

FRONT & FINISH[®]



August 2019

The Dog Trainer's News

GCH OTCH POC MACH2 PACH RACH
TopFlite Ricochet

Trained & Handled by
Gerianne Darnell



Photo by PupArt 2010



Photo by Ron Puckett

Robert is never far away from "Fox"!

**GCH AKC/UKC CH OTCH POC MACH2 PACH RACH
C-ATCH UCDX UROC EN
TopFlite Ricochet
UDX2 OM4 VER TD BN GN GO RM3 RAE2 PUDX2
MXB MXPB MJS MJPB MXF TQX T2B PAX
VCD2 SWA SCE SIE SEE CGCA CGCU FDC TKA,
Can CD RN, TBAD TG1**

**Owned, Trained, & Loved by Gerianne Darnell
Bred by Sandra Schumacher**

In August of 2010 I called my good friend Sandy Schumacher in order to get on her list for a puppy in the next year or two. I described to her what I was looking for, and she said, "Well, I think I have what you're looking for right now." But I wasn't ready! After seeing photos and videos of a beautiful tri-color puppy, I decided to take Robert on a trial basis. When I laid eyes on him, Robert's trial lasted all of ten seconds!



2013 Classic

training the following week. Robert was always a quick study in all of his sports. He began competing in AKC agility at 22 months of age, and he earned his MACH at the age of 3 years. He also did well in conformation as a puppy, earning a major and a Group Three from the 6-9 puppy class, owner-handled.

Robert's first score in obedience was a 199 1/2 from Beginner Novice in September of 2012, and later on the same day he was Winners Dog/Best of Winners at the Papillon Club of America Regional Specialty in Des Moines, Iowa. What a wonderful day that was! Robert finished his Conformation Championship his next weekend out, and then he quickly added the Grand Championship.

2013 was a very exciting year for Team Robert! He started the year by earning his TD in snow that was way over my knees (I earned another TD the same day on my 12-

Robert came home at 12 weeks of age, and my three Border Collies immediately fell in love with him, especially my eleven-year-old Quintuple Champion Riva. Riva completely adored Robert until her death four years later; she would fret whenever he had a bath or got his nails trimmed until he was returned to her, so she could make sure that all was well. He would sleep curled up next to her on her dog bed, and woe be to any other dog who would even look sideways at Robert. I think Robert still misses her; I know I do.

Robert began tracking the day after I got him, and he started baby obedience and agility

year-old Border Collie, Raymond.) At the draw, several people remarked that it was such a shame about the weather for the Papillon, as he obviously wouldn't be able to physically get through the snow. I laughed and said, "Just watch him!" I was more worried about Raymond! I managed to draw back-to-back tracks, and I had a severely sprained ankle at the time. But trooper that he always is, Robert put his nose down and about four minutes later presented me with the glove and a new Tracking Dog title, my tenth TD.



Photo by Corey LeGrand

Robert earned a 199 High in Trial and a 198 1/2 First Place his first weekend out in Novice obedience, and five days later he finished his CD with another High in Trial at the Mo-

Kan Toy Dog Specialty. A few weeks later I was excited to attend the 2013 Papillon Club of America National Specialty in Kentucky. Robert not only won the Inaugural Papillon All Around Challenge, which was awarded to the most versatile Papillon at the National, he was High in Trial at both the PCA Regional Specialty and the PCA National Specialty Obedience trials with scores of 199 and 198 1/2. A month later I enjoyed a trip to Canada to attend the Papillon Club of Canada National Specialty where Robert was High in Trial with a score of 198, and he also won the Bred By Exhibitor class.

In the summer of 2013 Robert earned his UKC CD with scores of 199 1/2, 199 1/2, and 199, and he then finished his AKC CDX during one weekend in October. Robert capped off the year by competing at the AKC Obedience Classic in Novice, where he finished eleventh overall and won the medal offered by the Papillon Club of America for the Highest Scoring Papillon.



