



LINES FROM LINDA

by LINDA AYERS TURNER KNORR

Left: Author and Doug Ljungren, AKC Vice President of Sports and Events

It's the time of year for reflection. AKC's 2017 events have already begun at a frantic pace, leaving little time to relish our accomplishments and savor our victories. Pausing for a breather is something we may long for, but the excitement keeps us going!

With more than 22,000 competitions for AKC-registered purebred dogs each year, there is truly something for everyone. Competitions and events held under AKC rules and regulations include conformation, obedience, agility, rally, tracking, herding, lure coursing, coonhound events, hunt test and field and earthdog test. Performance sports represent 53% of the total entries in AKC events. There are approximately 14,200 combined performance events yearly. Conformation events comprise 1,400 All Breed shows, 200 Group shows and 2,500 Specialty shows. While there are a relatively small number of conformation events compared to performance events, the number of entries per conformation event is much larger.

The mission of our American Kennel Club is clear: AKC is dedicated to upholding the integrity and promoting the sport of purebred dogs and breeding for type and function. AKC also advocates for the purebred dog as a family companion, advances canine health and well-being, works to protect the rights of all dog owners and promotes responsible dog ownership.

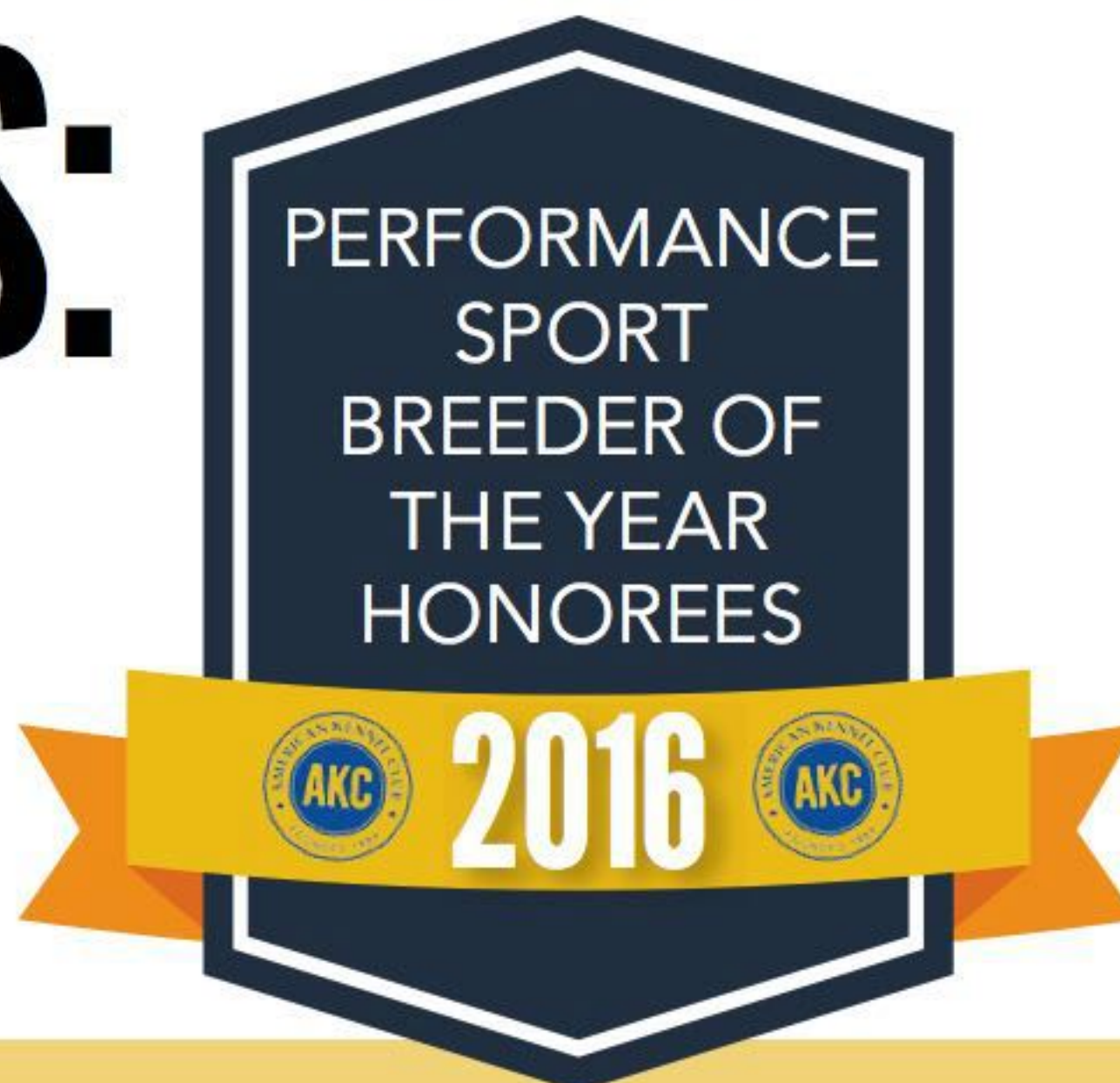
The AKC Breeder of the Year for Sport Award is given to those who have dedicated themselves to improving the health, temperament and performance of dogs in a given sport.

