



theZOO
LOUISVILLE
1969 - 2019

Celebrating
50
Years

50 YEARS OF HOPE,
INSPIRATION &
FIERCE DEDICATION

your
ZOO
& YOU



The Stories That Move Us

Your Louisville Zoo is a place to create memories.

We share these memories through stories, making connections with one another through our common — and sometimes uncommon — experiences.

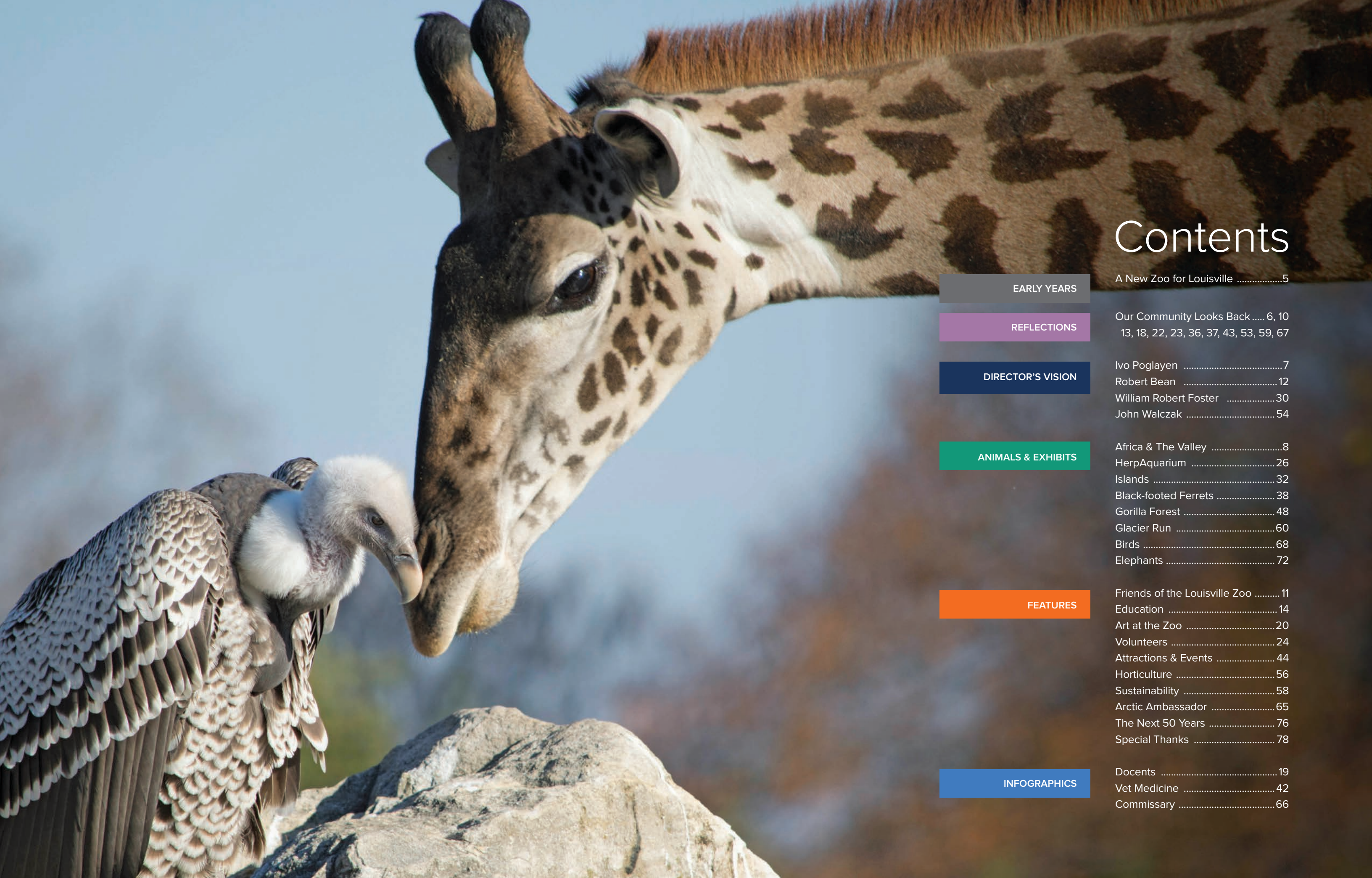
Every time we visit the Zoo, we enter a world that extends far beyond our own borders. Here, in the heart of metropolitan Louisville, we travel to exotic places like the islands of Indonesia, the Amazon rain forest, the Arctic Circle and an African village. We explore new ideas and cultures. We discover the delicate balance in nature and our role in protecting it.

But most important, we nurture memories that connect us to one another through our love of wildlife and our concerns about global environmental change.

For 50 years, the Zoo has brought us together — children and families, students and teachers, volunteers, citizens, local leaders and celebrities — to form a community dedicated to bettering the bond between people and our planet. More than 28 million visitors have entered the Zoo's gates, and almost half of them are members.

Together, we have shared in the Zoo's innovations and triumphs, its challenges and setbacks, its joy and its grief. We've celebrated the rescue of an abandoned polar bear cub from Alaska and mourned the death of a young African elephant. We've recycled cell phones to help save gorillas in the vanishing wild and helped bring a North American species back from near extinction. Together, we've won national recognition for outstanding exhibits, animal behavior management, conservation and educational programs.

This anniversary has been an occasion to reminisce about those moments that continue to be meaningful to us and others. So many people throughout the community have wonderful memories of the Zoo; we wish we could include them all and are extremely grateful to those who shared their stories with us.



Contents

A New Zoo for Louisville5

EARLY YEARS

REFLECTIONS

DIRECTOR'S VISION

ANIMALS & EXHIBITS

FEATURES

INFOGRAPHICS

Our Community Looks Back 6, 10
13, 18, 22, 23, 36, 37, 43, 53, 59, 67

Ivo Poglayen7
Robert Bean 12
William Robert Foster30
John Walczak 54

Africa & The Valley8
HerpAquarium26
Islands32
Black-footed Ferrets38
Gorilla Forest48
Glacier Run60
Birds68
Elephants72

Friends of the Louisville Zoo 11
Education 14
Art at the Zoo20
Volunteers24
Attractions & Events 44
Horticulture56
Sustainability58
Arctic Ambassador65
The Next 50 Years76
Special Thanks78

Docents19
Vet Medicine42
Commissary66

A New Zoo for Louisville

“The Earth is what we all have in common.”
 — Wendell Berry, Kentucky Poet and Environmental Activist

Interest in creating a zoo for Louisville dates back at least to 1922, when Mayor Huston Quin and other civic leaders decided that such a venture was “feasible.” In 1948, a group of citizens announced plans to establish a zoo and asked the city to donate a 25- to 35-acre site for it. The effort failed.

Almost 15 years later, on October 9, 1962, Mayor William O. Cowger announced a gift from James Graham Brown to establish a zoo in Louisville. The donation of \$1.5 million was made through the James Graham Brown Foundation. The facility was to be owned by the city and advised by a board of trustees, which included Brown.

The board hired zoologist Dr. Ivo Poglayen to oversee development of the new zoo in 1963. It was another two years before a site was chosen and construction could begin. The official groundbreaking ceremony was held on a snowy January day in 1965 and included music from the Louisville Male High School Band, a performance from a trained bear and short speeches by Cowger and others.

Another type of groundbreaking started behind the scenes. The giraffe building and the African Savanna were developed with a new European design that

few had seen in the United States. The exhibit would feature an expansive vista, from giraffes to lions to addax, in a naturalistic habitat. Although standard today, this type of immersive exhibit was an innovative approach in the mid-1960s.

Due to a number of obstacles, including a bricklayers’ strike and equipment shortages during the Vietnam War, the path to the Zoo’s completion was delayed until 1968, when it opened to the public on weekends only. At the time, the Zoo housed 19 animals, including sea lions, rhinos and monkeys.

At last, the Zoo was ready to open full-time on May 1, 1969. Sadly, Brown passed away before the date. But Mason B. Rummel, current president and CEO of the James Graham Brown Foundation, is confident Brown would be excited by the Zoo’s first 50 years.

“Mr. Brown wanted to support efforts that inspired pride in the citizens of Louisville and the entire state,” Rummel said. “Certainly, the institution has done that. The evidence is clear with the visitation, decades of city and private support, and the regional and national recognition it has brought the city.”

Brown’s visionary generosity has stood the test of time. “The ability of the Zoo to continue to stay relevant in terms of tourism, education and innovative programming,” Rummel said, “is an indicator of our aligned missions to improve the quality of life in Louisville and Kentucky.”



Louisville Zoo groundbreaking

1951

Louisville Jaycees undertake a campaign to raise \$125,000 “to obtain animals, construct a building, and operate a zoo for a year.” Jaycee William O. Cowger states, “the people of Louisville want a zoo and we are going to have one if it takes 50 years!”



1962

Mayor William O. Cowger announces a gift of \$1.5 million to the city of Louisville by James Graham Brown for the establishment of a zoo.



1963

January – Articles of incorporation of the Louisville Zoological Commission, Inc., are signed and acknowledged by James Graham Brown, William O. Cowger, George R. Armstrong, Charles Farnsley, Robinson Brown Jr., Nathan Lord and J. Van Dyke Norman.

July 1 – Dr. Ivo Poglayen is named director of the Louisville Zoological Gardens.

