



# Historically Speaking

## An Interview with Renee Schulte, owner and founder of Wynwood Golden Retrievers

by Edell Marie Schaefer



*Talented Michigan artist Pam Konieczny captured each dog's true expression and brought them to life in this impressive portrait, which measures 32" x 38" portrait. Pam titled her work Wynwood Family Reunion.*

***Please tell us how you got your start showing and training dogs, especially Golden Retrievers.***

As a young girl I remember spending lots of my time playing, training and teaching our family's mixed terrier, "Tiny," any trick I could think of...roll over, sit up, shake, dig at my parents throw rugs to dislodge a toy hidden underneath, on command, etc. Tiny was tolerant of my desires and spent some of her time dressed up in baby clothes with me pushing her around in a baby carriage. When I was a young teenager, my

dad brought home an adult Collie that needed a home. My own form of training now included basic obedience, which for some reason, seemed to come naturally to me. Newly married and in my early 20s, a Rough Collie, "Shady," was purchased for our family. I dabbled in conformation and continued on with obedience training with her. Shady even acquired a few AKC Winners and Reserve Winners ribbons, though she never completed her conformation championship. Shady was never shown in obedience and I settled into being a new mom to two boys born in 1967 and

1970. The "itch" for another dog started happening in 1973, as my young children were growing up. A trip to visit my sister in Vermont, introduced me to her family Golden Retriever. After a week of visiting I knew it was a Golden Retriever that would be my next dog.

Back at home the local newspaper would print the results of the local obedience shows in the sports section. After many weeks of reading about a dog named CH. Bardfield Boomer UDT, WC, OS, OBHF and his success in obedience, I hoped to find an offspring of his. Off I went to find this dog at a local



*Abbey's sire: Am-Can CH.; Can OTCH Bardfield Boomer UDT, WC, OS, OBHF; Can TDX owned by Cherie Berger, Meadowpond Goldens.*



*"Abbey" – Am-Can OTCH Meadowpond Angelic Abbey TD, WCX, OD, OBHF heeling with Renee.*



*Meadowpond Glory B Dickens CDX, WC was whelped in 1977, and later produced OTCH Wynwood Over Time UDX, OBHF*





## Historically Speaking



**Abbey reclines among some of the many trophies and HIT rosettes she won in her obedience career.**



**Wynwood's Thunderwater Rowdy WCX, an Abbey son by "Rango."**



**OTCH Meadowpond California Poppy, OBHF, an Abbey daughter and littermate to "Rowdy" was born in March 1978.**

dog show and that was my first introduction to Cherie Berger of Meadowpond Golden. That was in 1974, and my first Golden, "Abby," was born on November 11, 1974. She was by Boomer out of Laurell's Jaunty Jinn-Jinn CDX, OD. My prior dogs were females, so I was attracted to another female. There were three female pups in that litter and Cherie let me pick whichever one I wanted. Sitting on the floor and using information from Cherie and my heart alone (since I knew no other way to pick a pup), I chose the pup that seemed most interested in me. Interestingly, I still use this "feel" when picking a pup to this day.

### ***Why did you become interested in training; first obedience, then field?***

The attraction to obedience seemed to come naturally to me. It seemed to be a desire, interest, driving force, whatever you want to call it. Just working with dogs was my outlet, a time of my own to witness an animal respond to repetitive information that is given consistently and fairly. As the years went on, my sons matured and went off on their own and I weathered a divorce in 1989. Along the way titles, wins, accomplishments, and more information were acquired that furthered my continued success with my Golden and added greatly to my life. I eventually opened my own obedience school in 1990, which again brought me success and a new form of self-satisfaction in helping pet people learn how to be good, consistent dog trainers and owners for their family pets. These families would come to obedience class orientation and many of these families were at their wits end trying to live with their new out-of-control pet dog. The self-satisfaction came by the end of a class session when these same families would go home feeling they had control of their dog and that dog would now surely become a lifelong companion to their family. The downside was long hours of doing 18 classes a week and running a business. After about seven years, I seemed to lose interest in training my own dogs for the accuracy required of obedience competition. Nevertheless, my continued "need to train," seemed to spark my interest in my dogs own natural interest in fieldwork. Up to this point I enjoyed training my dogs for the WC and WCX titles, but now to learn more and become involved in hunt tests became my new goal. This interest grew into an interest in running field trails also.