Photo by Marv Crawford

Robert and I worked hard during 2014 to get ready for Utility, and early in 2015 we were ready! Robert earned his first UD leg his first weekend in Utility competition, and then he finished his UD the next weekend. I thought Robert was pretty good, but even I was surprised at how easily he earned his OTCH. He earned his first OTCH point on May 15, 2015, and just three months later he finished his OTCH! Wow! He is my fifth OTCH Papillon and my eighth OTCH overall.

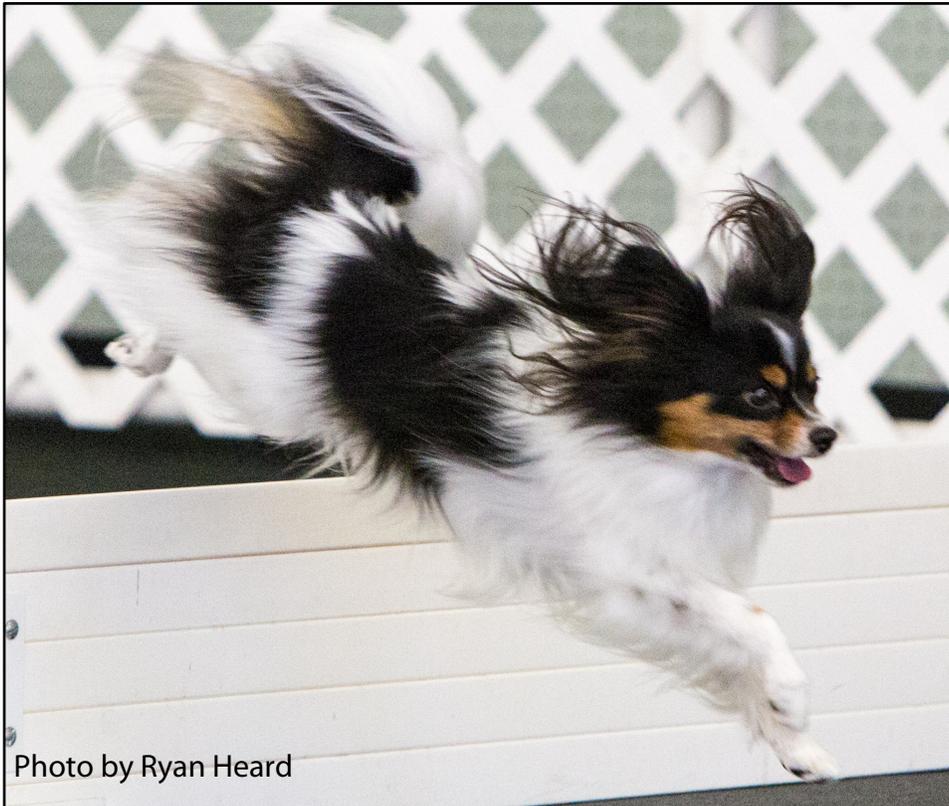


Photo by Ryan Heard

Not only did Robert earn enough OTCH points to be the 2015 Papillon Club of America Top Obedience Papillon (my seventh time to win this prestigious award with four different paps), he was invited to the 2016 National Obedience Championship held in Tulsa in March. I was pleased that my eleven-year-old Border Collie Rick was also

invited to the NOC, so I had the arduous task of showing two dogs in 16 rings on Saturday. My friends helped steer me in the right direction with both dogs and made sure I had the correct equipment, and at the end of the day I was elated to discover that BOTH dogs had made it to the Top 50 competition on Sunday! Not only that, Robert had won the Toy Group! It is a day I will never, ever forget.

