

It may seem odd to modern-day breeders and fanciers, but recording canine pedigrees was not exactly commonplace in the late 19th century. Certainly the practice was widespread in the bloodstock community; horse fanciers had been keeping up-to-date books for decades. However, many old-school dog men didn't see the need for such on-picking detail. Furthermore, the few registries that did exist easily confused individuals who were interested in formalized record-keeping. Enter the man who would set the wheels in motion for what was to eventually become the world's largest all-breed performance-dog registry.

Founding father

The United Kennel Club was the brainchild of Chauncey Zachariah Bennett, a traveling salesman and self-employed inventor for Bennett Novelty Works. In addition to volunteering as a fireman during and after World War I, Bennett sharpened his natural mathematical skills working as a track handicapper at local horse races.

On Feb. 10, 1898, Bennett founded the UKC with the simple goals of bringing breeders together under a common umbrella, and subsequently promoting various purebreds. He believed that groups like the then-flourishing American Kennel Club pandered to the conformation-only show dog and what he referred to as "the Big City idle rich." As Andrea Wood wrote in *UKC 1898-1997: The First Hundred Years*, the club began "as an everyman alternative to registries he felt were not open enough to new breeds, or especially too conformation show oriented. His emphasis was on the working dog, a concept known now at UKC as 'Total Dog.'"

Bennett reasoned that people were likely to value their pets and breeding stock less if their parentage was questionable. He theorized that pedigreed dogs were not normally the result of careless or wanton breeding; the offspring's value would be raised if inquisitive buyers would be able to count on certain qualities. This made particular sense to those looking for specific traits in working or hunting dogs. Today, these ideas seem obvious, but in C.Z. Bennett's time, it bordered on revolutionary.

SOME OF UKC'S LESSER-KNOWN BREEDS

The United Kennel Club is organized into eight Groups, which is one more than the Canadian, American and British Kennel Clubs, and two less than the Fédération Cynologique Internationale. More than 300 breeds are divided into Gundog, Herding, Guardian, Sighthound, Scenthound/Pariah, Terrier, Companion and Northern varieties. Many breeds, such as the Cesky Terrier and Chinook, are relatively new to the dog world. Others, such as the Azawakh, have been serving mankind for untold centuries.



THE BARBET

Group: Gundog

Recognized by UKC in 1995

Out of the Gundog Group comes the Barbet (pronounced bar-BAY) or French Water Dog. The Barbet is thought to be the progenitor of many of today's more familiar breeds, among them the Poodle, the larger griffons and the Briard. To its admirers, however, the Barbet is a bird dog without equal. Although the breed can herd, drive flocks and provide companionship, it excels in cold weather and dirty conditions, working by his master's side.

Appearance: Strong, sturdy and medium-sized, slightly longer than tall, the Barbet is covered with a thick, woolly, dense coat, ending in the characteristic *barbe*, or beard, that gives the breed its

name. Left without grooming, the coat will form natural cords. The tail has a "crochet hook" at the tip, and the dogs are always a uniform shade: black, gray, chestnut, tawny, sand or white. The ideal height is 23½ inches for dogs; 21½ inches for bitches.

DID YOU KNOW? UKC Gundogs fall into four different categories: pointing breeds, which indicate the presence of birds or game by "going on point" at their location; setters, which historically crouched or "set" so falconers and netters could release their traps; flushing spaniels, which burst on game coveys to flush them into view; and retrievers, which brought felled birds back to the shooter or archer.