### ***When did you decide to start your own breeding program?***

In 1975, after I started obedience training at Sportsmen's Dog Training Club in Michigan, I realized how important obedience was going to be to me and how talented Abbey was. I joined the Ft. Detroit GRC soon after I acquired Abbey and became engrossed in learning everything I could. Many books were recommended to me and there were many talented members in the club; Marcia Schlehr, Betty Gay and Cherie Berger, to listen and learn from. Shortly after joining Ft. Detroit I joined the GRCA, and currently I am a member of the Marshbanks Golden Retriever Club. After four years of learning, reading, training and competing successfully in obedience, I felt I was ready to take on the responsibility of breeding my very talented Abbey. Again I talked to more people and knew I wanted to breed to a stud dog with good structure from a working background, where my interests were. Abbey was not a champion so I wanted to breed to a male who had his championship.

### ***What were you trying to accomplish? How did you go about achieving your goals?***

My goal was primarily to produce a healthy litter and to acquire a male for myself for obedience competition. Abbey was bred to CH. Topbrass Durango Brave CDX, WC, OS, for her first litter and produced 10 puppies in March of 1978. Six of those puppies went to pet homes and four went to working homes. Cherie Berger had a buyer for one of the puppies and that female became OTCH Meadowpond California Poppy, OBHF, owned by Gary and Judy Howard. I did keep one of the male puppies for myself. His name was Wynwoods Thunderwater Rowdy WCX, and as the breeder's lament goes, Rowdy was dysplastic and never shown in obedience. One of those pet puppies, Nylands Gandy Dancer (my kennel name was never used in the registered name) went to a pet home with the Nyland family and subsequently through breeding arrangements with Cherie, later on became the dam of the famous obedience dog OTCH Meadowpond Stardust Reggie, OS, OBHF.

### ***What were some of your most memorable breedings and dogs produced?***

What a very lucky person I was to have Abbey (Am-Can OTCH Meadowpond





## Historically Speaking



**Abbey's grandson, OTCH Meadowpond Stardust Reggie, OS, OBHF pictured heeling with owner Fred Einhorn, was the top obedience competitor of his day.**



**Handsome and athletic OTCH Sungold Duke Of Brookshire WCX, OS, OBHF was the sire of Abbey's second litter, which produced four OTCH Goldens including "Zera" pictured below.**



**OTCH Wynwood's Two Double Zera TDX, OD (Duke ex Abbey) produced a litter of four OTCH Goldens herself when bred to "Reggie."**

Angelic Abbey TD, WCX, OD, OBHF) come into my life. I truly believe that the right dog at the right time with the right person is a winning combination. What a wonderful new world opened up for me and how fortunate I was to have a devoted, talented, intelligent dog to teach me the finer points of competitive obedience. Many of her accomplishments still stand today. She is the only dog to win first place four years in a row at the former Detroit-Windsor World Series of Dog obedience. She even won first place in the Top Dog division, performing Open and Utility exercises with eight-week-old puppies at home. The pups left for their new homes the week before the competition began! That litter was sired by OTCH Sungold Duke of Brookshire WCX, OS, OBHF. That litter also became the first litter of any breed where four of the offspring earned OTCH status, and three became outstanding producers themselves. The litter included: OTCH Wynwoods Fair Game Chedean, OTCH Wynwoods Countessa Of Wyndham, OTCH Wynwoods Golden Meddo Joel and OTCH Wynwoods Two Double Zera TDX, OD. "Zera" produced a litter of four OTCH offspring from one litter when bred to OTCH. Meadowpond Stardust Reggie, OS, OBHF (an Abbey grandson). This litter included: OTCH Locknor B-Fifty Two Bomber, OS, OBHF; OTCH Locknors Bank On A Star TD, JH; OTCH Locknor Be A Sparkle Plenty TDX, OD, OBHF and my own OTCH Wynwoods Locknor Bailee JH, WCX, OD, OBHF. Bomber, Sparkle and Bailee all became outstanding producers. That feat was hard to top. Wynwood produced many fine litters after that, including 40 American and Canadian OTCHs, the 2002 AKC National

