

1992

August Belmont

August Belmont IV, former chairman of the AKC Board of Directors and a noted breeder of Chesapeake Bay and Labrador Retrievers, died July 10th in Easton, MD, where he made his home, at the age of 86.

Belmont proved proficient in running his dogs in the field and in exhibiting them in the breed and obedience rings. His Bo-Marc of South Bay made Chessie history by earning a C.D. when he was 6 months old and then gaining a breed Championship and an amateur field title.

But it was with Labs that Belmont and his wife Louise really made their mark. Perhaps his most famous dog was NFC-NAFC Super Chief, which won the National Amateur Retriever Championship in both 1967 and 1968. Belmont and Soupy also won the 1968 National Open Retriever Championship - both the back-to-back wins and the doubleheader were firsts. Super Chief went on to become the highest point winner in history. Many other field and bench champions also came from the Belmont's Long Island kennels.

Fellow hunting enthusiasts say once Belmont got into the sport in 1957, he never again took a vacation that didn't revolve around training the dogs. But it was Louise who really loved the training, while Belmont enjoyed the competition and often ran his own dogs.

While Louise always trained the dogs she ran, Belmont's dogs usually spent some time under the firm hand of California trainer Rex Carr.

The teamwork of the Belmonts usually started at dawn, when they'd wake and train the dogs for a few hours before Belmont caught a commuter train for New York City. Louise would drive him to the station, then continue the training each day with a group of retriever enthusiasts. On Thursday she'd pack the car and head off to a trial. Friday night Belmont would fly out to meet them, and take over running his dogs on Saturday.

An AKC delegate representing the American Chesapeake Club, Belmont was on the AKC Board of Directors from 1968 to 1980. He served as treasurer from 1972 to 1977, and Board chairman from 1977 to 1980.

Belmont was a graduate of Harvard University. During World War II he was a special assistant to the Under Secretary of the Navy and a Lieutenant Commander from 1942 to 1945, and was decorated with the Bronze Star.

He became a partner in the investment firm of Dillon, Read & Co. and was a trustee of both the American Museum of Natural History and Presbyterian Hospital of New York City.

Belmont is the grandson of August Belmont Jr., president of the AKC from 1888 to 1915 and was one of the guiding spirits in the dog world and man of great vision at the AKC. It was Belmont Jr. who first proposed publishing a GAZETTE magazine.

Belmont Jr. was also a pioneer of horse racing in New York, overseeing the construction of Belmont Park racetrack, which opened in 1905. He bred the great horse Man o' War, and the Belmont Stakes, the third leg in racing's triple Crown, is named for him.

August Belmont IV maintained a family tradition when his colt Caveat won the 1983 Belmont Stakes. He also had several other stakes winners, and flags were lowered to half-mast for a day at Belmont Park to mourn his passing.

Belmont is survived by two sons, two daughters, two stepchildren, 16 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

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