
LINES FROM LINDA

AKC 2023 RHP HANDLER OF THE YEAR SHANE HOOPER

BY LINDA AYERS TURNER KNORR



The award was presented at the Kennel Club of Palm Springs shows in January by AKC Chairman of the Board, Tom Davies; RHP Field Coordinator, Larry Cornelius; and Show Chair Angela Stevanus.

Unlike many professional handlers today, Shane Hooper was not born and raised in the sport. He grew up on cattle ranches, with an extremely hard-working father, and learned how to work hard and have dignity and pride in the work he did. In his teens, he worked for a man who had a pet Doberman Pinscher, and it was then that Shane decided someday he wanted one! A few years later, he decided “now is the time” and, as was more common in the past, he turned to the newspaper to find his special Doberman. Young Hooper had no idea the adventure he was getting into! In 1992, he stumbled upon an ad by Thomas Field and Dr. Bob Groesbeck of Korfield Dobermans. At the time, due to health and situation, they were ending their breeding program, and Shane purchased his first (and most special) dog, Korfield’s Boo Bayou. By happenstance, Shane entered the young dog at the Silver Bay Kennel Club in Del Mar, California, stepping into the Show Dog World.

Shane recalled to me, “I haven’t left since! Everyone in the Doberman ring wondered who this amazing dog was, and who on earth this owner-handling ‘kid’ with no clue was... but it was the launching point of Boo’s incredible show career, and my lifetime work and sport. Handled by Jeanenne Thompson, and backed by Do Dillon McLaughlin for the premier part of his career, ‘Boo’ ended up being a multi BIS winner, 12x BISS winner, with dozens of Group wins and even more Group placements, plus the 1995 DPCA Top 20 Winner. Throughout Boo’s main career, I traveled with and helped Jeanenne, but I had first worked with Pete Ventura, and later ended up working for a number of other handlers who have had extreme success in the sport.”



GCHG Pheron’s Reboot The Mission (Bentley) and Shane



Bentley and Shane playing in the ring.

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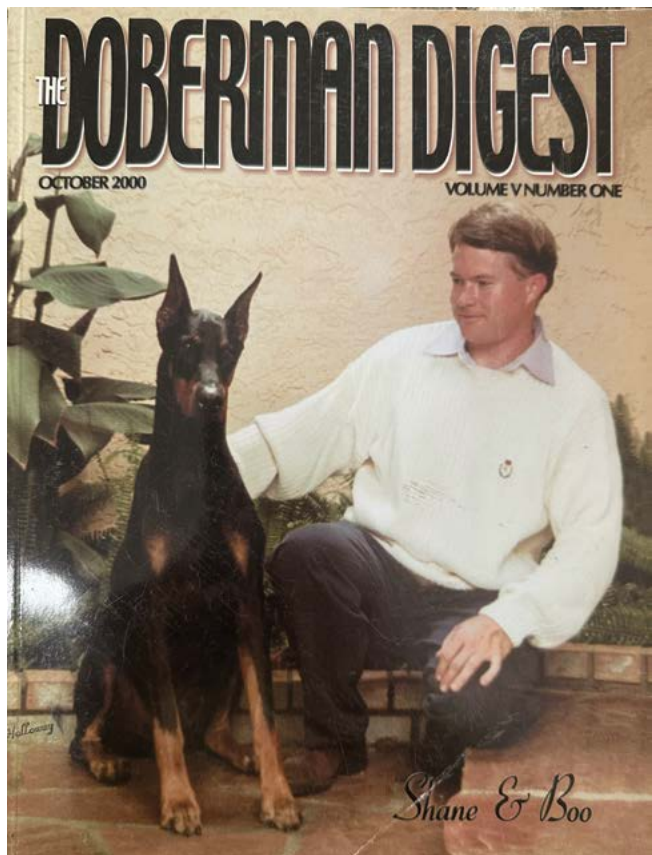


Shane enjoying the day.

As the years went on, Shane became a professional handler in his own right. He ended up connected to Doberman breeder Toby Bloom, who he now considers family. Together, they bred and exhibited over 100 Dobermans to their Championships, and a few Bostons! For the past 30-plus years, Hooper has had the honor of showing hundreds of dogs, of all Breeds and Groups, to their Championships, to Top 10 statuses, to Group wins and Best in Show/Specialty Show wins, and a DPCA National Specialty Best in Futurity win. Shane expressed to me, “While I have always held myself to high standards, since I became an AKC Registered Professional Handler, I have taken aspects of good sportsmanship, hard-work, and a clean, safe environment for my dogs and clients very seriously. I have been honored with being the RPHA Regional Representative for the West for many years, and my favorite aspect of that is putting on educational clinics and seminars. People, in any field of work or hobby, should always be striving for improvement, and I really love being able to be involved in setting up educational activities numerous times a year. These include anything from learning aspects of running a dog show, emergency medical attention, financial investments,



Shane winning his first Best in Show with GCHP Chancler's Hi Flyin Zion (Zion).



A younger Shane with his first show dog, CH Korfield's Boo Bayou (Boo).

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Shane and Wife Alex



Shane fly fishing in Montana near Yellowstone.

and, my favorite, handling seminars (for both juniors and adults). While it is so important to reach out and work with our future generation of youth who are interested in being in this sport, I have actually found a lot of adults really love coming to handling seminars. Like I was, many participants in AKC sports did not grow up in it and are not second and third generation professionals, and my wife and I really love helping those people learn and succeed.

I also have self-imposed a mission of recruiting new members to their local all-breed kennel clubs (wherever they live), as so many kennel clubs need younger and newer members carrying on the

amazing legacies that the older generations have built. I am thrilled to be partnered showing dogs with my wife, Alex, and getting to work with wonderful dogs, for great clients, and continuing to be involved in this unique sport. I look forward to many more years of showing, being involved in the four All-Breed/Group/Breed kennel clubs of which I am a member, and hopefully, breeding some beautiful litters so that I and others can keep enjoying this sport.”

It is an incredible honor to be recognized for decades of hard-work and dedication to our sport. Congratulations to Shane Hooper, AKC RPH Handler of the Year 2023! ■

AKC REGISTERED HANDLERS CURRENT MEMBERSHIP ROSTER AS OF JANUARY 16, 2024

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|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Jason Bailey | *Sara Gregware | Dave Musto | Hiram Stewart |
| Elizabeth Barrett | Dee Hanna | Kathy Musto | Greg Strong |
| *Doug Belter | *Stephanie Hentschel | Mary Norton-Augustus | Debbie Struff |
| Adam Bernardin | Tara Hartman | Matt Perchick | Christina Ulberg |
| Katie Bernardin | Shane Hooper | Sarah Perchick | Meagan Ulfers |
| Kerry Boyd | Erin Karst | *Adam Peterson | Alissa Welling |
| Kim Calvacca | Ania Kelly | *Madeline Peterson | *Linda Whitney |
| R.C. Carusi | Laura King | *Bekki Pina | *Kellie Williams |
| Paul Catterson | *Peter Kubacz | Annmarie Ruggieri | Linda Williams |
| *Marianne “Tuni” Conti | Ernesto Lara | Lori Sargent | *Denotes AKC Junior |
| Geoff Dawson | *Angela Lloyd | Celso Schneider | Showmanship Judge |
| *Terri Erickson | *Karen Mammano | Tara Schultz | |
| Kaki Fisher | Roslyn Mintz | *Dave Slattum | |
| Robert Fisher | Lori Mowery | Valerie Stanert | |
| *Diego Garcia | Patricia Murray | *Clifford Steele | |