The 2016 Breeder of the Year by Performance Sport award recipients are:

- POINTING BREED FIELD EVENTS
Albert and Cynthia Cropek
Brittany Spaniels
- RETRIEVER FIELD EVENTS
Mitchel and Margot Brown
Labrador Retrievers
- SPANIEL FIELD EVENTS
Kevin Battistoni
English Springer Spaniels

- HOUND FIELD EVENTS
Wayne and Marty Parker
Beagles
- HERDING
Kathy Greenwood
Belgian Malinois
- LURE COURSING
Mary Childs
Borzoi/Whippets
- EARTHDOG
Dawn Martin
West Highland White Terriers
- COONHOUNDS
Mike Crockett
Black and Tan Coonhounds
- AGILITY
Nina Plail
Shetland Sheepdogs
- OBEDIENCE
David and Judy Guaraldo
Shetland Sheepdogs
- RALLY
Gayle Watkins
Golden Retrievers
- TRACKING
Cynthia Nauer
Labrador Retrievers

AKC EVENTS: SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE





Above: Dawn Martin's West Highland White Terrier breeding program has produced over 150 Champions and over 500 AKC Sport titles.



Above: 2013 & 2014 National Gun Dog Champion DC/AFC High Hopes Dark Nite
Right: Al & Cindy Cropek and granddaughters winning the National Gun Dog Championship in 2006 with FC/AFC High Hopes Tar's Dot Com.

"Knowledgeable breeders are critical to the continued success of canine sports. These breeders have shown a long-term dedication to enhancing breed instincts and to breeding sound dogs with good temperaments," said Doug Ljungren, Vice President for Sports and Events. "Their accomplishments represent the highest level of commitment to their breeds and sports." The American Kennel Club salutes these individuals for their dedication and success in breeding purpose-bred dogs.

I had the privilege to speak to some of these honorees about the rewarding aspects of breeding purpose-bred performance dogs. Here's what they shared:

Below, Left to right: "Andy", Ch. Dawn's Up N' The Ante TD JE RE ROM; "Sunny", Ch. Dawn's Sunshine N' The Poconos TD SE RE; "Girlfriend", the dam, Ch. Dawn's Maid N' America TD ME RE ROMX PROMX (she was born during the attack on the Twin Towers on 9/11, finished her Championship on Memorial Day and her brother, Ch. Dawn's Born N' The USA VCD2 CDX TDX ME OAP OJP RE completed his Championship on the Fourth of July); "Curly", Ch. Am/Can Dawn's Disorder N' The Court TD SE RE ROM RATO and "Gigi", Dawn's Goodbye Girl TDX RE RATN.



DAWN MARTIN

Earthdog, West Highland White Terriers

"Everyone who knows me can attest to my passion for the world of dogs in performance. Participating in many different sports is my passion in purebred dogs. From the very first title—a CD on my foundation Westie bitch Abigail—through the current in-residence dogs, I believe in having titles on both ends of their names. My breeding program has a commitment to 'form follows function,' that I have stayed true to over the course of 30+ years in dogs.

"I have bred more than 150 Westie Champions and of those dogs, I am proud to report that more than half are also AKC performance titled

dogs amassing more than 500 AKC sport titles.

"It was humbling to learn that I had been selected as a Sport Breeder of the year in 2016. Representing Westies in Earthdog by having bred the most ME titled dogs over the course of time, is an honor and privilege to represent my breed, the West Highland White Terrier.

"I started in AWTA Earthdog before it became an AKC event and participated in the first AKC tests. To date, my dogs have amassed 17 Master Earthdog, 18 Senior Earthdog, 18 Junior Earthdog and four Certificate of Gameness titles. I currently judge Conformation, Tracking, Rally, Earthdog, Barn Hunt and Junior Showmanship."

