

## **SHREVE**

### **Bob and Marietta Shreve**

Why Westies? / From whom? / Was it a show dog?

Some may have heard our story, but this seems an appropriate place to repeat it.

In our “pre-Westie life” our house dog, Annie belle was a German Shepherd. One day my older daughter came in from playing to inform me that Annie was getting too big, she was breaking her doll clothes and she was too big to be pulled in the red wagon. Debbie informed us that “She falls out too much”. Debbie had decided we needed a smaller dog, one that would be a friend for Annie. Marietta and I decided that would be OK and called our Doberman show dog friends back in South Dakota. They recommended a Cairn like their handler had. So off we went to find a Cairn. We didn’t find a dog on the first day of our hunt but we did find an AKC poster with Cairns, Westies and Scotties in a row. We finally found both a Cairn puppy and a Westie puppy for sale in Denver. Our first stop was the Westie breeder’s house. When we entered the house we found all of the living room walls had 16”x20” portraits of Westie hung on them. The couple was Peter and Dorothy Pubols (McTwiddles), long time Westie breeders in the mountain west. They had maintained interest in the breed throughout the Second World War. Fortunately for the Shreve family the Pubols had a male and a female at the time that they wanted to place.

We hesitated. We had a family conference and decided that before we made a decision purchasing the Westie, we should check out the Cairn family. We left the Pubols’s home and went to see the Cairn puppy. What we found was a cattery. The lady showed cats. We asked “Why do you show cats rather than dogs?” She responded by telling us that “I don’t want to show dogs, dog shows are all fixed.” We headed back to the Pubols to purchase our first Westie, McTwiddles Twiddle Dee. As we left, Dorothy said you really should “show” this dog, she is very nice. When we arrived home I decided I needed to show our next door neighbor, Tom, our new family member. He also had a new family member, Rupert, the Basset. Rupert had arrived at the Denver airport that very afternoon. Tom was going to “show” his dog. We decided we would show our dog also. But how does one go about showing a dog?

Tom knew that Harvey Green was president of Greeley Kennel Club, we’ll contact him. The next week Tom, Marietta and I went to the Greeley Kennel Club meeting. There were six members. We joined GKC and the club then had nine members. “How do we show our dogs?” The response was that the puppies are too young to be entered in a show but you can be on the Greeley Kennel Club show committee where you can learn. When they the puppies are old enough to show we’ll show you how. Our puppy turned six months old in October so we went to our first show in Rapid City South Dakota, 325 miles north. In June 1970 De Dee finished her championship in spite of us. At 10 years old she was still as good as any dog we were

showing and in my opinion would have bested most of them.

As we began our show activities there was this lady from Draper, Utah, Dee Hanna, who came to all of the shows along the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains. She always seemed to win. I distinctly recall her saying "I'll stop coming when you guys start beating me." Then she announced before the next show I'll come over and we'll have a grooming seminar. She kept coming, holding grooming seminars and eventually we began to win a few points.

The second event that was a turning point was meeting John Marvin. Mr. Marvin was judging in Denver. Marietta approached him to ask about having a Terrier Club dinner with him. We were all seeking advice on how to improve our dog showing skills and to improve our breeding programs. John said "You must get out of your area. You need to see other dogs from other parts of the country." The local Westie fanciers said why don't we form a Westie club and invite the National Specialty to Denver. As I recall Mary and Jim Jones, Anita and Joe Becky, Joanne and Marshall Marriott and ourselves, Marietta and Bob Shreve were founding members of the West Highland White Terrier Club of Greater Denver. In the 1970s and 1980s this group spent many hours together learning to groom, showing our dogs and planning events.

In 1973 I was president of Greeley Kennel Club when a group of six all breed kennel clubs joined together and requested that AKC allow us to have an eight-day cluster in June 1976 as a part of the Colorado Centennial Celebration. The request was made at the height of the gas crisis and AKC agreed to the concept. It was a rousing success with over 4500 dogs at each of the six shows. The cluster show concept was born. The National club accepted our invitation to a part of the Centennial Celebration and we got to see Westies from all over the US just as John Marvin had suggested.

Our favorite Roving moment was winning the Bred by Exhibitor class in Chicago in 1971 with our first homebred champion Castlemilk's Jo Jo John Sell. Later that year he became our first Terrier Group winner.

There was a photo that appeared in one of the popular magazines of the times that showed a male Westie challenging a large Bulldozer. What could better describe the Westie? A friend came over to the house and commented about one of our dogs saying "He is so tough, he'll take on anything." That is the temperament that we love about the breed.

We have lots of Westie collectables but I think our favorites are those that were from Buchanan Scotch that showed the Westie and Scottie. We have pitchers, glasses, trays, bottles, a mirror and even ads from magazines. Perhaps one of our most unusual items is a small statue of one of the Wise men holding a Westie. The little statue was molded over a clothes pin so we could add it to our Christmas tree.

Establishing the Westie Foundation has been an excellent program. Supporting health issue

research can only be positive. The more that is known about the issues, the better opportunity we as breeders will have to remove these issues from our breeding programs. Westies have always been known as tough little dogs. They are lovable and adorable and we want to keep them that way.

The best advice I can offer is to read the standard and when you get through reading it read again. By reading the standard one can learn what the early breeders believed were the most important aspects of the breed. They attempted to put into words how the Westie was to function. What made a Westie a Westie? The standard tells us what attributes breeders should strive to produce. I feel that by focusing on the positive aspects, the breed will not only survive but it will flourish.