

KANZU MAKES HISTORY:

The First GCH-TC Hound

By Linda D'Antonio

January 2012 was a very special month for Kanzu (GCH TC Tigris African Treasure RE MC AXP AJP FCh JOR CGC ET HIC VC). He earned his Grand Championship on January 15 and just 2 weeks later on January 27 he finished his Master Agility Championship (MACH). With these new titles Kanzu earned a place in history by becoming the first RR and the first dog in the 27 breeds of the Hound Group to become an AKC Grand Champion-Triple Champion (GCH-TC).

In 2006 when I was searching for my 5th Ridgeback companion I never would have imagined the wonderful journey that I was about to embark upon. While I was accustomed to living in harmony with Rhodesian Ridgebacks and the unique joy and challenges such a living arrangement brings with it, I was not aware of the incredible versatility of the breed. My search for a puppy led me to Tigris Rhodesian Ridgebacks and Mike and Lisa Patterson. I was searching for a breeder who paid special attention to the first 10 weeks of the puppies' development. I am a Speech Pathologist with specialization in young children and I believe that early



developmental programming and stimulation unlocks great potential in children. I wanted to find a breeder who shared my beliefs about the importance of early developmental programming in puppies.

I quickly realized that the Patterson's had a unique commitment to providing neuro-developmental and environmental stimulation to optimize puppy learning and socialization. In our early discussions, they piqued my interest and expanded my horizons by explaining all the amazing performance events that Ridgebacks could participate in. I was hooked! The decision was made to co-own Kanzu with Mike and Lisa and to begin his conformation and performance journey.

Kanzu came home and I created an enriched learning environment aimed at optimizing his potential. But most importantly, I set about developing a partnership in which I set up small achievable goals and then moved the bar slightly so Kanzu could learn and succeed. I never set out for Kanzu to be a GCH-TC. Rather, I set out small goals just outside our reach and it was a series of baby steps. We just kept going! Kanzu and I were both blank slates. Neither of us knew enough to think that there were things we couldn't do. So, with a lot of naiveté and willingness to work, we both ventured out one event at a time. When people told me "Ridgebacks aren't good at 'that'" (whatever 'that' was), I would think, "Kanzu loves to work, he loves

being rewarded and he loves to please me. Let's see if we can do it." And Kanzu continued to surprise us and exceed expectations.

Our first task was to earn Kanzu's bench championship. With Mike handling, Kanzu earned his conformation championship at 2 years old finishing with 3 majors including two back-to-back majors at the Kennel Club of Palm Springs show weekend in January 2009.

After earning his conformation championship Kanzu took a break from the show ring to concentrate on performance. In 2009 he earned AKC and ASFA Field Championships resulting in his Dual Championship and a Top 10 AKC RR Lure Coursing placement. That same year we began Rally Obedience earning Kanzu's Rally Novice, Advanced and Excellent titles. Rally offered us a wonderful bonding experience and more opportunities for Kanzu to trust that I would never ask him to do anything that he couldn't succeed at.

In 2009, just for fun, we took some agility classes. Again, this sweet, silly boy amazed us all with his willingness to work and please. The key seemed to be that

we made everything fun with lots and lots of praise and rewards. Kanzu began competing in agility in March 2010. I was not physically able to compete in agility but I didn't want that to stop Kanzu. His agility instructor ran him in his early competitions, followed by his special friend Vicki LePenske, who took him to his MACH and continues to run him today. Kanzu was very precise and consistent leading to a #5 RRCUS national ranking in agility in 2010 and a #2 ranking in 2011.

In January 2012, Kanzu earned his Agility Championship (MACH). With the addition of the MACH to his Conformation and Field Championships, Kanzu was now the second Ridgeback to ever achieve an AKC Triple Championship. Laea, (TC MACH5 Ridge View's Manlaea Keiki RE SC XF FCH, CGC HIC VC), Kanzu's aunt (daughter of Kobe MBISS Ch. Tigris Nothing But



At left: Kanzu with Vicki LePenske and Linda.

Below left: Kanzu winning his new Grand Champion title under judge Sharon Sakson, handled by Mike Patterson.



