



AMERICAN  
KENNEL CLUB®

## Press Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### ***AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB ANNOUNCES THE RECIPIENTS OF 2023 LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS***

**New York, NY-** The American Kennel Club (AKC®), the world's largest purebred dog registry and leading advocate for dogs is proud to announce the winners of the 2023 AKC® Lifetime Achievement Awards: Michael Canalizo (Conformation), Curt Curtis (Companion Events) and Laurie Soutar (Performance).

The Awards, created by AKC President and CEO Dennis Sprung in 1999, are presented in recognition of outstanding participation and achievement within the dog sport. The finalists and winners are nominated by AKC member clubs and have impacted the sport on a national level through club involvement, judging, exhibiting, breeding and teaching.

#### **CONFORMATION**



**Michael Canalizo** has spent many years in the Dog Show World as a Breeder/Owner, Professional Handler, turned Judge. His first exposure to his primary breed: the Afghan Hound came in 1961 as a member of "the typical Hobby Breeder family" with their purchase of "Babu Bamn of Grandeur". He showed his family's home-bred dogs through five generations of their own small breeding program. His relationship with the Afghans of Grandeur spans over 60 years. He has owned, shown, and lived with many other breeds, among them: Salukis, Dachshunds, German Shepherd Dogs, Whippets, Border Collies, Parson and Russell Terriers.

He was the Breeder/Owner/Handler of the Top Winning Hound of All Time (Ch. Triumph of Grandeur) with 87 BIS wins until a daughter of his dog (Int. Ch. Tryst of Grandeur) broke that record with 161 BIS. He has won 2 Top Owner Handler Awards and 6 Quaker Oats Awards. Collectively he piloted over 100 Afghan Hounds to their Championships recording 300 All-Breed Best in Shows and nearly 1,000 Hound Group awards in the breed, including Top Dog of the year in 1995.

He is currently approved to judge BIS, All Sporting, Hound, Toy, Non-Sporting and Herding breeds plus breeds in the Working group. He has officiated at events in 38 countries to date.

Michael is a member of the Afghan Hound Club of America, Westbury Kennel Association and the Morris and Essex Kennel Club.

Michael Canalizo's credentials include developing and presenting dog-related educational seminars worldwide, 30 years as an OHA Handling Instructor, feature writing, and working as a contributing editor for numerous national and international publications. He was an AKC Executive Field Representative and held the position as Director of AKC Event Management from 2005 to 2016.

While he has demonstrated decades of success in the Conformation world, his focus has always been his unwavering support of the breeders and owners of the AKC purebred dog.

### **COMPANION EVENTS**



**Curt Curtis** began training dogs at the age of 8 in 1960 and has been training and working with dogs ever since. At the age of 16 he began to instruct and train professionally, working full time at a kennel in the Portland, Oregon area while attending school.

In 1972, Mr. Curtis founded his own dog training and consultation business, where he met his wife, Karla.

Curt has conducted dog training and tracking classes in the Pacific Northwest, with new training ventures developing in his new home area of Pahrump, Nevada. During this same period of time, Mr. Curtis acted as a consultant and trainer to several Police Canine Programs, in Obedience, Tracking, Scent Work and Handling.

Mr. Curtis is currently approved to judge all AKC Obedience, Rally and Tracking Classes, as well as being an evaluator for CGC, Trick Dog and Temperament Testing.

In 2005 Curt was hired by the American Kennel Club to oversee and run the Companion Events Department, governing the sports of Obedience, Rally, Tracking and Agility until his retirement in 2012. During his time with the American Kennel Club, his team developed the Beginner Novice Class along with creating many new Companion Event titling classes. Another highlight during his tenure with the American Kennel Club was the celebration of the 75th anniversary of Obedience.

After leaving his position with the American Kennel Club, Mr. Curtis has served as the President for the Tualatin Kennel Club and Portland Dog Obedience Club.

Although Mr. Curtis started training with a Black Lab, the past 61 years have allowed him to work with and title numerous dogs from many groups, in obedience, rally, tracking and conformation. Curt and his wife Karla are currently having fun working and showing their Pembroke Welsh Corgi.

In closing, Mr. Curtis stated his love of dogs and our sports would not have developed, if not for the support and guidance of his mentors who helped to guide him along the way.

## **PERFORMANCE EVENTS**



**Laurie Soutar** has been involved with Sighthounds since she was a teenager, bred her first litter of Greyhounds under the Lakilanni prefix in 1976, and since then has worked to breed, encourage and promote dogs who could be successful in both the field and in the ring.

She has been involved in promoting and preserving various Performance Sports for many years, and she has extensive experience in all facets of Performance Events. She hosted events at her property for 30 years, including shows, Lure Coursing, Rally and Obedience Trials, Draft Dog Tests, as well as Specialties and Breed Club Events. She has been Trial Secretary or Chair for many different sports for multiple clubs and has assisted and supported the creation of numerous Performance Clubs. She has mentored Judges, Field Trial Secretaries and Lure Operators. She oversaw the creation of the Canadian Amateur Racing Association and wrote the rule book. She created and wrote the rules for a Lure Coursing program, which

included the first ever coursing titles for non-sighthounds. The program was so popular that the following year AKC adopted virtually identical rules, and the CAT and Fast CAT® programs have introduced thousands of dogs and their handlers to the joys of running sports.

She has promoted Performance Sports enthusiastically and tirelessly through articles in many dog publications, teaching classes, as well as offering seminars, workshops and try-it days, and currently teaches Obedience, Rally and Scent Work, as well as running Lure Coursing practices. She is licensed to judge Lure Coursing in every venue, and various other sports through several registries. She organized the Fast CAT® test for the first Eukanuba Performance Games, has hosted the National Lure Coursing Championship, and when AKC Scent Work was introduced, she organized and was Secretary for full trials on the first official date.

On a personal note, she believes that Conformation and Performance go hand in hand and has bred more than 30 Dual Champions since the inception of AKC's Lure Coursing program in 1991, and more than 50 that included ASFA (American Sighthound Field Association) Field Champions that were also AKC Bench Champions. She was awarded the AKC Performance Breeder of the Year in 2015. In addition, she has titled Greyhounds in nearly every sport, and has had numerous dogs achieve #1 status in Lure Coursing, including two dogs that were #1 in AKC, ASFA and CKC Lure Coursing in the same year.

For more information on the recipients and all of the nominees, visit <https://www.akc.org/about/awards-and-honors/lifetime-achievement/nominees/2023-lifetime-achievement-award-nominees/>.

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### **About the American Kennel Club**

Founded in 1884, the American Kennel Club is a not-for-profit organization which maintains the largest registry of purebred dogs in the world and oversees the sport of purebred dogs in the United States. The AKC is dedicated to upholding the integrity of its registry, promoting the sport of purebred dogs and breeding for type and function. Along with its more than 5,000 licensed and member clubs and its affiliated organizations, the AKC advocates for the purebred dog as a family companion, advances canine health and well-being, works to protect the rights of all dog owners and promotes responsible dog ownership. More than 26,000 competitions for AKC-registered purebred and mixed breed dogs are held under AKC rules and regulations each year including conformation, agility, obedience, rally, tracking, herding, lure coursing, coonhound events, hunt tests, field and earthdog tests.

Affiliate AKC organizations include the AKC Humane Fund, AKC Canine Health Foundation, AKC Reunite, the AKC Museum of the Dog, and the AKC Purebred Preservation Bank. For more information, visit [www.akc.org](http://www.akc.org).

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