Architects Daniel, Mann, Johnson & Mendenhall of Washington DC, along with Tafel & Schickli of Louisville, are retained to develop a master plan for a complete zoo.

1964

March – The city buys 98.2 acres for \$384,450.

July – The Zoo’s first master plan is developed.



Source: Courier-Journal

The Pride of Friendship

LOOKING BACK WITH
SAM CLITES, KEEPER

Sam Clites, a long-time keeper at the Louisville Zoo, first met Trapper the lion when he was a volunteer. Years later he would become his keeper — and pride member.

Trapper came to Louisville as a cub in 1979. He lived an illustrious 21 years and was beloved by staff and guests alike. Toward the end of his life, Trapper's health deteriorated, and he suffered from renal failure. The difficult decision was made to euthanize him. Clites remembers saying goodbye.

"I always thought Trapper looked at me like a brother. He taught me to roar like a lion — we would roar together. The day before he died, I went down to see him. He wasn't feeling well, but he came over and leaned against the mesh — he wanted to rub heads with people because that's what he would do with another lion.

"That day, he wanted to hang out. I knew he wasn't feeling well, and I also knew what was going to happen the following day, so I wanted to spend time with him. And then he made an O shape with his mouth and looked at me and went 'oooh.' And I was like, 'You want to roar? You feel good enough to roar? We'll roar — we'll roar all you want.' So, he started, and I chimed in, and we roared and roared and roared.

"Then he got tired and laid down, and I sat there with him for a while. I was like, 'this is how I want to

remember you.' And I turned around and the Islands keepers were standing in the doorway crying. I found out later that Dr. Burns, our vet at the time, took his ashes on a trip to Africa and spread them on the Serengeti near a pride of lions. Trapper was a special animal."



Trapper the lion

Building a Zoo With a View

DR. IVO POGLAYEN, LOUISVILLE ZOO DIRECTOR (1963-1974)

“Only if zoos and similar institutions can recruit the masses, within a short time will public opinion grow to an overwhelming force, to a majority of conservation-conscious people. Then zoos will have achieved one of their noblest tasks.”

— Ivo Poglayen

In 1963, the Louisville Zoological Commission voted unanimously to hire Dr. Ivo Poglayen to oversee the creation of a new zoo. Not long after his appointment, Poglayen told the Courier-Journal that he would settle for nothing but the best for the Louisville Zoo.

Poglayen held doctorate degrees in zoology and paleontology from the University of Vienna. His wife, Ingeborg, who would accompany her husband to Louisville, along with quite a menagerie of animals in her care, also graduated from the University of Vienna with degrees in zoology and botany.

Building a zoo from scratch isn't easy, even for an accomplished zoologist. There was controversy about where to locate the Zoo, along with other challenges that would delay the opening. But Poglayen wouldn't compromise on his vision. He brought a European perspective to the Zoo that emphasized natural settings with unobstructed views, themes that would be carried out as the Zoo grew and matured.



Dr. Ivo Poglayen (center) with Marlin Perkins (right)

Marlin Perkins, director of the St. Louis Zoo and host of "Wild Kingdom," visited the Zoo shortly after its limited opening in 1968. He was impressed by what he saw, commenting, "you can certainly see that there has been extreme care in planning here."

Poglayen felt strongly about the purpose of the Louisville Zoo. "The Zoo's ambition is ... to arouse the interest, understanding and compassion of the Zoo visitors and thus to appeal to the private citizens to enter the battle to save wildlife, nature and thereby man himself!"

1965

January 30 – Supporters trudge through snow and 12-degree weather for the official Louisville Zoo groundbreaking.



Construction begins on a 3.5-acre African exhibit with indoor structures for blesbok antelope, South African ostriches, gazelles, zebras, giraffes, oryx and sable antelope. Gazelles and giraffes will share a three-quarter acre paddock. A grotto-type lion cliff will overlook the giraffe paddock separated by a hidden moat.

October – The Louisville Zoological Commission votes to buy a pair of white rhinos – its first major animal purchase. The Commission also votes to buy a miniature train for \$75,000.



1967

November – A male and female rhino arrive at the Zoo, followed by a camel, four antelopes and two yaks.

Frank Bullock is the first animal keeper hired.

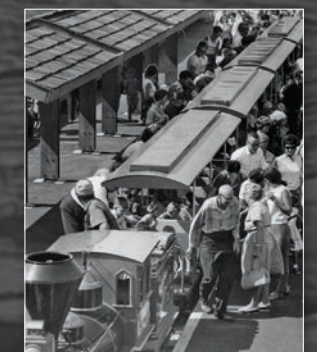
Dr. Poglayen offers classes to early volunteers, including Nina Luvisi.



1968

May – The Zoo train is up and operational.

August 2 – The Zoo opens for weekends only with 19 animals, including sea lions, giraffes, zebras and monkeys.



Source: Courier-Journal



Addax and calf

From Africa to Australia: A Path for Species Survival

From giraffes to meerkats to wallaroos and tigers, the team of keepers that manages the African Savanna, Australia and the Valley at the Louisville Zoo has their hands full with more than 20 different species in their care.

“To be a mid-sized zoo and have the species we have — it’s a pretty diverse collection,” said Michael Jones, assistant mammal curator and supervisor of the team.

Some are extremely rare, like the addax, an antelope native to the Sahara Desert. It’s estimated there are fewer than 100 addax remaining in the remnant wild due to threats including hunting, oil exploration and civil unrest. It’s probable this animal will become extinct outside of managed populations.

The Zoo has a long history of successful addax propagation, having produced almost 60 calves over the years. In addition to addax, the Zoo has frequently bred other hoof stock, including bongo, zebras and giraffes, as well as carnivores like maned wolves and Amur tigers.

“It’s the little moments in the day that make it all worth it. You have a week where you’re dealing with this or that, and then you have one day when you’re standing on a scale holding a new zebra.”

– Michael Jones, Assistant Mammal Curator and Valley Supervisor

In 2019, Jones had an opportunity to visit one of Louisville’s addax calves on a trip to the Los Angeles Zoo.

“I’ve sent animals all over, everywhere from Nashville to Calgary, Canada,” Jones said. “It’s so interesting to visit those zoos and see animals that came from Louisville. And to realize that kids across the country are getting to enjoy them.”

SILVESTER THE STUBBORN GIRAFFE

In her 35-year career working in the giraffe and hoof stock areas, keeper Silvia Zirkelbach thought she had seen her share of stubborn. Until she met Silvester.

“He was the last giraffe I raised and the stubbornest thing on the planet. He had to be hand-raised because his mother refused to nurse him. And it was hot — you’re in a hot stall all day and all night, trying to feed this young giraffe.

“I had the vet saying, ‘if you don’t get this giraffe to drink this much milk by this time, then we’re going to come and put in an IV tube,’ which was the last thing I wanted. I literally told everyone to leave me alone with him.

“But he was terribly stubborn — he didn’t want me to touch him. He’d walk around and I’d try to get him to take a bottle and he’s already taller than I am. And he’d clamp his mouth shut so tight.

“One day, I was feeling really frustrated. I was tired and hot. So, I ended up taking a step ladder into the middle of the stall. And I sat on the top of it and I just talked to that giraffe. I don’t know what I said to him, but I talked. He stood there looking away from me, mouth clamped shut, stiff as anything.

“Finally, at some point, he walked over to me, sniffed me from head to toe. And I fed him.

“He still didn’t want me to touch him. So, I finally said, ‘you know, you have to let me touch you, I have to take care of you.’ I reached out and touched him on the shoulder, and I started a little massaging. And I’d go all the way down his back, then the other way, and I suddenly saw that little giraffe just relax. Things were better then. He drank milk and he let me touch him. Everything was all better.”



Silvia Zirkelbach with baby giraffe

1969

May 1 – The Zoo opens seven days a week with 250 animals and 15,000 visitors in one day. Animals on exhibit include elephants, rhinos, zebras, giraffes, lions, gazelles, wallabies, llamas, sea lions, seals and more. Admission prices are 50 cents for adults, 25 cents for children 5-14, with children under 5 admitted free.



October – The Louisville Zoological Commission votes to keep the Zoo open year-round including winter months.

Two woolly monkeys arrive at the Zoo, as well as two North American bear cubs.

A donation allows the Zoo to purchase animals for the aquatic facility, including North Atlantic gray seals, California sea lions, harbor seals, Humboldt penguins and a North American river otter.

Two of the Zoo’s first flamingos arrive. Both are still living at the Zoo in 2019.

Marlin Perkins, star of the television show "Wild Kingdom" and former director of the St. Louis Zoo, speaks at the Louisville Zoo.



1970

The Zoo offers its first yearly memberships.

June – Barney Bright Memorial Fountain is dedicated in memory of Sidney Rosenblum by his widow. The bronze fountain represents an “animal tree” and is located at the front of the Zoo.

A rare albino wallaroo, three lion cubs, a baby yak and a baby llama are born.

Black Velvet, a female black swan, is given to the Zoo by Zachary Taylor Elementary School.



Hold on to Your Camels

LOOKING BACK WITH JACK NIGHTENGALE, VETERINARIAN

“My involvement with the Zoo goes back to before it was ever a zoo,” said veterinarian Dr. Jack Nightengale.

Nightengale cared for the Zoo’s first animals as the Zoo was being built, and then served as the Zoo’s part-time veterinarian at the request of Mayor Harvey Sloane.

“The Zoo didn’t have it easy when it first opened. Our big problem was we didn’t know how to handle the animals,” he said.

