

The History of ACFA Through Its Presidents

By Jim Mendenhall

Almost all of the material for this article comes from the past 50 years of ACFA Bulletins and Parades of Royalty. My thanks go to Lila Rippy for preserving the material and to Isabel Christie for passing it along to me.

PRICE CROSS (1955-57) (1959) (Texas) (Judge)

Mr. Cross bred cats for more than 40 years and bred, owned and exhibited all the recognized breeds of his time. The first ACFA Bulletin referred to him as “the dean of southwestern cat fanciers”. His first cat was a Tortoiseshell Persian, and in 1928 he acquired what is believed to be the first Siamese to come to Texas. He was Administrative Officer for the School Lunch Section, Food Distribution Division of the U.S. Department of Agriculture in the Southwest Area office serving seven states. Mr. Cross owned MAO Cattery. The October-November, 1959 issue of the ACFA Bulletin reported “On October 3rd Mr. Cross was brutally beaten and stabbed to death by a nineteen year old youth whom he had befriended, and who then took his money and automobile and drove to Houston. He stated that he was separated from his wife, could not face life and decided to kill Mr. Cross so that he would be caught and sent to the electric chair.” Mr. Cross left his estate to the University of Texas, and his will provided for the dispersal of his cats to various breeders in the Southwest.



Sherman Arps (1958) (Washington)

Mr. Arps and his wife Maxine were members of the Abyssinian and Russian Blue breed sections and were instrumental in promoting ACFA in the Northwest. The January, 1958 Bulletin reported “Mr. Arps was one of the early Charter Members of ACFA and has been an irreplaceable booster for ACFA ever since”. He and his wife owned SHERMAX Cattery.

Helen Mueller (1960-62) (Texas) (Judge)

Mrs. Mueller, from Austin, Texas, was one of ACFA’s most popular judges. She owned FLAG-STAFF Cattery and bred primarily Persians.



Don Yoder (1963 – resigned November, 1963) (Missouri) (Judge)

Mr. Yoder was described as “one of our youngest members, breeders and judges”. He was a breeder of Siamese, Persians and Burmese, and owned DAO Cattery (sometimes listed as DOCIA-DAO). He was the administrator of a hospital in Missouri and resigned from the presidency in November, 1963 citing work pressures.

Dorothy N. Baker (1964 - resigned August, 1965) (Ohio) (Judge)

Mrs. Baker (Dottie) was a former school teacher and was active as an antique collector. She was primarily a breeder of Tabby Persians and was very active in developing the North-Eastern Region during her time as Regional Director. During Mrs. Baker’s tenure as President a majority of the members of the Board of Directors voted to not re-appoint Mr. M. Porter Walley as Secretary-Treasurer of ACFA. Mr. Don Yoder led an attempt to have Judges decline to judge shows until Mr. Walley was removed from office. Many members requested a referendum on the matter, and Mr. Walley received a majority of the votes. The same Board members asked for a second vote, which Mr. Walley won by an even larger margin. A number of members had begun recall petitions for Mrs. Baker and the other members of the Board who had opposed Mr. Walley. Mrs. Baker stated “No petition will be necessary to remove me from office for I will resign immediately (if the members voted in August to retain Mr. Walley)”. Mrs. Baker and her husband owned YOUR PETS’ Cattery.



Walter Carl Darnell (moved from VP to President September, 1965–1967) (Texas) (Judge)

Mr. Darnell bred Abyssinians, Domestic Shorthairs (American Shorthairs), Manx, Siamese and Persians and owned DAR BER Cattery. He later concentrated solely on Havana Browns. He was charter member #91 and served as Secretary-Treasurer and General Manager of ACFA from 1957-59. He was the President of the Dallas Society for Animal Protection and on the Board of the Morris Animal Foundation.

