

German Shepherd Dog Council of Australia



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Tribute to Frances Farley

On behalf of the German Shepherd Dog Council of Australia

As we gather today, both in person and online, to honour and remember our dear friend and mentor Frances “Fran” Farley, we reflect on a lifetime devoted to the German Shepherd Dog and to the German Shepherd Dog Council of Australia. It is safe to say that Fran never truly realised the profound and lasting impact she had on breeders, exhibitors, judges and surveyors, aspiring officials, and the broader GSD community.

Fran’s contribution to the Council was both insightful and unwavering. She played a pivotal role in the development, implementation and steadfast support of the breed health and wellbeing schemes that helped protect the German Shepherd Dog during its forty years of immense popularity in Australia. As a senior judge and a member of the Executive for six years, she was a constant source of wise counsel, always supporting the work and direction of the Council.

Her commitment to learning was lifelong. Fran travelled overseas as often as she could, expanding her knowledge of the European bloodlines that would help shape the breed in Australia. Mentored by respected figures such as Anita Pettenhofer, Tom Luxton, Jurgen Neddermeyer, and Louis Donald, she thrived. She handled Phal Aegiediendam to a Silver medal behind the legendary Ingo von Hahfenlohtal at the 4th National in 1976, later standing Phal at stud in Melbourne. Phal played a major role in Fran’s early success as a breeder, followed in later years by Dunmonnaidh Junker; stories that deserve to be told in their own right.

Fran possessed an extraordinary ability to recognise and nurture the next generation of guardians of the breed. She built capacity and confidence in those she believed represented the future. In her Executive roles as Judges Chair and National Breed Commission Chair, she developed schemes, mentored emerging officials, and guided judge/surveyors such as Sam Bonifacio, Jenny Yuen, Greg Green, Ian Urie, Robyn Knuckey, Melanie Groth, Peter Flynn, Alastair Henderson, Stephen and Christine Collins, Joylene Neddermeyer; among many others whose names would be too numerous to list. She was an exceptional breeder herself and ever generous in her support of fellow breeders.

Her vocabulary and clarity of expression when describing a German Shepherd Dog were unmatched. Fran had a rare gift for capturing the essence of every dog she critiqued, both in writing and in speech. She authored numerous articles of enduring value to the Council and the breed. As a judge, she was among our finest; true to the standard, never allowing beauty to overshadow the essential virtues of character, temperament, and workability. She led by example, breeding and training dogs that excelled not only in the show ring and in obedience, but also later in meaningful service to the community.

Frances Farley was a remarkable guardian of our breed: a lifelong learner, a gifted teacher, a mentor, a motivator, and a cherished friend. On behalf of the German Shepherd Dog Council of Australia, we extend our profound gratitude for her lifetime of dedication and for a life truly well lived.

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