Nightengale remembers one instance when a camel had an eye problem. They chased the camel around the compound but could not get close enough. Having experience with farm animals, Nightengale thought he would rope the camel to get a closer look.

“I learned very fast that you don’t rope a camel,” he recalled with a laugh. “Since I didn’t come out of a zoo, we had to learn the hard way. When you rope a camel, not only do you have four legs going all different directions, you have a big, long neck that’s knocking you over. You just can’t handle them once they have a rope on, and once you get a rope on, then you have to get it off.”

After that, the Zoo built a gateway, like a squeeze shoot for cattle or goats, to allow Nightengale to examine and treat them, and the camels became

his favorite. “They were good to handle once they got used to you,” he said.

As the Zoo grew, Nightengale helped recruit Dr. Bill Foster as the first full-time veterinarian and transitioned to the Zoo’s board of directors. He enjoys reminiscing about the early days of watching the animals arrive and seeing the Zoo take shape.



Dromedary camel

The First Zoofari! ‘A Beastly Night’

Friends of the Louisville Zoo (FOZ), which began as the Louisville Zoological Society when the Zoo opened in 1969, is dedicated to preserving the Zoo’s legacy and supporting its mission. Funds raised by FOZ benefit programs, education, research and exhibits.

FOZ hosts the Zoo’s largest annual fundraising event, *Zoofari!*, as well as the popular Brew at the Zoo. Both events continue to grow each year, but *Zoofari!* got off to a rocky — or stormy — start.

Almost 300 guests attended that first *Zoofari!* on a sultry June evening in 1980. Guests strolled through the Zoo in their tuxedos and gowns, sipping cocktails, eating hors d’oeuvres of lemon and caviar mousse and enjoying entertainment by the Ja Ja dancers and the Nubian Sunrise Drummers. The upbeat crowd entered the event tent for a sumptuous buffet shortly after 8:00 p.m.

But just as everyone was starting dinner, an announcement was made: a tornado warning had been issued for Louisville.

As the rain began to pour, some guests dashed for the nearby train tunnel while others darted for the animal hospital basement. A few even managed to bring their wine glasses. And while partygoers were anxious — many remembered the tornados that had wreaked havoc in Louisville just six years earlier — the atmosphere remained festive.



Courier-Journal, 1980

There was a collective sigh of relief when the storm passed, and *Zoofari!* continued on with the “Adopt an Animal” auction and disco dancing until 2:00 a.m. The auction netted about \$3,200 with proceeds earmarked for the HerpAquarium and the MetaZoo.

On June 8, 2019, FOZ celebrated the Zoo’s 50th anniversary at the 39th annual *Zoofari!* The event was a huge success, despite overcast skies.

1971

Amur tigers arrive at the Zoo, including five-month-old Ethel.

Col. Jack L. Balthis is appointed Executive Administrator.

Cochrane Elementary School students donate Mr. Buckle, a pygmy goat, for the Children’s Zoo area.



Roger Caras, nationally known conservationist, author and lecturer, visits Louisville and calls the Zoo “one of the most modern zoos in the United States.”

1972

Four vervet monkeys arrive at the Zoo.

Monkey Island exhibit opens.



Births at the Zoo include four emus, two sable antelopes, three servals, a Persian gazelle, a Thomson’s gazelle, two rose-breasted cockatoos and 10 prairie dogs.

March – The Louisville Zoological Commission announces a campaign to raise \$1.5 million for new animal exhibits, including a proposed bear grotto and a reptile house.

Zeal for Zoo Spans Generations

ROBERT B. BEAN, LOUISVILLE ZOO DIRECTOR (1974-1988)



Aquariums (AAZPA), a rigorous evaluation process conducted by experts to ensure high standards are met. The Zoo was also designated the State Zoo of Kentucky.

Bean is remembered fondly by staff. Keeper Mary Jo Stearns was hired by Bean in 1976. "I was hired when zoos did not have many female keepers," she said. "He hired me in the giraffe area — working with hoof stock and carnivores. He gave me the confidence to pursue my career. It didn't matter to him that I was a woman. He saw my passion."

For Bean's daughter, Ellen, who went on to earn degrees in biology and wildlife ecology, her father's relationship with the Zoo made a lasting impact. "My father and I shared this love of the natural world, and that was probably the main way we connected. I am grateful that I had the Zoo during my childhood, and I know my path in life was greatly influenced by the Zoo, its people and the career choice my father made."

To Bean, working at the Zoo and with endangered animals was a privilege — a privilege he was proud to pass on to all three of his daughters, Janet, Pam and Ellen.

"The Zoo and my father instilled in me a sense of wonder and a desire to conserve the natural world," said Ellen. "I can't really imagine doing any other kind of work."

“To work with some of the most endangered animals in the world. It's an opportunity that so few people have.”
— Robert B. Bean

Bob Bean was affectionately referred to as "one of the silverbacks of the zoo world."

His impressive pedigree included his grandfather, the first director of Chicago's Brookfield Zoo, and his father, who served as the second director of Brookfield Zoo. Bob Bean started as a keeper at the Brookfield Zoo and then served as director of Busch Gardens in Tampa, Florida, before taking the helm of the Louisville Zoo.

In his time as director, the Zoo was accredited by the Association of American Zoological Parks and

Board Member Shares Hometown Pride

LOOKING BACK WITH MARK WHEELER, BOARD MEMBER

Mark Wheeler loved the zoo in his hometown of Omaha, Nebraska, before moving to Louisville. "After arriving here, I noticed how important the Zoo was to Louisville," Wheeler said. "I wanted to be part of that."

Now, after serving on the Zoo Foundation Board for more than 20 years, Wheeler's admiration for the Zoo has only increased. "To think about all the children, and many adults too, who have come to the Zoo and have a strong sense of pride in the Zoo — it belongs to them! It's an important part of their lives and the community."

While he's had a hand in the Zoo's progress over the years, Wheeler has been especially impressed by the dedication he's seen from the staff. "I remember when our female elephant, Mikki, was going to give birth for the first time. I visited the keepers and staff members in the exhibit who had moved in to ensure the birth was safe and that mother and baby had the best environment possible. They sacrificed their time with their families to ensure the elephants would be all right."

Wheeler has experienced this type of commitment time and again from Zoo personnel. "I wish everyone knew how dedicated and great our staff is."

When asked about the Zoo's role in the community, Wheeler said, "I think the Zoo is a big part of



Mikki the African elephant

the personality of our city. It truly represents Louisville in a very caring, progressive, creative and educational way."

1973

Mike July is named general curator for the Zoo, eventually serving as interim director.

November — Three-year-old Asian elephant "Punch" arrives at the Zoo.



Churchill Downs donates \$2,000 to the Zoo for a zebra in honor of Triple Crown winner Secretariat.

Mrs. W. L. Lyons Brown gives eight cranes to the Zoo.

1974

Robert B. Bean becomes the second Zoo director.

March — An initial education program begins with two groups from Bloom Elementary School and another group from Emmett Field Elementary School.

Additions to the Zoo include tundra wolves, a puma exhibit and a new gift shop called "The Monkey's Uncle."



An ordinance defines the Louisville Zoological Commission as consisting of nine members appointed by the Mayor, the president and treasurer of the Louisville Zoological Society, and a representative of the Jefferson County Veterinary Association.

A Living Classroom

“We’re fortunate that we get to reach out to students of all ages and abilities,” said Marcelle Gianelloni, retired curator of conservation education. She remembers a particularly special experience working with students who are visually impaired.

Gianelloni brought out one of her favorite animal ambassadors, a chinchilla. Native to the Andes mountains, chinchillas have long been hunted aggressively for their fur. The wild population has declined more than 90 percent over the last 15 years despite protective legislation. Talking to students about chinchillas provides lots of teachable moments, but for these students, it was all about the tangible encounter.

“If you’ve never touched a chinchilla, it’s almost impossible to describe how soft its fur is,” Gianelloni said.

“*We’ve learned that having that one-on-one experience with animals, there’s nothing that can compare to it.*”

— Kim Allgeier, Conservation Education Curator

But one student found the perfect words. “This young boy gently ran his fingertips back and forth on the chinchilla, taking his time, exploring, totally immersed in the experience,” Gianelloni said. “Then he whispered, ‘It’s like touching air.’ That’s a description that will stay with me forever.”

When the MetaZoo opened in 1981, it was the first of its kind — an onsite education center that includes living animals. Tens of thousands of students have had the unique opportunity to interact with MetaZoo animal ambassadors, including snakes and lizards, opossums and hedgehogs, and a cockatoo named Tootsie.



Schoolchildren with chinchilla



Schoolchildren with polar bear

1975

February – The Louisville Zoo Docent Program begins with a six-week training for 15 participants. Classes were taught by Mike July (Assistant Director), Marian Jones (Small Animal Area), Jennie Jenkins (Elephant Area), Eric Blow (Aquatic Area) and Dave Marshall (Giraffe Area).

Twin Amur tiger cubs are born, and two polar bears arrive.



1976

The Zoo’s first polar bear exhibit opens.

David Jenkins becomes the first curator of education.



Source: Courier-Journal

A Thomson’s gazelle calf is born. The wild population will decline 65% between 1970 and 2000 due to hunting and human encroachment.



The Zoo offers many learning opportunities for students, such as the award-winning, grant-funded School at the Zoo program. This weeklong experience brings third and fourth graders to the Zoo to learn about science and nature. Many of them have never been to the Zoo before. School at the Zoo has been presented by Brown-Forman for the past three years.