Obedience Dog of the Year, NOC OTCH Wynwood New Direction UDX OBHF, plus numerous UD, UDX, CDX, CD, TD, TDX, WC, WCX, Obedience Hall of Fame and OS/OD titled Goldens. There is one I'm especially proud of – Can AFTCH; MHR Wynwoods Jokers Are Wild CD, MNH, WCX. Joker was owned and loved by my friend Jill Richardson in Canada.

Over the past 36 years I have owned 14 Goldens. Abbey and Bailee had OTCH titles. Can OTCH Wynwoods Jumpin' Jacks CDX, JH, WCX, OS was the sire of ten OTCHs, including OTCH Wynwoods Hot To Trot UDX, OBHF (who lived to be 17 years of age!), OTCH Wynwoods Triple Crown UDX, OBHF and OTCH Wynwood's Thrill Of It All UDX4, JH, OS, OBHF; Can CD from a litter out of my Bailee. Six of my own dogs became Outstanding Producers. The rest of my Goldens were mostly titled with CDX titles. I have completed Master Hunter titles on three Goldens and a MH and a QAA title on one black Labrador Retriever, "Nigel;" the black sheep of the family who was given to me by friends.

### **What is the key element of your training philosophy?**

There are so many obedience training philosophies today, I believe whatever philosophy works for you, that you are comfortable with and also works for your dog, is the right one. Most importantly you cannot beat the age-old rule of being repetitive, consistent, fair and thoughtful. I believe that everyone needs to develop a bond with their dog, not just in training, but in finding something that the dog loves to do and build on that interest. I do not



**OTCH Wynwood's Locknor Bailee JH, WCX, OD, OBHF (Reggie ex Zera)**



**NOC OTCH Wynwood's New Direction UDX OBHF won the AKC National Obedience Trial in 2002.**





## Historically Speaking



**Can AFTCH; MHR Wynwoods Jokers Are Wild CD, MH, WCX; Can CDX, MH, WCX was also a Master National Hunter.**



**"J.J." – Can OTCH Wynwood's Jumpin' Jacks CDX, JH, WCX, OS (Duke ex Abbey), sire of 10 OTCHs.**



believe that competitive obedience, with all its accuracy and precision is very natural, interesting or even entertaining to a dog. Obviously some breeds and individuals within some breeds excel at obedience. Having a dog with a great temperament, a desire to work and please, structured to perform, and the health to withstand the rigors of obedience, helps in achieving the final goal of winning.

### ***How much has obedience changed from when you first became involved in it?***

I am not sure exactly how much the sport of obedience has changed, mostly because I have been out of competition for some time now. I still stop by shows to watch, visit and keep in touch with my obedience friends. Exhibitors still take winning pretty seriously, but there are so many other venues to participate in such as rally, agility, free style, herding, tracking, field events, dock dogs, and the list goes on. Many people seem to have gotten more involved in these other activities over obedience competition. If obedience competition is not your cup of tea, there is a wealth of other sports to enjoy with your dog. Sometimes people can lose sight of the Golden Retriever breed standard. The Golden Retriever is such a highly talented dog; they can compete in many different areas. I have always felt that a Golden can pretty much be whatever you want it to be for your particular interest or need, but first and foremost they should primarily be a hunting dog and never lose that innate interest and desire to retrieve game birds.

### ***The topic of aggression in Golden Retrievers surfaces periodically. What is your assessment of Golden Retriever temperament in years past, and now?***

Aggression in dogs and in the Golden Retriever breed is a very controversial subject. Many trainers, dog owners, veterinarians, people who work or are around dogs each have their own description of what they think aggression is in dogs. Some people call one dog dominant and another person would call that same dog aggressive. When a breed grows in number of puppies produced, then problems grow along with this. There is absolutely no excuse for a dog that lashes out at a person, especially a child. Great care and honesty needs to be taken when considering breeding any dog. Since a sound, solid, friendly, outgoing temperament is the hallmark of the Golden Retriever breed, breeders must keep these particular qualities at the top of their list of requirements when choosing a dog to breed.

