

## One Man, One Dog

By Gary Weller  
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**Gordon Gilroy**

In memory of a great friend

It is with a very heavy heart that I sit down to write these words but yet something compels me forward to bring you both very sad news and a remarkable story about a man and a dog and how together they made a huge contribution to the Treeing Walker breed.

On January 15, 2005 the coonhound world lost one of the all time greatest unsung heroes the Walker breed has ever had and I lost my best friend when Mr. Gordon Gilroy from Nanjimmy, MD, died in an automobile accident not far from his home.

If you knew Gordon, then you can consider yourself among the very lucky. If you didn't know him, I'll bet you have either read about, heard about, own or know someone who owns a Walker dog, that is a product of the hard work and dedication that Gordon willingly and lovingly devoted to his dogs.

Let me take you back over 22 years ago to the day I met Gordon Gilroy at the Grand American in Orangeburg, SC. I was standing around with about six or eight other people listening to the one and only Jim (Wildman) Meeks tell some of those humorous stories that he is so well known for. Gordon was standing there also and even though we both lived in Maryland we had never met. Thanks to Jimmy Meeks I would soon develop a never-ending friendship with Gordon that took us on a journey that lasted for many years traveling up and down and back and forth across the United States in search of the best coonhound we could find. Gordon bred a female he called David's Dinah (Dinah was a top notch female) to Jimmy Meeks' Yadkin River Jeff and from this cross he kept two male pups named Crowder and Jake. Jake was later sold and went on to become Gr. Nt. Ch. Southern Sound Jake and Gordon kept the Crowder pup.

The first time I heard Crowder bark

he was about 10 or 12 weeks old and I was amazed at the volume this pup had at such a young age. He was the loudest puppy I had ever heard in my life and was louder than most of the grown dogs I had hunted with. About 6 months later I got to hear this chubby little Walker pup tree. We had three dogs in the woods, Gordon's Crowder pup and two older dogs. We no more than turned loose when all three dogs struck on a small creek. The two old dogs went to the right and the Crowder pup went to the left up another small creek. They all treed about the same time with Crowder split to the left of the old dogs. I went with Gordon to Crowder and watched as one of the old dogs pulled off the other tree and ran wide open right past Crowder who was not tied but was sure enough treed and he never skipped a beat. I knew that a pup with his track speed, locating ability, stay-put tree power and awesome volume would become a force to be reckoned with in the not to distant future. I was correct in my assessment but what I didn't know was that Gordon Gilroy and this Crowder pup would some day contribute great things to the Walker breed and I would be there to witness it all.

To say the least Crowder made his presence known every time he opened his mouth. Gordon on the other hand was never one to boast or brag and was completely happy to stay out of the limelight. Gordon was never much for the competition hunts and would much rather just go hunting with some good friends. But, nevertheless Gordon always demanded the most from his dogs and would not tolerate an idiot dog no matter where it came from or whose dog it was from. But, let me get on with the story.

We started to haul Crowder around with us all over the United States when he was about 14 or 15 months old. Everywhere we went people were amazed at the locating ability, awesome tree power and volume of this young hound. I'll tell you now that Crowder was not the best coonhound I ever hunted with, but he was far better than most and could hold his own with any dog. He was however one of the top five tree dogs I've ever seen. When I say "tree dogs" I'm talking about dogs with the ability to locate the tree with a coon in it very quickly, bark with a mouth I can hear and stay put no matter what. I'm not talking about some track waddling idiot that has no clue where the coon went; so he ends up treeing on 10 trees and you may see one coon. That type of dog I would call worthless but I would never call it a tree dog.

