



### **Richard G. “Butch” Nelson Honored At 2023 CEB-US Conclave With Peter Ward Service Award**

Richard G. Nelson, fondly known to all as “Butch,” was honored at the 2023 Club de l’Epagneul Breton - United States Conclave held in Wellston, Oklahoma in December. He was recognized as the recipient of the annual Peter Ward Memorial Service Award for his long history of involvement with CEB-US, the Epagneul Breton and for his service to the Epagneul Breton greater community. The CEB-US Peter Ward Service Award was conceived and inaugurated in 2012 in memory of its namesake, chiefly as a means of recognizing and honoring a sustained period of unheralded generous service by a CEB-US member to the breed and club membership in furtherance of the mission to advance and protect the Epagneul Breton in the United States. The annual selection committee is made up of prior recipients of the award, which nominates and selects a deserving recipient.



Butch Nelson's formal involvement with the Epagneul Breton began in the early 1990's, when he first encountered the breed as a dog trainer. The Epagneul Breton's increase in popularity in the United States mirrored much of Butch's training career as it evolved via Hyalite Kennels, where he specialized in helping persons develop gun dogs. He became enamored with and enjoyed working with the EB breed from the perspective of a dog trainer. Correspondingly, his Epagneul Breton training clients increased as more people in the Rocky Mountain West acquired EBs. He also trained EB's from around the country in addition to the Rocky Mountain West as his clientele increased due to wintering for a number of years in southwest Georgia, and also in southern Arizona. At the same time, he began selectively breeding Epagneul Bretons under the "du Hyalite" kennel affix and he and his spouse, Karen Paugh, bred a litter or so per year for use as gun dogs for close to thirty (30) years.



After the United Kennel Club became the official registry and sanctioning body for the Epagneul Breton in the USA, and upon implementation of the UKC Pointing Dog Program, Butch became the first judge in the USA to be licensed to judge sanctioned UKC pointing dog field trials. He and his friend Henri Xavier Guelou, of Bretagne, France, supervised the first official UKC TAN event in Three Forks, Montana when Butch and Karen hosted the 2001 CEB-US (then known as French Brittany Gun Dog Association) Annual Conclave near their first Montana home in Belgrade, Montana that spring. Shortly thereafter, Butch was tapped to officiate at the first UKC sanctioned local EB UKC Gun Class trials which were held first in Georgia and shortly thereafter in Montana. When the trials expanded to offer Open Class stakes, he was frequently requested to judge. As a longtime trainer, judge, and breeder, Butch quickly recognized the value of the UKC pointing dog venue, as a "pure breeder stake," where the natural qualities of dogs could be evaluated for their amateur owners and handlers, as well as those competing at a higher level of training. Butch felt that the UKC field trialing venue based on the model of European trials with the handlers on foot, had value in this country, both as a form of recreation and involvement in upland sport for the individual gun dog owner, as well as value as a process of identifying good dogs for breeding. Widely recognized as the dean and most experienced field trial judge in the EB ranks in the USA, Butch has been invited to judge the EB and other pointing breeds in virtually every trialing venue in the U.S. In addition to serving as a colleague and advisor to visiting foreign judges (including Poul Valdemar Nielson who persuaded him to come judge with him at this year's National field trials and to be present to receive this award), Butch has mentored, counseled and helped train many other UKC pointing dog judges from the EB ranks in the United States, as well as judges with backgrounds in other Continental pointing dog breeds. Under the CEB-US banner and umbrella of local club sponsorship, over the last 30 years, Butch has provided numerous training seminars to field trial judges, as well as

individual and group instruction to EB owners and handlers, both experts and novices alike. He previously served on the UKC Field Trial Judges Advisory Committee at the request of UKC, as well as the CEB-US Field Trial Judges Committee at the request of other senior UKC field trial judges. Butch's informed input and broadness of perspective have been instrumental and significant in the development of the UKC field trialing structure, venue, and rules. Butch's involvement with the EB on multiple levels including his unique perspective as judge, trainer, breeder and owner, has in a broader sense, contributed greatly to the formal evaluation of field work and the development of the EB in this country.

After relocating to Denton, Montana years ago, Butch and his spouse Karen Paugh, sponsored and hosted many Type W (Wild) EB field trials on the finest grounds for natural upland game in central Montana, under the banner of the Big Sky Epagneul Breton Gun Dog Club. From whelping young puppies for new owners, to developing young gun dogs, to putting the finishing touches on field trial dogs for domestic and international field trial competitions, Butch's skill and impact as a trainer of EBs (as well as every other breed of pointing dog) has had a positive impact across the spectrum of the EB breed. Aside from his work as a trainer assisting the gun dog public, helping EB's and other dogs and their owners in large and small ways has been a "calling" for Butch for his entire career in the pointing dog world. He has been active in the above roles for the entire 26 years of CEB-US's existence as the parent club of the EB, including service on the CEB-US Board of Directors. One of the speakers during the award presentation at the 2023 Conclave made the observation that if there were such a thing as a Hall of Fame for the Epagneul Breton in the USA, Butch would have received no less than four separate nominations to become a member. First as an esteemed field trial judge of the EB, second as a widely acclaimed trainer and observer of the EB in field work, third as a breeder of quality EB's under the du Hyalite Kennel affix, and fourth and finally as a generous overall member, helper and contributor to CEB-US in countless ways for over a quarter of the last century. From working to help dogs with problems overcome them and be successful, to helping kids and other persons new to the upland sport of pointing dogs, Butch has always found the time to help and to offer encouragement and assistance. It was indeed fortunate for the Epagneul Breton as a breed, and CEB-US as the breed's central constituency in the US, that the Epagneul Breton and Butch Nelson found themselves traveling down the same pathway for the last 30 years. For these and many other reasons, Richard G, "Butch" Nelson was honored and recognized as the 2023 recipient of the Peter Ward Award for his long and sustained period of active service to CEB-US and the greater EB community in the USA.