

Tribute to . . .

TATSUKO "TAT" DANFORTH

BY ROSE CHANDLESS

"The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires." — William Arthur Ward

The American Shetland Sheepdog Association is comprised of members who enjoy this breed on virtually every level expanding across both performance and conformation. Each member's level of expertise is essential to the continued growth and development of this wonderful breed. The parent and regional breed clubs continue to grow and flourish as a direct result of the interest and support of these members. Although each level of experience is valued, none enjoy so high a pedestal as the established, successful breeder/owner/handler. These experienced and savvy individuals truly inspire the next generation of grass roots breeders which is the foundation of any breed. Many of us have had the good fortune to have had such a mentor in this breed, perhaps even more than one. These are the "wizards" of a breed who somehow magically, generation after generation, produce the dog that captures every eye and is presented to perfection. Still these wizards contribute far more than just outstanding dogs to our breed. Their contributions continue to inspire as their shared secrets stretch from one generation to the next. The counsel of these seemingly mystical mentors is wisely sought by every novice along the journey to make their own mark in the breed. Not every breed has the above average percentage of "wizard" breeders amongst its membership as does the Shetland Sheepdog. However, like any group, there are those who by their own unique

talents raise the bar setting themselves apart from an already prestigious gathering. For the Shetland Sheepdog, one such "Wizard" was Tatsuko Danforth, mentor extraordinaire!

"Tat", as we all fondly knew her, was born in Miyazaki, Japan. In 1961 she came to the US as the young military bride of George Danforth settling in New Hampshire. Several years later, George bought a Sheltie pup for their daughter from Dr. Pet Store. This pup positively captivated George and Tat. They searched for more information about this breed they found so endearing. George



(CH Romayne's Patent Pending x CH Romayne's You Are My Sunshine from 2011)

saw a photo of Marlin Roll with his Sheltie in a dog magazine and contacted him. Marlin Roll of MarJan Shelties was a well-known breeder of that time. In those days, it was customary for area breeders to gather periodically at someone's home and discuss all aspects of the continuing development of the breed. Ideas were exchanged, puppies evaluated, pedigrees analyzed, the newcomer learning first hand from the masters.

George and Tat were invited to join a group meeting at Marlin Roll's home



that weekend. There they met and received the guidance of such legends as Mary Van Wagenen (SEA ISLE), Barbara Curry (BELTANE), Charlotte McGowan (RORRALORE) and of course Marlin. Now understanding the importance of a good foundation bitch, the Danforths began their search. Shortly thereafter, Barbara Curry called them to say there was an excellent proven bitch in California that was going to be sent to Canada, but if they hurried she could be theirs. George called immediately and purchased BELTANE ROMAYNE, the foundation of the Romayne line. The choice for their first litter's sire was FAIR PLAY OF SEA ISLE ROM. That combination produced CH ROMAYNE SPORTIN' LIFE ROM and so the Romayne saga began.

In keeping with her Japanese heritage, Tat carefully evaluated her breeding dogs and meticulously prepared her show dogs. As a professional hairdresser by trade for many years, she developed a distinctive eye for beauty. Her special talent for grooming was the envy of all. So like her previous mentors had taught her, she shared her gift at every opportunity. Tat, utilizing the huge coats produced by the Romayne line, set the standard for excellence in grooming. For nearly four decades, Tat spread out her generous wings nurturing each Sheltie enthusiast who had the good fortune to cross her path. From evaluating pedigrees, to analyzing sires, litter evaluation, conditioning, grooming, to puppy-raising and training and right on

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Sir Joshua and his son CH. Marwal Steppin' Out.

up the ladder to successfully exhibiting. Tat taught all comers the secrets to her outstanding success. As encouragement, she would often sit at ringside and applaud a newcomer's efforts.

Later, you would see her quietly talking to that individual explaining the areas that needed improvement; always the supporter. Tat's pure dedication to the essence of the breed's standard was always absolute and complete. As she witnessed the achievements of her protégés, her warm smile and bright sparkling eyes would instantly acknowledge how well they did and that their mentor was pleased!