So what does all this have to do with contributing great things to the Walker breed you say? Well, it went like this. While on one of our many hunts across

the country we decided to go out to Kentucky to hunt with Harvey French. One night while hunting with Harvey and five or six other guys from Kentucky we sent Crowder, a Nt. Ch. dog that I had and a Gr. Nt. that Harvey was hunting into a big swamp. They struck a track and ran it for about 10 minutes or so. Crowder treed first and stayed treed while the other two dogs kept on running track. Finally after about ten minutes one of the other dogs went to Crowder's tree and the other dog kept running. I stayed out on the road with the other hunters from Kentucky (can't remember their names) while Harvey and Gordon went to Crowder's tree. To no surprise Crowder had the coon. The men on the road could see that Crowder was holding his tree no matter what the other two dogs did. They were really impressed with Crowder's volume and stay-power and had made a few comments about it as we listened to him tree. I said, "yep, he's sure enough loud and he'll stay there but I believe old Rattler's even louder than him." These guys couldn't believe a dog could be much louder than Crowder and pretty much laughed at me. They must have told Harvey what I said because the next day Harvey was asking us about this Rattler dog. We told him all that we knew and didn't think anymore about it. A month or two later Harvey called us to say he had bought the Rattler dog. Rattler changed hands a few times after that and was bred to some nice females along the way. Rattler was known to the public as Gr. Nt. Ch. Yadkin Tar Rattler and was off Yadkin River Jeff and Tar Heel Peggy. Rattler went on to write his own page in Walker history but it was Gordon Gilroy and Crowder that brought Rattler to the attention of the hunters in the midwest. Gordon and Crowder's impact on the Walker breed didn't stop there.

A friend of ours by the name of Joe Flynn had a female off Yadkin River Champ he called Gypsy that was a really nice young female. She would run and tree her own coon alone at six months old with no problem. Gordon had her as a pup and let Joe get her with the stipulation that she would be bred to Crowder some day and Gordon would get a pup. The deal was struck and Walker history was about to be written. Gypsy was bred to Crowder making the pups a double shot of old Yadkin River Jeff. I had a male dog off of Red Eagle Dick that Joe wanted to buy. I told Joe, "You go ahead and take the dog and when those pups are born off Gypsy and Crowder you give me a male pup." When the pups were 7 weeks old Gordon and I went down Joe's to get our pups. Gordon insisted that I select my pup first so after about 40 minutes of

"no, you pick first" I gave in and said I'll take that pup with the big head. That pup, like his ancestors before him, turned out to be a loud hard stay-put tree dog that could drive a track. I hunted him until he got to be too wide for my area and sold him at 15 months old, to the only person I knew who could possibly wear him down, Frank Giddings. When Frank bought the dog he was a hard going young started dog. That dog went on to become Gr. Nt. Ch. Rock River Sackett. Old Sackett was bred to Skean's Dolly and Sackett, Jr. was born. You know the rest of the story.

Although Gordon never really got any credit for it, it was the team of Gordon Gilroy and Yadkin River Crowder that opened the floodgate that held back the mighty Yadkin River strain of dogs. The Yadkin River stock, with the exception of a few, was pretty much confined to the southeastern United States back then. I'm not saying that the Yadkin River dogs were nothing until Gordon came along. The fact is they were very powerful loud mouth track and tree dogs long before Gordon ever knew about them. But there is no doubt in my mind that Gordon and Crowder were very instrumental in spreading this great bloodline across the nation.

I for one thank you my friend. Thank you for the many miles we traveled together, for the many memories, for the many mornings we watched the sunrise together, but most of all thank you for allowing me to share a big part of my life with you.

Like so many others who knew and loved Gordon Gilroy, I will forever have an empty spot in my heart now that he has gone on to be with the Lord. I don't know if coon hunting is allowed in heaven or not, but just maybe it is. If so, then I know Gordon is up there with Old Crowder and the coon hunting angels are now witness to two of the best.

