

Meet your NSWFCFA Judges (Cat Show - 8th April 2023)



FIONA HAWKINS (SA)

Fiona's introduction to cats was with a rescued Domestic kitten, which at 10 days old needed a helping hand and a lot of care. Mignon was joined by a handsome white Russian male in 1998. Odessa White Knight (Kimba) was her introduction to showing cats. Since then, Fiona has been involved with many facets of showing cats - first as a steward, then by completing the GCCFSA Group 3/4 Judges course, followed by Group 2 and in 2022 Group 1. Fiona enjoys the experiences that judging provides and seeing so many beautiful cats.

Fiona started breeding Russians in 2000 under the prefix of 'Myenya' with a lovely Odessa female and has gone on to have many successful exhibits on the show bench. Fiona has been involved with several South Australian clubs and the Governing Council of the Cat Fancy of SA since 1998. Currently serving as Chair of GCCFSA.



JOHN SMITHSON (NZ)

In his professional life, John has been a Credit Manager for more than 35 Years and is currently key account Credit Manager for Porter Group, which is the largest heavy equipment hire company in the Southern Hemisphere. His involvement in the Cat Fancy began in the late 70's, registering his first prefix 'impertus' with the NZCF in 1978, and shortly afterward was appointed Editor of 'NZ Cats' magazine, when in 1980, he produced the first NZCF Yearbook. In the intervening years, John began by breeding Persians and Himalayans. Extending to British Shorthairs, Burmese, Siamese, and Exotic Shorthairs. He bred NZ's first Ref Persian Grand Champion and first Himalayan Double Grand Champion. Later he obtained Grand status' with a British Shorthair in CFA (USA), and bred Orientals, Foreign Whites followed by Munchkins, culminating with 9 Grand Champions and taking one to All-Breed Cat of the Year in 2009.

In 1985, he passed his Long-hair Judges exams and began his judging career, later extending to cover all short hair breeds in 1990. He has held various positions such as Club Delegate, Secretary and/or President of several NZ clubs, serving for a time as Northern Region Chairman and on the National Executive and was ultimately elected as National President of the New Zealand Cat Fancy in 1992, serving on the CFA International Committee in 1993. John is currently listed as an All-Breed Tutor Judge with the NZCF.

When the World Cat Congress was held in New Zealand, John was invited to be one of the five guest speakers delivering a presentation on Feline History. In April 2017 he spent a month in the UK on a research tour, collecting material for a new in-depth biography of Harrison Weir, while concurrently giving presentations to history groups, on the art, life and passions of the Father of the Cat Fancy.

John was recently invited to serve on the CFA Foundations Board of Directors with whom he is now working to further the aims and future direction of the CFA Foundation and the Feline Historical Museum doing historical research after giving a series of four history presentations in the Education ring at the CFA International show.



ANN SKILLING (NZ)

Animals have been part of her life since early childhood when she spent countless, happy hours on her grandparents' farm in one of New Zealand's top scenic spots, Akaroa. In the 1960's she began breeding Burmese and Persians under the CHUNTAO and RIVERAIN prefixes, having been coerced into it by her brother!

In the 1970's she read about the new Burmese colours (at the time), and soon imported stock from England which became the foundation stock for her multiple Best in Show and National Best in Show winners, the Chuntao Creams.

In the later 1980's a 4th generation Exotic girl joined the Skilling household. Although she wasn't show quality she did become the ancestress of NZ's first Grand Champion Blue Cream Exotic as well as being a much loved pet!

Ann has held many roles within the NZCF including Life Member of the NZCF, All Breeds judges, Former All Breeds Tutor Judge, Former Judges Registrar, Provisional and Siamese/Oriental Registrar and Former Chairman of the Genetics Advisory Panel, just to name a few. She has judged in Australia, UK and Europe. She very much looks forward to her upcoming appointment at Sydney Royal.