



THE 149<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL  
**WESTMINSTER**  
KENNEL CLUB DOG SHOW

PRESENTED BY



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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***THE WESTMINSTER KENNEL CLUB ANNOUNCES JUDGING PANEL FOR 149<sup>th</sup>  
ANNUAL DOG SHOW MAKING ITS HIGHLY ANTICIPATED RETURN TO  
MANHATTAN IN 2025***

*Champion breeder and owner-handler Paula Nykiel will crown Best in Show at Madison Square Garden on February 11, 2025*

**New York, NY** (June 14, 2024) — The Westminster Kennel Club is thrilled to announce the Best in Show judge and judging panel for the **149<sup>th</sup> Annual Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show Presented by Purina Pro Plan**. America’s most prestigious dog show will make its anticipated return to two iconic venues in New York City on February 8, 10 & 11, 2025—Madison Square Garden (MSG), Westminster’s original home—which will host group judging and the Best in Show Ceremony, and the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center (Javits Center) for additional events. **Mrs. Paula Nykiel** of Washington, Missouri will select America’s Dog at “The World’s Most Famous Arena” on the evening of Tuesday, February 11.

Veteran breeder and owner-handler Paula Nykiel has been involved with the sport of purpose-bred dogs for nearly 50 years. She has bred over 50 Pointer Champions under her Sydmar banner, including the breed’s all-time top producer, Ch. Sydmar the Heartless Wench. Paula owner-handled her Pointers to the #1 ranking in 1978, 1979, and 1982.

She transitioned to judging in 1990 and has since judged 33 National Specialties in the Sporting, Hound, and Working Groups. International assignments have included Sweden, Ireland, the United Kingdom, Italy, Australia, Canada, and Mexico.

Paula is a lifetime member of the American Pointer Club, a current member of the Judges Education Committee, and a founding and lifetime member of the Missouri Rhineland Kennel Club and the Gateway Sporting Dog Association.

The 2025 Best in Show assignment will be Paula’s ninth at Westminster. She previously judged the Sporting Group in 2005 and 2017, as well as the Working Group in 2009 and 2023.

Recently, Paula received the esteemed “Judge of the Year” honor in the 2023 Show Dogs of the Year Awards.

## **2025 JUDGING PANEL**

Seven **Group Judges** will make their selections over two nights at Madison Square Garden with their winning dogs advancing to the Best in Show competition.

On Monday, February 10, the following judges will select four Group winners to advance to the Best in Show competition: Mr. Harold Tatro, III of Crowley, TX for the **Hound** Group; Mrs. Angela Pickett of Chuluota, FL for the **Toy** Group; Mrs. Vicki Seiler-Cushman of Xenia, OH for the **Non-Sporting** Group; and Ms. Janina K. Laurin of Ashford, CT for the **Herding** Group.

On Tuesday, February 11, the following judges will select the remaining three Group winners to advance to Best in Show: Mrs. Virginia Murray of Island Lake, IL for the **Sporting** Group; Dr. Niksa Lemo of Zagreb, Croatia for the **Working** Group; and Mr. David Kirkland of Sanford, NC for the **Terrier** Group.

On the heels of celebrating its 90th anniversary in May 2024, the **Junior Showmanship competition at Westminster**, which highlights and supports the dedicated youth in the sport of dogs, and Junior Showmanship Finals judge Ms. Elizabeth Jordan-Nelson of Sacramento, CA will name the **Best Junior Handler** on Tuesday, February 11 at MSG. The eight junior showmanship finalists will be determined in preliminary rounds by judges Mr. Adam Peterson of Seagrove, NC, and Mrs. Kellie Williams of Riverview, FL.

The **12th Annual Masters Agility Championship Presented by Purina Pro Plan** takes place at the Javits Center on Saturday, February 8, and will be judged by Mrs. Michele Fletcher of Pikeville, TN, and Mr. Paul Moore of Welford Northants, England.

The judging panel for the **Best of Breed or Variety** competitions includes:

## **HOUND BREEDS AND VARIETIES**

- Mr. Joseph Buchanan of Drexel Hill, PA: Basenjis, Cirnechi dell’Etna, Greyhounds, Ibizan Hounds, Pharaoh Hounds, Whippets.
- Mrs. Linda Clark of Tulsa, OK: Rhodesian Ridgebacks.
- Ms. Patricia Cruz of Coram, NY: Borzois, Scottish Deerhounds.
- Mr. Laurent Heinesche of Klaukkala, Finland: Norwegian Elkhounds.
- Mr. Ryan Lee Horvath of Oakland, CA: Basset Hounds, Beagles (both varieties), Dachshunds (all varieties).

