

## VALERIE ANNE EDWARDS

Valerie Edwards' parents were devoted to pedigree animals, working with thoroughbred horses and cattle.

Valerie, herself, was allowed to show her first American Shorthair cat at the age of 13. Her parents stressed that she was "on her own" if she decided to take up the breeding of cats ... there would be no financial or other help for her.

She registered the Crown E cattery name in 1964 and set about researching bloodlines, color genetics and the general history of the breed.

By 1967, her mother had also succumbed to the American Shorthair breed and registered her own cattery name, Fenton, which she allowed Val to manage for her.

In 1969, Valerie published a booklet titled *What is an American Shorthair?* that aimed to give the public an overview of the breed.

Later, in 1978, she rewrote the booklet and published an expanded version, this one titled *The Littlest Pilgrim, the American Shorthair Cat*.

Valerie's interest in the history of the American Shorthair breed only grew as she became more involved with the Cat Fancy. A large bulk of this book is Val's research that she compiled and intended to publish as a book one day. That dream never materialized during her lifetime, but we are fortunate that her brother maintained her files and has allowed us to edit the manuscript, add additional material to make the information more current, and include a multitude of photos that enhance the text.

We like to think that Valerie would be exceptionally pleased with this result.



Valerie Anne Edwards with two of her Crown E American Shorthairs and their rosettes and trophies.

### *The Littlest Pilgrim: The American Shorthair Cat*

by Valerie Anne Edwards



# KAREN LAWRENCE

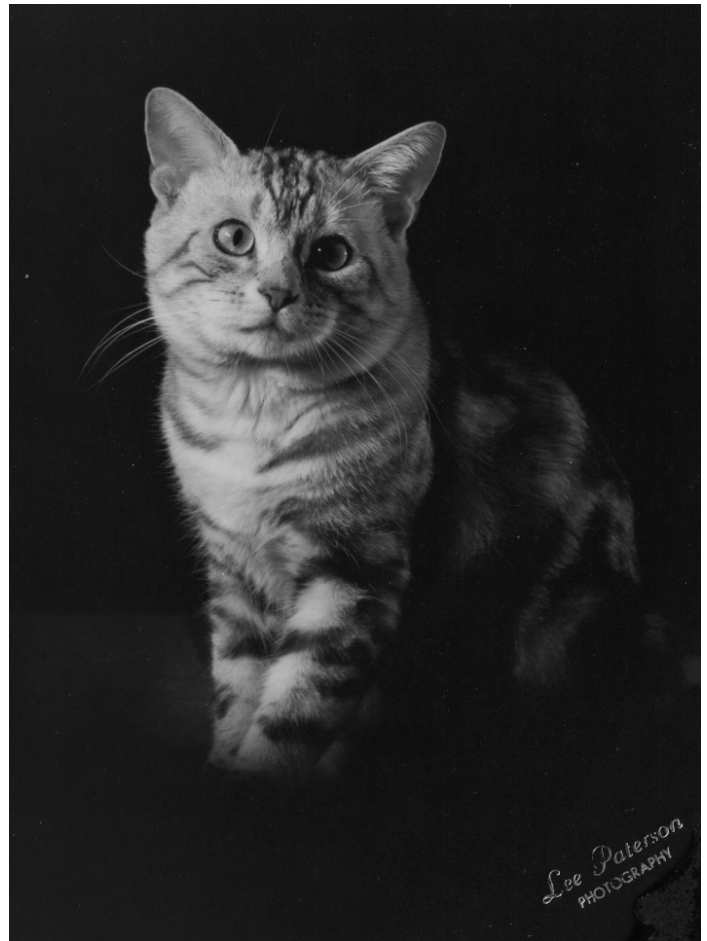
While Karen Lawrence is best known for her historical work with the Abyssinian breed, she did breed American Shorthairs for a time during the late 1970s to the early 1980s. Her first American Shorthair came from the famous Chota-Li cattery of Mrs. Edna Field. GC Chota-Li Bo-Bangles of Tailsend, a silver tabby male, was a combination of Fongin and Apache lines. Bo had the same sire, Apache Chief Lobo (commonly known as 'George'), as the famous silver tabby GC, NW Apache Chief Mateo. Unfortunately, he also had the misfortune to be shown alongside Mateo for several years—and we came to accept and actually grew quite fond of his second place ribbons, especially as they often included a final win alongside his half-brother.

Karen's foundation silver tabby females came from Annie Kimball, Millcreek Cherie of Tailsend, and from Bea Wilson, Broadlands Kristie of Tailsend. Despite a goal of breeding silver tabbies, George's black smoke genes seemed to be dominant and the majority of kittens produced by Bo, Cherie and Kristie were black smoke. Breeding silver tabbies was a nice thought while it lasted!