James Kilborn (1968 – resigned in mid 1969) (Washington) (Judge)

The December, 1968 Bulletin states “Jim is known as a progressive go-getter type of person as typified by his record in the Life Insurance business and ACFA members can look forward to a return to the active, advancing type of progress that was an integral part of our Association until very recently”. In his “platform” he had requested more frequently scheduled meetings of the Board of Directors (at the time they met once a year). Jim and his first wife Mary bred Abyssinians and Siamese and owned KILBORN Cattery, and both were licensed ACFA Judges. After Mr. Kilborn’s election, various allegations were made about the election results and process, and the case ended up before the Jurisprudence Committee and in court. An agreement was reached out of court whereby he and Betty Haralampus both agreed to resign (she was Vice President and one of the main sources of the allegations) and they agreed that neither would run again for office in the next election.

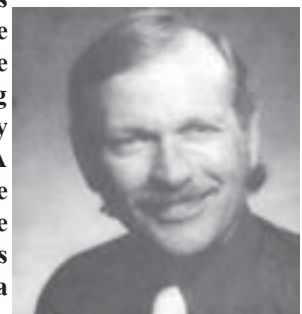


Phyllis Whitney (1970 - 74) (California) (Judge)

Mrs. Whitney had been a member since the inception of ACFA and judged for ACFA from the beginning, first as a guest judge and a year later as an ACFA Judge. She was also Southwest Regional Director for two terms. In her real life, she worked for the same company for over 25 years as a buyer and contract consultant. Mrs. Whitney began a President’s Podium column in each issue of the Bulletin. She and her husband owned BURQUE-LEE Cattery and were primarily breeders of Persians, adding American Shorthairs at a later date. 1974 was a year of turmoil for ACFA with protests, petitions, protests against petitions and controversial decisions by the JPC.

Dr. David Apel D.V.M. (1975 - 76) (Illinois & British Columbia) (Judge)

Dr. Apel was associated with ACFA beginning in 1957 and served several terms as the North Central Regional Director before being elected President. He was employed by Quaker Oats Nutritional Farms, Kennel and Cattery as a staff veterinarian for two years before opening his own private practice. He was instrumental in setting up the ACFA Research Fund. He wrote in his first column as President that “I personally feel that lately we have been too quick to use the legal channels.....What ever happened to the old idea of talking to each other....?”. During his term a lot of his time was used to respond to various and numerous complaints raised by Russell Middleton, one of the founders of ACFA, who was disturbed at the direction ACFA had taken, particularly the Board of Directors. In 1975 ACFA sent a check for \$4,500 to the College of Veterinary Medicine at Washington State University to provide financial assistance for research being conducted on feline infectious peritonitis (FIP) – one of numerous donations sent over the years. In November, 1976 the ACFA office and equipment were destroyed in a fire - luckily many records were stored in another location. David and his first wife Joan owned ARK Cattery and bred numerous breeds, but worked primarily with Silver Persians. They had two Cat of the Year Awards – in 1968, Cashmere Dancer of Ark, a Chinchilla Persian Male, and in 1973, Ark’s Remember Me, a Shaded Silver Persian Male. In 1975 David and his second wife Lois moved to British Columbia where they concentrated on British Shorthairs.



Lila Rippy (1977 - 78) (Illinois) (Judge)

In announcing her candidacy for the position of President, Mrs. Rippy wrote that she had “for the past 21 years served the best Association in the Cat Fancy as a member, judge, judging school instructor, Jurisprudence Committee member and Chairman, Regional Director, and 5 years as Vice President”. During her years as Vice President Mrs. Rippy regularly wrote a column “The Veep Speaks” for the Bulletin. In 1969 she established the “ACFA Annual Picnic” which was held in July by Mrs. Rippy and her husband Ray at their farm – when Mrs. Rippy was elected President, the Rippys had been married 48 years! Mrs. Rippy owned VAN DYKE Cattery and bred primarily Persians in her early years and was later famous for Ruddy Abyssinians. She bred and owned the 1978 Cat of the Year, VAN DYKE’S ABI ABDEL, a Ruddy Abyssinian Male. During her second year in office Mrs. Rippy seems to have had a very divided Board with which to work. Cora Swan – who wrote as a member of ACFA and not as its Secretary-Treasurer – wrote the following about the 1978 election “In a very short while campaigning and elections will be over, and never in the history of ACFA has such vigorous and vicious campaigning taken place in our organization.....”. Luckily Mrs. Rippy was a “collector”, and it is thanks to her that I have much of the material upon which this article is based.