Of course, there were those other times, when things did not go as planned. Upon the newbie exiting the ring, Tat would take them aside with a slow shake of her head and a firm grasp on their arm guiding them off for reevaluation. Tat would never discredit another's dog. When someone would bring their "pet" Sheltie to Tat for her approval, like the teacher she was, Tat would offer a comparison for their edification. She would bring out one of her dogs and line it up aside the pet. She would then read or quote from the standard and ask the owners to compare each dog's virtue to the standard. She brought the written standard to life!

Tat and George's generosity

seemed boundless to everyone. Tat would train the many nearly every weekend. She opened her home or took time at shows and matches she attended for all who inquired. Grooming was certainly her forté. The observations by her analytical eye were always followed by detailed, hands-on instruction. Tat would have you stand back and evaluate a dog's profile. She would point out the problem areas and teach you to train your eye to seek perfection. Instruction on what tools to buy and how to use them would follow.

It was always a lot of information to retain in just a few afternoons which is why we all just kept coming back again and again. When Tat would take a break to teach another visitor, George Danforth would set up stakes on the front lawn for handling instructions to begin. "No time to waste", Tat would say. When there were the inevitable disasters in grooming or handling, even one after another, "You will make it, try again!" was always Tat's resounding cry.

As the years passed, Tat and George kept improving the specific virtues offered by their outstanding breeding program. Over the past four decades it is hard to imagine how many Champions have been produced either by direct breeding or from the progeny of their



Ch. Sir Joshua of Winslow winning the Veterans Class at the 1990 ASSA National.



Winning Best of Breed and Best Opposite together with CH Romayne's Eddie Pumpkin (Breeders George & Tatsuko Danforth & Etsuko Kageyama) and Romayne's Sportin' Girl.

line of dominant sires. Leading that list of sires was CH ROMAYNE SPORTIN' LIFE ROM. His offspring included such notables as BIS/BISS AM/CAN CH RORRALORE SPORTIN' CHANCE and BIS/BISS AM/CAN CH SIR JOSHUA OF WINSLOW. Both top Register of Merit (ROM) sires and both members of the ASSA Century Club (CC) as well continuing the legacy with their own off-springs CH ROCKWOOD'S GOLD STRIKE ROM CC and CH MARWAL'S STEPPIN' OUT CC ROM respectively, to name a few with the list continuing on and on for generations more.

Over the years, Tat relocated from New Hampshire to South Carolina, Texas, Massachusetts and finally Missouri. Crossing back and forth over the mid-west and east coast of America, Tat's mentoring continued to spread across the land. Although Tat's special knack for spectacular grooming is now gone from us, just a glance in the Sheltie or Collie ring at any show reassures us that her techniques and sense of style are here to stay generation after generation.

There are so many stories about Tat and how she made the difference between success and failure to so many that time and space would not

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*BIS AM Can Ch Rorralore Sportin' Chance
CD Can CD ROM CC "Chance"*

permit even a small percentage to be written herein. Still there are some tales that have to be shared:

WINSLOW

Rose Chandless

My special favorites . . . The first time I saw a Sheltie groomed by Tat was an unforgettable experience. I had attended a local show taking my daughter to her Junior Show competition with our pet Sheltie. I settled back into my folding chair to await her ring time when suddenly, my daughter came rushing up. "Come quick!! You have to see this!", she exclaimed. Dragging me out of my chair, she pushed and pulled me down the aisle and around the corner of the grooming area. As we turned the corner, I was stunned in sheer disbelief! There free-standing on a grooming table about 10 feet away was a MAGNIFICENT Sheltie. So precisely trimmed and groomed was this dog that he appeared to have a glowing aura about him...and he knew it! My daughter and I were simply AWE STRUCK! The Sheltie stood regally as he guided his beautiful eye over us and in summary dismissing us as the bystanders we were. The dog then returned his attention to a small, thin Asian woman who was maneuvering her brush like a magic wand. Every hair appeared to be at her command. With purpose and direction, each follicle brushed exactly into its place with every flip of her wrist. The symmetry created

by this effort was so captivating it was exciting to just witness the transformation. I HAD TO KNOW her secret! Tat's warm, welcoming smile began a friendship spanning over three decades between our families.

Many a Saturday in those early days, I would journey to their family's New Hampshire home to learn the techniques of her outstanding grooming. Preparing for a match, I over-trimmed a young dog's hocks. As I came in the door of the Match site with my dog, minus his hock furnishings, Tat saw him and exclaimed aloud, "What did you do?!!!" Without another word, Tat hurried over and taking the lead from my hand, she turned and talking to the dog said, "Don't feel bad. It's okay, I'll fix it." As they walked back to Tat's setup, I meekly fell in a step behind to await the reprimand I knew was to come.

