

Anne C. Sanders

WFA Board Member



I guess I was destined to have Westies because before my husband, Sil, asked me to marry him I had to pass muster with his Westie and Scottie. His favorite was Mac, the Westie, because he could play soccer with him and had a more outgoing personality. When we decided to get a puppy in 1973, we attended the Golden Gate Bench Show and walked the benches looking at all of the dogs. We narrowed it down to a Westie or Cairn. Since the Westie people were friendlier, KarRic's Rimy Ryvoan entered our lives.

Rimy was our pet and we had no thoughts of showing him, but his breeder convinced us that he was a nice dog and so the adventure began. Then one Sunday afternoon we had nothing better to do, so we attended the first gathering

of what would become the San Francisco Bay WHWTC. We were drawn into a circle of Westie lovers and became part of the organizational effort to get the club sanctioned and licensed to hold AKC events. We were hooked and never looked back.

Sil and I started showing in conformation and bred one to two litters a year. My local mentors encouraged me to attend seminars on breeding, training, and health and the knowledge gained at seminars and reading extensively has helped immeasurably in our success. Almost all of our champions are breeder-owner-handled. As Sil & I became more involved in other aspects of the dogs (obedience, working terrier, tracking) we enjoyed the friendship and camaraderie of people with a wide variety of breeds.

When we had our first CMO affected puppy in 1987 we began to look into the causes and what we could do about it. That led to a collaboration with Dr. George Padgett at MSU who helped many breeders and breeds develop plans to reduce the incidence of genetic disease. At this time DNA research was in its infancy so test-mating was the only option to seek out carriers and identify clear stock. It only took 25 years to find the gene(s) responsible and develop a DNA test! That is how it goes with research. Results doesn't usually come quickly, but if you never start, you never find the answer.

Meanwhile, at one of the Hospitality gatherings Montgomery weekend, I was talking with Jim Diemer and Wayne Kompare. Somehow we shared how we had a lot of Westie art and memorabilia and no one to leave it to when we passed. That is where the idea of a charitable foundation to raise funds to sponsor medical and genetic research first bubbled to the surface. In 1997, the Westie Foundation was launched and I took on the job of Secretary-Treasurer. I have been

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involved with WFA ever since, either as an officer, board member, or member of the advisory council. It has been a privilege to be part of the growth of one of the most successful breed health foundations in the world. That such a small group of dedicated individuals and so many generous financial supporters could do so much in relatively little time is a testament to Westie lovers everywhere. Westie people are not only friendly; they are dedicated to protecting and cherishing their beloved breed.