

Top breeders are not measured by wins alone!

A top breeder is not always determined by the number of rosettes, RWs, NWs. or even DMs they get. It is determined by the strength of how much they contributed to advancing the progress of their breed towards meeting the standards, how well they modeled and mentored new breeders to incorporate only the highest personal standards for ethical behavior and sportsmanship, and the legacy of their good stewardship for their chosen breed.

Not everyone can show at a Regional or National level, but they can breed cats that at that level or quality and place them into the hands of those who will ethically use them to also advance the breed towards that ideal example embodied in their standard.

Some NW and RW producing breeders may be more focused on producing a few top winning cats, but some may do so by shortcutting the proper emphasis upon developing sound lines and using diversity-retaining breeding practices. Sound health and genetic diversity may be more important to the breed in the long run than a few rosettes and those admittedly fun splashy wins. Some top winning breeders may not be as focused on also developing the next generations of ethical new breeders, nor of putting great cats into carefully-vetted newer breeders' hands, so that the newer breeders may continue to build upon the improvements towards the Written Standards and health your lines achieved.

Its wonderful when a breeder's program can do it all, sound health, genetic diversity, good sportsmanship, ethical dealings with your fellow fanciers, selflessly Mentoring newer breeders to be credits to their breed, AND achieve a nice sprinkling of top wins, too! That kind of person IS a great and TOP breeder in my book!

But if I had to drop off any ONE factor from my listing of top breeder attributes, the most expendable to me is getting the top

wins. I am happy when my cats make finals, Grand, RW or beyond, who isn't?

But the legacy that I hope to leave for my breed and the Cat Fancy isn't measured in rosettes alone. It is measured by every protégé I've Mentored who stays in the Cat Fancy to go on to become successful, ethical, who exhibits great sportsmanship, generously Mentors others, and who furthers their breed to improve in health, adherence to their Written Standards, sociability, and longevity. It is also measured by all the sound, healthy, more genetically diverse lines I carefully place into the hands of the next generations of excellent breeders, that produce Grand/NW/RW cats for their program that continue to be and produce healthy, sound, typey, and more genetically diverse excellent examples of their breed.

That legacy is worth achieving and celebrating wherever it is encountered!

***Cheers,
Candice Massey
Saturday, August 3, 2013***