“Students are just beyond excited to see a giraffe for the first time or be able to touch a snake,” said Kathleen Johnson, who has been an educator at the Zoo for 25 years. “It’s a happy, thrilling and safe place for them to be.”

Other programs for students include Zoo Kids, Inc., which helps fund field trips for underserved children, and a new space in Snow Leopard Pass designed specifically for preschoolers to play and learn, called the Cub House, presented by PNC. Classes for middle and high school students emphasize advocacy and conservation.

Johnson remembers one day that turned out especially stimulating for a group of seventh graders, courtesy of the keepers at Glacier Run. Early in the morning, before students arrived, the keepers put a little peanut butter along the outside windowsill of the Glacier Run classroom. The students filed into the classroom and sat down to listen to a presentation on the tundra ecosystem.

Suddenly, all the kids jumped up and screamed “POLAR BEAR!” as they practically knocked over their chairs to get to the window.

There, sniffing and licking the window, was Qannik. She stood on her hind legs to get a better look at

the students, which meant the students could get an even better look at her.

It’s hard to reign in a class of seventh graders after the surprise appearance of a polar bear. But Johnson used the experience to her advantage. “After everyone settled down, we talked about polar bears and ways we can curb global warming, ways we can make a difference even in places far away like the tundra,” she said. “Qannik was a great animal ambassador that day.”

Of course, the Zoo’s educational programs aren’t just for children. From family camps for parents and kids, to teaching natural science and biology classes at Bellarmine University and the University of Louisville, to the longstanding volunteer docent program for adults in the community, the Zoo provides a wide variety of opportunities for all ages to expand their horizons.



Kathleen Johnson shows a lizard to students

“It’s important for everyone to make a connection between what we’re doing and what’s happening in other parts of the world,” said Kim Allgeier, the Zoo’s current curator of conservation education. “And to empower people to do something about it.”

AMBER MAKES CONSERVATION PERSONAL

Of all the orangutans at the Zoo, Amber is known to the keepers as the most mischievous. Mammal curator and animal training supervisor Jane Anne Franklin describes her as “crazy smart, intuitive and personable.” With her curious brown eyes, high forehead, shaggy orange coat and playful demeanor, Amber has a way of touching the hearts of all those who meet her.

When Kathleen Johnson teaches her class about the rain forest ecosystem, she takes the students to the Islands exhibit to see some of the endangered mammals from the rain forests of Borneo, Sumatra and Malaysia. Keepers talk to the students about the animals and how they’re impacted in the wild by human encroachment, deforestation and the palm oil industry.

“Having the kids talk with the keepers is such a great way for them to learn,” Johnson said. “Students almost always take a keen interest in the orangutans because they’re so expressive.”

One of Johnson’s classes was particularly smitten with the orangutans and returned to the Islands to see them throughout the week. On the final day of class, with a few extra minutes, the students asked if they could go back and see the orangutans one last time.



Schoolchildren with Amber the orangutan

As the kids entered the dayroom inside the Islands pavilion, Amber was waiting for them. She was sitting up against the window. All the students clamored around her to say goodbye.

“There was one young girl who just adored Amber,” Johnson recalled. As the class was getting ready to leave, the girl sat on the wooden bench on the opposite side of the window, across from Amber.

Slowly, deliberately, Amber put her hand up to the glass.

“The girl put her cheek up to the window,” Johnson said. “And I heard her say, ‘Bye, Amber. I love you. I hope we can save your rain forest.’”

1977

February – Dr. Bill Foster is hired as the Zoo’s first full-time veterinarian.

The Zoo’s Amur tiger exhibit wins a design award from the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA).

Gray seal Josh is born, making Louisville only the second zoo in the U.S. and the first inland zoo to breed gray seals.



Other animals born or hatched at the Zoo include six peach-faced lovebirds, four pumas, three Amur tigers, six rheas and one Grant’s zebra.

Ceramic tree leaves are made available for purchase to raise money for a horticulture plan developed by the Glenview Garden Club. Full implementation of the plan will cost about \$200,000.

Mrs. Smith, a great horned owl and star of Smith’s Furniture and Appliances, has a new home at the Louisville Zoo.

June – The first baby giraffe, John Edward, is born at the Zoo to mom Pat.



Bringing the World to Kids

LOOKING BACK WITH SUNIL THIRKANNAD, MD

When Sunil Thirkannad, MD, came to the United States from India in 2003, one of the first things he and his wife did was find places for their three-year-old daughter to explore. That's where their love of the Zoo began.

"The Zoo provides a very safe, healthy space where children can play and learn at the same time," he said.

He remembers one visit when a docent was showing a rhinoceros horn. "That particular horn

was very smelly," recalled Dr. Thirkannad. The docent explained what the horn was made of, and how rhinos are often hunted because some believe their horns have medicinal powers. "My daughter asked the docent, 'Why would somebody want something that stinks so bad?'"

Dr. Thirkannad and his wife are both surgeons, and the Zoo helped bring their love of science to their daughter. "The Zoo is a place where a child can learn science, a child can be outdoors. Looking at animals from different parts of the world, she also starts learning geography," he said.

That geographical element helped connect the Thirkannads to their homeland by showing their daughter animals that are native to India, like tigers. "It was a connection to the whole world," he said.

When his daughter went off to college, Dr. Thirkannad and his wife remembered how much fun they had at the Zoo and began donating. In 2017, Dr. Thirkannad joined the Zoo's Foundation Board where he learned about the Zoo Kids, Inc. program, which subsidizes Zoo field trips for schools and non-profits serving at-risk or disadvantaged children.

He and his wife now direct their support to Zoo Kids, Inc., "so all children can come here and enjoy what we saw our daughter enjoying when she was growing up," said Dr. Thirkannad.



Dr. Sunil Thirkannad and daughter (Source: Courier-Journal)



2019 Docents with the Zoo's 50th Celebration Derby Parade Float

SHOW & TELL

A **docent** is a volunteer teacher who assists the Louisville Zoo Education Department in teaching classes to school groups and sharing information with Zoo visitors and the community.

“Working with kids and adults is so rewarding. To see the joy in their eyes when they get to touch an animal is fabulous. School at the Zoo is another favorite of mine – working with the educators, showing and talking about animals and their habitats. Some of these children have never been to a zoo, so it is just remarkable to see their interest and wonder!”

– Jo Barrett, Docent

- 1967** Dr. Ivo Poglayen begins offering classes to interested volunteers
- 1975** First official class of docents
- 174** Number of docents who have contributed more than 1,000 hours
- 16,457** Number of hours contributed by docents from June 2018 to June 2019
- 948** Total number of docents who have completed docent training since the inception of the program
- 48** Hours required per year to be an active docent
- 15,077** The most hours contributed by a single individual (Kathy Nuss, 22 years)

Examples Of Outreach: Hospitals, nursing homes, daycare centers, schools, Kentucky State Fair



1978

A major fundraising drive is approved by the Louisville Zoological Society, specifically for the new HerpAquarium (\$1 M) and the MetaZoo (\$300,000).

Director Robert Bean presents a five-year plan to the Louisville Zoological Commission for Zoo construction and renovation.

A half-acre lake is constructed by the Zoo Maintenance Department with assistance from District Soil Conservation Service and a donation made by the Louisville Audubon Society.

The stage area where chimpanzee shows had once been featured is transformed into the Exploration Stage where visitors can have hands-on experiences.



Art Imitates (Wild) Life

There is so much to see and do at the Louisville Zoo, it's easy to overlook the fun and inspiring artwork sprinkled throughout the park. In addition to the authentic artifacts you'll find in the exhibits, several sculptures stand as monuments to our diminishing wildlife.

Some of the most popular pieces include:



Monument to Extinction

Artist: Bob Lockhart

Terracotta plaques depict endangered and extinct animals, along the lake side of the MetaZoo

Sponsored by friends and relatives of Jerry Kirkham, as well as art patrons Mrs. George Norton, Charles and Marian Weisberg and the Altrusa Club of Louisville



Jackson's Chameleon

Artist: Bob Lockhart

Bronze sculpture in front of the HerpAquarium

Donated by Dorothy and Wendell Cherry and the Humana Foundation



Molly

Artist: Paul Fields

Bedford limestone sculpture in front of the rhino exhibit

Commissioned by Donna Stone in memory of her mother, Sylvia Molly Traiman, because she "always took the grandkids to the Zoo"



Komodo Dragon

Artist: Tom Tischler

Bronze sculpture in the outdoor portion of the Islands

Funded in part by a grant from Alderman Barbara Gregg's discretionary fund



Running Rabbit

Artist: Bob Lockhart

Bronze sculpture outside the carousel area

Donated by Brown-Forman



Lucy the Giraffe

Artist: Unknown

Bronze sculpture outside the giraffe house

Made possible through the generosity of Steve and Linda Hester



Gerta Bendl Silhouette Tribute

Artist: David Caudill

Stainless steel flat sculpture located on the Main Plaza

In memory of Gerta Bendl



Ely

Artist: Meg White

Bronze sculpture across from the elephant exhibit

In honor of C. Fred and Celia M. Blankenship by their children Bonnie Chapman, Nancy Brinly and Bob Blankenship



Pot-Bellied Pig

Artist: Bob Lockhart

Bronze sculpture in the Islands



Lowland Gorilla Family

Artist: Bill Wieger

Bronze sculpture depicting a gorilla family in Gorilla Forest

Made possible through the generosity of Helen and Dan Ulmer and family



Lion Pride

Artist: Tom Tischler

Bronze sculpture of a lion family located near the African Outpost

Funded by the Stephen and Mary Birch Foundation, Inc.

