

# Nick Mickelson

16 Jan 1954 — 31 Aug 1998

## NICK MICKELSON

**O**n August 31st, 1998 the retriever world lost one of its true giants when Ralph "Nick" Mickelson died unexpectedly at age 44. Nick was returning home from having judged the two day Master stake at the Labrador Retriever Club of Greater Boston's hunting test in Hopkinton, New Hampshire. It was my privilege to have run two dogs in that test under Nick and his co-judge, Bill Armstrong.

Nick Mickelson's "dog" resume was most impressive, and he is universally remembered as a major force behind the success of the hunting test program. But, if you knew Nick only from his involvement in hunting tests, you didn't know the person who helped Yankee, among others, in innumerable ways. Debi and I first encountered Nick when we attended our first Yankee match on October 1st, 1989. Nick judged conformation on that occasion (Believe it or not, hunt test people!) and he wrote a very thoughtful commentary in the November/December 1989 issue of *Finish Lines* from which I quote: "I hope that my humble opinions on this wonderful breed will be accepted as fair and unbiased." Nick, who we kid-dingly referred to as a golden guy in a Lab suit, was, by any definition, fair and unbiased. He loved the game, the dogs, and supported anyone willing to step up and give it a shot. As an example, Jan Bramhall recalled recently how big a help he was to the club as we strove to find our way through the bureaucratic maze at the AKC to obtain licensing to run a specialty show. Nick, you were indeed humble as well. It was my good fortune to have run under you, to have judged with you and, especially, to have known you as a friend.

Our condolences go to Nick's family: his mom, his wife, Ann and his sons, Bret and Jarod.

*Glenn Simonson*

### MICKELSON, Ralph W. "Nick" III

Ralph W. "Nick" Mickelson, III, 44, of West Suffield, husband of Ann Huntington Mickelson, D.V.M., died Monday (August 31, 1998). Born in Providence, RI, he lived in Longmeadow, MA, for 16 years before moving to West Suffield 14 years ago. Along with his wife, he owned and operated the Suffield Veterinary Hospital for the past 15 years. He previously was a firefighter with the Longmeadow Fire Dept. for 14 years. Nick was a graduate of the Longmeadow High School, Class of 1973; current secretary of the Suffield Fire Commission; past president and current vice-president of the Suffield Rotary Club, where he was awarded a Paul Harris Fellowship; past president of the Suffield Volunteer Ambulance Assoc.; treasurer of the Suffield League of Women Voters; chairman of the Nod Brook Committee for the Connecticut D.E.P.; delegate to the American Kennel Club; treasurer and past president of the Labrador Retriever Club of the Pioneer Valley; director of the Labrador Retriever Club, Inc.; member of the Suffield Sportsmen's Club; and was a past director and chairman of the breeding committee of the Guiding Eyes for the Blind. Nick was a nationally known Breeder, Hunting Test Judge and authority on Labrador Retrievers, traveling extensively throughout the United States. Besides his wife, he leaves two sons, Brett Mickelson and Jared Mickelson both at home; his mother and step-father, Frances (Brett) and Johnny Soucie of Enfield; his father, Ralph W. Mickelson Jr. of Vienna, VA; two sisters, Frances Mickelson Dera of Ellington, Mary Prankus of Stafford; five aunts; two uncles several nieces and nephews, and the dogs that he loved. The funeral will be Thursday, 11 a.m., at the West Suffield Congregational Church, 1408 Mountain Rd., West Suffield, with burial in Woodlawn Cemetery, Suffield. His family will receive friends Wednesday, 2-4 and 6-9 p.m., at the Nicholson & Carmon Funeral Home, 443 East St. (Rt. 159), Suffield. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Suffield Rotary Scholarship Fund, PO Box 283, Suffield, CT 06078; or to the Cornell Research Laboratory for Diseases of Dogs; James A. Baker Institute for Animal Health, both at Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853.