

In Memory of Rick

10/20/04 – 2/16/21

CH CT OTCH MACH HC VCCH UCH UOCH UUDX UROG URX2 SCH NGC
EN NHD C-ATCH ARCHMX

Skyland Ricochet

UDX10 OGM VST TDX TDU PUDX VER GN GO RAE2 HXAsd HXBsd MXS
MJB MFB T2B SWM SWNE CGCA CGCU TKI FDC VHM, EAC OJC WV-N
TN-N NCC, RL1X3 RL2X3 RL3X3 RLVX RL3-AOE RLV-AOE RL2-AOE RL1-
AOE, NW1, SPOT, CCSS-L1

I was there when he was born, and I was there when he left this world. Rick was the fourth born out of a litter of four, and as he appeared I said "There he is!". He was marked just like his sire, Raymond, and we called him "Baby Ray" until he came home. I visited Rick's litter every other day, and at 4 ½ weeks he started playing tug with me, and at 5 weeks he started voicing his displeasure when I would leave. He then voiced his displeasure every single time I left him for the next 16 years.

Rick was a beautiful dog in every way. He was sweet, mischievous, and full of life. He was the first puppy I raised with a dog door, and he drug many, many objects out in to the dog run the first few years of his life. If you couldn't find something, that was the first place we would look.

Rick's first exposure to sheep was notable, as were so many of the events in his life. I was in the sheep barn, scooping up corn to feed the ewes, and as I was bent over I saw sheep feet go by, followed by little border collie feet. I rushed out the door to watch 12-week-old Rick moving sheep around the pen, it was amazing to watch. I remember smiling thinking, oh, I like the way that looks! Rick proved to be a sheepdog who was well-suited to me, he was quiet, and reliable, and the sheep liked him. He was a great farm dog, and he helped me lamb for many years. He handily earned his Herding Championship, and he especially loved to herd ducks, just like his dad before him.

But then Rick loved everything that we did together. I didn't think he was going to make much of an obedience dog, as he couldn't walk with his head up until he was almost a year old. He made up for that slow start by showing in obedience until he was 12 years old. He and I disagreed over where heel position was for most of those 12 years, until I finally gave up and let him heel where he wanted to. When I see pictures of us heeling together, I always wonder how I didn't trip over him. But the big smile on his face made it all worth it, despite all of those 196 ½ scores that could have been 198 ½'s had he chosen my version of heel position and not his. That said, Rick was a very accomplished obedience dog, earning his OTCH, his OGM, his UDX10, and he was the first dog in the country to earn the PUDX when it came out. He was also a UKC Obedience

Champion, and he was the number one UKC Utility dog in the country in 2014. His crowning obedience achievement was to place in the Top 50 at the 2016 National Obedience Championship at the age of 11 ½. I still marvel that he got invited, much less made the Top 50. I was SO proud of him.

Rick also LOVED LOVED LOVED rally. The AKC Rally Championship came along a couple years too late for Rick, but he earned all of the top titles in UKC, AKC, and WCRL rally, forging and barking and biting signs along the way.

Rick adored agility. I had had several agility dogs by the time he came along, but it took years for us to finally become a team. He was always one of the fastest dogs at the trial, whereas I was never one of the fastest humans, far from it. I think it took three years to get his first ten Double Q's for the MACH. I was thinking the summer that he turned 8 that it might be time to give it up and move on to something else, and then he got his next ten Double Q's in just a few months. He didn't want to quit!

After Rick got his MACH, he was then a Quadruple Champion. I had always hoped to try for a second Quintuple Champion to go along with Riva's CH CT OTCH MACH HC, but I always thought the MACH could possibly keep Rick from that goal. After Rick got the MACH and I knew the Quint could happen again, we started serious tracking. Unlike his sire Raymond, Rick very

much enjoyed our tracking training. He earned his TD in a ground blizzard (half the dogs didn't get past the first turn), and on a lark I entered the new "TDU" test a month later, as we were going to be in Wichita anyway, and I wanted to see what it was all about. The night before the test, Rick ended up at the emergency clinic in Wichita, and all I can think of is that he ate something when we stopped to exercise on the way down there that afternoon. I truly thought he was dying in front of my eyes, and it's the only time he was ever sick in his life. The emergency vet never did give me a definitive diagnosis. The next morning he was certainly feeling much better, and since the toy dog conformation show that Robert was entered in didn't start until that afternoon, I decided to drive over to the tracking test and watch. I had no intention of participating after the night we had been through. Long story short, I ended up trying Rick in the test, and he was the only dog to pass, becoming one of the first TDU's in the country. Rick and I then VERY much enjoyed several years of advanced tracking training. He earned his VST at the age of 12, and when a couple more years went by with some near misses and bad luck in TDX tests, I figured that our window had closed to earn the coveted CT for his Quintuple Championship. I should have known to NEVER count out Rick, as he delighted me by earning his TDX at the age of 14 years, three months, to become a CT and my second Quintuple Champion.