### ***Do you have any tips or tricks for raising and evaluating performance puppies?***

All my puppies, whether for performance, field or pet homes are all raised the same. The puppies are introduced to the Bio Sensor Neurological exercises from day 3 to 16 as their introduction to minor stresses. They are all handled daily and individually. New objects and sounds are incorporated when their eyes and ears open. They are removed from the solid-sided whelping box and contained in a wire-sided pen by the time they are four weeks old so they can observe the movements of people and dogs and feel a part of daily household activities. My puppies are whelped and raised in my kitchen, the most active room in my home. As a single person, when I am gone for long periods, I have a puppy-sitter come by for several hours during the day to feed and socialize the litter...and of course to help clean. Weather permitting, pups go outdoors where they are exposed to a variety of things such as short grass and high grass. Play objects are introduced...tunnels, saucers, sleds, or wobble boards, plastic playscapes, slides, and other small toys. Puppies are introduced to pigeons, ducks, chukar and pheasants. Again, weather permitting, they are introduced to water and swimming if they so desire. I try to make the seven weeks of life that they are with me as interesting and fun as possible. Sometimes I do a basic temperament test of follow, come, restraint, chase, focus, retrieve. But

***Pictured at left: OTCH Wynwoods Hot To Trot UDX, OS, OBHF, OTCH Wynwood's Triple Crown UDX, OBHF and OTCH Wynwood's Thrill Of It All UDX4, JH, OS, OBHF; Can CD – littermates by J.J. out of Bailee.***





## Historically Speaking



**Wynwood's One 'N Only CDX, JH, WC (J.J. ex Bailee) the most devoted and comical dog I have owned.**



**Wynwood's Dazzle'm Dancer UD, WC, OD; Can UD was whelped in 1982 by OTCH Karagold's Magic Marker ex Abbey. This breeding also produced OTCH Wynwood's Double Delight, OBHF and OTCH Wynwood's Cruise Control.**



**Wynwoods Brass Ring CDX, JH "Ringer," by OTCH Wynwoods Cruise Control out of Wynwood Cheer From Lochbrae CDX, JH, OD.**

many times after spending weeks interacting with the litter, I usually just have a good idea of each puppy's temperament. Many times several of the pups are so similar that it would be hard to pick one over the other.

### **What is your current involvement in the sport?**

I still breed Goldens and am proud to have a successful breeding program with only one or two litters a year. Over the past 35 years there have been several years where I have not bred or had any litters. The most Goldens I have owned at one time was six. Right now I have two living with me, and I co-own three females that live with friends. There have been a few years where I've considered stopping, and just about that time someone will call who has had one of my Wynwood Goldens and is looking for a new pup. That's when my plans, research and conversing start up again to pick what I hope to be the "right" stud dog. Of course, there are the inevitable times when I want a new pup for myself...and what better way to get your own puppy then to breed it yourself? Until recently, I have not kept a puppy from one of my litters since 1998...the most recent pup was born this past February 2010, from a frozen semen insemination. I have big plans for this most recent pup whose name is "Rocky," (Wynwoods Wild Card), with hopes of field work, and maybe even a return to the obedience ring. Rocky's pedigree goes back to all my old dogs through his sire Can AFTCH; MHR Wynwood Jokers Are Wild CD, MNH, WCX, including OTCH Wynwoods Thrill Of It All, Can OTCH Wynwoods Jumpin' Jacks, OTCH Wynwoods Locknor Bailee and Wynwoods Cheer From Lochbrae. Rocky has some big "paw steps" to follow, but I have great hopes for this young guy.

### **Please share the origin of your kennel name – Wynwood?**

My kennel name simply came from the fact that at the time I was deciding on a kennel name I also enjoyed the music of Steve Winwood, with a little variation in spelling and with the thought of a winning kennel, the name became Wynwood.

