the breed? Where would you like to see it in 10/20 years?
19. How best can WHWTCA members assure the future well-being of the breed.
20. What advice can you impart to present and future Westie enthusiasts?

From my varied experiences over the years and from my judging in-ring experiences, I firmly believe that today's breeders' are doing themselves proud. I find the overall quality of today's Westie to be quite good. Breeders need to keep in mind, however, that in spite of the beguiling demeanor of our beloved Westie, this is, in all respects, a working terrier. The breed needs to be able to do a day's work. Substance is needed. Bone and muscle are integral parts of making a working terrier. Westies are not toys, they are terriers!