Dad Receives Elephant Badge of Honor

LOOKING BACK WITH MAUREEN CHAMBERS, DOCENT

“The longer I’ve been here, the more passionate I get about the Zoo. It just keeps growing in my heart.”

Maureen Chambers traces her love for the Louisville Zoo back to childhood visits with her father, who had an affinity for the elephants. “I don’t know what it was, but there was just some connection between them,” she said.



Mikki and Scotty

As a docent, Chambers has contributed more than 6,500 hours and has plenty of memories about the Zoo. But one day from her youth stands out.

“At the time, that was when men wore dress shirts to the Zoo, in the mid-seventies. We were standing at the elephant exhibit. And suddenly the elephant sneezed all over my dad in his mint-green shirt. It was an elephant sneeze, so you can imagine the amount of mucus that was on my dad’s shirt. But we didn’t go home. It was like a badge of honor for my dad to walk around with that elephant snot on his shirt. Until the day my dad died, we would talk about the elephant sneezing on him.”

When African elephant Mikki gave birth to her first calf, Scotty, in 2007, Chambers brought her father to the Zoo to see the baby elephant.

“By this time,” she explained, “Dad wasn’t walking very well. But we just stood there at the elephants — I think he would have stood there all day, to be honest.”

Chambers cherishes her memories and the time she’s spent at the Zoo as both a member and a docent. “For me, it’s my sanity,” she said. “The minute I walk through the gate, I think, ‘Here I am. I’m home.’”

Not-So-Spooky Halloween Charms Families

LOOKING BACK WITH DIANA DEVAUGHN, PR MANAGER

“We were looking to host an event for the fall,” said Diana DeVaughn, retired events and public relations manager at the Zoo. “And we came up with the idea of Halloween at the Zoo. And it just rolled from there.”

DeVaughn, who first joined the Zoo as a docent, remembers hearing that the City Council was concerned that trick-or-treating was growing dangerous. So, the Zoo decided to reinvent the holiday in a neighborhood setting where people would feel safe.

“All the staff and volunteers were fantastic,” DeVaughn remembers. She also remembers that it was 1982, around the same time as the Chicago Tylenol poisonings. “We had places to trick-or-treat where you got that neighborhood feel, where someone would say, ‘Oh, I love your costume.’ It was safe, which people really appreciated. And it was perfect for families with young kids because it wasn’t too scary.”

One of the best-loved features of “The World’s Largest Halloween Party!” (as it later became known) was the Headless Horseman. DeVaughn gives credit to Pat Peers, the supervisor of the maintenance department at the time. “He made sure that safety of the animals as well as the safety of all the guests

came first. But as a boy growing up on a farm, he had celebrated Halloween by riding around on his horse as the Headless Horseman. So, he said, ‘This is what we need to do.’ He made everything work, and it was spectacular.”

But DeVaughn remembers some other costumes as well, and not from Zoo staff. “We had several medieval re-enactors who would volunteer. King Arthur and Queen Guinevere came for years. And sometimes, when the weather would get rainy, they would look at me and say, ‘Kings and queens do not get wet.’”



The Headless Horseman

1979

Kentucky legislature passes a statute enabling the City of Louisville and Jefferson County to jointly fund the operating budget of the Zoo. The Zoo’s second giraffe, Sebastian, is born.

Laparoscopy is added to medical services available to the animals at the Zoo. Lucy, a gray seal, gives birth to twins, the first recorded multiple birth of gray seals in captivity or the wild.

June – The new Amur tiger exhibit opens with a dedication dinner held with Commission members, the Mayor, the County Judge, the Board of Aldermen, members of the Fiscal Court and Legislators.



1980

The Louisville Zoo is accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums.

The Zoo is designated the State Zoo of Kentucky by the Kentucky General Assembly.

Two Amur tiger cubs are born and are named Butch and Sundance.

The first *Zoofari!* is interrupted by tornado warnings. Guests in formal attire take shelter in the train tunnel, animal hospital basement and education building. No animals or people are harmed.



Passion Makes a Difference

A young man named Craig Mikel really wanted to volunteer at the Louisville Zoo. But at the time, he also didn't like school very much.

Diane Taylor, the Zoo's volunteer coordinator, told him point blank: "You don't go to school, you don't volunteer."

Sometime later, Taylor was called into the Zoo's main office. "There was a man standing at the door, and he just gives me this big kiss on the cheek. I had no idea who this man was." As it turned out, he was Craig's grandfather, grateful for the gentle nudge Taylor had offered his grandson. Craig graduated from high school, and now he's a keeper at the Zoo. Taylor points out proudly that many of the Zoo's keepers started as volunteers at a very young age.

When Taylor first took on the program in 1988, there were about 200 volunteers. Today, there are nearly 3,000 who donate more than 60,000 hours of work each year. These volunteers do work equivalent to 30 full-time employees, saving the Zoo more than \$1.25 million in wages and benefits. Not only do they assist with animal care, they also help the horticulture department maintain the grounds, serve as docents to share information with guests, and some volunteers — in the case of the volunteer Youth Board — raise funds for exhibits at the Zoo.

"It's really important for the volunteers to know how much we appreciate them," Taylor said. "Because truthfully, we couldn't afford to hire that many people."

It's not just individuals who volunteer their time. A number of local businesses, such as UPS and Ford, send groups to staff events at the Zoo like "The World's Largest Halloween Party!" where they help decorate the Zoo and hand out candy. And they participate year after year.

In her 40-plus years at the Zoo, Taylor has noticed another positive trend. "One lady came in here last week and said, 'I want my son to volunteer because



Diane Taylor (front) with volunteer Youth Board

“ *The volunteers don't work for me. I work for the volunteers.*

— Diane Taylor, Volunteer Coordinator

I used to be a volunteer myself. We get more and more children whose parents or aunts or uncles were once teen volunteers."

PROTECTING THE FUTURE

In the mid 1990s, the Zoo's volunteer Youth Board began raising funds through face painting and a sand art station. In their first year of fundraising, the Youth Board generated \$3,600. They have now contributed more than \$200,000 to support major exhibits at the Zoo.

When teenage volunteer Cary Hearn joined the Youth Board, his whole perspective shifted.

"The Youth Board was definitely a catalyst," said Hearn. "Diane Taylor and my mom instilled in me an understanding about what giving back means."

Today, Hearn is a wealth advisor and an active volunteer in several nonprofits, and still an avid supporter of the Zoo. "My boys are eleven, nine and seven. We're at the Zoo any time we can go." Hearn also enjoys a very personal connection to the Zoo. "Sometimes I go by myself, because it allows me to step back from the world. It's a chance to take in a beauty that we don't see driving up and down I-71 or I-65."

"It's a place to escape, laugh and have fun," Hearn said. "I'm so glad I can continue the legacy with my own children."



Face painting

1981

The bald eagle exhibit opens. Famous primatologist Dian Fossey speaks at the Louisville Zoo during the American Association of Zoo Keepers conference.

The Zoo's first polar bear cub, Maku, goes on exhibit.



August – The MetaZoo opens and becomes a prototype for zoo education centers throughout the country.



1982

A donation from Trinity High School students allows the Zoo to acquire five Père David's deer, which are extinct in the remnant wild.

Safari Day Camp and ZOOper Kids education programs begin.



The Zoo presents "Halloween at the Zoo" for the first time; the event features a pumpkin-judging contest.

Six capybaras are born.



Snakes Alive!

Reptilian Wonders Get Warm Welcome

Memorial Day weekend 1989, when the HerpAquarium opened, lines snaked out the door of the exhibit. Visitors waited eagerly — if not a little nervously — to see inside the mysterious, geometric building that promised to expose some of the world's most unusual creatures. Why does a rattlesnake rattle? What kind of monster is a Gila monster? Can a piranha really eat an entire cow?

These secrets and more were revealed as the double doors slowly opened. Guests entered and were immediately soothed by the calming sounds of the ocean, luring visitors into underwater ecosystems like the Sargasso Sea and the mangrove swamps of Florida. From these shadowy depths, guests strolled through glass doors and suddenly found themselves in a humid rain forest where Cuban crocodiles slithered and snapped in a pond just beneath a walkway overgrown with tropical plants. Leaving the steamy jungle behind, visitors entered the bright arid deserts of North Africa and India, where diurnal animals like the pygmy spiny-tailed skink and the mastigure lizard burrow to escape the heat. Next, day turned into night as guests discovered nocturnal animals like those found in the deserts of the southwestern United States, including tiger rattlesnakes and geckos.

Everyone marveled at the nearly 700 specimens slinking, leaping and gliding through three unique environments. Nothing like the HerpAquarium had ever been seen before in Louisville — or even in most zoos. The innovative facility organizes its inhabitants by climate rather than classification, emphasizing the unique relationship between the animals and their habitats. It's also a more energy-efficient design because adjacent exhibits require similar temperatures.

Keeper Derick McNair works with some of the most fascinating creatures on earth, but it's the opportunity to interact with people that excites him most.

"We do keeper talks where we'll bring out a snake, and it's always fun to watch how everyone reacts. A lot of people have never touched a snake before, and to be sure, we have



Derick McNair



Reticulated python

1983

A serval is born and raised with a litter of domestic kittens.



