

Dr. Eloise Gerry

Breed Pioneer

Sheila Smith
The Basenji

A dear friend is gone – Dr. Eloise Gerry a pioneer of the Basenji in the United States. I met her in 1951 or 1952 – a quiet, dark complexioned lady who loved her dogs and friends. Dr. Gerry had her doctorate in forestry and was on the original staff of U.S. Forest Products in Madison, Wisconsin, when the Laboratory opened in 1910. She was a remarkable scientist, and when a disease of some sort hit the forests in Florida, she was the one sent to find the cause and cure. This was years ago, of course. After 45 years, she retired from the United States Forestry Products in 1955.

Dr. Gerry started in Basenjis in 1942. Never using a kennel name, the puppies she raised were given single names, such as: Nedji, Panzi, Glyphea, Prunella (Champion), etc. Her stock at first was varied, from Windrush, Rhosenji, Phemister and



Haku. When I met her, she had one bitch Haku Black Mischief, and a young tri male from Veronica, Black Mint of the Congo (photo). He as the first proper tri color in Wisconsin and became a champion.

Dr. Gerry's home was a lovely huge home in Shorewood Hills – and I found the most remarkable item in the house – portable chain link runs, including one in the bedroom. Her young dogs were not crated, but had the inside runs to keep them in during the night, and bitches in season were also in inside runs so not to upset the neighborhood dogs. House, runs and yards were immaculate – and her dogs were scientifically fed and in perfect condition at all times. “Mint” was her special love, and though he was used at stud several times, she purchased Glenairley Golden Tiara as a special mate for him when he was about seven, I think. Tia finished her championship, but Mint developed nephritis and died before the mating could take place. Tia was bred to Ch. Marlisle Nimrod to produce Ch. Prunella.

In reading over old correspondence today, I ran across several letters from Eloise that recalled long ago time, far off places, forgotten wins and friendly faces, especially her's.