On another occasion, I had a young promising male who at 10 months of age had discovered bitches in season and decided they were better than food. Over a course of three months, he had stopped eating completely. Despite the lack of nourishment, he was still very active running the fence thus dropping 12 pounds off his 15 inch frame. He had become a walking skeleton; I was frantic!! My vet seemed rather unconcerned adding his casual comment, "When he gets hungry enough, he will eat." I was dropping liquid vitamins down my young male's throat in a state of panic! Having tried numerous options to improve his appetite without success, I brought him to Tat. Upon my arrival, she scooped up my young dog in her arms and disappeared into her kennel. She returned with a bouncing female in full coat and said: "Here, you take my dog and I will keep yours. Keep her for two months. Keep her exercised and the coat brushed out. I will fix your boy."

One never argued with Tat, one just complied. Her energy and confidence always radiated positive results. One never doubted her resolve to "get it right" and looked to her as an example of

a respected leader in our breed. Never once did Tat ask compensation of any kind for the assistance she offered the many. Two months later, we exchanged dogs once again and my bouncing boy was back to his normal, healthy self. The wizard had weaved her magic and saved CH SIR JOSHUA OF WINSLOW!

As recent as the 2011 ASSA National Specialty Show in Grey Summit, MO. Tat's command of a situation and unlimited supply of compassion was evident to all. I had become very ill and bed ridden the last two days of National week, missing all final results. My traveling companion had a long drive home and had to return to work that Monday, so she could not wait. We agreed she had to leave with all 5 dogs as I was too ill to travel. Tat learning of my dilemma stepped right up.

As I lay in bed pondering my immediate fate, there was a hard knock on the door. Barely standing, I opened the door and Tat walked into my room. "Okay, you need to go to the hospital near my home, NOW! George, get her in the car." They packed me up, checked me out and had me in their car on the road is less than 15 minutes! Their local hospital treated me for the full day, IVs, mist inhalers, and advised I needed to rest on medication for three days, absolutely no travel. Tat sent her daughter, Michelle, to collect me at the hospital and had readied a room at her home. For three days she nursed, fed and waited on me. By the third day, I was anxious not to overstay my welcome. George had supplied me with the list of possible flights home and a computer to make arrangements. On the fourth day, Tat still at the helm, instructed George to get the car loaded and we were off to the airport. As I left, Tat stood in the doorway and remarked with a warm smile, "Okay, you're better now. Have a good trip home."

The success I have enjoyed in this breed would not have been possible had it not been for Tat's constant encouragement, passion and support. In her honor

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and memory, I have tried to follow her example and continue her kindness to those in need and dedication to the breed we both love so much. In God's hand and our hearts may you now have the rest you so deserve dear friend.

VENTURA SHELTIES

Marta Heckman

The world of purebred dogs lost one of its finest this summer. I was privileged to meet Tat Danforth early in my career in Shelties. I watched and learned so much from her about Shelties, but also about how to treat people. I had seen photos of the Romayne Shelties and knew that was where I would take my first bitch to be bred. Tat welcomed me into her home as if she had known me for years. She shared her knowledge and talent willingly, treating me like an equal, despite my status as a newcomer to the breed. Together we evaluated my little girl, and I learned to see her strengths and virtues as well as the areas that needed improvement. Tat helped me to visualize the words of the Sheltie standard. Pedigrees were discussed and I was introduced to



BIS AM/CAN CH Romayne's Contessa

Lance (CH Romayne's Sportin' Life) and several of his offspring. When the time came to breed my bitch, I was comfortable leaving her with Tat, knowing that she would be well taken care of.

Later I was proud to purchase a puppy from Tat that went on to be BIS AM/CAN CH Romayne's Contessa. The way I was treated during both of these transactions has become my model for

treating others when they come to purchase a puppy or breed their bitches. Tat and I became good friends and that friendship continued over the years, even when many miles separated us. I will miss our long telephone conversations, her sense of humor and her wisdom. I continue to strive to treat the people who come to me to learn about Shelties with the same respect and integrity that Tat treated me.