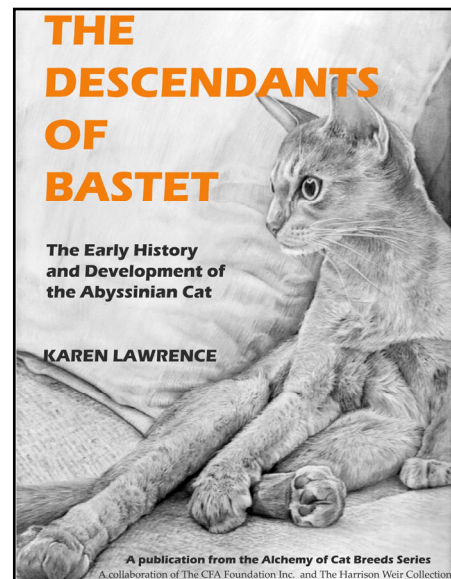
Karen moved on to a variety of other breeds and eventually became a CFA Judge in 1995. She retired in 2020 after 25 years of judging at cat shows around the world, and was elevated to Judge Emeritus status by the CFA Board of Directors in 2021. Karen was instrumental in the development of the original CFA web site during 1994, and maintained the site from 1995 until 2011. For 10 years, she was the editor of CFA's online bi-monthly magazine, *Fan-c-Mews*.

Karen currently holds a seat on the Board of Directors of The CFA Foundation, and is privileged to manage their Feline Historical Museum in Alliance, Ohio. She spends much of her free time writing historical articles for publication on The History Project web site ([www.cat-o-pedia.org](http://www.cat-o-pedia.org)) and in the *Felis Historia* online magazine ([www.felis-historica.com](http://www.felis-historica.com)).

She recently published an historical book on the Abyssinian breed, titled *The Descendants of Bastet*, which has been well-received by breeders worldwide.



GC Chota-Li-Bo-Bangles of Tailsend.  
Bred by Mrs. Edna Field, and owned by the author  
and her husband, Roger.  
Photo ©Lee Paterson



## GAYLE A. HAND

The loss of a beloved van black & white bicolor domestic shorthair pet is what initially drew Gayle Hand to the cat fancy and pedigreed American Shorthairs. In 1987 she named her cattery BiAmeriKitty (in memory of “Kitty” and as a play on ‘Buy American’ and ‘Bicolor’).

In addition to being editor of the *American Connection*, the breed newsletter of the CFA affiliated National American Shorthair Club, from 1993 to 1997, and 2000 to present, Gayle co-authored one of the Prefaces to the CFA Breed Standards entitled *Feline Structure* and the related pamphlet, *Feline Structure: Recognizing Normal from Abnormal*.

Professionally Gayle worked as a Neonatal Intensive Care Nurse at the Children’s Hospital at Stanford University, so having seen the devastating consequences of human congenital anomalies and conditions that affect reproduction, she wanted fanciers to be aware of trends that can negatively impact form and function of cats.

At the request of Joan Wasthuber Miller (Nepenthes), former CFA Board member and Winn Feline Foundation President, Gayle agreed to participate as the “cat-hobbyist” public member on the San Mateo County (California) Animal Task Force in a futile effort to stop the infamous first US anti-breeding legislation in 1991.

Gayle also served along with Joan on the Winn Feline Foundation Board from 1997 to 2002. In that capacity, and with her experience and knowledge of study design from her work at Stanford, she was able to advocate for funding of many high-quality feline health studies pertinent to pedigreed cats and catteries.

During her time away from the fancy, Gayle retrained as an Adult Nurse Practitioner and moved to Oregon where she established and owned her own Primary Care practice until retirement in 2019. As an avocation, in place of exhibiting and breeding cats, she danced Argentine Tango socially for 15 years at events locally, throughout the US, and in Buenos Aires.

Since returning to the fancy Gayle has endeavored to collect and archive American Shorthair breed history. A complete set of



GC, NW BiAmeriKitty And Tyler Too, a black & white bi-color male owned by Gayle Hand.  
Photo ©Chanan

newsletters from the National American Shorthair Club (1978 to 2022) are now available for future enthusiasts to read and learn from at the CFA Foundation’s Feline Historical Museum Library.

With the publication of this book an even greater dream has been achieved – an extensive account of breed history to entertain and educate. Additionally, she hopes it will serve as a guidepost for those who will preserve and carry the breed into the future.

“ History is an exploration for truth which must be understood and recorded within the cultural context from which it evolves.