## The Ohio Sportsmen and Sporting Dog Association

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Before anything else, I must make a correction: The OSSDA CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL BENEFIT EVENT is MARCH 26. In last month's column I mistakenly had the date as March 19. I apologize if this caused any problems. Check out our ad in this month's issue for Bench Show, Nite Hunt and Auction times. The purpose of this event is to raise money for a very worthwhile cause, the Children's Hospital in Columbus. There are Children's outreach clinics all over the state and specialists from Children's in Columbus practice and consult in the other hospitals for children in Ohio.

No child is ever refused treatment at Children's.

This is being written on the last day of Ohio's coon season. This year we had pretty good weather (wet, but warm) for the first part of the season. Then came "The Christmas Storm," followed by a short warm spell and then another blast from Old Man Winter. Remember, the DOW feels that the best hunting in Ohio (for coons) is in December and January. Well, at least the boars are moving. It looks like the "germs" are moving too. At OSSDA's January meeting, our Zone 2 rep, Frank Proctor told of finding dead coons "curled up" in the woods, just lying in the snow. We've found a dead coon (not shot) along a stream south of here while hunting several weeks ago and I shot a sick coon that came into our dairy barn last week. Distemper thins out the population every few years, it seems.

Well, we're 3 months into this year and the HSUS up in Bowling Green is already working on plans to beef up its Animal Rights work. The HSUS merged with the Fund for Animals last year, giving them hundreds of MILLIONS of dollars to spend for their causes. They have announced that their project for this year is to attempt to end bow hunting in this country. Now they have formed a new "legislative arm" called

the HSUS Fund for Animals (how original!) for the time being and its purpose is to lobby for the Anti's agendas in our Legislatures. The news bulletin says that as a non-profit organization, HSUS and the Fund were limited as to the amount they could spend on lobbying activities. However, this new "arm" is set up as a 501(c)(4) SOCIAL WELFARE organization, so is not restricted in the amount that can be spent to lobby for their legislation. In other words, they can spend LARGE amounts of money to wine and dine and persuade OUR ELECTED Legislators to vote for their agendas. These folks are not hesitant to put their money where their "mouth" is. They have deep pockets.

March is usually the month when the hunts and shows pick up. Once again, we ask that every club plan some day of activities for the youngsters. The young folks have to be introduced to our sport to insure that it continues. Most all kids love dogs... you could plan a "fun" show...all breeds allowed...include local scout groups in some activity. And it's always good community relations to sponsor a rabies clinic.

Every year the Division of Wildlife holds an open house at each of the Wildlife Zone Headquarters (locations are in your hunting regulations booklets). This year the open houses will be on March 6 from noon to 3 pm. You are aware of our efforts to attempt to get the coon season to open before the present date of November 10. We have asked you to write letters to the Chief of the DOW, Steve Gray. Now we are asking you to take the time and make the effort to go to the open house at your Zone's HQ on March 6. Sign in and write that you would like to see the coon season begin earlier than it does now. Be a presence, but be polite and courteous to the DOW folks there. Your President, John Hembree, and a delegation of members are going to attend the open house and District One HQ in Columbus. Here is an opportunity to show the DOW that we are more than "a few coonhunters" who would like to see the opening date for coon season be (perhaps) before Halloween. Thanks in advance for your efforts!

Mark your calendars with the right date for the Children's Hospital Benefit, March 26 at Medina CHA. Remember, the Bench Show will be at noon and our Auction of great articles to benefit the kids will be at 3 pm. Nite Hunt deadline is 8 pm so there's plenty of time for everyone to get there. Special trophies for high scoring dog of each coonhound breed! Help us help Children's Hospital and plan to attend!

It's also time to renew memberships, \$25 per club and \$10 for individual memberships. Mail dues to Jackie Carpenter, Treas., 23291 Zion Rd., Gambier, OH 43022.

### Clouse's Kennel "We Keep The Best" For Sale

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### TRADE DAY AND FLEA MARKET

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of Every Month

Vendors to be on grounds for hunting supplies  
North Central Kentucky Coon Hunters Club

**Elizabethtown, KY**

Dave Catlett, President

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