When Rick was 11 ½, I decided that he needed something to do in his “old age”, never dreaming that his old age would last so long. There was a new sport out there called “nosework”, so I brought in an expert clinician to teach those of us in the area how to get started. An activity that I thought was going to just be something that Rick got a few titles in turned out to be a full-blown new career for Rick. He was the first dog in the area to make it to the Elite level in UKC nosework, and then the first dog to earn the AKC Master Nosework title, earning his Master Buried title in three tries, under the old rules when the hides were buried eight inches in the ground! He was also one of the first dogs in the area to earn an NACSW nosework title, and he was still earning High in Trials with the fastest times of any dog at the age of 16. In fact, he did nosework on the day he died. How lucky for both of us that he found a new career as an old dog, as I firmly believe that is what kept him going for so long. Rick was legendary for “biting the hide” and I apologize to the thousands of boxes, objects, and vehicles that he bit over the years.

Rick also nipped a person or two (or three) in his life. He was a fierce watchdog, and he did not appreciate any stranger coming on to the deck uninvited, or in any way, in his opinion, threatening me. I couldn't say that any of his nips were unwarranted, with the possible exception of that boy scout that one time...

Rick was a hoot to live with, and like his dad before him, he made me laugh every day. When I would give the dogs their marrow bones to chew outside, Rick would make a couple circuits around the yard to find just the right place to bury his. I can't imagine how many bones are out there. He also loved running circles around the big sheep tank when another dog was in it. He was always a gentleman in the house, and he slept on a blanket next to my side of the bed his entire life. That spot will now always be a huge hole in my life.

Rick also sired eight wonderful puppies, who earned an OTCH, several MACH's along with UD/UDX's, rally titles, herding titles, they are an accomplished lot, just like their dad. Luckily I had Rick collected when he was a young dog, so maybe one day I can have one of his puppies; I so hope that works out.

Rick and I **ADORED** one another, from the moment we laid eyes on each other. Some partnerships in life are just meant to be. I think his making it to such an advanced age was somewhat attributed to him not wanting to leave me, along with me not wanting him to go. I had him for a **QUARTER** of my life, and at my age, that is really saying something. Rick had the best old age of any dog I've ever had, along with outliving any of my previous dogs by a year. He earned his last title in January of this year, the new "home manners" title, and he barked and cavorted his way through that, I wish I had a video of it. Rick

earned his first title in 2006 at the age of 22 months and his last title at the age of 16 years, 3 months in 2021, which made for an incredible 16 years in a row to earn a title, beating my dear old pap Zack's record of 15 years in a row.

Rick was actually entered in a nosework trial the weekend following his death, and he was still doing well until the weather turned so cold and snowy the two weeks prior that we couldn't get out and walk every morning. I think his body really needed that movement, and that is when he stopped eating and started to struggle. I have always been an obituary reader, and I don't like the kind of obit that just lists all of a person's accomplishments and affiliations and a lot of dry facts, so I don't mean for Rick's last story to just list all of the titles and things that he did. But the titles for me have always been a reflection of the training and the love that went in to every single one of them. So, the titles are important. But what is MOST important is the relationship that forms because of all of those thousands of hours spent working with a dog. What I always remember most about showing a dog is the goofy, funny things that they did, and yes, I also remember some of those amazing, fantastic days that everything just lined up perfectly. It all becomes a journey that is never forgotten. It is why I am making a scrapbook of each dog's journey so that I can make sure I don't forget any of it.

So, today I honor Rick, and I humbly thank him for choosing me. I have no regrets, and my only wish is that he could be two years old and we could do it all again. I love you Rick, and I will miss you always. Say hi to Raymond for me, hopefully he'll be nice to you at the bridge and show you where the sheep are.