

REMEMBERING JULIE DESY

BY LINDA AYERS TURNER KNORR



On February 29, 2020, Julie Desy entered my ring at the Chicagoland Shetland Sheepdog Specialty Show. It had been some years since we had seen each other and I will always remember what I said to her as I reached the table to examine her dog: “Wish I could give you a big hug right now!” Of course, that was not possible, but I said it anyway. (Julie was the only one who heard me and, yes, I know that may not have been an appropriate thing for a judge to say to an exhibitor.) It wasn’t until the afternoon that we were able to catch up on hugs, but it was a treasured reunion between two old friends.

Also, on the judging panel that day was our friend, Brian Cleveland. Sadly, the Chicagoland Shetland Sheepdog Specialty turned out to be the last Specialty show attended by these two great icons of the breed. In less than a year, the dog world lost both Brian Cleveland and Julie Desy.

Julie Desy’s passion for Shelties spanned more than 60 years. She finished her first champion at the age of 12. As a small hobby breeder, she went on to breed or co-breed nearly 60 more champions, including four Register of Merits:

- Ch Ilemist As You Like It ROM
- Ch Ilemist Gorgeous George CD ROM
- Ch Ilemist Impossible Dream CDX ROM
- Ch Jade Mist Memorandum ROM

Her devotion to the breed and to the sport extended well beyond her own kennel. She was an accomplished handler, an active and longtime contributor to the American Shetland Sheepdog Association as well as a dedicated educator and mentor to fellow breeders and judges.

As a handler, Julie finished well over 300 champions for clients, and she successfully campaigned seven Century Club Winners:

- Ch Starphire Lochlyn Takin Over 3CC (359 BOBs)
- Ch Brandywine Imprint 2CC (215 BOBs)
- Ch Sundial Midas Revelation ROM 2CC (233 BOBs)
- Ch Willow Layne Makin Out ROM CC (138 BOBs)
- Ch Norwood Nenana CC (101 BOBs)
- Ch Marikohill Sunblest Captiva CC (106 BOBs)
- Ch JusDandy Devine Ms M CC (119 BOBs)

She was a 50-year member of the ASSA and served the organization faithfully since joining in 1968; as a Board Member (1968-1970), Recording Secretary (1989), Life Membership Committee Member, a member of the Judges’ Education Committee (2008-2021), and Judges’ Mentoring Program (2006-2021). Her greatest honors were to receive the ASSA’s inaugural Sportsman Award (2008), to judge the Futurity (1991), to be inducted into Life Membership (2015), and to judge the first Veteran Sweepstakes (2019).

Perhaps Julie’s greatest gift to the sport was as an educator and mentor. Formally, through her Objective Evaluation seminar and, informally, in countless ways, she inspired, guided, challenged, and supported generations of Sheltie enthusiasts. That will be her enduring legacy.



Julie Desy
Ilemist
1946-2021

LINES FROM LINDA: REMEMBERING JULIE DESY



top left: February 29, 2020, Chicagoland Shetland Sheepdog Specialty, Julie and Me.

