

Top Dogs Honored at Show Dogs Event

The people behind the winners gather to celebrate the world of show dogs.

Posted: Feb. 11, 2008, 5 a.m. EST

Respect, admiration, and genuine affection from a crowd of 300 black-tied and bejeweled dog fanciers greeted breeder-handler Wendell Sammet Saturday night at the Purina ProPlan Show Dogs of the Year Awards when he was named to the Anne Rogers Clark Hall of Fame. Joining such luminaries as Pat Craige-Trotter, Peter Green, Maxine Beam, and William Stifel in the Hall of Fame brought tears to Sammet's eyes – and the dinner guests to their feet in New York's Grand Hyatt hotel.

The honor recognizes those who embody the very best of the sport, and was renamed this year for the esteemed and beloved judge Anne "Annie" Rogers Clark, who died in 2006.

Karen LeFrak, a New York philanthropist and Standard Poodle breeder with Sammet, said it was a "challenge to contain in an introduction" what she wished to say about her friend and co-breeder. But her revelation that he began his career "showing cows" brought laughter from the assembled dog lovers. She explained how Sammet had trained her up in the dog world. His rules for her? "Keep quiet, get the numbers, don't hug the judge."

In accepting the award, Sammet first said he was "getting too old for this," but added, "I still have more coming." A vignette of photographs quickly traversed his life from boyhood through his many champions and successes.

Recognized earlier in the evening were the seven dogs who won the most Group Firsts during 2007 – and the many people behind those dogs.

Racking up nearly one hundred wins each were English Springer Spaniel Ch. Karmadi's Madam President in the Sporting Group and Beagle Ch. K-Run's Park Me In First in the Hound Group. Akita Ch. Redwitch Reason To Believe walked out of the Working Group rings with 117 wins, Sealyham Terrier Ch. Efbe's Hoidalgo At Goodspice triumphed in the Terrier ring 121 times, and Toy Poodle Ch. Smash JP Win A Victory got 140 first nods from Toy Group judges. Rounding out the list of top dogs for 2007 were Standard Poodle Ch. Brighton Minimoto with 130 Group Firsts and German Shepherd Dog Ch. Kaleef's Geneva Aeval-Achtung with 117.

Madam's handler Robin Novack thanked the many people who made Madam's win possible, but ended by saying, "Most of all to Madam who never had a bad day."

Aaron Wilkerson called 2007 with Beagle Uno, "a year we will never forget," and Laurie Jordan-Fenner tearfully revealed that Akita Macey would retire after Westminster. "So many people believed in her, supported her. I never ever thought this would have been," she said.

Sealyham Charmin's owner-handler called 2007 "an exciting year," clearly pleased that this "is a sport that somebody like me can win." Kaz Hosaka, Toy Poodle Vikki's handler, said, "We think showing a dog is fun. I hope you appreciate Vikki as much as we do."

Don Rochow, co-owner of Standard Poodle Remy, said he was "absolutely overwhelmed." Handler Christian Manelopoulos in turn said he wished that Don were his father. Co-breeder Sheree Moses called GSD Geneva "a dream come true like her sister and her dad," while her husband Jimmy Moses, Geneva's co-breeder and handler, marveled that after 20 years "they're still paying me for stuff I'd do for free."

Also honored was Coke (OTCH Tanbark's Something's Burnin UDX14), an 11-year-old Golden Retriever, owned by Yvonne Piefer who earned 1,160 obedience points during 2007.

Winkies, sponsored by show-dog pet supplier Cherrybrook, were awarded for outstanding achievement in the sport of purebred dogs to: Terry Miller of Déjà Vu Briards, Outstanding Breeder, who said, "This to me represents the dogs that I've bred and my love for them." Kaz Hosaka, Best Professional Handler, "This means everything to me. I've been lucky to show a lot of great dogs. Now I've got proof." Tom Coen of Macdega Shetland Sheepdogs, Best Owner-Handler. One of his competitors, Anne Bowes, accepted in his place, saying, "He is one of the most outstanding owner-handlers that I have ever seen." Maxine V. Beam, Judge of the Year, who, according to handler Bill McFadden, said she wasn't



present because she knew she “wasn’t going to win.” Louisville Kennel Club, Show of the Year. Industry achievement awards were presented to: Cesar Millan, Trainer of the Year, sponsored by Panasonic. Steven Hansen, DVM, Veterinarian of the Year, sponsored by Hartz. Irvine Animal Care Center, Shelter of the Year, sponsored by Frontline. Christian Manelopoulos, Groomer of the Year, sponsored by Cardinal Labs.

The annual event is sponsored by Dogs In Review magazine, which is published by BowTie Inc., owner and operator of the DogChannel.