Georgia Morgan (1979 – resigned mid year) (Texas) (Judge)

Mrs. Morgan owned VELVET, sometimes shown as VEL-VET, Cattery and was primarily a breeder of Ruddy Abyssinians, plus Persians and Siamese. She was licensed as an ACFA judge in 1973 and became South Central Regional Director in 1974 following the recall of SC RD Jerry Kahn. During 1978 Mrs. Morgan and Mr. Larry Paul had been at the center of various controversies on the Board of Directors. One of Mrs. Morgan's primary goals was to remove Cora Swan as Secretary/Treasurer of ACFA and to move the ACFA Central Office. When Mr. Paul was recalled as Vice President and the members voted to retain Mrs. Swan, Mrs. Morgan resigned and began the formation of TICA. Jacob Ash, NW Regional Director was appointed by the Board to act as Interim Chairman for a few months since VP Larry Paul had been recalled from office. If Mrs. Rippy had won reelection, the future of the cat fancy, and ACFA in particular, might have taken a much different direction.



Maxine Potter (elected November, 1979 - 84) (Kansas) (Judge)

Mrs. Potter served for eight years as NC Regional Director and began a further term in 1975 before resigning to return to her home state of Kansas. She became an ACFA licensed judge in 1968 and in 1975 was elected Vice President. During Mrs. Potter's Presidency a building fund was established to build a new head office (these funds were later used to purchase and renovate an existing building – the building in use until recently); ACFA celebrated its Silver Anniversary (many clubs also celebrated their Silver Anniversary Shows); the Annual Meeting was moved from February to a “date to be established in the late summer or early fall”; the first hardbound POR was published (1982); the Judging Program was revised to be much as it is currently; and cut slips were eliminated. Mrs. Potter and her husband George owned WESTERN SLOPE Cattery and bred primarily Siamese and Burmese.

John Bodner (1985-86) (Manitoba) (Judge)

Mr. Bodner and his wife Laura owned LO-BOD Cattery and bred Siamese, Burmese, Manx and American Shorthairs. He worked for Eaton's for over 40 years, and was host of "What's New Pussycat", the longest-running program on the Winnipeg Access TV Channel. John served three terms as Western Canada Regional Director and succeeded in reestablishing clubs in several Canadian Provinces. He was licensed as a judge in 1968. During his Presidency the Judging Program was further revised; Central Office expanded its computer system; the Household Pet section of the Show Rules was completely revised; ACFA developed a new partnership in Australia; the position of Second Vice President was added to the Board; and the first "ACFA Style" ring in a European show was held in Germany.



Betty Haralampus (1987-recalled in 1989) (Washington) (Judge)

Mrs. Haralampus was a charter member of ACFA, and her name first appeared on the list of Apprentice Judges in 1963, and in December, 1964 was listed as an Allbreed Judge. Mrs. Haralampus and her husband Alex owned HARA Cattery and bred Siamese and Domestic Shorthairs (ASH) and showed a number of other breeds. She had experience in business and management and for five years was the Executive Director of the Miss Oregon Pageant. She served ACFA in many capacities: Election Judge, Vice President, POR editor, Siamese Breed Chair, Chair of the Judges' Guild (precursor of the JEC), Judging Co-Ordinator, Merit Awards Scorer, and she judged the first ACFA Show in Japan (1973). During her Presidency the Clerking Program was established; the Judges' Executive Council replaced the Judges' Guild; the Household Pet Judges' Program was established; realignment of regions was studied and later implemented; and the ACFA Office was fully computerized. In the summer of 1989 a recall petition was filed alleging that as President she had allowed the Board of Directors to take illegal action against two ACFA Judges. The recall was successful by six votes, and Vice President Tom Herbst officially became President in December, 1989.