SEASCAPE SHELTIES

Diane Steele, Professional Handler
Back in 1979 when I first started in the Shetland Sheepdog breed, I had the good fortune to live only 10 minutes from the Danforth family home. George and Tat Danforth taught me everything there was to know about breeding better Shelties. Night after night, we sat at the kitchen table in their home going over pedigrees trying to find the genetic trait that transcended the generations as well as the common denominators. George taught me how to do smears learning the right time to wait and the best time to breed and Tat taught me how to evaluate litters. I was a constant companion in their lives. At their home practically every night and accompanying them on weekends to every show they would attend. I was told if I wanted to win . . . I had to show every weekend which is where I have been since 1979!

Getting my start as a handler, my first show dog was a Romayne Sheltie. I also purchased my foundation bitch from the Danforths, CH ROMAYNE SUMMER SEASCAPE. I learned the value of crossing CH September Rainmaker with the CH ROMAYNE SPORTIN' LIFE or Peter's line. I used both these sires every other generation, the results of which made me very happy.

Tat was always very upfront and forthright. She never withheld any secrets or knowledge about breeding dogs or the grooming and showing of them. For me, the time I spent with Tat was just a wonderful part of my life. I

learned so much while being introduced to such legends as SEA ISLE Kennels as well as international breeders from Japan. Tat taught me an important point in breeding. "Bitches", she said, "should have the right parts and substance while Studs should make the litter beautiful, pretty." Japanese breeders often bred substantial bitches to young, pretty, moderate studs with great success.

I was welcomed into so much of Tat's life from breeding better dogs, to successfully showing them, to her family life. It was wonderful being so much a part of their lives, night after night, never wanting to go home. I know that had it not been for Tat's generosity and sharing, I never would have the success I enjoy today and am truly thankful for her inspiration. I am going to miss her terribly.

BARMOUR COLLIES & SHELTIES

Rita Barthuly

I had only been in Shelties for a short while when I heard about the Romayne Shelties and George and Tat Danforth. I had bought a puppy from a friend who had a litter produced by Ch. Romayne Sportin' Legacy. My friend and I took the litter to Tat for evaluation. I was looking forward to this opportunity to finally meet with George and Tat. Tat spent time looking the litter over, studying each one. She reached for my puppy, the one I had bought, and said "We'll see, when he grows up". I named him "Piper". From that point on, a long friendship between Tat and I grew and



CH Karmayne Spring Into Action "Piper"

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grew.

Tat enjoyed giving me tips on grooming techniques. I especially enjoyed learning how to use Japanese tape to set ear braces on the pups. One of my "proudest" moments was when Tat told me to "Hurry and finish that Piper, I want to use him". To have her approval was so special to me. Piper became CH Karmayne Spring Into Action and Tat did use him three times.

I miss Tat's cheery phone calls just to find out how the dogs are doing, our friendly chats and seeing her at the dog shows, and especially her legendary Japanese Tape lessons which produced the most perfect ear set and tips.

The Romaine influence can still be seen in many of the champions of today as well as upcoming stars of tomorrow. Tat's daughter, Michelle Toczek, continues the legend of the Romaine line into the future from her home in Missouri. We thank you Tat for the compassion, support, and most of all, the love you gave to this wonderful breed. Your contributions will never be forgotten. Although your special talents are gone from us, your contributions continue on . . . generation after generation after generation. We are forever grateful! May you rest in peace, dear mentor. How well you have earned it.

RORRALORE

Charlotte McGowan

It has been a long while since I bred and showed Shelties, but I remember many pleasant days showing dogs when George and Tat were also showing. They were fun competitors and Tat always had a twinkle in her eye and was able to see the fun in our sport. I can think of any number of happy days joking with Tat at ringside. We were all serious competitors but also good friends.

VICTORY HILL COLLIES & SHELTIES

Carolyn Foreman

I met Tat about eleven years ago at a dog show. Then had the opportunity to go with a friend down to Tat's home for a

visit. She gave us a tour of her kennel and introduced us to her Shelties. I fell in love with one of them, telling her if I was to have a Sheltie it would have to be her "Lovey" (Romaine's Love Token). Lovey was so pretty, sweet, loving, with good structure and movement and beautiful head piece, she reminded me of my foundation Collie, Magic, who was my favorite. She said she would think about selling me Lovey and would get back to me. She and I hit it off, she liked the photos of my favorite Collies, and I liked the photos of her Shelties. She had told me we looked for the same things in our dogs.

