

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

## RECERTIFICATION

Dr. Gerard C. Penta

On November 20, 2020, we were notified of the AKC Board's action establishing a continuing education requirement for Conformation Judges. The requirement is "for conformation judges to complete a recertification course/exam on current AKC procedures and policies related to conformation judges every five years." The course and exam will be delivered through the AKC's Canine College and will include a \$50 fee. The target date for implementation is January 1, 2022. It is hoped that most of the details of this new requirement will be developed and reported on during the coming year.

The announcement does provide the rough outline of the idea and the order in which judges will be asked to satisfy this new requirement. Starting with judges who have not completed an assignment in recent years and ending with those judges most recently approved. Presumably, after those with no assignments in recent years have satisfied the requirement, some system, as yet to be developed, will be used to determine the order for other groups of judges to take the course and exam. Obviously, there is a great deal to be fleshed out regarding this new program, but the notification does at least provide the concept that has been approved by the Board.

Addressing just what we have been told so far, the recertification course would be a worthwhile addition to the Judging Approval Process. As AKC approved judges, we should all have a familiarity with current policies and procedures as they relate to the practice of judging at AKC shows. Achieving this is the first and most obvious outcome of the new requirement. It may also have some positive PR value as was indicated in the notification. Although it is rather dubious that this requirement will improve the quality of judging, at least we will all be on the same page procedurally. That alone may impart greater confidence in our decisions among the dog show public.

The recertification fee is clearly a financial benefit to the AKC as it provides another income stream for the Judges Department which has always struggled to meet the administrative desire that the Department cover its own expenses. Finally, this requirement will help to clean up the judges list in that all of the AKC judges listed have most likely been active in the sport within the past five years. There were times in the past when deceased judges

were carried on the list of AKC judges for many years.

In general this new recertification program, as it is focused on AKC procedures and policies, is a sound idea. Such requirements have been a common practice in many other fields both within and beyond dog world activities.