

# Commanding ATTENTION

A salute to a five-star general



By Theresa M. Lyons ■ The Ridgeback Register

Penny Weston of New Harmony, Utah, was raised in the world of horses and competitive jumping. Her father, Buck Brown, was a professional horse trainer and stuntman for many Western movies. He was also known for breaking the world's high-jumper record in 1938, with a famous horse named Killarney.

"Movement was my passion," says Penny fondly about how the movement of beautiful and well-constructed Arabian horses can "simply take your breath away."

Her appreciation for those magnificent animals that have the form and endurance to go all day is precisely what drew her to the Ridgeback.

In 1976, while visiting her father's Southern California ranch, she acquired her first Ridgeback, gifted by her father's long-time friend

and famous horse rider and actor, Richard Farnsworth. The 11-month-old female, Princess, had just come from being spayed, and had a single crown and very light yellow eyes.

"It was like looking directly into the eyes of a lion," Penny recalls.

Knowing little about the breed other than their fierce loyalty and devotion to children, Penny nonetheless realized this was the perfect breed for her. Sadly, the bitch was lost in a tragic accident at only 5 1/2 years old. Devastated, Penny chose not to get another Ridgeback, as she did not want to ever make comparisons to her first.

But time heals all wounds. In 1998, after many years without a Ridgeback in her life, Penny purchased a 12-week old-show puppy, reviving her love for our wonderful breed.

"Nala" (Ch. Freedoms Nala Bahari, ROM) became the foundation of Freedom Farms Ridgebacks. Championing easily, Nala was bred to "Kobe" (Ch. Tigris Nothing But Net From Masai, SC,

NA, NAP, NAJ, NIP, CGC, ROM). This litter produced three stand-outs: "Boomer" (Ch. Freedoms Blast O' Dynamite by Tigris), who was the #3 Ridgeback in 2005, 2006 RRCUS Top 10 winner, a Best in Regional Specialty winner and a multiple Group winner; "Faith" (Ch. Freedom's Faith,

JC), who finished in one four-day show cluster with four five-point majors and a BOB and who is soon to receive her ROM; and livernosed "Olivia" (Ch. Freedoms Awesome Olivia by Tigris, JC, HIC, CGC), who was the RRCUS #1 bitch in 2006 and Westminster Best of Opposite in 2006, earning back-to-back BOS placements at the Eukanuba National Championships in 2005 and 2006, and many Group placements. Penny, who personally believes in breeding her bitches only twice in their lifetimes, decided she would repeat this breeding because of the exceptional quality it produced.

And then, there was Tank.

"From the day Tank was born, he was outstanding," Penny says. He possessed what she was looking for in her breeding program: type, temperament, substance, movement and balance.

"... the movement of beautiful and well-constructed Arabian horses can 'simply take your breath away.'"



■ BOOMER



■ FAITH



■ OLIVIA

Eight-week old-Tank hams it up for Theresa's camera.



Always the charmer, at a mere five weeks old he could "speak" and "give five" on command, Penny remembers.

On one of my many visits to the Orange Coast Rhodesian Ridgeback Club Regional Specialty, I was fortunate to stay with Mike and Lisa Patterson of Tigris. It was during this stay that I discovered Tank through my camera lens.

No matter where I went, Tank followed. No matter what dog I was trying to photograph, he was there. And so I could not help but snap several images of this rambunctious youngster. Tucked up neatly in front of a palm bush, this vibrant young liver nose was showing off for me.

And now he is showing off for you, the judges and his beloved handler, Michael Scott. "Just watch him in the ring - you can see it in his eyes and attention to his handler," says Penny.

All grown up, Tank is a multiple Group winner and a top-10 Ridgeback. He has won Awards of Merit at Westminster and the RRCUS National.

But his most notable achievement came in 2007, when Tank became the first liver-nose Ridgeback to win the coveted RRCUS Top 20 event, following the win by his brother Boomer in 2006.

Penny says she delights in Tank's dignified demeanor, effortless movement, wonderful bone, lovely head and expression, and above



Tank and Mike at the 2007 RRCUS Top Twenty Event.

all his temperament and "give it all" attitude.

Great judges "do not see color," says Penny, "and neither did Mike." There is a "real respect between handler and dog," she continues, and this is what

makes them such a dynamic team.

As a breeder, she puts her ethics and concern for the breed first. And while some might think it a cliché, she says she truly cares about the future of this breed. "What worries me is that the judges are the ones that are forming our breed, when it should be the breeders," she says.

Penny watched quarter horses and Arabians change for aesthetic reasons and to please a judge's eye, when it had nothing to do with function. She fears we will lose some of our true function as well if we focus on certain cosmetic features.

It is up to both breeders and judges alike to acknowledge a great dog, no matter his pigment. Judges should see beyond nose color, and judge a dog on his merits.

**"You don't special the color, you special the dog,"** Penny concludes. **"And this dog is special."**



Tank exhibiting his "give it all" attitude.

## Fact Check

### CH. FREEDOM'S FIVE STAR GENERAL BY TIGRIS, CGC

**Sire:** Regional BISS Ch. Tigris Nothing But Net From Masai, SC, NA, NAP, NAJ, NJP, CGC, ROM

**Dam:** Ch. Freedoms Nala Bahari, ROM

**Whelped:** March 31, 2003

**CHIC# 39319**  
OFA Hips Good  
OFA Elbows Normal  
OFA Thyroid Normal  
CERF Normal

**Breeder/Owner:**  
Penny Weston  
Freedom Farms

**Accomplishments:**  
2007 RRCUS Top Twenty Winner

2007 RRCUS National Specialty Award of Merit Winner

Multiple Group Winner & Placer

2006 #5 Breed / #7 All-Breed

**Currently #4 Breed  
#5 All-Breed**