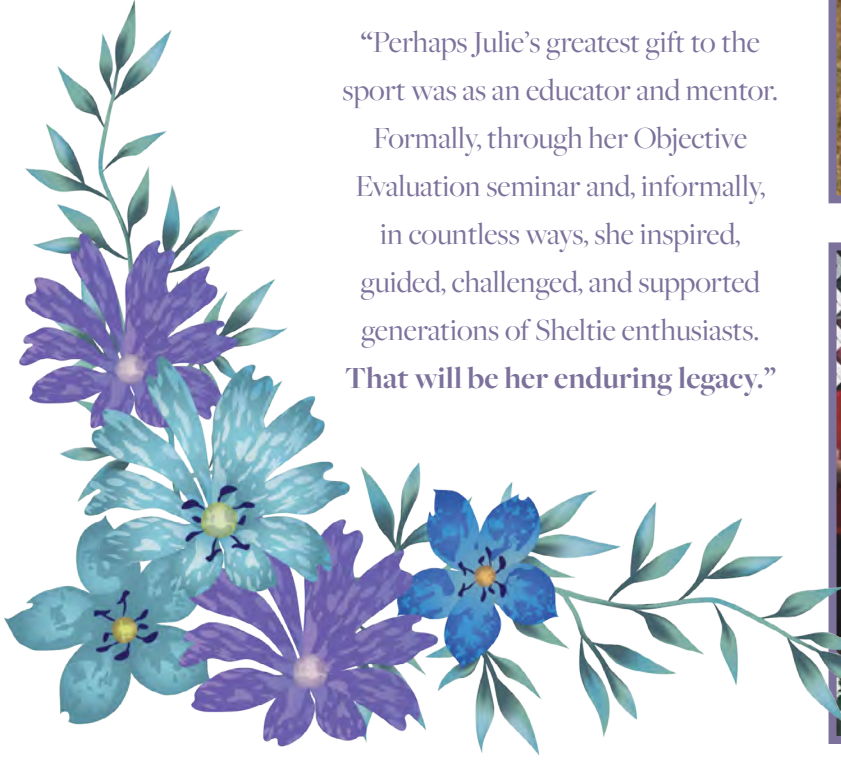
top right: Gr. Ch. Neahm's Kiss Me Kate

top middle: Ch. Ilemist Impossible Dream CDX, ROM. Sired by Halston's Peter Pumpkin

lower middle: Julie awarding (Ch.) Pocono Calico Lace Best in Sweeps with Betty Whelan



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LINES FROM LINDA: REMEMBERING JULIE DESY



Julie's Loving Family... Daughter Meredith and Son-in-Law, Hector Hector, and Son Michael Maust

Mom,

You were an icon and an inspiration to many. You will be well- and long-remembered as a highly successful breeder, handler, educator, and mentor—rightfully so. Your numerous accomplishments and contributions to Shelties and to the sport are well-documented.

But we want to acknowledge and celebrate some of the personal qualities that made you so special:

- Your Appreciation for Beauty
- Your Love of Dance and Music—from Classical to Pop to Motown
- Your Strong Will and Determination
- Your Sharp Mind and Deep Curiosity
- Your Wonderful Humor and Great Wit
- Your Constant Striving for Excellence
- Your Single-Minded Pursuit of Your Passions
- Your Generous Spirit
- Your Grace and Quiet Dignity
- The Twinkle in Your Eye and that Mischievous Grin

You are dearly loved and deeply missed.

Until we dance again.

Love,

Meredith, Michael, and Hector

"YOU WERE AN ICON AND AN INSPIRATION TO MANY. YOU WILL BE WELL- AND LONG-REMEMBERED AS A HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL BREEDER, HANDLER, EDUCATOR, AND MENTOR—RIGHTFULLY SO."

MY TRIBUTE TO JULIE

Oh, the stories I could tell! With our friendship spanning almost 50 years, I could write a book! But, since this is a magazine article, I will just share a few of my favorites.

From the beginning, I knew Julie was special.

I was forced into learning how to handle my newly purchased Sheltie. So, I went to a dog show to observe exhibitors and ring procedure. I watched class after class after class, as the exhibitors did their best to show what was at the end of their lead. Although I was a complete novice, one person stood out from all the rest. It was Julie! I thought her presentation was the best. She gaited the

dog smoothly around the ring, stood back from the dog so that it was in full view with its head up, looking forward, standing four-square, her non-interfering stance while being judged on the table; all this with a pleasant, but confident, look on her face. (This was the first time I saw Julie, and she was pregnant with Michael!) It was my goal and desire to become her friend, and to learn all I could from this powerhouse of knowledge. Little by little, I inched my way into her life. My prowess continued, and I was proud to be part of the Illemist team.

Julie was not only a renowned handler here in the states, but also in Canada, Japan, Korea, and China, showing dogs that came from all these countries. Mrs. Hiayama, a breeder of Shelties from



Julie mastering the art of using chop sticks.



Gini Shaw trying to master eating with chop sticks.

LINES FROM LINDA: REMEMBERING JULIE DESY



Breed j. Katie Gammel, Gini Shaw, Julie, Sweeps j. Anita Paull, "Annie" and "Noire"



Julie and Aiko Wakasugi

Japan, had a handsome champion blue merle male. It was her fervent desire to have "Sam" become an American champion and have Julie show him. Mrs. Hiyama contacted Julie, and it was "a go." Sam achieved his championship rather quickly and became Julie's special. He was Am. Jap. Ch. Kencherry Keep Top.

