
LINES FROM LINDA

CELEBRATION OF LIFE FOR DENNIS MCCOY

BY LINDA AYERS TURNER KNORR



During his lifetime, Dennis McCoy achieved an incredible level of success both personally and professionally. Following his passing, friends came together to support Randy Garren and to celebrate the great man whom they loved so dearly.



Carolynne McAteer, Mari-Beth O'Neill, Joan Scott, Pamela Beale, Mary Miller



Marybelle DeHertough, Mary Miller, Teresa Hundt, Randy Garren, Mari-Beth O'Neill, Susan Sprung, Joan Scott, Susan O'Neill (wearing PINK socks in honor of Dennis)



Evan Threfall with his son, William



Randy Garren with Mari-Beth O'Neill

LINES FROM LINDA AYERS TURNER KNORR: CELEBRATION OF LIFE FOR DENNIS MCCOY



Dennis and Randy's wedding with Jackie Beaudoin's granddaughter, Makena

The reception was held at Dennis and Randy's favorite restaurant, Rey's in Raleigh, North Carolina. One of those friends closest to them, Mari-Beth O'Neill, remembered Dennis with the following tribute:

"Good morning, thank you for coming today to celebrate the life of Dennis McCoy. Dennis loved a party and especially being the center of attention—so he is very happy that we are all here today to share how he touched each of us in different ways.

Dennis was born in Buffalo, New York, on May 18th. You may not know that Dennis and his brother attended the Girard College school for fatherless boys in Philadelphia from the age of 6 until he graduated high school. Upon graduation, Dennis returned to Buffalo and attended Canisius College, obtaining a degree in accounting.

Then Dennis acquired his first Poodle and the rest is history—he became a devotee to the breed, seeking to learn as much as he could about the breed, its history, exhibiting, seeking to understand who was who and how to improve his own skills to become successful.

Dennis studied all those who were successful as breeders, exhibitors, groomers and handlers. He wove all that he learned to become the successful breeder and handler that he became of so many top dogs.

Randy hired Dennis to be his handler which then became the team of Randenn becoming a formidable force for years—handling the Top Dog All Breeds multiple years as well as the successful breeding of Poodles, Norfolks, and Dachshunds. Their breeding program produced the Top-Winning Black Poodle, Ch. Randenn Tristar Affirmation, "Yessie," owned by Martin and Toni Sosnoff and handled by Tim Brazier, to 103 Bests in Shows.



Dennis and Randy's Poodle 'Yessie' (top-winning black Poodle in history with 103 All-Breed BIS) with Dr. Richard Mean

Throughout his career as a professional handler, Dennis had the good fortune to exquisitely present top-flight dogs for many notable breeders in the United States, including: Top-Producing Standard Poodle Ch. Maneetas Del Zarzosa Fuego Fatu, "Gordon," who lived out his life at Randenn as Dennis' mother's companion; Ch. Fairview No Nonsense, Toy Poodle; Ch. Broad Bay Hell's A Blazen Revue, Toy Poodle; Ch. Lou-Ell's Exotic Dancer, Chinese Crested; Ch. Spotlight's Spectacular, Dalmatian; and Puli, Ch. Cordmaker Mississippi Mud, to name a few.

With his attention to detail and talent as a handler, Dennis McCoy immortalized a handful of sensational, show dogs and they are well remembered by all who live and breathe our sport: The Standard Poodles Ch. Whisperwind on a Carousel, "Peter," winner of Westminster in 1991 and over 100 Bests in Show, and Ch. Lake Cove's That's My Boy, "Treasure," who became the Top-Winning Dog in the United States for 1998 and 1999 with 167 Bests in Show; and Dalmatian Ch. Spotlight's Spectacular. "Penny's" record still stands as the Top-Winning Dalmatian in Breed History. All in all, he handled dogs to over 500 Bests in Show and finished over 1,000 dogs in his career as a handler.

