



Nancy McClain is a professional dog groomer, instructor, and owner of the Diamond Cut Dog Grooming School in Medina, Ohio. Ms. McClain began her passion for dog grooming when she was 9 years old and has been teaching Professional Dog Grooming for over 25 years. Currently, she instructs students from all over the country at her school – helping to keep our “canine personal trainers” gorgeous and pampered.

Ms. McClain, what started your interest in dog grooming?

NM - My love for animals is my first interest I had. They brighten your day, make you smile, and are part of our family. As a young girl, I would brush the neighborhood dogs and do my best to make them look pretty. I found this to be very satisfying and turned it into my life's work. In this profession, you must be able to work hard and have a soft heart. For each grooming, you should always remember you are being entrusted in the care of someone's precious pet.

I have wheaten terriers that require LOTS of regular grooming. Some people tell me their dogs don't really need to be bathed or groomed. Can you give some guidelines about how often typical short- and long-haired dogs should be groomed and what kind of grooming every dog should get?

NM - Dogs require grooming – some more than others. Typical short-hair dogs need nails trimmed about every three weeks. Check to be sure no water gets in their ears. Brushing will keep the undercoat under control. Just running your hands over the dog will also help you find anything that a vet should know about to keep you pet healthy. Long-haired dogs need to be brushed on a weekly grooming program. This keeps the hair under control so that the dog will not matt up as bad. You will need to have a Professional Groomer with your long-haired dog because they will also keep ears plucked if needed. A groomer will also keep nails trimmed, and will know the trim the dog requires with clippers, scissors, and being safe.

Over the past 40 years of grooming dogs, what changes have you seen in what people are looking for when they have their dogs professionally groomed?

NM - People are looking for experience. Making sure their pets are groomed by Professional Dog Groomers. Making sure they do have a Certificate and went to a reputable school. They want their pets to be safe. I have noticed they like to see the places where they bring their dogs for a grooming. References from word of mouth,

neighbors, family, and friends are what they look for. Having a clean shop and the safe environment for their pet is very important. I see customers want quality grooming. I must say pets love coming to Diamond Cut Dog Grooming School. They do not want to leave and owners notice how happy their pets are when they drop them off and pick them up. It is very important to be able to read your dog! Also, they want a kind groomer, someone they trust with their pet. One day, Amy, an Old English Sheep Dog, had surgery done and she could not make it in for her regular grooming. When she came in later, she just was so happy to see us and she carried on for over ½ hour so excited to be back. Her owner also noticed this and said Amy loves being here. Everyone who comes here says the dogs are so happy and always want to come back. We have groomed many dogs their entire lives. Many owners will never go anywhere else; they know how safe we are with their pet. Sometimes we have to give customers treats before their pet will leave.

What is the typical age and background of your students? Do any of them start out as beauticians?

NM - I have taught students from the age of 14 and as young as 69. As far as background, we have taught students from all walks of life and from almost every state in the U.S. I have taught a judge's wife and many vets' wives and vets' daughters. college students, and, yes, beauticians. In the medical field, I have taught nurses, therapists, and ministers as well. One who amazed me and was my honor to teach was the great, great granddaughter of one of the Presidents of The United States of America, and she is still a groomer today! I take a lot of pride in my students and like to stay in touch with them.

Do you have a favorite dog grooming or teaching story you'd like to share?

NM - My favorite dog-grooming story I would want to share is this. One day, a lady brought in her dog that was so badly matted that the dog looked very sad and depressed. He seemed ashamed and not very happy. He was not clean at all. It seemed like he knew how bad he looked. He walked with his head held down and his very matted tail between his legs. After a few hours and a beautiful groom, bath, and dry you could see how much better he felt. The attitude of the dog changed and he was so happy you could see the gleam in his eyes. He held his tail up and was so proud. I could say he had a smile on his face and when his owner came to pick him up he was so happy and so was his owner. This is what it is all about, what a wonderful happy ending. In teaching, I feel it takes a special teacher: one with many years of grooming and teaching experience. Not just someone who has a few years under his or her belt. Over the years, there are so many nice stories and I want to share this one with you. A student walked in with no confidence and in just two weeks walked out the door a completely changed person. This student, a young middle-aged man who came to me about two years ago, I remember him walking in. He could hardly speak and was so very nervous and in a sweat. He lost his job after 20 years and did not know what to do. He had this love for animals and I could see this in him. He needed me to help him bring his grooming skills as a groomer and change some ways to make him the best I could. I could see the potential he had and just needed someone like me to bring it out. One day, his confidence went through the roof and today he is one of the best Mobile Groomers out there, making more money than he ever dreamed and is so happy to be a Professional Dog Groomer. He calls me every month to see if he can stop by our school

to show new students his Mobile Grooming Van and share his story and help them achieve their dream too.

Do you have any quick grooming tips for people who do a bit of their own dog trimming at home?

NM - If you need some good tips for people who groom at home on their own dogs, I will give you some advice. Start your puppy at a young age by introducing them to grooming. This will help them to not be afraid of their grooming. You want to make this a nice experience for them. Something they will look forward to having done. Start by just petting them and touching their toes, ears, and mouth and tell them how good they are when they let you brush them. Sound is important also in grooming. Turn on your hair dryer on low and no heat setting. Slowly introduce them to the sound and the feel of the dryer. Always talk to them, and assure them it is safe and nice to be groomed. Be gentle when you brush them and never pull their hair. Once they get use to the grooming, just take it slow, one day at a time showing them new things. Be very safe and never leave the dog unattended at any time. Never restrain the dog by the neck alone; there are other ways to keep the dog from moving when you are grooming them. Always brush all tangles out before a bath, as they will be worse to comb out after. If at all possible, go to a good school and learn the right and safe way to groom.

Any advice for someone who's thinking of a career in dog grooming?

NM - Diamond Cut Dog Grooming School is a great choice. Go with your heart. You are never too young or old. Grooming is so rewarding. Working with dogs everyday is so nice, and being your own boss is even better. You can pick your own hours and days you want to work. There is so much to incorporate with your grooming. Doggie Day Care, Doggie Bakery Shop, Cat Grooming, there is no end. If you have any questions please personally give me a call 330-239-1471. Good Luck and always be good to the pets.

Anything you'd like to add?

NM - Learn dog grooming, even if it is for your own personal enhancement, learning to groom the right and safe way. If you have your pet groomed by someone, please check him or her out carefully. Do not leave your pet with just anyone. Request many references and talk to people who have had their pets groomed where you are looking to have your pet groomed. Make sure your pet is happy when you take him to the groomer. When you pick your pet up after a groom, is he happy or traumatized? You must really be certain your pet is in a safe and clean environment. I always say, if you would not leave your child there, than do not leave your pet there.

What better way to thank your Fido for all he or she does for you than a day of professional grooming and pampering. To see if you have what it takes to become a professional groomer, visit Nancy's website: www.schoolfordoggrooming.com