A rare African crested porcupine is born. Although not endangered, the African crested porcupine is often in conflict with the human population in its natural habitat.

The Zoo unveils a new master plan that includes a gorilla exhibit and an exhibit for reptiles and aquatic animals.

1984

Marcelle Gianelloni becomes the Zoo's second education curator.

Twin Amur tiger cubs are born and nursed by Rosemary the dog.



For the first time in the world, an exotic equine embryo (Grant's zebra) is successfully transferred to a domestic equine (quarter horse) at the Zoo. The result is the birth of a zebra named E.Q.





some folks who will hug the wall. Sometimes they're encouraged by their friends or family, and then they're surprised by how it feels — that it's not scaly or slimy, but actually kind of soft."

McNair, who started as a volunteer and has now been with the Zoo nearly 30 years, enjoys answering questions about the extraordinary animals in his care. "Some people will ask about snakes they might find around Louisville or Kentucky. Sometimes they'll show us a picture on their phone and ask if we know what kind of snake it is. It's a chance for us to share our knowledge, and it gets the juices going about what's in our own back yard, our own community."

One snake at the Zoo has captured the attention of scientists as well as visitors.

"We discovered here in Louisville that the world's largest snake is capable of virgin birth," explained Bill McMahan, curator of ectotherms.

In 2012, the Zoo's 20-foot-long female reticulated python produced a clutch of eggs. The staff decided to let the snake brood over the eggs for two weeks, so that guests could watch that natural behavior occur. When keepers went to dispose of the eggs, some appeared to be healthy, and the Zoo decided to incubate them. After several weeks, six baby pythons poked through their shells.

By testing the DNA in the shed skins of the hatchlings, a molecular lab at the University of Tulsa determined that these offspring came from mom and mom alone. Although parthenogenesis, a natural type of asexual reproduction, had been documented in other reptiles, it had never before been recorded in reticulated pythons.

"It's pretty amazing, some of the stuff we get to see," McMahan said.

PREVENTING A CROCODILE CRISIS

What has big teeth, heavy speckled armor and lives in just two swamps in Cuba? Meet the Cuban crocodile, the world's most endangered crocodilian.

Their historical range once included the Cayman and Bahaman Islands, but today Cuban crocs are found only on the island of Cuba, in an area that would easily fit within Jefferson County, according to Bill McMahan. Hybridization with American crocodiles, along with hunting and human encroachment, have drastically diminished the wild population.

That's why McMahan, who has studied the reptile intensely throughout his 38-year career, recommended a Species Survival Plan (SSP) to the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) to help maintain the Cuban crocodile population in managed environments. In 1993, the Cuban crocodile SSP became the first initiated by the Louisville Zoo.



Cuban crocodile hatchlings



Cuban crocodiles

“It's just part of our culture to look and see how we can we take an idea and make it better.”

– John Walczak, Zoo Director and the first Curator for the HerpAquarium

McMahan has traveled to Cuba several times to work with local biologists and study the Cuban croc in its native habitat. The conditions were often humble, if not downright dangerous. "They put up these big nets when we were in the compound, because it didn't really have any doors. They did that to keep the crocodiles from coming in while we slept. And when we camped in the swamp, we would take these small dogs with us — they'd bark if a crocodile came near."

If the accommodations weren't rugged enough, perhaps the cuisine was more appealing? "We'd often eat hutia while out in the swamp," McMahan confessed. Hutia is a large Cuban rodent, the same food source that sustains the Cuban crocodile. Asked what hutia tastes like, McMahan answered dryly: "It tastes like squirrel, just a lot more of it."

Marcelle Gianelloni, the Zoo's curator of conservation education from 1984 to 2014, joined McMahan to

help generate public awareness for the plight of the Cuban crocodile. Working with the Cuban Department of Flora and Fauna and the Havana Zoo, Gianelloni's efforts included a Crocodile Festival on the Isle of Youth to celebrate the enigmatic reptile. Over several years, Gianelloni and others offered workshops to guide teachers and community leaders in strategies to help local people appreciate the Cuban crocodile. "It was a powerful experience," said Gianelloni, who grew up in Cuba. "We were able to connect what we do in the Zoo to what's happening in their homeland."

Today, the Zoo's Cuban crocodiles live in the Islands exhibit as another endangered species native to an island habitat. While the Louisville Zoo and other institutions have successfully bred Cuban crocodiles, McMahan is concerned about their future.

"I don't think they'll be around much longer in nature," he said. McMahan compares the potential for an extinction crisis to an airplane. "You have so many bolts in an airplane, and maybe you don't need all of them. You take out a few, the plane still flies. You take out a few more, the plane still flies. But you never know when you might take out one bolt too many."

1985

The renovated white rhino exhibit opens. Once thought to be extinct, in 2019 southern white rhinos are classified as near threatened after more than a century of protection and management.

Six woolly monkeys arrive from Scotland.

First ring-tailed lemurs are born at the Zoo to mom Rachel, discovered on Mother's Day.



A record 4,630 people attend the Zoo's Teddy Bear Picnic.

John Walczak is hired to design, staff and assemble the collection for the HerpAquarium.

1986

Dr. Brent White, professor emeritus at Centre College, begins grant-funded study about the relationship between animal behaviors and cortisol, a hormone associated with measuring stress. This research continues with a number of animals, including woolly monkeys, bears and elephants.

The Zoo rehabilitates mallard ducks injured in the Beargrass Creek diesel fuel spill.

Eight Vietnamese pot-bellied piglets are born, the first litter produced at the Louisville Zoo, which is one of only five zoos in the U.S. permitted to acquire the pigs under federal regulations.

Tasha and Tyrone are the first orangutans to live at the Zoo, on loan from the Henry Doorly Zoo in Omaha, Nebraska. Pediatrician John Doyle, who served as the Zoo's first president and one of its first commissioners, lent his medical expertise to veterinarian Bill Foster.



Source: Courier-Journal

The Golden Age of Zoos

WILLIAM ROBERT FOSTER, LOUISVILLE ZOO DIRECTOR (1988-2004)

Dr. Bill Foster, who began his career in Louisville as the Zoo's first full-time veterinarian and later became the Zoo's third director, refers to his time in Louisville as the Golden Age of Zoos.

"We were very young and looking at a transition in the world of zoos from being a menagerie to taking a real scientific direction. We tried a lot of things in a medium-sized zoo that big zoos couldn't do. And we had fun."

Several innovative exhibits opened while Foster was at the Zoo, including the Islands and Gorilla Forest. "Innovation takes a lot of good people," he said. "It's intimidating. It's important to give people permission to try and the room to know there will be failures and heartbreak, but to learn from it and move forward. You just have to keep moving the goal line."

Foster was instrumental in bringing black-footed ferrets to the Zoo as part of a national collaboration to reintroduce the endangered mammal in North America. "It was a great commitment that I knew the staff in Louisville could handle." But he does remember one small hiccup at the beginning of the program.

"A Kentucky Fried Chicken corporate Learjet flew out to Omaha, Nebraska, to pick up our first ferrets in 1990. It was a beautiful, sunny day, snowing in Nebraska. Now, I don't know if you've ever

been around ferrets, but the pilot of the plane was a little concerned about bringing them onboard because of the odor. The ferrets were a little excited about traveling, so they were especially noxious." Ultimately, the ferrets arrived safely — if smelly — in Louisville, and the program has thrived since.

Foster has many vivid memories of his experiences in Louisville, but he holds one animal dear in his heart. "On my shelf today, I have a picture of my wife, my grandchildren, my children ... and I have a picture of a gorilla. When we brought the gorillas in from Chicago, Debbie took a fancy to me and we were great friends. She was a great gorilla. She ended up having kidney failure, and we put her on a dialysis machine so we could stabilize her. Unfortunately, we ultimately realized she couldn't survive without a kidney transplant. To this day, she holds a position of honor on my shelf with family."

