

A March Through ACBA History

ERNIE PARKS 1999 ACBA Hall of Fame

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Ernie started raising cavies in Ohio in the 1940's. His ARBA judge's number was #13. In the 1945 (first edition) ACBA Official Guide Book, Ernie's ad lists him as an "AR&CBA Registrar and Cavy Judge". He was definitely one of the country's first cavy judges. In that edition, Ernie wrote an interesting article on Tortoiseshell & White Americans.

At this time, Ernie was on the ACBA Board of Directors. Over the years he held several offices in the American Cavy Breeders Association and served as secretary and treasurer.

Due to health problems, Ernie and his wife Emma moved to Phoenix, Arizona. By then, he had his rabbit judges license and was used so much as a rabbit judge that some forgot that he had actually started out as a cavy judge.

Ernie never let you forget! He really loved the cavies— especially the Tortoiseshell & Whites. He was always happy when a TSW won breed or (even better) a Best in Show! From the time that cavies were added to the Southern California Expo in Del Mar (late 1960's), Ernie was the only judge anyone requested and he remained the only judge until his death in the 1990's. He handled all animals with great gentleness. He never messed up a coat on a long haired animal.

Ernie was always the perfect gentleman with a kind word for all. He would often donate awards (especially for the youth) that he had made out of Indian jewelry. After the show was over, he would spend time talking to any exhibitor or interested cavy person, giving insights into the past of the ACBA, the reason for the name change of the AR&CBA to ARBA, old stories of the early cavy show days to all who wanted to listen. He encouraged everyone to join and work for the ACBA. He would take time to explain good and bad points of "for sale" animals with newcomers and chat all night about a breeding or health problem. He never rushed or hurried anyone, making all feel special, that their questions were worthwhile. He created good will among exhibitors and encouraged visitors to join the cavy fancy. Ernie was truly a good will ambassador for cavies.

When we think of Ernie, we remember his smiling face and good nature. Most of all, we remember his discussion with a fair visitor. "You don't have a cavy?" he exclaimed. "Who says good morning to you? Who whistles at you when you walk by? You need a cavy bad!" For his hard work and enthusiastic support of the ACBA over such a long period of time, we feel Ernie Parks well deserves the recognition as a member of the ACBA Hall of Fame.

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