

Working Dog Named Most 'Cloneworthy'

Retired police officer receives five cloned puppies of search-and-rescue dog Trakr.

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Left, James Symington holds five clones of Trakr, his late search and rescue dog. Right, Lou Hawthorne, chief executive officer of BioArts International, the company that sponsored the "Golden Clone Giveaway" contest.

Photo courtesy Ben Glass Retired police officer James Symington, owner of the late search-and-rescue dog Trakr, received five cloned puppies on June 17 in Los Angeles for being the winner of the "Golden Clone Giveaway."

The contest, which was sponsored by BioArts International in 2008, set out to find the most "cloneworthy" dog in the world. The Mill Valley, Calif.-based company offers commercial dog-cloning services, which can average about \$144,000. Symington received his puppy clones of Trakr for free.

"We received many very touching submissions to our contest, describing some truly amazing dogs," said Lou Hawthorne, chief executive officer of BioArts International. "But Trakr's story blew us away. His many remarkable capabilities were proven beyond all doubt in our nation's darkest hour — and we're proud to have cloned him successfully."

Trakr was credited with hundreds of arrests and recovered more than \$1 million in stolen goods during his career as a police search-and-rescue dog. Trakr also located the last human survivor in the rubble of the Sept. 11 attacks.

The cloning of Trakr occurred at the Sooam Biotech Research Foundation in South Korea under the direction of Dr. Hwang Woo-Suk, who produced the world's first canine clone in 2005.

In order to clone Trakr, Dr. Hwang's team replaced the genes in eggs from unrelated dogs with genes from Trakr, stimulated the resulting "couplets" to develop into embryos, then transferred the embryos to dogs who served as surrogate mothers. After normal pregnancies, the clones were born between Dec. 8 and April 4.