

Lines From Linda

BY LINDA AYERS TURNER KNORR

BEEN THERE, DONE THAT AND GOING STRONG GEORGE ALSTON CELEBRATES 80 YEARS



Imagine trying to throw a surprise birthday party for someone as savvy as George Alston! Well his daughter AKC Field Rep. Jane Alston Myers flew in from California and pulled that off for her Dad's 80th Birthday Celebration held at The Parke Clubhouse.

When I asked George how it happened, he said, "One of my golfing buddies called me and said they were having a problem with the computer/printer at the clubhouse and he asked if I would come down and fix it. I rushed down and walked right into the party. Wow, was I surprised!"

In case you've been buried under a rock somewhere or may be new to the dog world, the Alstons are one our our sport's most loved and respected families. George and his wife AKC Judge Mary Ann Alston live in a golf course community in Ocean Pines, Maryland.

Some of the fellow fanciers in attendance at the party of about 50 guests included Will Alexander, Kathy Lorentzen, Janie Fowler, Chris Baum, John Ashby, Linda Wallasea Self, Tom Manson, Sue Miller, Sue Schneider, Janine Dennis, Cathy Thistle, Harry and Lisa Miller, David Fitzpatrick and Jimmy Mitchell. Family members sworn to secrecy and in on the planning were Mary Ann, daughter Jenn Alston Pahl and son Tommy Alston (who I must say has inherited the same handsome looks of his father). And Granddaughter Lily Pahl was the life of the party!

The achievements of George Alston are legendary! He first entered the show ring in 1947. In 1954 he won Best Junior Handler at the prestigious Westminster Kennel Club. In those days Professional Handlers judged Junior Showmanship and Judge Hollace Wilson chose George over 47 Juniors. All ages were judged together in one class.

Through the years George was privileged to work and learn from some of the best. Nate Levine, Gordon Barton, Lina Basquette and Bob and Jane Forsyth all contributed to George himself becoming one of the greatest Professional Handlers of all time. You will find his name listed in the Professional Handlers Hall of Fame. Dogs handled by George Alston achieved greatness! He has the magic touch and he used it on very special dogs!

But perhaps Alston's best personal achievement is the satisfaction he gained through teaching and inspiring others. For many years the George Alston Seminars provided guidance to those eager to learn from the best. Many of today's top winning professionals and judges got their start through George Alston Seminars. Rather than being remembered by the scores of wins at the most prestigious shows, George would rather be thought of as, "the greatest teacher that ever walked".

Today you will find George on the golf course three days a week and in the gym the same amount. Whenever possible you may spot him ringside enjoying watching his wife Mary Ann judge.

Yes, George Alston has most certainly been there, done that and he's still going strong! Happy Birthday George from all of your friends at *ShowSight!* ■



Surrounded by his children Tommy Alston, Jane Alston Meyers and Jenn Alston Pahl, George is all smiles as he celebrates his 80th Birthday!



Jane Alston Myers managed to pull off the impossible, surprising her father.



Mary Ann Alston celebrates with granddaughter Lily Pahl



Middle:
Lily Pahl knows
her grandfather
George will
love the dog
balloons!

Right:
SURPRISE!!!