

In the mid sixties we decided that we wanted a small Purebred dog. I knew nothing about dogs always having had dogs from the pound. Someone told my husband about a local pet store. The “puppy mill” industry was just beginning. None of the breeds I initially saw appealed to me. They brought me to the area where they had older puppies. There was a 3month old Westie puppy and it was instant love.

When she was six months old I was told about an obedience class and off we went. My trainer, Doris Storberg, a German Shepard breeder, sent me to Shirley Nichols, a Westie breeder, where I saw my first adult Westie. Shirley took me under her wing. She introduced me to the show ring, the breeding, and the grooming of Westies. She also introduced me to prominent Westie breeders such as Betina King, Cathrine Hayward, and other Westie people. These people contributed to my Westie education. With these people I was one of the founding members of the WHWTCNE.

Doris Storberg taught me about the importance of bone structure and movement. She used horses so that I could easily see angulation and movement. Page Elliot’s book and movie on movement added to my knowledge. With every ones help I developed two lines. My Ch Skaket’s Lolly Pop (Lolly) was my first champion from my first line. Ch Crubin Dexter through Ch Loch Ness Highfalutin was the foundation. Ch Skaket’s Chunkies UD (Chuckie) was my second champion taking a 5 pt major at the Roving Specialty and a 4 pt major the next day. He was my second line. He was also the first versatility dog.

I continued with the two lines producing and handling several champions. Then I combined the lines and produced FIC Int, CA, MEX, AM CH Skaket’s Candy Man UDT. His structure, floating movement (I had to run to keep up to him when he was in a trot), and his showmanship brought him to multiple group wins and placements and BIS. At Montgomery in 1981 he placed group 4 and then in 1988 from the veterans class, at the age of 9 1/2, he placed group 2 there. At 9 1/2years old he was at his peak. His condition and showmanship had me in awe of him. All I did was hold his leash. He did the rest.

In the group that day, while the judge was busy with the other dogs he was giving me a hard time. He kept trying to sniff the ground. I kept pulling up his head trying to keep him clean. After several minutes of this he lied

down. So I gave up and let him do what he wanted. Suddenly he pulled himself into his show stance. The judge had just finished with the last dog and was beginning to look at the group. I always wondered how he knew when it was time to “show”.

He had 24 champion kids most of who were in the hands of amateurs and novices. Barbara Partridge, receiving his FIC Int, Canadian, Mexican, Bermudian, handled him out of country American Championships. He was 1st runner up to Show of Shows in Canada. He also went backpacking and climbed Mount Washington with me. He was active in performance receiving his UD, TD, JE, and CG. There was no agility then. Thus earning his versatility award.

My original Westies “Lolly Pop” and “Chuckie” were at one of the first earthdog trials run by AWTA receiving their Certificate of Gameness titles. I continue with earthdog today with my dogs getting their tittles. My dogs and family were on Animal Planet’s Dog 101.

I have always been involved in obedience, receiving many title including 4 Utilities. Now I add rally.

I’ve been involved in tracking since AKC added it to their agenda. I currently teach tracking. My latest Westie Lonach’s Over the Rainbow is 2 years old, and was bred by Chris Forbes who used my line. She is going for her TDX this spring. She is also in rally, obedience, agility, and breed.

I started with agility when it began in this country with USDAA. I continue with AKC agility.

I have been concerned with the direction Westies have gone since the early 90’s. Shoulder angulation so straight that they cannot “cover ground”, size way over standard, large bone instead of medium bone, many health problems. I have been encouraged recently observing more breeders addressing these problems. I hope this continues.

I am back in breeding and showing working with Chris Forbes (Lonach), Mitzi Gauthier (Skaket), and Cheryl Cyr (Chien D’Our’s). So I am making sure that my line continues.

My advice to breeders is that you evaluate your dogs realistically without emotion. Learn how to feel bones when evaluating and not your eyes. Your eyes and your emotions can fool you, Study movement and look for how the front reaches. We all want beautiful heads and coats. Anyone can see this. But what good is it if the dog cannot move properly.

The future of the breed is in your hands. Please evaluate your dog's realistically, breed only the top dogs, and never breed a dog with a genetic health problem.

Best of luck to all.

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