



AMERICAN  
KENNEL CLUB<sup>SM</sup>

## Press Release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**Contact: Daisy Okas**  
**Phone: 212-696-8342**

### ***TRINITY, AL RESIDENT NAMED AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB COMMUNITY ACHIEVEMENT AWARD WINNER***

**New York** – The American Kennel Club announced today that Gaylon Dodson of Trinity, Alabama has been named the Community Achievement Award winner for his efforts to teach responsible dog ownership and safety around dogs to the children in his community.

The American Kennel Club, the largest not-for-profit purebred dog registry in the country, instituted the Community Achievement Awards in 1993 to support and encourage the efforts of its local clubs to bring the message of responsible dog ownership to the general public. Each honoree receives a certificate and a \$1,000 check payable to their club or federation to further their organization's public education or canine legislation efforts.

A retired teacher and Decatur Alabama Kennel Club member, Gaylon Dodson returned to the classroom to teach his philosophies to children. Dodson believes that young people are not only the future of pet ownership, but can also help shape the opinions and behavior of their parents and friends in the present.

Dodson's one-hour presentation "Best Friends" instructs children on local and state laws regarding pet ownership, and provides information on selecting a puppy, housebreaking, health care, grooming, exercise, obedience, spaying and neutering, and safety around dogs. In 2001, Dodson presented the Best Friends program to 556 children in the community. The children participated by grooming and cleaning the teeth of Dodson's Cavalier King Charles Spaniels.

When teaching safe behavior around dogs, Dodson has been known to don dog's ears and get on all fours to help demonstrate how children should react to a threatening dog.

"The kids are so good. I've had such a wonderful experience with this," said Dodson of his visits. "Most of the kids don't have any idea you clean the dog's teeth. Nowadays we can't go anywhere in town without being recognized by a kid," added Dodson. "They always bring up something that they learned from the presentation."

Dodson and his wife have also shared their love of dogs and dog shows through the Big Brother/Big Sister program. With the Dodsons' guidance, 11-year-old twins James and Anna gained a new understanding of dog shows. James had an opportunity to show two

of the Dodsons' Cavaliers, while Anna was the official groomer for the dogs.

Dodson continues to donate his time to help his breed and educate the community about purebred dogs. He and his wife provide a foster home for rescued Cavaliers. He also participates in community education, pet therapy, the annual pet fair, all-breed dog shows, agility, the Walk Your Paws fundraiser for the animal shelter, and the annual Halloween Dog Costume and candy distribution at a local mall.

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The AKC, founded in 1884, is one of the oldest sports-governing organizations. It maintains the largest registry of purebred dogs in the world, is responsible for overseeing the governance of the sport of purebred dogs, and keeps records of competitive results. For further information about AKC and the sport of purebred dogs, visit AKC Online at [www.akc.org](http://www.akc.org) or contact the Communications Department at 212-696-8343.