Martin finishes with this advice: "Follow your dreams and passions; you never know where they will lead you down the road of life."

AL & CINDY CROPEK

Pointing Field Events, Brittany Spaniels

"We have always taken a lot of pride when it comes to breeding our Brittannys and we have strived to breed dual national quality Brittannys. Even though we don't show our dogs ourselves in conformation, we have used professional handlers through the years.

"Cindy started field trialing in 1977 and I myself in 1991 when we started dating. God has blessed us with 15 National Gun Dog placements. We have won the National Gun Dog Championship five times with four of them out of our breeding.

"We are also very proud to be the breeders of 2016 National Amateur Gun Dog Champion FC/AFC High Hopes Little Ann owned and handled by Dan Riedl. We could not have received this honor without the people who have bought and campaigned our dogs through the years; but most importantly are the breeders before us that have given us amazing lines to work with.

"Our special thanks go to the owners of the stud dogs we have used through the years. We believe our success has come from going outside of our own kennel and using national blood lines to keep improving the breed at a dual national level.

"Cindy and I are grateful to the American Kennel Club for this special recognition in Pointing Field Events."

KEVIN BATTISTONI

English Spaniel Field Events, Springer Spaniels

"I bought my first Springer in 1985. She was a well-bred, field trial wash out and I bought her as a gun dog. I ended up breeding her three times to Ray Cacchio's 1986 ESS National Open Champion, FC, NFC Pondview's Left in the Light, but did not keep a pup until the third litter, at which time we kept the three pups and I started trialing. One of those first pups became an FC, AFC and East region high point dog; the hook was set and we were off, never to look back. It seems like yesterday, but in reality, that was 20 some years ago.

"From the very beginning, our breeding efforts focused on perfecting three critical traits: 1) super olfactory senses and bird finding ability, 2) biddability (the eagerness of the dog to work with its handler/owner) and 3) creating Springers that lit up like fire when in the field, but at the end of the day were happy to lie in front of you while you napped on the couch.

"Over the years, there have been many memorable instances; many exciting trials and many serious trial dogs. For a few years, I was routinely traveling to the UK and bringing back breeding stock; outcrossing my domestic bloodlines with UK lines, all the while trying to remain true to my three guiding principles. I had a few crackerjack imported dogs; one noteworthy handsome dog, a big liver and white male named Ynyslawd Swift that we made into an FC and AFC and yet another memorable import was a very special black and white bitch

I purchased in Wales, Amerlda of Green Island, an FC here in the States that later became the dam of my black and white male dog 'Zip', the 2006 US National Open Champion.

"Zip was FC, AFC, NFC, CFC Crosswinds Warpath, 2006 US National Open Champion and a 2010 Bird Dog Hall of Fame Springer inductee. He was second in Canadian National one year, a runner up high point dog one year and in three years of active all age competition, won 6 times, was second 8 times, third 15 times and had 2 fourth places. He finished 81% of the trials he was entered in and he placed in 77% of those trials he finished. Zip was testimony to our breeding program foundation stock; he was sired by one of those first three pups I kept from that third litter we bred way back when. In many ways, Zip was an extraordinary dog, possibly a once-in-a-lifetime animal. In addition to his flawless competition career, during his short life span he proved to be a prolific sire of extraordinary offspring. On one outcross breeding, he sired a Canadian National Champion; CNFC, FC, AFC, Prairie Meadows Rise and Shout "Rise" and in another outcross, he sired the Springer that has now accumulated more field trial points than any other Springer, ever; two-time National Amateur Champion (one in Canada and one in the US) FC, AFC, NAFC, CAFC, CFC, CNAFC Flushingwing Annie, 'Annie'. I don't have an accurate count of the champions he produced, but it was a sizable total.

"In December 2013, 15 US and Canadian Springer owners with dogs having

direct Crosswinds genealogy joined with my wife and me in sponsoring the fifth series at the US National Open Championships in Cambridge, MD. The Springers competed by those 15 owners at that time had accumulated a total of 30 individual championships; open and amateur, US and Canadian, plus several national placements.

"One of our personal dogs, my wife's liver and white male Pilot, was second in the 2010 US National Amateur, beaten at that trial by his cousin Annie. At another National Championship, a Canadian National Amateur in 2011, three of the four placements were dogs we either sired, bred or owned and handled. Our personal dogs have earned 18 Championship titles and 3 national placements.

