

GORDON HALL CARVILL 1917 - 2008

Those of you who have memory of him know exactly how delighted he'd be with the honor that the Dachshund Club of America has bestowed on him this October 2009. If he could be here, he'd be walking his black and tan boy, "Stretch Limo", while shaking hands and grinning, giving a word here and there, joking with some of you, nodding to others, sometimes with a wink. He could be one tough competitor in the ring, and just as tough as a judge. Gordon believed in the breed, working with his wife, Jean, to produce standards and minis alike with strong fronts, straight top-lines, true gaits, beautiful heads and bounteous personalities.

Born in Schenectady, NY, Gordon was the fourth of six children of George R. Carvill and Angelina May Warner Carvill. Early in his life, the family settled on a farm near what is now the Albany International Airport in Colonie, NY. As a young man he worked the farm with his father and two brothers, but one of his favorite pastimes, when not occupied with chores, was playing baseball across the road on a sand lot with a team of local boys and his brothers. Baseball was a lifelong love, especially the NY Yankees. He was also a basketball ace at Milne High School in Albany, NY from which he graduated just prior to starting a 35 year career with the New York Telephone Company, now Verizon. Beginning as a lineman, he worked his way up to engineering, a position from which he retired in 1979.

During those intervening years, Gordon and his wife Jean built a home in Delmar, NY, raised their daughter, Judy, and became involved with gardening, Gordon with golf and Jean with perfecting various crafts. It was also during this time that they shifted from pet owners to career breeders. Gordon didn't actually begin his journey in the world of dachshunds, that was Jean's love. There had been beagles, various cats and a Springer Spaniel named "Spotty" that met an accidental end. And on traveling to a local breeder's home to look over a litter of Springer pups, from which Gordon selected Beaupeg's Candytuft, a black and white girl, Jean spotted the litter of dachshunds, taking home Beaupeg's Borage, a wee black and tan fellow, "Tarry", for short. It wasn't long before the dachshund family grew, while Gordon schooled "Candy" in obedience.

Once their daughter had entered college and they had purchased a several-acre plot of wooded land in East Greenbush, NY, Gordon and Jean could begin building a second home with plenty of room to add on a kennel with outdoor runs. It was an unpopulated area in 1958, with one or two homes to the north and the Langenbach farm to the east. Of course, living in a small house trailer with no indoor plumbing during those early winter months of this move, before the driveway could be pushed through to the top of the closest hill where Gordon would clear the land and start construction was not exactly "easy living", especially with one Springer Spaniel, three dachshunds and a cat. It took a good deal of fortitude and a sense of humor. However, once the house was completed enough to move in, the serious business of breeding dachshunds began.

There were difficulties along the way, and like many other families, there were personal losses. Gordon's mother had died when he was a young man, years before, and he lost his father in 1968, along with a brother in 1986. And Jean also lost both of her parents. But the breeding "bug" had become a lifestyle, moving them forward. Jean obsessed over pedigrees, Gordon learned the fine art of "handling" and they achieved a notoriety for fine-looking, sound dachshunds, among them

one of their first to finish, Ch. Villanol's Troubadour. The kennel became a bustling blur of standard long-hair, wired-hair and smooth specimens, with some miniature faces here and there. The thing was, this wasn't just a kennel, it was an adoption agency.

Gordon became active in many organizations to support the breed. He was involved with the Albany Capital District Dachshund Club, serving as President for many years, and a member of both the Albany and Troy Kennel clubs, where he held various positions. He was instrumental in founding the Associated Dog Clubs of New York State, and served as President of the American Dog Owners Association for several years, an organization that promoted legislation to benefit breeds and breeders, responsible dog ownership and dog welfare. Gordon also served as a member of the DCA Board of Directors, as a President of DCA.

Judging became an endeavor, and after earning AKC licensing, Gordon was eligible to judge the Hound Group, Dachshund Specialties and several Sporting Breeds. He was honored to judge Best of Breed at the DCA 100th Anniversary Show in Louisville, Kentucky in 1995. And in February 2001, Gordon was awarded the prestigious Langdon Skarda Award for his good works to better the dog fancy.

You may know some of these facts, may have even read Jean's articles on the history of their kennel and breeding. But did you know that Gordon grew unbelievable tomatoes in his spare time? Fat, juicy and multitudinous, alongside rhubarb, asparagus, corn and various greens and flowers in the early years, a fenced garden to protect the bounty from the deer. There are apple and peach trees that he planted along the driveway being a great plate-of-tomatoes and apple pie for dinner man. In his last years, the garden became half-barrel tubs in the back yard, again, full of tomato plants loaded with fruit, and the deer would come to his call of "here girls", in the front yard for snacks.

His granddaughters were a source of much teasing and fun. He often wore a stern countenance, that they came to know was frequently just a mask for some mischief he was up to and in which he was about to engage them. Actually, it was one of Gordon's comments that led to the surprise 50th wedding anniversary party in 1990, that his granddaughters greatly assisted in pulling off, much to his and Jean's pleasure.

He'd drive through ridiculous weather to get to and from a show, loved Alaska when he judged there, and spoke highly of Japan on his judging assignment there as well. And he loved his home in the woods. When he'd hop on his grey lady, the prized old tractor, to roar up and down the driveway plowing newly fallen snow, it seemed to give him a charge, even at the age of 80.

So often we know of a person's accomplishments, but not of the person. It is hoped that he will be remembered by those of you, here, for not just how you saw him or his contributions to the dog world, but for his love of home, his family and friends and the dogs so dear to him.

(Written by Gordon's daughter, Judith Sutherland)