



**Steven Appelbaum
President of Animal Behavior College**



Steven Appelbaum is the president and founder of Animal Behavior College (ABC). Using his 30 years of dog training and pet industry experience along with his business acumen, he created the largest animal career vocational college of its kind in North America. ABC currently offers three certification programs—Dog Trainer, Veterinary Assistant and Pet Grooming—which are available in all 50 states and in every Canadian province. ABC’s alumni group boasts the largest number of certified dog trainers in the United States.

Dogs were Appelbaum’s life-long passion and he knew that someday he would devote his career to working with them. In 1977, he enlisted in the United States Air Force, where he worked as a Security Specialist and Patrol Dog Handler and Trainer. Upon leaving the Air Force, Appelbaum began working on becoming an expert in dog behavior and training.

In 1981, Appelbaum enrolled at the Animal Trainers Career Academy where he learned to train dogs for motion pictures. The school also taught trick training, obedience and problem solving, and included hands-on experience training exotic animals. After graduating at the top of his class, Appelbaum formed his first company, Animal Behavior and Training Associates (ABTA).

Providing dog training services, ABTA quickly branched out to major pet stores. It was named the exclusive provider of dog obedience classes for all Petco stores, as well as Petcetera stores in Canada. ABTA became an international success and the largest dog training company in North America.

Building ABTA required Appelbaum and his staff to locate and hire trainers all across North America. Finding quality trainers mattered to Appelbaum, which was problematic since a startling 70 percent of “professional trainers” were failing ABTA’s basic dog training knowledge exams.

It became obvious to Appelbaum that the pet industry overall had a great need for skilled trainers. And existing trainers were also in need of a structured education. In 1998, these issues led Appelbaum to create his second successful business, Animal Behavior College. The school was developed from scratch and now generates more than \$15 million a year without debt. Much of ABC’s success is due to its unique program design, which combines an in-home study curriculum with hands-on externship training.

Appelbaum has been an expert witness on a number of dog bite cases and is often consulted as an expert. He is a former member of the Board of Directors of the International Association of Canine Professionals (IACP) and was also featured as one of the 25 people to people in the pet industry by *Pet Product News International* in 2005. He is instrumental in forging strategic relationships between ABC and major pet product vendors, manufacturers, and pet organizations.

In addition to being a prominent dog trainer, Appelbaum has had numerous published articles, tip pieces and interviews, including a recurring column in *Pet Product News International* from 2011 to 2013. He is the author of the book *The ABC Practical Guide to Dog Training* and is the former editor of *Off Lead Magazine*, the largest independent dog trainer magazine in North America. In addition to his writing, Appelbaum is also a lecturer and consultant.

Residing in Pasadena, Calif., Appelbaum is an avid Basset Hound lover and a devoted “pet parent” to his dog Truffles. In his downtime, he enjoys running, reading and flying small planes—he has a private pilot’s license. Appelbaum is excited about what the future holds for himself and ABC.