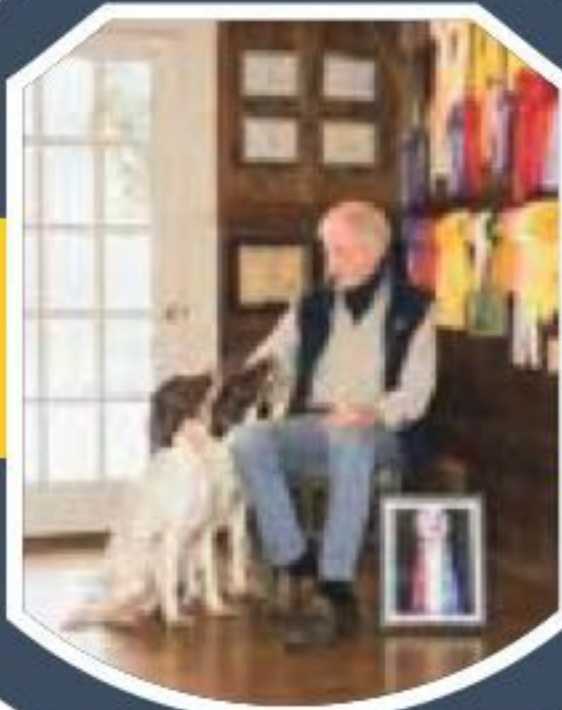
"Over the past few years we have been concentrating on continually refining our line. Correspondingly, our pup output has been somewhat reduced, but we still adhere to our core principles; superior noses and bird-finding abilities, biddability and that insatiable drive. Our standards have not changed. The only significant difference we can see in contrasting where we are now to where we were when we started is that in our more recent breedings, we can see the results of the tighter line breeding; most notably apparent in more uniformity across the litters. We are not quite finished; we hope to stay at it a while longer. It would be nice to create one more National Champion.

"I thank the AKC for selecting me and my Crosswinds line as breeder of the year. I am incredibly grateful to be their 2016 honoree. I also thank each and every one of those field trailers who have Springers with Crosswinds genealogy, for campaigning their dogs, for getting placements in trials and for making their dogs champions. I would not be the 2016 Breeder of the Year if it were not for each and every one of them."

MITCHEL & MARGOT BROWN

Retriever Field Events

Mitchel and Margot Brown have been active in Retriever field trials most of their adult lives and as a married team for the last 22 years. They live full-time in Boston, Georgia, whose greater area is one of the largest communities of winter Retriever areas in the country. They have owned, trained and handled



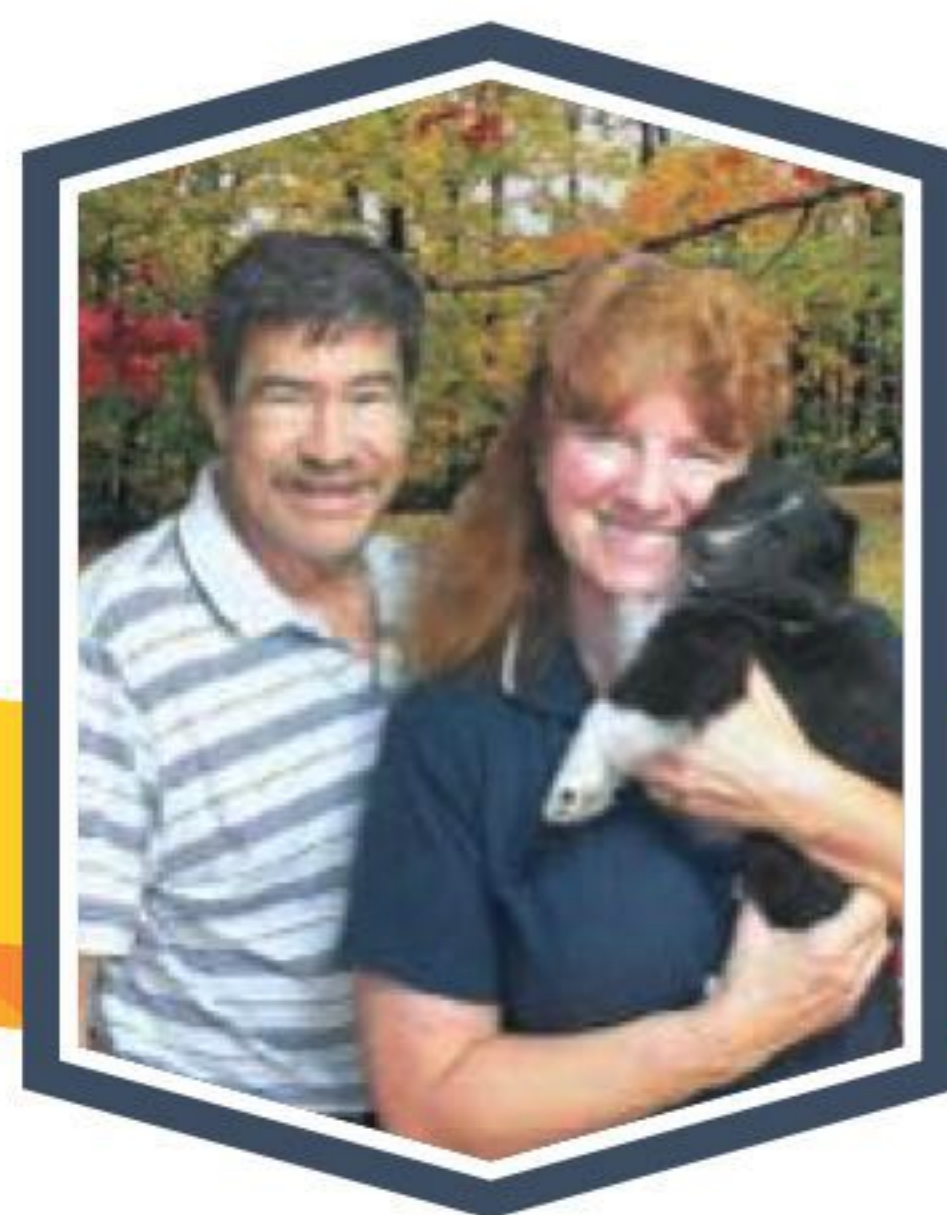
Above: Spaniel Field Events winner, Kevin Battistoni shares his honor with "Riot, Riot", AFC Crosswinds Comic Relief and "Proof", Crosswinds Proofs in the Pudding.