- Mr. Juan Miranda of Mexico City, MX: American English Coonhounds, American Foxhounds, Azawakhs, Black and Tan Coonhounds, Bloodhounds, Bluetick Coonhounds, English Foxhounds, Grand Basset Griffon Vendéens, Harriers, Irish Wolfhounds, Otterhounds, Petit Basset Griffon Vendéens, Plotts, Portuguese Podengo Pequenos, Redbone Coonhounds, Sloughis, Treeing Walker Coonhounds.
- Dr. Jose Luis Payro of Mexico, D.F., MX: Afghan Hounds, Salukis.

### **TOY BREEDS AND VARIETIES**

- Mr. Larry C. Abbott of Fairview, TX: Affenpinschers, Biewer Terriers, Brussels Griffons, Chihuahuas (both varieties), English Toy Spaniels (both varieties), Toy Manchester Terriers.
- Mr. Laurent Heinesche of Klaukkala, Finland: Chinese Cresteds, Maltese, Pomeranians, Toy Poodles.
- Mrs. Tammy K. Jackson of Bristol, CT: Cavalier King Charles Spaniels, Papillons, Pekingese, Pugs, Russian Toys.
- Ms. Margaret Reed of Wilton, CT: Havanese, Italian Greyhounds, Japanese Chin, Miniature Pinschers, Shih Tzu, Silky Terriers, Toy Fox Terriers, Yorkshire Terriers.

### **NON-SPORTING BREEDS**

- Mrs. Vicki L. Abbott of Fairview, TX: American Eskimo Dogs, Chinese Shar-Pei, Cotons de Tulear, Dalmatians, Lhasa Apsos, Schipperkes, Shiba Inu, Tibetan Terriers, Xoloitzcuintlis.
- Mr. Philip Capozzolo of Babylon, NY: Boston Terriers, Bulldogs, Chow Chows, French Bulldogs.
- Mr. Laurent Heinesche of Klaukkala, Finland: Miniature Poodles, Standard Poodles.
- Mr. Jussi Liimatainen of Klaukkala, Finland: Bichon Frisés, Finnish Spitz, Keeshonden, Lowchen, Norwegian Lundehunds, Tibetan Spaniels.

### **HERDING BREEDS AND VARIETIES**

- Mr. Larry Adams of St. Louis, MO: Beaucerons, Bergamasco Sheepdogs, Berger Picards, Border Collies, Bouviers des Flandres, Briards, Canaan Dogs, Entlebucher Mountain Dogs, Lancashire Heelers, Miniature American Shepherds, Polish Lowland Sheepdogs.
- Mrs. Linda Clark of Tulsa, OK: Australian Cattle Dogs, Australian Shepherds, Bearded Collies, German Shepherd Dogs.

- Mr. Jussi Liimatainen of Klaukkala, Finland: Finnish Lapphunds, Icelandic Sheepdogs, Norwegian Buhunds.
- Mr. Charles L. Olvis of Lake Wales, FL: Belgian Laekenois, Belgian Malinois, Belgian Sheepdogs, Belgian Tervuren, Mudik, Old English Sheepdogs, Pulik, Pyrenean Shepherds, Spanish Water Dogs, Swedish Vallhunds.
- Ms. Marilyn Van Vleit of Salem, OR: Cardigan Welsh Corgis, Collies (both varieties), Pembroke Welsh Corgis, Pumik, Shetland Sheepdogs.

## **SPORTING BREEDS AND VARIETIES**

- Mr. William Alexander of Milton, Ontario, CA: Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retrievers, English Setters, Gordon Setters, Irish Setters, Irish Red and White Setters, English Springer Spaniels.
- Mr. Michael Faulkner of Center Cross, VA: Pointers, German Shorthaired Pointers, German Wirehaired Pointers, Vizslas, Weimaraners.
- Mr. Jussi Liimatainen of Klaukkala, Finland: Bracci Italiani, Lagotti Romagnoli, Nederlandse Kooikerhondjes, Spinoni Italiani.
- Ms. Kathy Lorentzen of Chesaning, MI: Flat Coated Retrievers, American Water Spaniels, Boykin Spaniels, Clumber Spaniels, Cocker Spaniels (all varieties), English Cocker Spaniels, Field Spaniels, Irish Water Spaniels, Sussex Spaniels, Welsh Springer Spaniels.
- Ms. Elizabeth Muthard of Lake Wales, FL: Golden Retrievers, Labrador Retrievers.
- Mr. Richard W. Powell of Palmyra, PA: Barbets, Brittanys, Chesapeake Bay Retrievers, Curly Coated Retrievers, Wirehaired Pointing Griffons, Wirehaired Vizslas.

