

# LINES FROM LINDA

BY LINDA AYERS TURNER KNORR



## TIMELESS MEMORIES ARE FOREVER

“The love in our family flows strong and deep, leaving us memories to treasure and keep.” Reminiscence with me as I relive a sentimental journey.

My brother, Roy Ayers, Jr., put the biggest imaginable smile on my face today. The mailman delivered a special delivery package from him containing what, for me, is a priceless treasure, a letter written to my parents, Roy and Hazel Ayers, following my very first judging assignment.

When Roy moved from Alexandria, Virginia, to his new residence in Sarasota, Florida, he found a new place of honor for our family’s prized antique chest containing all of the love letters sent back and forth between Daddy and Mother when our father was overseas serving our United States Navy during World War II. I was born while he was away. When he returned from the war, I was a year and a half old. In our parents’ chest, Roy also discovered this letter I wanted shared with you.

Those of you who have been in the sport for a while will recognize the names of icons in our dog world who are no longer with us, but who were part of the journey I’m reflecting on here.

*December 8, 1992*

*Dear Mother and Daddy,*

*A report on my very first judging assignment at the Arkansas Kennel Club in Little Rock, Arkansas...*

*Arrived in Little Rock on Thursday afternoon and was met by the Hilton Hotel van which was waiting to take me to the hotel. A letter was awaiting my arrival from Don Henderson, Show Chairman, inviting me to dinner and later, if I wished, a tour of the sights in Little Rock. I had two hours free, so the Hilton van driver took me to the fabulous shopping mall, where I did not make any purchases, but I had a great time seeing the expensive items that Santa was getting ready for Christmas. I ran into Betty Moore and Adelene Pardo who were also on the judging panel. They had arrived earlier and had the same idea I had.*

*When I returned to my room and started to change into something new for evening, my phone rang. It was Don Henderson (President of the Shetland Sheepdog Club of America—He was Daddy’s ring steward at the Collie National some years ago) calling to see if I received their invitation to dinner and asked me to join them*



early in the hotel lounge for drinks if I wished. I skipped the early drinks and joined them just in time to go to dinner.

Going to dinner together that evening was Clint Harris who told them that he judged me in Junior Showmanship "twenty years ago." He was serious, and that sounded like a long time ago. I kissed him on the cheek as that would make me about 26 years old! Also, Miriam and John Boyd, Donald Doltz, Sherry Wallis, and Mr. A. C. Williamson. (See judging schedule.) Everyone sends their love to you. We went to a great restaurant and then a tour of the city. Saw the Statehouse where Bill Clinton was on election night, the Governor's Mansion, Campaign Headquarters by McDonalds where the President-Elect has had decaffeinated coffee every morning and along his jogging route. I was very excited to see all of that!

The next morning... my first day of judging! Ordered room service to be delivered at 6:30. Did not eat a bite! The other judges were to be picked up at 8:00, but a special van was to take me at 9:00. My assignment was to begin at 10:30. WOW! Got dressed—called you for last-minute instructions. (Mother, you were already gone to the beauty salon—Little Rock is one hour behind Atlanta). Was so excited, I went ahead and left at 8:30.

The Onofrio people were great. Gary Lambert sat me down and went over the judges book with me. Theirs is easy as it is all marked with d's and b's, so there is no way to make a mistake. Also, these use odd and even numbers for the sexes, so all you have to do is look at an armband and you can tell if it is a male or female.

Judged my dogs and Junior Showmanship. The dogs were easy! Junior Showmanship was not. I only had one ribbon for the best Junior and I needed four! The kids were great! Nancy and Don were the show photographers and they were great, too. I put up a boy with a Doberman.

After the show, I had dinner with other new judge friends: Don Doltz, Sherry Wallis, and the Boyds. We ate at the Hilton where we were staying. I found Dr. Cres Farrow who was to judge German Shepherds the next day and got his permission to be an observer. When I thanked him, he said, "Your daddy could teach you a lot more than I ever could." That made me so proud, and I thought it was so nice of him to say that in front of everyone!

Joined Maxine Beam and two other judges (I can't remember their names) for breakfast. Maxine asked me to sit with them. Then Dr. Greathouse came in and sat by me as one of the other guys was leaving. Everyone left and it was just me and him. He told me about finding and sending Daddy the hardhat. I love him.

Oh, I forgot to tell you... Victor Joris (the former designer for Dior, etc.) was there with Jane Roppolo. They travel together. He was the first to mention that he had cut out the picture of you from Dog Watch in your 1940's clothes. He keeps a design book and he cut it out for that collection. Everyone I saw said something about seeing it. They all loved the picture. Victor adopted me and followed me around everywhere, talking fashion. I thought he was great fun!

Dog Show Day Two: I observed 74 German Shepherd Dogs under Dr. Farrow and later 30 Pembroke Corgis under James Bennet from Washington State. He just loves both of you. He has the funniest ring procedure that I have ever seen, but he was the best judge I have observed under for learning to judge dogs.

Betty and Don Henderson asked me to join them for two dinner parties to be given by their club members. The first was at the home of a wonderful couple named Jim and Patti Eskola. They have Shelties and I left them out of the ribbons. Jim was the local high school coach. They have three sons. All of the out-of-town Sheltie people were there, including the lady I put Best of Breed from Tennessee, Elizabeth Doyle. I just love her dog! (See catalog.) These were all very nice people and they were extremely complimentary to me about my judging!

Then we went to the home of Richard and Nina Dixon, Schipperke people. It was their anniversary. Both homes were decorated for Christmas and we ate dinner twice. It was sleeting outside. Don and Betty are wonderful Christian people, too. The second home was on the top of a ridge looking out over the river and the city of Little Rock. This home had huge baths, lots of decks, rock wall fireplaces, and was beautifully decorated for Christmas with her Santa collection. They travel all over the world and he is a big hunter.

I forgot to say that Clint Harris was also with us. He sends his love, too.

Got to sleep late and spend the day traveling home. WOW! I had a wonderful time.

When my father passed away in 1993 following an automobile accident, he was one of only little over a handful of AKC all-rounders approved to judge every breed. My brother also followed me in becoming a judge. It's easy to recognize what our love for the sport has meant to our family!

The valuable memories experienced with these friends and encouragers on my first judge's journey in Arkansas will always live on in my heart. Thank you, Roy! I love you! 🐾



Roy and Hazel Ayers taking a stroll down Atlanta's Peachtree Street just before Daddy left to serve our country in WWII, a favored photo of Dior's Victor Joris.