Right: Mitchel and Margaret Brown, Retriever Field Events.

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YET PROUD OF MANY DOGS
THAT HAVE DONE SO WELL
FOR ME AND OTHERS. I AM
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CHOSEN FOR THIS AWARD—
**A BETTER LEGACY
I COULD NOT LEAVE
TO THE BREED."**

—MARY CHILDS



David & Judy Guaraldo
Obedience, Shetland Sheepdogs

nine Field Champion Amateur Field Champion titled Labradors and bred and competed with competitive Flat-Coated Retrievers including two Canadian field champions.

Mitchel said, "Having had a life-long relationship with Retrievers, I have always been in awe of the ability of this breed to perform in the field using their eyes and nose to retrieve fallen game. In 1972 while in the Army and stationed at Ft. Bragg, I heard about a Retriever trial being held nearby and decided to see what it was all about. To say I was blown away by what I saw the dog can do is an understatement.

"After the trial, I approached a professional trainer named Bacnman Doar and asked him how I could get into this sport. What he told me is the philosophy that we have followed: a great bitch will produce great dogs. Always buy a puppy from great bitches. This philosophy has led us to where we are now.

"We find many things very rewarding about breeding. When we sell our puppies, who buys them plays a huge part in whether the pups go on to become Field Champions. However, the buyer's success is only one factor in our decision of who to tell sell our pups to. We have sold many pups to new people; to watch them have success with our breeding is a great joy. We also only sell our pups to people who will make them a part of their family and will love them even if they don't have success in trials. We never sell our puppies solely for breeding; they must be involved in the field trial sports."

MARY CHILDS

Lure Coursing, Borzoi/Whippets

"I got my first Borzoi in 1981. He was a first conformation champion and he produced my first group winner. I fell in love with the black Borzoi and obtained a bitch from Texas and from there I bred her to four different conformation animals that I had. From then on I guess you could say that I specialized in the first Irish-marked blacks and eventually was pretty much producing pseudo self to self black dogs.

"I have always striven to have beauty follow function. Using artificial lures is fun, but many dogs learn very quickly that this is not live gain and do not last long term in the coursing Venus; but I am proud to say I have never produced a Borzoi that would not hunt live game.

"I have produced multiple triathlon winners at the BCOA specialty and one dog won once as a youngster and later as a veteran. I have produced top conformation winners, specialty winners, top 10 obedience dogs and have been very proud of the breeders that have owned or bred from my dogs to enhance their breeding programs. I have bred Whippets, Scottish Deerhounds, Pharaoh hounds as well as my beloved Borzoi. I have also owned Ibizan Hounds, English Cocker and Chinese Crested.