Through the years, as I would travel to Missouri and Kansas to visit my daughters, I would look forward to spending an afternoon visiting with Tat. She was always willing to show me her grooming techniques, how she would train the ears, and how to evaluate the Sheltie puppies. Of course we would meet at the dog shows and manage to get a nice dinner and good visit in. We would cheer each other on and do our evaluation of the dogs that won, whether ours or competitors, not mean things but what we liked and what we would improve and the mesh of different breedings, etc.

I will miss Tat so very much. She left a legacy and how proud she would be of her daughter, Michelle who is so very lucky to have been raised with such a wealth of knowledge and ability to follow so well in her mother's footsteps.

DARRAHMIST SHELTIES

Joyce Wilkinson

I first met Tat through Becky Cram of Sunnybrook Kennel. I purchased a puppy from Becky and she suggested contacting Tat Danforth re: questions, show info etc. because Tat lived closer to me. Tat immediately welcomed this novice with open arms and I was so impressed with her knowledge of the breed and her beautiful grooming techniques. She was a grooming master. She also had no qualms about sharing her "DO's and

DON'Ts re: all aspects of grooming, training and pedigrees.

Whenever I called, she was available and we became good friends. She was always honest..no matter how brutal, when it came to evaluating quality, temperament and size and I acquired very valuable knowledge as our friendship grew. We were especially close during the time she left New Hampshire to live near her daughter, Michelle. Jodi Abrahamson and I were with her when she dismantled Romaine Kennel and it was heart wrenching for her. She gave me her original Romaine wooden tack box which I still treasure.

We roomed together at a couple of Nationals and she was so proud of her Romaine (Lance) offspring. No one cheered harder or louder for them than she did. This was especially true at the 1990 National when her "Sportin Life" son, Ch Sir Joshua Of Winslow, went BOS at the age of 12, and his grandson, CH Winslow Summit Rob Roy earned an Award of Merit at his first National.

Before leaving New Hampshire Tat suggested that some of her students meet to help each other and share her info. The first meeting was at my home and Martha Heckman, Marilyn Moses, Jodi Abrahamson and I did just that. Over a period of time we formed the Granite State Shetland Sheepdog Club of S.E. N.H. She would be extremely proud of the club's accomplishments over the years. Thank you, Tat.

SUNNYBROOK

Charles and Rebecca Cram

Since Tat's passing Charlie and I have been reminded of when we first met some 40 plus years ago. We were both quite new in the Sheltie world of breeding. Tat I got together often to look at litters. Tat had the eye for evaluating and looking at the positive and negative traits. Tat could put that certain touch on a sheltie before going in the ring with George on the end of the lead We visited

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each others house often, and at the colonial sheepdog meeting when we could bring our puppies.

My first Sheltie Abby was purchased from the Hildreths. We bred her to Ch. Romaine's Sportin Life which produced Ch Sunnybrook's Matchmaker. We moved to South Carolina in 1980. Later in the 80's the Danforth's moved to South Carolina, and lived about 4 miles from us. Tat and I did some dog grooming for a short time.

In 1990 we moved to North Carolina and George and Tat moved west to Missouri. We have had little contact since then, but we will always hold dear memories of Tat. Rest in peace dear Tat.

FOXHOLLOW SHELTIES

Trudy Supalla

In 1977 I started showing Shelties and have been in competition with the Danforths over these many years. I did not feel like I knew Tat personally until after recently purchasing Romaine's Uptown Girl. Tat was very concerned that Christi was being treated and cared for properly so we had some good long conversations. Tat's daughter, Michelle laughed about Tat checking up on her puppies crowning her as "Mama Romaine"! I will particularly treasure our last conversation which was just a couple weeks before she left us.

When I went to purchase Christi, Tat after all the years remembered one special day in my life when she told me Foxhollow's Medicine Woman (Michaela) would finish her championship under Judge Collier out in the parking lot in Kansas City. We laughed and I did not think any more about it until Michaela won her last Major that day! Such insight she had into the world of Shelties.