Tom Herbst (December 1989-92) (Wisconsin) (Judge)

Mr. Herbst was licensed as a Judge in 1980, and was co-owner, with Dan Lalley, of TODA Cattery and raised primarily Abyssinians and American Shorthairs. They bred Alter of the Year in 1982 – TODA'S KHARIS, a Ruddy Abyssinian. He served ACFA as Abyssinian Breed Chair, American Shorthair Breed Chair, Northcentral Regional Director, and First Vice President. Tom worked in private business and for the City of Madison, Wisconsin. He was one of ACFA's strongest supporters and wrote extensively for the ACFA Bulletin and Cat Chat, the newsletter of the Madison Cat Club. During his Presidency the Guest Judging Program was terminated; Specialty Judges were approved to present "Top 10" if at least 25 entries in a class; HHPs were approved to be judged as other classes (previously Specialty Judges presented an Allbreed HHP final); members approved using at least 2 Specialty Judges for a one-day show and at least 4 for a two-day show; the Judging Program was revised to provide for review of Judges for relicensing at the Semi-Annual Meeting; and requirements for Specialty Judges were raised to 40 shows judged before applying for Allbreed. In November of 1992, a Judge, whose license had been suspended at the 1992 Annual Meeting, brought a lawsuit against ACFA; this lawsuit would prove to have a major impact on ACFA's history.



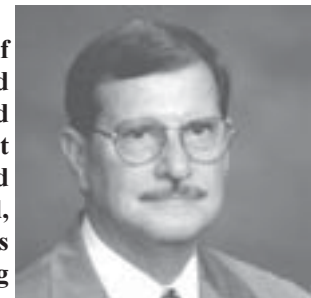
Darrell Newkirk (1993-94) (Illinois) (Judge)



Mr. Newkirk was licensed as a HHP Judge in 1987 and as a Specialty Judge in 1990. He and his wife Beth own PURRSYNIAN Cattery and breed Abyssinians and he served as ACFA Abyssinian Breed Chair. He was a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist. Mr. Newkirk had the misfortune to take over as President immediately after the above-mentioned lawsuit was filed. By February, 1993 the lawsuit had already cost ACFA nearly \$8,500.00. This was a very trying time for ACFA and much of Mr. Newkirk's Presidency was involved with the lawsuit and all that resulted from it. Several small associations broke away from ACFA and there were a number of resignations from the Board and other ACFA Committees. Throughout his time in office Mr. Newkirk tried to keep the members informed about the progress of the lawsuit and to keep the activities of ACFA on track. Show reports were printed in the Bulletin for the first time since the early days of ACFA. Many members and clubs supported ACFA financially during this period with donations.

Ron Summers (1995-96) (Indiana) (Judge)

Mr. Summers was licensed as a Judge in 1986 and is co-owner, with Ricky Burthay, of BURTHAY Cattery and they have raised Cornish Rex and American Shorthairs. They bred the 1987 Cat of the Year, BURTHAY'S CENTAURI, a Blue Cornish Rex Male. He served ACFA as Northeast Regional Director, Mid-Central Regional Director, President of Amerikat (ACFA's ASH Breed Club), Cornish Rex Breed Chair, American Shorthair Breed Chair, and First Vice President. At the beginning of his term as President the lawsuit was finally settled, and the main impact on ACFA was the staggering load of legal fees. One of the main projects for Mr. Summers and the Presidents who followed him was to keep ACFA vital while working to pay off the debts.



Steve Lawson (1997-98) (Florida) (Judge)

Mr. Lawson was licensed as an ACFA Judge in 1989, and served as ACFA's Second Vice President. He and his wife Carol own LAWMAINE Cattery and have bred primarily Maine Coon Cats. They are the owners of a Travel Agency and during Mr. Summers' Presidency they organized the first ACFA Cruise, an annual tradition, which has raised thousands of dollars for ACFA. They bred the Kitten of the Year in 1994 – LAWMAINE THE BIG BOPPER, a Brown Tabby Maine Coon Cat Male.

Carol Barbee (1999-present) (Kentucky) (Judge)

Mrs. Barbee was licensed as an ACFA Judge in 1982; she and her husband Herb own KIMIKI Cattery and have bred Siamese and Cornish Rex. Before being elected President, she served ACFA as Cornish Rex Breed Chair, Midcentral Regional Director, and as a member of the Genetics Committee and the Judges Executive Council. During her Presidency the first ACFA Judges judged in China, the Color Codes underwent a massive update, and many of ACFA's debts have been settled. She is currently serving as editor of the POR.