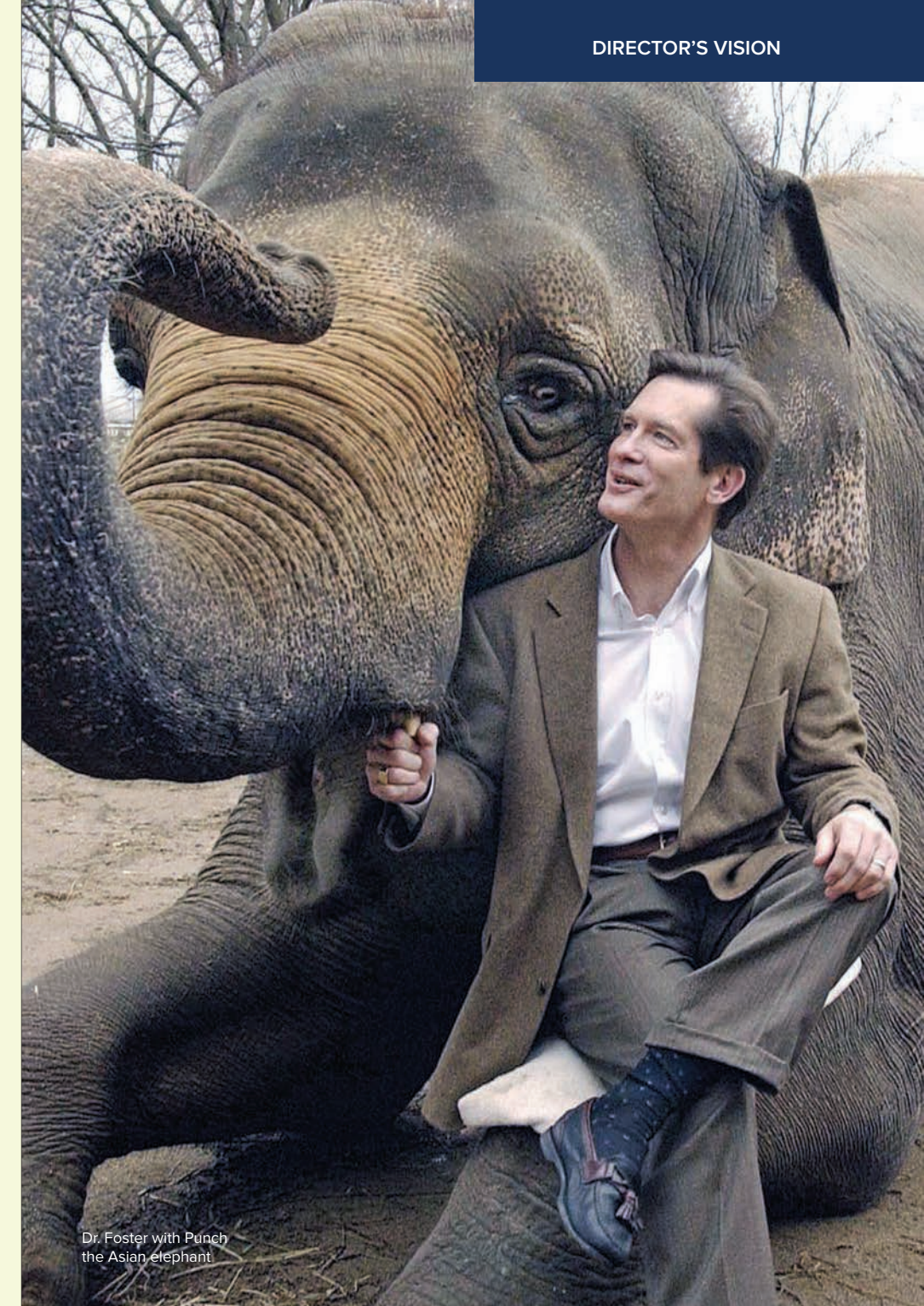
Over the years, Foster witnessed and influenced a number of medical and animal behavior management breakthroughs. But he also recognizes a shift in the role of zoos in the community. "Zoos are built for people, about animals," he said. "I don't think you can put the Zoo into a jar and say, 'that's what the Zoo does.' The Zoo is a complex structure that serves many purposes throughout this community for creating a value that, if it were lost, there would be nothing to take its place."

“Zoos initially introduce people to a fascinating world. That’s not the end of it, though — it’s just the beginning.”

– William Robert Foster



Dr. Foster feeds a tiger cub



Dr. Foster with Punch the Asian elephant

1987

The Louisville Zoological Commission is dissolved, and a new Zoo Foundation board is formed.

Mikki the African elephant arrives at the Zoo. The population of African elephants in the wild has been greatly reduced due to habitat loss and the illegal ivory trade.



May – The Monument to Extinction, created by Bob Lockhart, is unveiled. The artwork is underwritten by friends and relatives of Jerry Kirkham, art patrons Mrs. George Norton and Mr. Charles W. Weisberg, and the Altrusa Club.

1988

The Louisville Zoo wins the prestigious Edward H. Bean Award for its Woolly Monkey Propagation Program. In the remnant wild, woolly monkeys are threatened due to habitat loss and harvesting.



The Australian Walkabout exhibit opens.

August – The Zoo hosts a display of a half-size replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.



Dr. Bill Foster is named the third Zoo Director.



(clockwise) Babirusa, Sumatran tiger, Malayan tapir, orangutan

The Challenge of Being First

The Islands exhibit tells many stories.

First is the tale of life along a stream in an Indonesian village. Water, the most important natural resource for all creatures including humans, flows through home-range habitats of intriguing animals surrounded by lush botanical plantings.

The Islands serves as a gentle reminder of the fragile ecosystems of island environments. As their finite space becomes more developed, island ecosystems account for some 99 percent of all species' extinction in the world. In the Islands at the Zoo, all the species of animals on exhibit are threatened or endangered.

But there was some question whether the exhibit would even work. Islands is the first of its kind, a rotational exhibit that houses both predator

and prey from five different species — Malayan tapirs, babirusas, siamangs, Sumatran tigers and orangutans. The exhibit is designed to allow the animals to rotate through individual habitats each day. And, while the concept promotes well-being for the animals by providing a wealth of multisensory experiences as they follow one another through the different habitats, it had never been done before.

In fact, halfway through construction, one of the exhibit's architects told Steve Taylor, assistant director of conservation, education and collections, that he was unsure about the Louisville Zoo's ability to implement the rotational design. After patiently listening to the architect's concerns that the animals couldn't be trained to rotate through the exhibit, Taylor announced to Zoo director Bill Foster that "we're absolutely going to make this happen."

Taylor did not tell Jane Anne Franklin about the architect's doubts. Franklin, today the Zoo's mammal curator and supervisor of animal training, was put in charge of getting the animals to move from space to space, using passageways above and beneath the exhibit.

“ We did the right thing at the right time when a lot of people were debating whether we should. Rather than debate it, we put thought into action.”

— Bill Foster, Louisville Zoo Director

1989

Memorial Day Weekend – The HerpAquarium opens, a major state-of-the-art facility for exhibiting reptiles, amphibians and fish in a bioclimatic format, focusing on habitat rather than taxonomy. With the opening of the HerpAquarium, Zoo attendance spikes to more than a half million this year.



The Zoo develops its third master plan. The Louisville Orchestra presents the first Roarchestra Concert Series at the Zoo.



1990

The Zoo's first official celebration of Earth Day brings in 30,000 visitors. The North American Wild Cat exhibit opens.



A new ZooTram system is introduced. The Louisville Zoo is the first in the nation to successfully breed Kirtland's snakes in a managed environment.





Jane Anne Franklin with Sarah the Malayan tapir

leading to the transfer chute and filled it with water. They then invited Sarah to bob for apples in the flooded stairwell. Day by day, one step at a time, the keepers lowered the water level until Sarah was marching down the stairs with ease.

Tapirs aren't the only challenging Islands animal to work with. Orangutans are known for their intelligence, not to mention their opposable thumbs. As Islands was getting ready to open, there were two young orangutans living in the exhibit — Teak, still a favorite resident of the Islands, and Amber, his half-sister. Together, they dismantled the exhibit's irrigation system (using sticks as hooks), took apart a hot rock, tore up the shingles on the roof, and stole a jacket and a chisel from one of the workmen. It took 20 jellybeans, two bananas and some peanut butter to get the chisel back, because Teak knew it was valuable.

WHY RAISE JUST ONE?

There are many other stories from the Islands, but the one that stands out to Franklin involves three baby siamangs.

Zoli was born in 2007 to parents Ziggy and Sue Ann, who died very suddenly when Zoli was an infant. As the team prepared to hand-raise Zoli, Franklin consulted with experts in the field. Most warned Franklin that she wouldn't succeed, that hand-raising a siamang would result in behavioral issues.

Around the same time, two other siamangs were orphaned at other zoos. Zain and Sungai



Zoli, Zain and Sungai the siamangs

soon joined Zoli in Louisville and keepers provided around-the-clock care, which included wearing furry vests for the baby siamangs to cling to. The Louisville Zoo is believed to be the only zoo to ever raise three siamangs this young at once.

After he matured, Zain moved to a zoo in West Palm Beach, and although he may have been "overly confident" when he first arrived, he is now successfully paired with a female. Likewise, Zoli is now at the Lee Richardson Zoo in Kansas and is paired with a mate.

Sungai remained in Louisville, in part because keepers weren't sure how well she would adapt to

another zoo. She had been moved around a few times before coming to Louisville, and keepers were worried that this instability would have a negative impact on her behavior if she were relocated again. Today, she enjoys a healthy relationship with Darwin, a new male siamang.

That all three siamangs grew up to exhibit socially appropriate behavior is a significant achievement. "It's one of the best things I've ever done," Franklin said.

ROTATIONAL DESIGN CATCHES ON

The Islands continues to be on the cutting edge of zoo exhibitory and animal behavior management, with rare births such as the white-throated ground dove in the Forest Bird Trail and the Rodrigues fruit bat, a critically endangered species found only on one small island in the Indian Ocean, east of Madagascar.

"The fun thing about Islands," Steve Taylor said, "is that nobody had ever done it before, so there were no colleagues we could call to ask questions, no books, no published papers on animal rotation. It was all a brand new idea."

The experimental design of the Islands set the stage for future rotational exhibits at the Zoo, like Gorilla Forest and Glacier Run, and its success has influenced other zoos. In a study of the animals' well-being, the Louisville Zoo has shown that the animals benefit from their rotational experiences.

As Taylor puts it, "The Islands is where we learned that we could do great things."

1991

January – The Louisville Zoo becomes one of only five facilities to participate in the managed breeding program of the black-footed ferret. The Conservation Center, built to house the black-footed ferret program, was completed the previous year.



Four new Hartmann's mountain zebras are introduced to the zebra exhibit.

"Real Sea Monsters" exhibit arrives for summer and includes replicas of a giant squid and a white shark.

