



Lines from Linda

LINDA AYERS TURNER KNORR

Getting to know AKC's Vice President of Public Relations & Communications

Brandi Hunter

When Brandi Hunter started as the Director of Public Relations at the American Kennel Club, two years ago, little was known about her. She was not an exhibitor or a breeder and while her background in public relations was clear, she was not a dog sport or show person. Fast forward two years she is now the Vice President of Public Relations and Communications and is fully engrossed in the mission and the advancement of the AKC, working on ways to expand the

brand's reference and relevance to the average dog owner.

Brandi is a southern girl at heart. Born in Boston and spending the majority of her life in Georgia, she has always been a learner. "I grew up with a schoolteacher mother," she says. "The values of education and manners were always instilled in me, but my mother and father also encouraged me to challenge myself and learn things for myself."

A graduate of Georgia State University with a degree in Journalism, she cut her teeth and honed her skills at large companies, namely CNBC, Sony and IAC before she took some time to strike out on her own and be a contractor. "I have worked at some amazing companies and had great experiences, but I needed to experiment and find new challenges. I also wanted to venture into digital communications and social media and I did exactly that for four years, until the right challenge came along and the AKC was it."



"Hollywood" and Brandi at the AKC Madison Avenue headquarters. Dogs are welcome at AKC!



Looks like Brandi and AKC Senior Public Relations Manager Jessica D'Amato are working on a good news announcement for AKC!

The American Kennel Club is a challenge that she is glad she has taken on. She and her team of seven service the AKC, its affiliates and consult on the LLCs. Needless to say, there is never a dull moment and that is fine with her. Brandi fully believes in the work that the AKC does and how it is relative to dog owners everywhere. She also knows that sometimes it may involve her doing things that are considered a bit unconventional, "My goal is to make sure our communication and messaging keep up with the world, which is not always easy," she says. "We are a historic organization and we have to maintain that legacy and also stay connected to the world." To work towards that goal she has taken press requests that may seem a bit treacherous, been unafraid to correct or educate an outlet or reporter and focused a portion of the communication on AKC being a lifestyle brand, finding new media outlets that can allow the AKC to show their relevance. >

AKC's Vice President of Public Relations & Communications

Brandi Hunter • by Linda Ayers Turner Knorr continued



*Clockwise from above:
Dog tired! After completing a huge
project Brandi finds joy in relaxing
with "Emily", a staff member's
Leonberger*

*AKC Executive Secretary Gina DiNardo
and Hunter discussing a press release*

*Parents Frank and Cheryl Wilson visiting
Brandi in the Big Apple*

Southern Beauty!

*Photos courtesy
THE AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB*

When she is not at the AKC, Brandi is working on her Master's Degree, writing a book and enjoys traveling and cooking. She is also a bit of history junkie and loves a good podcast. A self-proclaimed workaholic (she carries two cellphones and a tablet everywhere), the AKC is never too far from her mind. "I can honestly say I love my job. There is no organization like the AKC and the work that we do. The guidance, knowledge and comradery is unlike anywhere I have ever worked. But it is the mission and the dedication to dogs that makes me even more passionate and fuels my desire to educate people about who we are. I feel like I got lucky."

Our friendship began shortly after Brandi joined AKC as Joe McGinnis, Brandi and I were leaving the Eukunuba judges dinner in Orlando. The conversa-

tion was lively and immediately Brandi and I discovered our "Georgia Girl Bond". What more can I say, our friendship began as heartfelt and special! Joe was smiling as he escorted us through the Hyatt. Brandi and I were merrily walking holding hands all the way! Finding Brandi has been a blessing for me and our AKC! ■

Linda Ayers Turner Knorr is from one of our dog world's very special families. She is the daughter of the late All Breed Judge Roy Ayers. Both Linda and her brother Roy Ayers, Jr. became second generation judges. Three judges is one immediate family is quite a rarity. Linda is also a second generation AKC Delegate. She entered the show ring with one of her Conrad Collies when she was only six years old and has never stopped giving back to our sport! Her love of the American Kennel Club and its mission is reflected in all of her uplifting articles.