

Erin O'Shea

I grew up with German Shepherds as family companions and have been active in the sport since 2008, when my husband and I got a show line German Shepherd, Zambo vom Riedschlurgi. I competed with Zambo in both conformation and IGP and had remarkable success with him — he earned VA titles multiple times in three different countries, and in 2011 and 2012 was the WUSV Universal Sieger World Champion.

Since Zambo, I have shown multiple working line German Shepherds. Vegas von der Burg Hinte won the 2018 USCA National GSD Championship and placed 15th at the 2019 WUSV IGP World Championships. My husband and I bred Vegas to a female I had titled, Gala von der Mohnwiese, and produced Joker von der Beizjagd. Joker has been a once-in-a-lifetime dog for me — together we have been fortunate to compete consistently at the national and international level, including winning the 2023 AWDF National Championship and the 2024 WUSV IGP World Championship, and placing 3rd at the 2025 WUSV IGP World Championships.

By profession, I am a scientist. I have held faculty positions at the University of California – San Francisco and at Harvard, and I am currently President of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, the largest biomedical philanthropy in the United States.

After more than fifteen years as a competitor and trainer, I am eager to contribute to this sport in a new way through judging. IGP has given me an extraordinary community, and I feel a deep commitment to giving back to it. What draws me to this work is both the human side and the intellectual side. On the human side, I love the opportunity to meet handlers at every level, to encourage people who are finding their footing, and to exchange knowledge with experienced competitors whose perspectives continue to sharpen my own. On the intellectual side, I am genuinely engaged by the challenge of interpreting the rules and applying them rigorously and consistently to actual performances — work that I find connects naturally to my scientific training. I bring to judging the eye I have developed as a trainer and competitor at the international level, and I hope that experience translates into evaluations that are fair, consistent, and meaningful to every team on the field.