### **What do you feel that breeders today can do to improve the Golden Retriever?**

Research, research, research. Know your own line of dogs better than you know your own human relatives. Study the breed

standard. Ask questions. Be honest. Share information. Be willing to learn. Be open-minded. Know when to take a risk and know what the outcome of that risk could be, not just what you hope. Know all the health risks and the odds of longevity. Don't over breed and try to be successful with as small a colony of dogs as possible. The big risk by following some of this is that a breeder does not always have progeny available to carry on their line. This is where I find myself sometimes. I have a full time job and do not wish to keep more dogs then I have time or space for. Most of the people that buy puppies from me have their dog spayed or neutered (which is a good thing), so access to some of my old dogs is not always available.

### **What is your take on the explosion of performance venues in AKC – especially in rally and agility? Where do you think the sport is heading?**

After all, AKC is a business, and to keep "the business" active, alive and growing the AKC will always be improving, changing, and encouraging more participants in a wider range of venues. My thoughts would be if an organization can offer a variety of activities for people to participate in with their dog, that's great. To have something enjoyable to do with your dog...what could be better? The inclusion of mixed breeds is a good thing. I am not sure it has been thoroughly thought through as yet and it may have some rough areas right now, but I still see it as a good idea.

### **You've recently become involved in fieldwork. How does it compare to obedience? Is your approach to training any difference?**

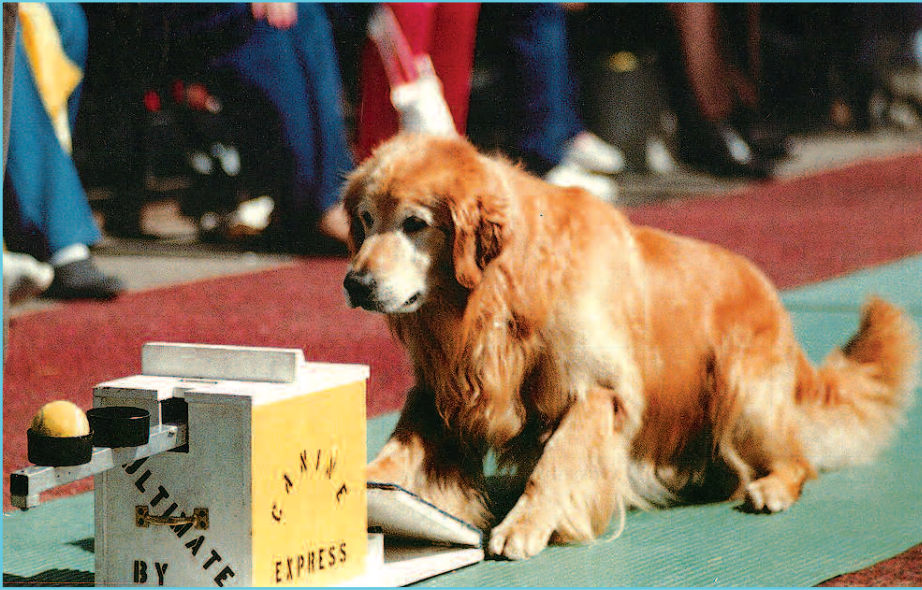
Fieldwork is very self-motivating to the dog. When I was much younger I probably should have flip-flopped my interest and trained advanced fieldwork first. There is a lot more work to advanced field training, more equipment, more people needed, more walking, more land and water, daylight hours, decent weather, etc. Nowadays it seems I'm always looking for training areas whenever I am driving around. Being outdoors, doing what my dogs love...is like a tranquilizer and I am content.

So much can be done with very young pups and dogs to acclimate them to the outdoor environment. My love of the outdoors certainly makes working with my dogs and pups outside a great attraction. There is a lot less accuracy training needed





## Historically Speaking



One of "J.J.'s" favorite sports was flyball. He played it with great intensity as this photo will attest. He was an enthusiastic flyball team competitor.

for field work, such as the need to sit straight, heel in a particular position, etc. As I said previously, I believe that thoughtfulness, fairness, consistency and repetition are still the basic tools that I would use for fieldwork or obedience.

