

MOELLER

MERRIWEST ACRES

Marian Moeller

1. Why Westies?

I was attracted to Westies from seeing them at shows and in ads. At the time we had Labrador Retrievers and I wanted a little dog. My husband bought dog food at Twin City Pet Supply and the owner, Letty Larson showed and bred Westies. He jokingly said he wouldn't bring me there because I would want a Westie but of course he did, and we became great friends with Letty and remain so to this day.

2. From whom did you obtain your first Westie?

Letty Larson of Neocles Kennels is who I purchased my first Westie from in 1978. She eventually became Ch. Neocles Media in 1980, eventually earning her CD degree in 1987 and her CGC in 1993.

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

I purchased my puppy to be a show dog and I wasn't disappointed. She was showy and loved being in the ring.

4. Who was your most important mentor and why?

I have had more than one mentor for different reasons. Letty, was important for selling me my first Westie and helping me with grooming. When I moved to upstate New York in November 1978 I did not know anyone near my new home that could help me with grooming. I tried and showed my Media but never won any points. Again Letty Larson came to my rescue. She contacted Dora Lee Wilson who showed Media to her championship; one of her most prestigious wins was Winners at the Western Reserve Kennel Club show in 1980. Betsy Finley of Woodlawn kennels gave me her retired Ch. Merryhart's Happy Hobo to use as my stud dog. She was more than patient when I kept calling her with questions about my first breeding attempt. She kept telling me that Hobo would know when the time was right and he sure did. Dawn Martin told me about the Versatile Westie Award an owner and dog could earn and my Ch. Dawn's A Stitch 'N Time, JE RN GCG TDI was my first Versatile Westie and I also traveled to Pennsylvania for grooming advice. I met Ginette Lemieux at an obedience trial and she, too, was helpful with grooming tips. It was through these meetings that we became and remain good friends. France Bergeron, a wonderful Canadian breeder and handler was also very helpful to me.

5. What do you remember most about this mentor?

Letty helped me finish my first champion. After a six-year drought with no puppies, Dawn let me purchase Stitches and told me about the Versatile Westie Awards and the yahoo group. Ginette helped me with my breeding and offered a wealth of advice, and France's handling my dogs and also furnished a world of valuable advice.

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

My answers are in questions 4 & 5.

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

I would have to say when France Bergeron showed my homebred Sissy, to her Best in Show win at the Canadian *Classique* Royal Canin show. She went on to win another BIS after that. France finished Sissy at the Hatboro show and went on to receive an Award of Merit at our National Specialty at Montgomery County.

8. What is your favorite dog show and why?

The National Specialty held at Montgomery County is my clear favorite. At this show you get to see all of the beautiful Westies, puppies and adults showing, working in all the performance events. Doing what Westies do best,,,,, "Doing it all!" You learn a wealth of information by talking and watching the events, and you can catch up on friends who you haven't seen in awhile.

9. Who taught you to groom?

Letty (What would I have done without her?) started me off and she told me that when I thought I had pulled enough, to keep on grooming as this was one of my faults, not removing enough hair. I was sorry I had to move from Minnesota so soon after purchasing Media because it was hard to learn, and I did it by trial and error. And again, Ginette Lemieux, Dawn Martin and France Bergeron offered valuable grooming advice.

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

Letty flew to New York to help me evaluate my first litter. After that my friend Clare, a Cairn breeder, and the late Cindy Sherman, as well as my friend Elsie Bartholoma who was a Saint Bernard breeder who now has a Cairn all took part in my education. Ginette Lemieux was a great help to me also with her breeding background. In addition, I read books, watched videos and always watched and listened at the shows.

11. When you look back, which of your Westies would you consider your favorite or most influential? Why?

My Ch. Dawn's A Stitch 'N Time, JE RN CGC TDI, for being my first Versatile Westie and for being the mother of my Ch. and Can BIS Ch. Merriwest Sign 'O The Times, RN CGC TDI.

12. Also looking back, which sire, in your opinion, had a strong influence on the breed?

I think stud dogs from Purston Kennels, Kennels of the Rouge, Merryhart, Holyrood, Wishing Well, Heritage Farms, Sno-Bilt, Leman, and Mac-Ken-Char Kennels all had a strong influence on today's Westies.

13. What was your most memorable Montgomery County moment? Roving moment?

My most memorable moment was when my Sissy finished her championship at Hatboro and then went on to receive an Award of Merit at the 2006 Montgomery

County show. Yes, that was definitely my best Montgomery memory.

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

I was only able to be there until Friday but my UCD Merriwest Out of Time, CGC RN JE TDI CD earned his Rally Novice title at the Centennial and his sister, , Ch. Merriwest Sign 'O The Times CGC RN TDI (Sissy) earned her first leg towards her Rally title.

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

My first Westie books were *The Complete West Highland White Terrier* by John T. Marvin, and *Westies from Head to Tail* by Ruth Flaherty. Both included a wealth of information.

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

I have so many Westie collectibles that it is hard to say, beautiful plates, statues etc but maybe my most valuable is my Beswick figurine.

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

If there was a regional club near my area I would be involved but there is not one near me.

18. What do you think the future holds for the breed? Where would you like to see it in 10/20 years?

With all of the conscientious breeders/mentors I think the Westies' future will continue to grow. I would like to see correct-sized Westies bred to the standard, in my opinion I think they are getting too big.

19. How best can WHWTCA members assure the future well-being of the breed.

Members can test their Westies for genetic defects, give to the Westie Foundation so that soon the defects can be eliminated, and be open minded to new ideas as long as they are in the best interest of the breed.

20. What advice can you impart to present and future Westie enthusiasts?

Read as many books as you can, ask questions, find a mentor and never give up your dreams in Westies whatever they may be. Mentors can be especially helpful so new Westie fans can pursue their dreams.

I have had only nine champions, six were homebreds and two had Canadian titles, three that were almost finished. I have nine with CGC titles, four with CD titles, one with a UCD title, two with Junior Earthdog titles, five with TDI titles and three with Rally Novice titles. I did not have many litters and for a span of six years I had no breeding bitches until I purchased Stitches from Dawn Martin in 1999. I must say that I do love the performance events, just to watch Westies in action brings smiles to Westie lovers' faces. Besides working in Rally, Obedience, and Earthdog, I am training for Tracking and Agility which is a lot of fun.

