

**WARD**

**DONNYBROOK**

## **Billye & Tom Ward**

When Billye and I married, we wanted to get a dog as soon as I finished the sea duty I was serving. We wanted a dog small enough to travel with us in our Austin Healey, big enough to be sturdy and self-reliant, and handsome. After lots of research, we discovered Westies, and that was it. Westies were quite rare in 1962 but we found Anna McGuinness through a newspaper ad. She was located in Miami, 150 miles from our home in Key West and had a litter sired by Ch. Elfinbrook Simon. We bought a pet, which was all we could afford at the time. We greatly loved that puppy and were devastated when we lost him to distemper when he was only six months old, despite the fact he had had all his shots.

When we felt we could do so, we started looking for another Westie. At the Miami show in early 1963, we fell head over heels for a six-month-old puppy bitch and watched her go Winners Bitch for a major. We were told, however, that she was not for sale. The details are another story, but we ended up co-owning her with Beverly Sundin and later owned her outright. Her name was Suncrest Little Audrey and she was the foundation of our breeding.

Our most important mentor, and we will never forget her, was Triskett Vogelius. We bred Audrey to her Ch. Triskett's Most Happy Fella and they produced our first three champions. Triskett saw that we needed help and offered to help me learn to groom. There were no Westie people, let alone groomers, within 200 miles of us in Key West. I would try to make Audrey look like the dogs in Jack Marvin's *The Complete West Highland White Terrier* and then would take a roll of pictures from all angles and send them to Triskett. She would mark them up, saying things like "take more hair off here" or "you took too much here." She also spent time telling us about bloodlines, breeding, evaluating puppies, etc. Many other people helped us, including several professional handlers and breeders in other breeds, but she was the special one.

To date, my most memorable moment in Westies was winning the breed at Montgomery from the Veterans class with Ch. Donnybrook's George. His first Montgomery win and his first all-breed Best in Show were special but winning from the Veterans class while he was having such a good time was even more special. Montgomery, with all its wonderful terriers, has always been my favorite show. We first went in 1964, when we showed Little Audrey (and got one point at Devon over a special). I have missed only one MKC show (1984) since.

Looking back, of our Westies, I would consider George to have been a favorite and the most influential dog we have owned, although Ch. Donnybrook's Miss Triskett also had great influence on our own breeding. She produced nine champions out of a total of 11 puppies and three won groups. Every Westie we have ever had was a "favorite." Of the dogs I didn't own, Ch. Ardenrun Andsome of Purston was very close to my idea of perfection. Ch. Whitebriar Jalisker and his son, Ch. De-Go Hubert were great dogs. I think Ch. Cruben Dextor had a great

influence on the breed.

We are not currently active in a local or regional breed club and have not been for twenty years. We are active in the Maryland Kennel Club and in the Columbia Terrier Association of which I was a founder.

I would advise any Westie enthusiast to approach breeding seriously. Read. Listen to your “elders.” I can remember Billye literally sitting at the feet of Lulu Haskell and Polly Walters, begging them to tell her about this dog or that dog. Look. Don’t pack up and leave a show as soon as you have finished in the ring. Talk to breeders. Learn from handlers. Study pedigrees. Look at dogs, their siblings and, importantly, their dams. Do they have what you need? Don’t go to the “winner du jour.” Go to the dog that can help you improve the single most significant feature on your bitch that you think needs improvement. Improving one thing at a time will take you much further than trying to do everything in one breeding.

Westies, along with Billye, have been the great loves of my life. They have given us so much; they deserve our protection as a breed. Respect them.