The following year, in 2003, the Sheltie National was held here in Michigan. It was to be Sam's last show. Mrs. Hiyama was flying in to take him back to Japan after the National. He had a glorious ending to his show career in the States by going Best of Breed with Meredith (Julie's daughter) showing him for his "grand finale!"

When Mrs. Hiyama decided that it was time to retire Sam from his show career, she invited Julie to fly to Japan and show him for his last go around the ring. She could also bring one companion. Meredith was her first choice, but luckily for me, she could not go. So, I became the companion! Sam retired from the ring by going BOB, which delighted Mrs. Hiyama and his cheering fans no end!

A cute story about Sam's last trip around the ring... The Japanese, unlike us, run their dogs around the ring. Julie was running and keeping up with the rest of the specials. Mrs. Hiyama motioned for her to go faster, faster, faster! Julie told me to tell her that if she goes any faster, she will fall on her face! Mrs. Hiyama said, "It's OK. Someone will pick up!"

We had a fantastic time visiting the sights and learning about the culture. Julie even mastered the art of eating with chopsticks! I never could. We were treated like royalty and, to them, Julie was.

While at the show in Japan, we met a young woman who had been to our National for the previous three years. Each year she would watch Julie groom and handle her charges, but she was too shy to introduce herself. She owned, bred, and handled Shelties in Japan for many years. Her big dream was to come to the States and have Julie be her "teacher." After much translation and discussion, it was decided that she would come to the National the following year, stay about three months, and begin to fulfill her dream. She would live with Gini and study under Julie. This was our dear friend, Aiko Wakasugi. I became her American "mom" and Julie was her "teacher." She adored Julie and continued to come every year for the next nine years. She perfected many of her skills under the tutelage of Julie. Aiko was a "natural" and became an awesome handler and groomer.

Aiko's favorite story about us was the time we'd left her at a gas station. We were coming from a show, and it was late at night. Julie was driving, I was co-pilot, and Aiko was asleep in the back of

the van. We stopped at a gas station and called to Aiko. No answer, so we let her sleep. We filled the tank, used the restroom, got snacks, and were on our way. About five minutes down the road, Julie's phone rings. "Hello." A small voice asks, "Julie?" "Who is this?" "It's Aiko. You left me at gas station!" Poor Aiko! We had no idea she had gotten out of the car and was still in the station when we'd left. I dread thinking about what would have happened if we did not have cell phones. From that time on, our constant question was, "Aiko, are you in here?"

In 2010, the SSC of Hawaii invited Julie to present a grooming seminar and judge a fun match. Again, I was the fortunate one who accompanied her. They were so impressed with all the knowledge Julie shared that they did not want her to stop talking. She had the same effect on others when presenting her seminars. They just did not want them to end.

Most of my Shelties were either bred by or co-owed with Julie. A little bi-black bitch that we co-owned was a definite favorite. At our club's (SSCGD) Specialty, we entered "Annie," MBISS Ch. Kell Lil' Sure Shot, 2 AOM, in Specials and her daughter, "Noire" (Ch.) Kell's Little Black Dress, in Sweeps. Since Julie had client dogs to handle, I showed our girls. To my delight, I won both Sweeps and Breed! Julie was there to cheer me on, which was a complete role reversal.

With Julie, it was not all about winning—though she could and did compete with the best. She was joyous and considered it a win when the dog that she was showing had learned to walk in a straight line or would stand back and bait for her. She always tried to teach the dogs to do (and be) the best they could.

I was blessed having Julie as my mentor, my friend, my sister. Through the years, we shared the joys and sorrows of life and aging together. I will miss her voice of reason, driving to shows and singing to tunes on the radio, getting lost and turning it into an adventure, discussing everything from all about Shelties to solving world problems. I will just miss all of her!

I hope Julie is basking in the glory of all she has accomplished for the Sheltie community. Her journey has ended. She will live on as an icon and a legend. To many, she was a Champion. To me, she was Best in Show!

Gini Shaw
Shallimar Shelties