"My top triathlon winner is DC Windnsatin Black Legacy FCH, LCM 3. CD aka Knuckles. I have loved breeding in that, like an artist, you are sculpting in flesh and not in clay, with each individual planned out and carefully

directed to be the best that they can be whether in conformation, obedience, lure coursing or as beautiful sofa decorators.

"I am extremely humbled yet proud of many dogs that have done so well for me and others. I am extremely honored to be chosen for this award—a better legacy I could not leave to the breed."

DAVID & JUDY GUARALDO

Obedience, Shetland Sheepdogs

"We started our kennel over 25 years ago. It was hard to find a Sheltie that was raised to be a good performance dog so we decided that is what we would concentrate on. We do a lot of socializing, acclimating the puppies to noise and commotion and stimulation to their minds.

"Unfortunately, Dave recently passed away. He took such great pride in making sure every puppy felt loved and had confidence. He was instrumental in our breeding program.

"Himark Shelties has produced over 125 dogs that have earned obedience titles. Seventeen are Obedience Trial Champions. We have produced over 125 dogs that have agility titles with over 25 having Master Agility Titles. The most rewarding part of being a breeder is the life-long friendships you make.

"I love obedience because it produces a special bond between owner and handler. Dogs love having something fun to do with their owners. Training with food and lots of praise accomplishes that."

GAYLE WATKINS

Rally, Golden Retriever

Gayle and her husband Andy have been breeding and competing with their Golden Retrievers under the Gaylan kennel name since 1979. From the start, Gayle's focus was producing multi-purpose Goldens that loved doing all manner of activities. As a result, Gaylan's Goldens have succeeded in rally, conformation, hunt tests, field trials, obedience, agility, tracking, nose work, barn hunt and coursing, most often more than one of these sports.

To date, Gaylan's dogs have acquired more than 70 American and Canadian championships in these many sports. Many of Gaylan's dogs also partner with their owners in work such as search and rescue, pet-assisted therapy, service and hunting. Gayle is most proud of the SAR dogs she has produced, including her own Can. Ch. Gaylan's Winter Promise UD SH NA WCX, who was her teammate on a German search and rescue dog while living in Europe.

Today, Gayle's focus is on improving canine health as a board member of the Baker Institute on Animal Health at Cornell, an active member of the Golden Retriever Club of America and through Avidog International.

In response to her award, Gayle said, "I am so honored to accept this award from the AKC for the many Gaylan's dog and handler teams that have competed in rally, including Rosie Higdon and Brass, Gaylan's Earth, Wind and Fire UDX GN RAE7 SH WCX, who placed 3rd in Rally Advanced Excellent at the 2015 AKC Rally National Championships and will be returning again this year!"

WAYNE & MARTY PARKER

Hound Field Events, Beagles



Left: Gayle Watkins, Rally honoree with her 14½ year old Golden Retriever, "Una", Can. Ch. Gaylan's Hole in One, CD GN MH MX MXH NF WCX OD VCX CCA.



Right: Hound Field Events Father/Son Team Wayne and Marty Parker from Louisville, Kentucky.

Wayne Parker instilled in his son a love for being in the field with his Beagles, when Marty was only 6 years old. They have been partners in Brace Beagling field trials for over 50 years. In 1995 the pair was inducted into the Breeders Hall of Fame, having bred over 125 field champions.

Wayne was inducted into the Brace Beagling Hall of Fame in 2009 and Marty followed in his father's footsteps in 2012. Together they won four National Championships in addition to five Purina Hound of the Year Awards.

Marty reminisces, "Through our love and activities with our dogs, my father and I have been best friends for

my whole life. We have bought a couple of dogs over the years, but winning with the ones we have bred and trained is so much more rewarding. It gives me goose bumps!"

Preserving, protecting and improving a breed represents the very essence of our American Kennel Club. These honorees have worked hard to do just that. Congratulations to these successful breeders on their many accomplishments.

The new year has just begun. Let's resolve to expand our horizons, by getting out to enjoy more of the wide variety of events our AKC Sports have to offer! ■

CONGRATS
TO ALL THE
HONOREES!

2016

ALBERT & CYNTHIA CROPEK
MITCHEL & MARGOT BROWN
KEVIN BATTISTONI | WAYNE & MARTY PARKER
KATHY GREENWOOD | MARY CHILDS
DAWN MARTIN | MIKE CROCKETT
NINA PLAIL | DAVID & JUDY GUARALDO
GAYLE WATKINS | CYNTHIA NAUER