## **WORKING BREEDS**

- Mrs. Sioux Forsyth Green of Pinehurst, NC: Bernese Mountain Dogs, Black Russian Terriers, Boerboels, Great Pyrenees, Mastiffs, Neapolitan Mastiffs, Newfoundlands, Portuguese Water Dogs, Tibetan Mastiffs.
- Mr. Laurent Heinesche of Klaukkala, Finland: Dogos Argentinos, Dogues de Bordeaux, Great Danes, Samoyeds, Siberian Huskies.
- Ms. Victoria M. Jordan of The Villages, FL: Akitas, Alaskan Malamutes, Anatolian Shepherd Dogs, Bullmastiffs, Cane Corsos, Chinooks, Doberman Pinschers.
- Mr. Jussi Liimatainen of Klaukkala, Finland: German Pinschers, Komondorok, Kuvaszok.
- Mr. Jay Richardson of Elgin, IL: Boxers, Giant Schnauzers, Greater Swiss Mountain Dogs, Leonbergers, Rottweilers, Saint Bernards, Standard Schnauzers.

## **TERRIER BREEDS AND VARIETIES**

- Mr. Larry C. Abbott of Fairview, TX: Standard Manchester Terriers.
- Mr. Randy E. Garren of Apex, NC: Australian Terriers, Bedlington Terriers, Border Terriers, Cairn Terriers, Glen of Imaal Terriers, Miniature Schnauzers, Sealyham Terriers, Skye Terriers, Staffordshire Bull Terriers, Welsh Terriers, West Highland White Terriers.
- Mr. Jussi Liimatainen of Klaukkala, Finland: Smooth Fox Terriers, Wire Fox Terriers, Norfolk Terriers, Norwich Terriers.
- Mr. Richard W. Powell of Palmyra, PA: American Hairless Terriers, American Staffordshire Terriers, Cesky Terriers, Dandie Dinmont Terriers, Rat Terriers.
- Mrs. Allison Corn Sunderman of Hanover, MI: Airedale Terriers, Bull Terriers (both varieties), Irish Terriers, Kerry Blue Terriers, Lakeland Terriers, Miniature Bull Terriers, Parson Russell Terriers, Russell Terriers, Scottish Terriers, Soft Coated Wheaten Terriers.

Additional event information including ticket sales, partner hotel listings, [FOX Sports](#) broadcast and streaming schedules, and more are available at [westminsterkennelclub.org](http://westminsterkennelclub.org). Be sure to follow The Westminster Kennel Club on social media to keep up on event news and special announcements.

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### **About The Westminster Kennel Club**

The Westminster Kennel Club, established in 1877, is America's oldest organization dedicated to the sport of dogs. It hosts the iconic, all-breed Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show, the second-longest, continuously held sporting event in the U.S. after the Kentucky Derby and, since 1948, the longest nationally televised live dog show. The Club's mission is to enhance the lives of all dogs by celebrating the companionship of dogs and promoting responsible dog ownership and breed preservation. The Club advocates for purpose-bred dogs, with an understanding that each breed has a legacy and history that deserves to be taught, honored, and preserved. The Club uses education to raise awareness and encourage owners to conscientiously select dogs that are the right match for their families. The annual dog show—a conformation competition for purpose-bred dogs—and the Masters Agility Championship and Masters Obedience Championship—where dogs from all backgrounds are eligible to compete—make Westminster Week, with thousands of dogs from the U.S. and around the world, a pinnacle experience for any dog lover. The

Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show has captivated canine enthusiasts for more than a century. Learn more at [westminsterkennelclub.org](https://www.westminsterkennelclub.org). WESTMINSTER. *There's only one.*® Visit us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [TikTok](#), [X](#), [YouTube](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

### **About Nestlé Purina PetCare**

Nestlé Purina PetCare creates richer lives for pets and the people who love them. Founded in 1894, Purina has helped dogs and cats live longer, healthier lives by offering scientifically based nutritional innovations. Purina manufactures some of the world's most trusted and popular pet care products, including Purina ONE, Pro Plan, Fancy Feast and Tidy Cats. Our more than 11,000 U.S. associates take pride in our trusted pet food, treat and litter brands that feed 46 million dogs and 68 million cats every year. More than 500 Purina scientists, veterinarians, and pet care experts ensure our commitment to unsurpassed quality and nutrition.

Purina Pro Plan is a leader in the advanced nutrition category, with more than 140 targeted formulas to help your pet thrive throughout every stage of life. It is also the food of choice for 17 of the past 18 Westminster Best in Show winners\*. For more information, visit [www.proplan.com](https://www.proplan.com) or follow @ProPlan on Twitter, Instagram, or Facebook.

Purina promotes responsible pet care through our scientific research, our products and our support for pet-related organizations. Over the past five years, Purina has contributed more than \$150 million towards organizations that bring, and keep, people and pets together, as well as those that help our communities and environment thrive.

Purina is part of Nestlé, a global leader in Nutrition, Health and Wellness. For more information, visit [purina.com](https://www.purina.com) or [subscribe here](#) to get the latest Purina news.

\*The handler or owners of these champions may have received Purina Pro Plan dog food as Purina ambassadors.