

# Helen B. Gaither



## GAIDOUNE

*We'll see you again  
whenever spring breaks through.  
Time may lie heavy between,  
but what has been  
is past forgetting - with  
yellow roses scattering your path.*

*Gene & Linda Hains*

# Helen B. Gaither

*Remembered by Alice Watkins - June 1996*

It is very difficult to write about a dear beloved one who has just passed away. Helen was my best friend, role model, and mentor.

My first introduction to Helen was 28 years ago, through Stewart Gettle (Saggettes). Stu had bred to several of Helen's good stud dogs. He would plan several trips a year to visit Helen. These trips brought him a lot of pleasure. Wanting company for the 5 plus hour trip to Wheeling, West Virginia, Stu began inviting Ed and me to go with him. We would leave about 4:00 AM and arrive in time for a nice long chat. Helen always served a delicious lunch. For those who have never been to Helen's house, what an experience! Her dining room had numerous shelves from floor to ceiling. These shelves are laden with silver trophies her Scotties have won at various shows. I have been to stores that sell silver, but never have I seen so much silver in one room. The famous "Tauskey" photographs of all her top winning dogs are prominently displayed on the walls in the dining room, hallway and living room.

The next part of the visit was to go to Silver Ho Kennels, just outside of Wheeling and owned by Dr. Nancy C. Lenfesty. Dr. Lenfesty was the handler and manager of all the Gaidoune Scottish Terriers. They would bring some of the dogs out, one at a time so you could see them. What a thrill it was to see all of these wonderful and some very famous Gaidoune Scotties. Helen and Dr. Lenfesty were very particular and fussy, and would not place their dogs or puppies with just anyone. They had to know you for quite some time before they would trust you with one of their dogs. They also would turn you down for stud service if they felt your bitch was a poor specimen or if they felt a pregnancy would endanger the bitch. Because of this policy, Ch. Gaidoune Great Bear's record of champions and get, sired by him, were of better than average quality.



If Ch. Gaidoune Great Bear's record of champions had been measured by percentage of total get sired, I believe he would stand out as the all time top producer in the USA. When they used the phrase, "Bears The Mark of Excellence" in their ads, no one I knew ever took issue with that statement. This did not mean that they were only interested in show dogs. Helen would bring dogs from the kennel that wouldn't make it in the show ring and make house pets out of them. I think that Silver Ho kennels may have housed about 100 Gaidoune Scotties at a given time during their height of success. You may look in most Scottish Terrier books written in the last 25 to 30 years and find statistics on Gaidoune Scottish Terriers, but now I would like to give you a personal glimpse of the Lady behind the scenes.

The first Scottie Ed and I owned was Ch. Saggettes Murphy's Leisure, a son of Ch. Gaidoune Great Bear. I began showing Murphy when he was 5 plus years old. He became a champion when he turned 6. I lacked self confidence when I started to show Murphy, and without He-

len's support I do not think I could have gone into the ring. The first C-Section I encountered was so traumatic for me, seeing that little dog with all those stitches. I had difficulty dealing with my conscience of having caused this awful thing. I was ready to bolt the scene as a breeder. Helen again was there supporting me with sound advice, and one thing she said which I will never forget was, "Alice, you will find there are more disappointments in breeding dogs than there are rewards." My thoughts at that time were, how can this be, you are so successful. So many times these words have been recalled, especially when one is dealing with puppies who looked so promising, then fell apart, a breeding that didn't take, newborn dead puppies and diseases lurking around every corner. Many times her words of encouragement have given me hope when I believed there was none.

Helen's kindness was extended to everyone she befriended. Whenever there were sick friends and neighbors, you would find Helen, in the kitchen cooking and packaging food that she would deliver to those in need. Most of her friends will miss her famous homemade Christmas cookies and chocolate Scotties that she would decorate with colorful paper, wrapped and sent over the Holidays.

Three personal stories I would like to share with you speak of the character of this wonderful lady.

Several times over the years, Helen would call to tell me to be on the look out for a perspective home for a rescue Scottie that was being held in her local pound. She knew the volunteer at the pound and they had agreed that the dog was not to be put to sleep, and that Helen would pay his or her board until a good home had been found. Her generosity was also extended to the other poor waifs who were sheltered in this facility as well.

One evening after finishing her

kitchen chores, Helen picked up some of her jewelry lying on the counter to take upstairs. The jewelry fell out of her hand and onto the kitchen floor. She was able to retrieve all pieces except her most treasured one, which was a diamond ring that had belonged to her grandmother. For days the search went on and no ring. Even dog stools were checked in case they had found and swallowed this expensive morsel. The search for the ring never really ended for Helen. She finally reported the loss to her insurance company and was reimbursed accordingly. Helen went to a jewelry store to try and have the lost ring duplicated. Another ring was made but it did not have the same sentiment as grandmother's ring. About 4 years ago, she decided to remodel her kitchen. She told the workmen that if anyone happened to find a lost ring

there would be a handsome reward for its return. The ring was found and the reward was gratefully given. That should be the end of a happy story, right? Wrong! Helen immediately reimbursed the insurance company and could not understand why they were so shocked in receiving the check from her.

About 13 years ago, Helen made an inquiry of how much I was asking for a puppy I was planning on selling. I told her the price, not knowing why she was inquiring. She told me she would be referring someone to purchase the puppy and for me to quote half of the price to this individual and she would make up the difference. The person who would be buying the puppy had fallen on bad times. Their old Scottie had died and they couldn't afford to buy a puppy at current prices. I was instructed by Helen

never to tell this person about her involvement.

*Footnote:* The Scottie mentioned above passed away last year. While Helen was in the hospital this past April, she had me deliver another Scottie puppy to this same individual as a gift. This friend's husband died four days after Helen passed away. I have been told that this young Scot has been a big help in getting the friend through this very sad time.

Helen would be very embarrassed to read what I have written about her. She was a very humble, dignified, independent, free spirited, generous, witty and loyal individual, who thought of herself as being just ordinary. My wish to all of you is that you may have the experience of having a very best friend like Helen B. Gaither. □