Photo: Jim Wallace

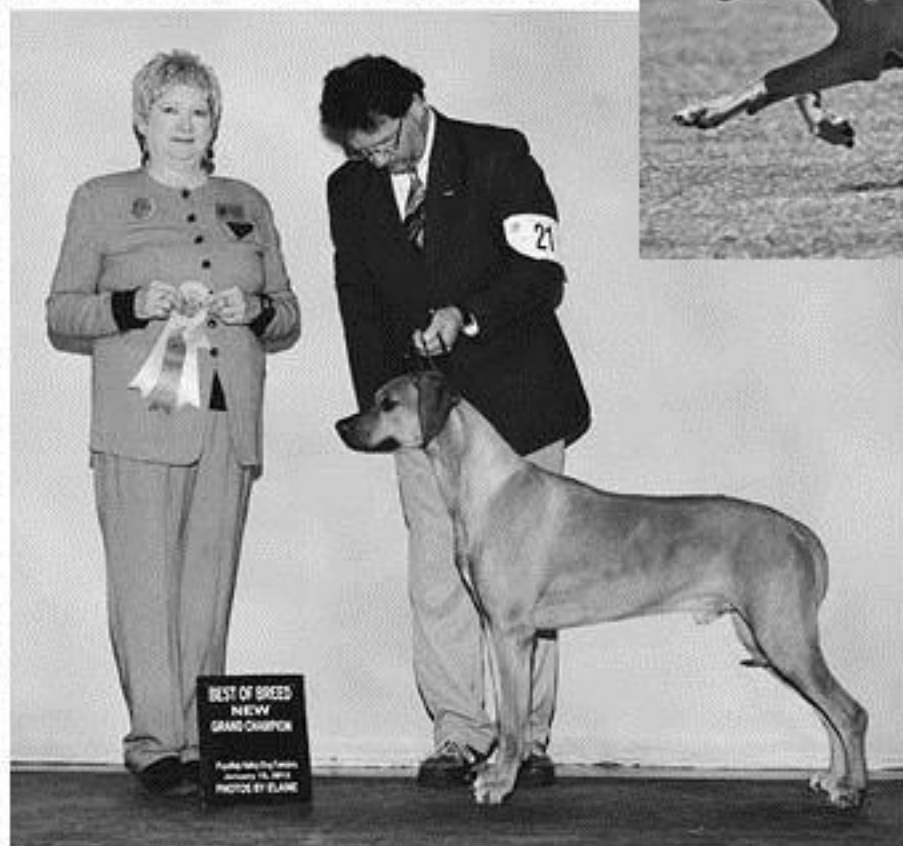


Photo: Bruce McCalland

Net From Masai, RN, SC, NA, NAJ NAP, NJP, HIT, CGC ROM), was the first to hold this title and with the new TC, Laea and Kanzu have kept it all in the Tigris family.

Kanzu was having great success in the performance arena, yet we didn't want to miss the opportunity to capitalize on the inextricable link between structure and function. With the advent of the AKC Grand Champion program, Kanzu returned to the conformation ring. Handled by his friend Curtis Freeling and breeder/co-owner Mike Patterson, Kanzu earned his GCH in 8 shows with four majors including three Best of Breed, three Best of Opposite and two Select Dog awards.



*Kanzu pictured at one year old.
Sire: Ch. Of Afrikka's Kumbayah JC
Dam: DC Lexus She's Got Game
By Tigris RN MC CGC HIC
Whelped July 2, 2006*

There is a Chinese proverb that says "The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." I never dreamed when I brought my new puppy home and began

playing, training and competing that our baby steps would result in such an accomplishment. The GCH-TC titles are a small set of initials that encapsulate our broader journey...a series of small steps that built on one another resulting in an accomplishment that I could not have imagined at the beginning. Perhaps more importantly, the GCH-TC emphasizes the remarkable versatility of the Rhodesian Ridgeback and highlights the inseparable linkage between structure and function. *



It takes a village! Some of Kanzu's favorite supporters on his journey. From left: Curtis Freeling, Linda, Justin Dannenbring, Jennifer Gysler under a banner made by Carie Krumme.