



HOW TO FIND A DOG TRAINER
William F. Doverspike, Ph.D.
and HR Twin Branch Karma's Hunter, SH, AX, AXJ, UDX3
2001 Canine Disc World Championship Finalist (IDDHA)

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I have enjoyed training dogs and trying to understand the dog's mind since 1970, when I first shaped behaviors in a dog as part of an operant conditioning experiment as a freshman in the Department of Psychology at Emory University. It is ironic that I was invited to serve Emory as an Adjunct Professor 40 years.

After earning a Companion Dog obedience title on my first Golden Retriever, Apollo of Westchester (aka, Chester) in 1983, I was involved in competitive dog training and trials for over 25 years. My top dog was Hunter, a Golden Retriever titled as HR Twin Branch Karma's Hunter, SH, AX, AXJ, UDX3, also known as the "land shark." He competed in the 2001 IDDHA Canine Disc World Championship and earned a total of 15 titles in four different canine sports including obedience, agility, field and hunting tests, and Frisbee®. Hunter was also a certified therapy dog.

I began basic obedience training at Dogwood Training Academy in Atlanta. While Hunter earned the American Kennel Club (AKC) Utility Dog Excellent (UDX) title, I received individual instruction from two former Dogwood instructors, Barbara Jones and Kathryn Willis, who helped Hunter and I qualify 30+ times at the UDX level while earning a few obedience championship points. I learned the basics of field work from the hunters and field trial professionals of Old South Hunting Retrieving Club. Learning to handle a dog and a gun at the same time is a whole different world. Years later, when competing in agility and teaching classes, I worked as an instructor at Canine Capers Dog Training Club in Norcross and at Sirius Dog Agility Training Center in Decatur. Both of these training facilities have instructors—and students—who have competed at national and international levels. Both facilities also have instructors who work with dogs at basic levels. Although I have taught group classes and private lessons as an amateur, I refer difficult dogs to professional trainers, such as Mark Spivak at Comprehensive Pet Therapy.

When I was not training dogs, I worked during the day as a clinical psychologist who was board certified in Neuropsychology and Medical Psychotherapy. I have taught at the doctoral level since 1996. Two of the best compliments I ever received from dog trainers were:

- (1) I did not seem like a shrink ☺ and
- (2) Hunter was too much dog for me to handle. 🐾

When choosing a dog training class, choose a trainer with the credentials and experience that fits your own interests. As an expression of gratitude for the years that my dogs and I competed, I recommend the following training clubs and facilities (listed in alphabetical order).

Atlanta's Dogwood Obedience Group, LLC

3929 Green Industrial Way
Chamblee, Georgia 30341
Phone: 770-986-8317
Email: train@adog-ga.com
Web: <http://www.adog-ga.com/>

Canine Capers Agility

6095-B Northbelt Drive, NW
Norcross, Georgia 30071
Phone: N/A
Email: cheryl@caninecapersagility.com
Web: <http://www.caninecapersagility.com/>

Comprehensive Pet Therapy (Mark Spivak)

6600 Roswell Road, NE - Suite K-2
Sandy Springs, Georgia 30328
Phone: 404-236-2150
Email: markcpt@aol.com
Web: <http://www.cpt-training.com/>

Doggie du Good (Karen Smalley)

Several locations in metro Atlanta
Phone: 770-781-2565
Email: karen@doggiedugood.com
Web: <http://www.doggiedugood.com>

Old South Hunting Retrieving Club

Phone: 678-477-5199
Email: sueatoldsouth@gmail.com
Web: <http://oldsouthhrc.org/>

Sirius Dog Agility

1880 Montreal Court
Tucker, Georgia 30084
Phone: N/A
Email: classes@siriusdogagility.com
Web: <http://www.siriusdogagility.com/>

The Dog's Spot Daycare (Kim Hicks, formerly Kim Tome)

643 Pleasant Hill Church Road
Ellabell, GA 31308
Phone: 912-823-4382
Email: DogsSpot@icloud.com
Web: <https://www.thedogsspotga.com/>

Ruff House Dog Resort [Boarding only]

640 Dorris Road
Milton, GA 30004
Phone: 888-790-7833 or 404-420-2803
Email: reservations@ruffhouseinc.com
Web: <https://www.ruffhousedogresort.com>

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