Lines from Linda Ayers Turner Knorr: Celebration of Life for Dennis McCoy

Dennis and Randy retired from professional handling at the 2000 Westminster Kennel Club show. Dennis became an American Kennel Club approved judge for the Toy Group, the Non-Sporting Group, and the Terrier Group as well as the Miscellaneous Class and Junior Showmanship. His judging assignments included judging the Toy Group and the Non-Sporting Group at Westminster Kennel Club, The Poodle Club of America, Santa Barbara, the Kennel Club of Philadelphia, and numerous other notable assignments in the US and abroad.

Dennis contributed in many ways to our sport. He had the ability to see the big picture and the finesse to get people to work together—he understood that a lot of work had to be done before the meeting actually began to get agreement on issues. He was a politician at heart and he greatly enjoyed the hours he spent on the telephone to achieve a consensus for topics that one never thought could be achieved.

He was an active member of the Poodle Club of America, determined to maintain the history of PCA, and foremost in his mind was the Standard. He served as President for three terms and oversaw the glamorous show as Show Chairman for years. Most recently, Dennis served as the Delegate to the AKC, a roll that he was not sure of but he was intrigued by what was going on behind the scenes in the Delegate Body and the Board of the AKC.

Locally, Dennis was an active member of the Raleigh Kennel Club, serving as the President, Show Chairman, and the Chair of the Tar Heel Cluster for years. Again, his ability to see the big picture and understand how to get five clubs to work together or to solve an issue on the spot took great understanding of the complexities of the sport, the facilities, and providing a positive outcome for all. He will be remembered for his director's chair, which sat in the corner of the ring, and for his regular use of the microphone.

Dennis loved fashion and was an especially colorful dresser, with beautiful ties, matching pocket squares, and his favorite Pradas.

Dennis loved the sport and was an advocate for the new person, offering a bit of advice and encouragement. At the Raleigh Kennel Club meeting last week, Becky Harrison shared with me that she met Dennis at a handling class with her first Pug back in the early 1980s. Dennis recognized her interest, encouraged her, and brought her Rachel Paige Elliot's book "Dog Steps" to study. His ongoing encouragement gave her the confidence to show her own dogs and become a Breeder of Merit and now the President of Raleigh Kennel Club.

Another story was just published by Linda Knorr of a lady showing her first Boston Terrier, Jeannette Stribling. Dennis realized she was nervous and that she had a nice young dog. His kind words of encouragement gave her the confidence to continue, and she successfully finished that first dog. Jeannette joined the Greenville Kennel Club and is now the President.

Just a couple examples of how Dennis made a difference in the lives of people who were just beginning their participation in the Sport and are here as leaders today.

I know that we will all miss Dennis who was a friend, mentor, and confidant to so many within our sport. Daily, he spent hours listening, consoling, advising, and offering guidance to those seeking his input or to those who were suffering from something in their lives, and he was there to listen and provide support.

His telephone was always ringing, and he was always there, ready to help. It is difficult to fathom the loss of his influence. His passing leaves a great void in those active in dogs today and we can only wonder at how the loss will affect the future? Who will we call for advice? Where can we find solace now that Dennis' phone is silent?

Dennis felt strongly that staying mad or holding a grudge was a waste of energy. He chose to forgive, or in some instances, just get over it, to do what is right for the future, for yourself personally or for the sport, and in some instances, for both.

I encourage each of you to reflect on how Dennis influenced your life and I challenge you to become the one who will make a difference for others in the future.

Dennis was raised Catholic. He said his prayers daily. I know he included many of us at different times. Please join me in reading the Prayer of Saint Francis."

Peace Prayer of Saint Francis

**Lord, make me an instrument of
your peace:**

**where there is hatred,
let me sow love;**

**where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.**

**O divine Master,
grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.**

**For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that
we are born to eternal life.**

Amen

Michael Scott and David Fitzpatrick also shared memories of their friend Dennis.

Mari-Beth concluded her message by reminding those present to "please take the time during this reception to share with each other an example of how Dennis had a positive effect on your life.

Now, a toast to celebrate our Dennis McCoy, an active, colorful individual who was full of life, who provided so much to so many!" ■