

Kathy Shaw

Bengal Breed Committee Candidate

In 1975 I registered Kamisha Cattery with CFA and began my lifetime journey traveling the exciting, yet complicated, path of showing and breeding cats. Exotic shorthairs were the love of my life and they are still a large part of it. I was a Charter Member of TICA back in 1980 but the registration requirements for exhibiting Exotics at that time didn't work for my program, so I stuck with CFA.

In 2005 I finally realized my longtime dream of bringing Bengals into my life and have been a part of TICA ever since. I love this organization and its people. I love that TICA is a registry based on genetics...so logical!

I am retired now, but worked for over 30 years in the field of Cytogenetics, so am well versed in genetic principles and how to apply them to a breeding program. I also strongly value DNA testing and its role in eliminating conditions involving simple recessive inheritance.

I have bred two RW cats, both of who attained their Supremes as well: RW SGC Kamisha Light Up the Sky and RW SGA Kamisha Skyclone. I live in the State of Washington so do most of my showing in the NW Region, though do love to visit my friends down in Mid Pacific a few times a year.

I see challenges on the horizon for both the Bengal breed and the cat fancy as a whole, which is why I am running for Breed Committee membership. With the Bengals' acceptance into CFA shows, there is a situation with strongly differing Breed Standards and the potential of having the Breed split into CFA Bengals and TICA Bengals. There is temptation to bring the standards into alignment, but this is not something that should be done in haste. The TICA Bengal Standard is a good one and its allowance for some interpretation is not a flaw. Highly specific standards lead to extremism and cookie cutter cats and dogs. I don't think that should be our aim. The old "pattern vs type" situation is becoming less and less valid as breeders make headway in their programs and create gorgeous Bengals with wild type and wild coats.

I have mentioned DNA testing and have hopes of advances in HCM screening that can utilize DNA in addition to echocardiograms. Many breeders do not live in areas where screening is available. I hope we can all work together to aid in HCM testing research so more cats will have access to testing.

Regulations which regard SBT Bengals as wild animals are a concern. I am hoping at some point to find an accord with USFWS that will finally recognize our cats as domestic felines like every other cat. I know they have dug in their heels on this, but there must be a way to change these rules so that attending Canadian shows as well as importing and exporting SBT cats is simplified and more financially feasible.

Another concern that we all must be aware of is the increasing encroachment of Animal Rights activists into the Dog and Cat Fancy as they lobby for anti breeding ordinances and control sales of cats and dogs. These rules may not all apply to you now, but as they are implemented, the activists are one step closer

to their goals. Vigilance and involvement are essential.

We all may have our differences in how we approach our breeding programs but we do share our love of the Bengal cat and I know we can work together to protect and promote them as the jewels of TICA that they are!