

This story is to tell what our first Jack Russell, Keesha , did for me in building my confidence to be able to run in front of a crowd!

My story in growing up with 4 other siblings is that we always wanted a dog or cat! The cat won out but not until I was 15 which is when I was more involved in music having played the piano, a regular accordion and also played a bass accordion in a band when I was 13. I sang in school & our church choirs which involved solos. My first solo on stage at school was at the age of 8.

Now one thing that I want to say is that I never liked being the centre of attention so when I sang solos in the church choir I would have the song book in front of my face so I couldn't see the congregation looking at me!! In the other solos with the school choir we couldn't have a book and I would find a spot to stare at!

When we purchased our first Jack Russell, Keesha, we were told to get her into agility! At the age of 7 months we had her spayed and when we got her home we couldn't touch her let alone cuddle her like we could prior to the surgery. She had been abused by the vet. This started a long road of problems and work for me, not having any idea how to deal with this! One of my fellow classmates, Faith, came up to me one night after class having seen what I was dealing with to get Keesha into the truck! Faith said to me "Jan I don't know of anyone else who would have the patience to cope with what you are dealing with as they would have got rid of that dog a long time ago. My response was this – they would have got rid of her not taking on any responsibility for the dog. I had just done the work and not even thought about giving her up so had no idea where I came up with that answer – it just came out! We did just deal with it to help her more than anything. I did eventually get us to a behaviourist to help us.

At my very first trial with Keesha in January 2001 at a Cliffhanger Trial where at the time they would have trials of 1500 runs which meant a lot of people watching. I ended up being the first dog and handler of the trial to start running in the Starter ring. I thought I was going to "throw up"! While I was trying to figure out how I could get out of being first in the ring – it all of a sudden came to me that this wasn't about me but about Keesha! From that day forward I have never looked back. Those that know me from when I started out, also, know all the trials and tribulations that I went through with that little girl and how over the years she "kicked butt" with me at trials and the Regionals that we were able to attend! What I learned with that little Keesha is overwhelming at times as she taught me so much!

Keesha crossed over the Rainbow Bridge on August 19, 2011. I will never, ever forget that baby girl and what she did for me!