### **Are there "politics" in obedience or field performance events?**

Basically, I do think that politics "can" play a part in any sport. There will always be those few who need to control situations and exercise that need in dog sports. One thing about dog sports, excluding field trials or other competitive sports, is that the outcome for you and your dog's success is black and white. Either you pass or you fail, so in that regard politics are not as prevalent.

Back in 1987, the GRCA asked if I would head a committee to research the height that dogs needed to jump in obedience. At that time dogs needed to jump 1½ times their shoulder height. After thinking this request over, I decided to chair this committee. I wanted people on my committee who were not only knowledgeable, but in good standing and highly respected by the AKC. Just imagine how fortunate I was to have Pagey Elliott, Marcia Schlehr, Betty Gay and my good friend Lynn Hoekstra willing to support me on this committee. Was this a form of politics? It probably was. The committee presented our findings and research. Marcia created technical drawings of the impact on the dog's shoulder assembly when landing on thin mats covering concrete. Pagey and Betty added

their years of expertise as well. Marcia, Lynn and I went to the AKC in New York to meet with their Board of Directors. We had a very professional packet to share and presented our case. The Board was gracious in listening to our pleas to lower the obedience heights for all dogs. No answers or decisions came out of that meeting. Later on we sent that same information packet to the next convening AKC obedience committee that met to review, update and possibly change any obedience rules and regulations. Low and behold the jump heights were lowered! The GRCA Jump Height Committee was not mentioned in their contribution for this change, but you can bet your life that our little committee was jumping for joy and *knew*, without a doubt, that our work had a big impact on this obedience regulation change.

### **What impact do you feel the OTCH has had on obedience?**

The OTCH title has added greatly to turning the sport of obedience into a highly competitive activity. It has also added to the explosion of puppies from the breeds that are consistently winning. The downside is that sometimes it leaves people always in the "back row" – those people who do not have the right dog, or the ability to compete with the exhibitors in the "front row." These exhibitors might feel more rewarded for their hard work if an additional class could be added for those dogs that have already achieved their OTCH title. In addition I do believe that the

"B" class competitors could spend time visiting and conversing with the "A" class exhibitors, especially exhibitors in Novice A. With the Novice A entries being low, this may be why the AKC has now included mixed breeds in the sport of obedience.

### **Are there any other thoughts you would like to share with us?**

My most recent involvement in the prcd-PRA condition in the Golden Retriever has again brought me a wonderful opportunity to meet many new people from across the country – people who truly care about the welfare of this marvelous breed. I would like to add that the opportunity to test any Golden, in particular ones being bred, for the prcd-PRA gene is readily available through Optigen Laboratories, [www.optigen.com](http://www.optigen.com). I cannot think of one good reason why anyone would not want to test their Golden for this condition, especially if they are going to breed. If a genetic test were available for hip and elbow dysplasia, or cancer for that matter, I would hope we would all be running to have this test done. It would be a matter of being safe and not sorry. We are lucky, as Golden Retriever fanciers, so early on in the discovery of prcd-PRA, to be able to control this condition in our beloved breed.

My life has been blessed, surrounded by my dogs. My dogs have brought me my closest lifelong friends. I have had the good fortune of great success with my own dogs, shared in the success of dogs that I have sold to others, and that of my friends and their dogs. I have owned my own dog obedience training school and I was instrumental in developing a breeding program for Paws With A Cause, an Assistance Dog organization in Michigan. Currently I hold the rewarding position of Breeding Manager at Leader Dogs for the Blind in Rochester, Michigan. How fortunate I have been to have worked with people with disabilities and to see firsthand how a dog can truly change a person's daily life.

I have "gone to the dogs" and what a great place that has turned out to be! Now I welcome friends and retriever owners to my home and training property to train for a day or a weekend. I enjoy helping new people interested in getting started with field training, or taking young pups and introducing them to retrieving and their first steps in becoming a team player. I have been rewarded in sharing my life with and falling in love with the Golden Retriever breed. ♦