After the 2016 NOC, I switched Robert from the regular obedience classes to preferred. I had enjoyed showing in the preferred obedience classes with Rick, but we didn't get enough points to finish his Preferred Obedience Championship. If you have never looked at the requirements for the POC, oh my! It is a very difficult title, and only a few dogs have earned it. Not only do you have to get 20 PUDX legs, you have to earn 750



Photo by Ron Puckett

points, which are predicated on score. I decided I wanted that POC on Robert! It took us about a year and a half to earn the 20 PUDX legs and the 750 points; compare that to the three months it took him to earn his OTCH! I also felt pressure to finish the POC before the new obedience rules took effect in May of 2018, as I had no desire to teach an eight-year-

old seasoned obedience dog the new command discrimination exercise. And, typical Robert, he came through for me and earned his POC at my club's April obedience trials, where there was a great big rosette for finishing the title! Robert was retired from obedience after he earned his POC. He won 43 High in Trial Obedience Awards in his career.

When I first read about AKC's new Rally Championship, I thought "Oh my goodness, what a slog that would be!" I did think that the new Master class looked interesting and kind of fun, so I decided to go for the Master title and see what happened after that. Robert seemed to enjoy rally, so for his tenth master leg we added in the Excellent B and Advanced B classes to pick up his first Triple Q. We were about halfway through the 20 Triple Q's needed for the RACH when AKC decided the original RACH rules were too time and cost prohibitive. I do think they went too far in the opposite direction and made the RACH too easy, but what the heck, it's nice to have a doable Championship. By the time the rule change came through in February of 2019, Robert was almost finished with his RACH. He finished his RACH a year to the day after his POC, again at my local club's show. My club has the best rosettes ever!

I enjoyed showing Robert at the 2019 AKC Rally National Championship in Tulsa, where he tied for tenth place in the Championship class and then lost the runoff on time, darn it! That side-by-side right spin bit us at just the wrong time in his first run, but he worked beautifully all day other than that. The sting of him just missing out on the placements was helped greatly by my young Border Collie Rayna placing tenth out of 110 dogs in Novice. I have fantastic pictures and memories from that day. Robert also competed in the AKC Agility National Championship that same weekend in the four-inch preferred class, and I was totally floored when he made it to the Challengers Round on Sunday. I had to have somebody explain to me how all of that worked :-)

Robert ended up in seventh place overall, which capped off an amazing weekend. We then dodged flooded roads that night on the way home from Tulsa.



Just another day at the dog show...

Early in 2016 I started doing nosework with both Robert and Rick. I wanted something less physical for Rick to do, and I figured as long as I was learning how to do something, I might as well do it with both dogs! Robert has been a super little nosework dog. He is currently working at the Master level in AKC Scent Work, and he

recently finished his overall Elite title in UKC Nosework and will soon be working on his UKC Nosework Championship. It is something I will enjoy doing with him for many years to come. We have also started working in VST tracking, and we are having fun with that as well. Robert now has a collection of AKC Championship titles that no other dog holds. I do hope that the AKC comes up with a doable Nosework Championship in time for Robert, and of course the Champion Tracker and Versatile Companion Champion titles are on our radar as well.

Robert is now nine years old. He has been an amazing, fun-to-train, versatile little dog, but it is his sunny personality and love of all people and dogs that really defines him. In fact, I would say that the only problem I ever had showing Robert was that he really wanted to make friends with all of the dogs and people at the trials, so I had to teach him that a meet and greet would be a delayed reward for him! Robert is my husband's special pet, and he sits up in the window and waits for George to come home at night. He is also a wonderful little bed dog, although sometimes he snores! Robert very much enjoys a walk in the field every morning with the Border Collies, and they are very protective of him. Robert also likes to chase the sheep off of the fence each morning, which makes the Border Collies roll their eyes at him I think!

I now have a young female Border Collie that I am currently training and competing with, and she is as difficult as Robert was easy. Much as I adore her, I think my struggles with Rayna are payback for how easy everything came with Robert! But I know that she will teach me even more about this wonderful dog sport that I love.

Robert's nine years on this earth have flown by, but he is still firmly in his prime, and he still very much enjoys his training and showing. I am looking forward to the many adventures that we still have ahead of us.

Thank you to Sandy Schumacher for this wonderful little dog!