Tat had the talent of knowing which pedigrees to put together to produce her beautiful Romaine line. She was totally

devoted to the breed.

I will forever miss her accent and her loving making chicken for her dogs.

MACDEGA

Tom Coen

I remember when Tat and George first appeared on the Sheltie scene as enthusiastic newcomers. I think it's fair to say that we go back a long time! Early success came their way with a Best In Show winner, Ch. Romaine's Special Edition and then with the top sire Ch. Romaine's Sportin Life ROM, who became one of the breed's really influential sires. I remember how crazy Tat was about her "Lance" and his dam, "Romaine". Trust me, you couldn't find a more devoted owner. After Tat left our area there were long periods of time between seeing or hearing anything about her or George. When we did make contact or visit at the National Tat was just the same and it was if we had never missed a beat. I appreciate that Tat never held back and you always knew exactly where you stood with her. Shelties have lost a good friend and she will be missed.

STARFALL SHELTIES

Janet Turnage Nahikian

It was 1979 and I had been breeding Shelties about 5 years and was a little disillusioned about the line I was working with when Hidden Oaks Shelties came to Florida with a beautiful Romaine bitch that was cleaning up at all the shows. I saw a picture of the litter this bitch was from and it was a litter of 5 and at 6 months they were all beautiful. I promptly called Tat Danforth and told her I wanted to breed Shelties where the whole litter had quality, and not just one good one in a litter. She agreed to let me have "Angel" (later to become CH Romaine's Angel Dust). We talked extensively and made the arrangement for her to get first pick from Angel's first litter.

When it came time to bring the litter

to South Carolina, Bev Rockett and I drove up there and when we pulled up I saw the most lovely Sheltie puppies I had ever seen--and this was before I got out of the car. When Tat took us in the kennel I will never forget her twinkling eyes as she led us to her kennel and the serene little smile on her face when she saw my my face. When we walked in the kennel I was blown away. Every dog had a sweet expression with a lovely head, balanced body, and heavy, fiery red coats.

That night we sat at her kitchen table and talked until the wee hours of the morning, and I learned from a woman who had a vision of what the Shetland Sheepdog should be. This was the beginning of a friendship that lasted all these years and every time we saw one another (although it wasn't often the last couple of decades) it was a joy for both of us to be together.

Thank you, Tat, for bringing moderation back into the breed when in those days the dogs were getting very overdone and starting to look like Collies. The Romaine dogs were always Shelties.

Karen Chewing

On October 15th, 2010 my husband, Buddy, and I met Tatsuko Danforth for the first time. Knowing it was difficult for me to travel, Tat and her daughter, Michelle, offered to deliver our first Romaine puppy to our home. I say "first" because I'm certain "Chase" (Romaine's Chaser My Way) won't be our last Romaine puppy.

From the moment we met Tat it was obvious this very gracious lady had a great passion and dedication for the Shelties she and her husband, George, bred. Tat did everything within her power to ensure Chase's transition into our home would go as smoothly as possible. Over the past three years we've stayed in close contact with Tat and Michelle. Both have continued to love and care for Chase and they've become

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our very special friends.

Early on, Chase began to remind Tat of his grandsire, her beloved "Koi" (Ch. Romaine's Sportin' Legacy). Tat went through her own pictures of Koi and very touchingly sent some for us to keep. Tat was convinced Chase would do well in the show ring. He proved her correct when in March of 2011, at his first show, he won his first 4 point Major from his 6-9 puppy class in Columbia, Missouri. Before his showing, Tat worked her awesome magic grooming him to perfection.

Tat traveled with Michelle to shows whenever possible. She so generously shared her abundant talent for grooming and her never ending encouragement, support and love for Chase with us. I would be remiss if I didn't mention Tat's other legacy to us, her truly amazing daughter, Michelle, who has spent many hours training and showing our Chase. Tat has left her Romaine legacy in very talented and capable hands!

Thank you, Tat, for sharing your knowledge and talents with us so freely. You will be lovingly remembered dear lady.

Rose Tomlin

My family moved to New York in 1969. I didn't know the Sheltie people, and Tat always made me feel welcome. We bred to Sportin' Life and after that, we became even better friends. There were three champions in that litter! Tat volunteered to keep a dog for me in 1978 when we were in London for a month. I always looked forward to a show a bit more when I knew Tat would be there.