Operation Brightside offers Christmas tree recycling at the Zoo. Participants receive one free admission ticket.

1992

Thirteen black-footed ferret kits that were born at the Louisville Zoo are reintroduced to the prairies of Wyoming.

The warthog, wattled crane and arachnid exhibits open.

The Zoo receives the "Best Place to Take Children" Best of Louisville award from Louisville Magazine's reader poll.

Sculptor Paul Fields completes "Molly," a life-size white granite rhino. The sculpture is donated by Donna Stone in memory of her mother.



The Zoo is awarded a conservation grant to support a study of hypertension in woolly monkeys.

ZooVision, made possible by grants from Alderman Barbara Gregg and the Zoo Foundation, is completed.

"On the Wild Side with the Louisville Zoo," a new television show produced by Storer Cable, begins airing.

It's a Zebra!

LOOKING BACK WITH MARY T. CLEMENTS, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, AND ZOO DIRECTOR BILL FOSTER

In 1984, the Louisville Zoo made international news with the first successful embryo transfer of a wild zebra to a domestic quarter horse. The goal was to see if a horse could carry a zebra embryo to term. Several species of zebra are endangered, so if the procedure worked, it might be a way to increase zebra populations.

And while media coverage was important to Mary T. Clements, the Zoo's administrator of external affairs at the time, it was the opportunity to experience a potentially game-changing event that stands out most.

"It was really quite a feather in the cap for the Zoo. And I got to watch it being born. Zebras, after they're born, pretty much stand up and they're ready to run — because if you don't run in the wild, you could get eaten. So, this little zebra just stood right up and the surrogate mom leaned over and smelled him. He smelled right — he was just a little small. But she nursed him and took care of him and that was wonderful."

Bill Foster, the Zoo's veterinarian at the time, was assisted by Dr. Scott Bennett, a local veterinarian who had experience breeding Arabian horses through embryo transplants.

"The media was there to film the birth. We decided to remove the foal, who was overdue. I joked to Scott, 'If it doesn't have stripes on the



E.Q. the zebra with quarter horse mother Kelly

foot, just push it back in.' The world was expecting us to give birth to a zebra, and if it didn't have stripes, we were going to look really silly. He reached in and pulled the first leg out and it had a stripe on it, and he was so excited, he shouted, 'It's a zebra!' He knew scientifically that it should be a zebra, but it was still a surprise that it actually was."

When the Weather Outside Is Frightful

LOOKING BACK WITH STEVE TAYLOR, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Overnight on January 17, 1994, almost 16 inches of snow fell on Louisville, the most snow to fall at one time on the city. Schools and businesses shut down, and the Mayor advised all non-essential personnel to stay home.

Steve Taylor, then curator of mammals, didn't necessarily think of himself as essential. But he knew that someone had to take care of the animals at the Zoo, and he wasn't sure who else would be able to make it in.

So, he started walking. From Jeffersontown, Kentucky. Nine miles away.

The streets were deserted, but one lonely newspaper truck offered Taylor a ride. They just had to take a quick detour to help another stranded newspaper truck, so Taylor went along. He helped the drivers move newspaper bundles from one truck to the other.

Then the second truck got stuck, and Taylor started again on foot. Finally, he reached the Zoo.

"What's important is that there were 10 other people who managed to get here," Taylor said. "It's wonderful today to sit back and think about how we overcame what was a very tough time for the city."

Those 11 people, including Taylor, checked on all the animals that day, making sure they were fed, watered and warm.

The next day was bitter cold, with temperatures well below zero. Taylor had arranged for a ride that following day, and as he waited, he found himself with a smile on his face. "The sun was shining, and I knew others would do what it took to get to the Zoo. More than twice as many people came in the next day, and we were back in business doing what we have to do — what we love to do."



Winter snowstorm, 1994

1993

The Zoo is designated the home for all North American woolly monkeys due to the success of its propagation program.

The Zoo's black-footed ferret recovery program receives the AZA "Conservation Award."

The JC Penney/United Way Golden Rule Volunteer Award is presented to the Louisville Zoo Docents.

The Louisville Zoo Youth Board is formed with 32 youth.



Brightside's Summer Youth Employment Program takes place at the Zoo with 12 at-risk students.

The Zoo's first botanical master plan is completed.

August — Cicely gives birth to Bart, the first California sea lion pup born at the Zoo.

Zaleska and her three polar bear cubs (Aurora, Aquila and Arcturus) go on exhibit.



1994

"Big Man," a Komodo dragon, arrives from the Cincinnati Zoo and goes on exhibit in the HerpAquarium.

To celebrate the Zoo's 25th birthday, Mikki the African elephant marches in the Derby Parade along with the keepers' wheelbarrow squadron.



April — The first Eggstravaganza is held at the Louisville Zoo.

The Zoo's first Hartmann's mountain zebra is born.





From the Brink of Extinction

Their story is a cautionary tale with a hopeful ending.

Originally black-footed ferrets lived across the prairies of North America, from the Great Plains of Canada through the American Great Plains and the southwest. Historically, their population is estimated to have been 5.6 million.

By 1979, they were thought to be completely extinct.

While black-footed ferrets are related to the European ferret sometimes kept as a pet, they are not domesticated. Weighing in at only two pounds on average, they are carnivores that feed on prairie dogs, a cornerstone species of the prairie ecosystem.

In many areas of the Great Plains, as prairies gave way to ranches and other developed land, prairie

dogs were considered a nuisance and were systematically eradicated. It's estimated that only 1 percent of the prairie dog population from 1900 exists today. Black-footed ferrets, among other species, suffered as well.

One day in 1981, a rancher's dog named Shep in Meeteetse, Wyoming, brought an unidentified carcass home to his owner. A taxidermist friend helped the rancher and his wife identify it as a black-footed ferret, an animal thought to be extremely rare, possibly extinct. So, they reported it to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

The USFWS investigated and discovered a small colony of 120 black-footed ferrets. At first, they studied the colony in order to preserve it and hopefully increase its numbers. Then, the ferrets began dying at a rapid rate, possibly from a coyote with distemper or an outbreak of the plague. With few available alternatives, USFWS took the only remaining 18 ferrets into captivity, looking for a way to sustain the species. They started a conservation and breeding program with the intention of reintroducing the species to its native habitat.

“*The biggest lesson to be learned from these animals is to take care of the species before it gets to this point, because it's taken a lot of work to do what we've done.*”

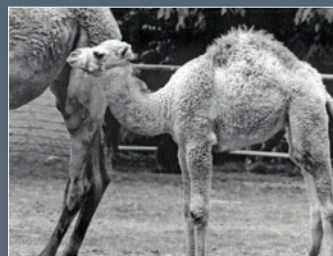
– Guy Graves, Conservation Center Keeper

Black-footed ferret

1995

The Wetlands Trail opens for use in the Zoo's educational programs. Wetlands in nature are home to numerous animal populations, including birds and fish, as well as mammals, but are threatened by pollution and climate change.

Keepers hand-raise a prematurely born dromedary camel.



A second set of polar bear twins are born to Zaleska – Buzz and Neil.

1996

July 3 – The grand opening of the Islands, an innovative rotational exhibit, includes Mayor Jerry Abramson along with representatives from the Indonesian Embassy, gamelan musicians and Balinese dancers. Robert Barry, former U.S. Ambassador to Indonesia, is the keynote speaker at the black-tie celebration dinner.



Orangutans Teak and Amber arrive at the Zoo. Sumatran orangutans are critically endangered; they are hunted for meat and traded illegally as pets and also face deforestation of their habitats.

The Zoo partners with the Jefferson County Cooperative Extension Service to offer the Green Guerrilla program for volunteers interested in horticulture.





Black-footed ferret at release site



Louisville Zoo director Bill Foster learned about the program and thought the Zoo should participate, even though black-footed ferrets are not native to Kentucky. When the program expanded, Louisville was selected as one of five zoo partners, including the Phoenix Zoo, the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo, the Toronto Zoo and the National Zoo.

Louisville received its first 12 ferrets — seven male and five female — in January 1991. They were housed in the new Conservation Center built specifically for breeding black-footed ferrets and preparing them for release.

FERRET FAST FORWARD

Black-footed ferrets only breed once a year, which leaves a very small window for keeper Guy Graves, who has been caring for the ferrets since the program began. Males and females don't necessarily come into season at the same time, adding to the complexity, and pairs aren't always compatible.

"It's kind of like being the manager of a baseball team, knowing when to bring in your relief pitcher," Graves says.

The other enormous challenge is maintaining genetic diversity, considering the originating population of just 18 animals. Since the goal of the program is to release the ferrets back into their native habitat, this genetic diversity is crucial for the species' survival.

"We want to put the best animals out into the release sites, the ones with the best genes,"



Black-footed ferret Silverdollar and kits

Graves says, "because we can't control the breeding once the ferrets are released."

Since they will be reintroduced to their native habitat, it's important that the young ferrets, called kits, learn the behaviors that will help them survive in the remnant wild. They need to build muscle to be able to prey on prairie dogs, which are often bigger than the ferrets. Fortunately, this is where the Louisville Zoo excels.

Lights in the facility are timed to mimic the changing daylight throughout the year. With training and enrichment, the Zoo's black-footed ferrets develop their hunting behaviors as well as behaviors like caching or storing items for future use. Their habitats are designed to give them access via a tube (like a tunnel) to "above ground" and "below ground" spaces. As tempting as it may be, the kits are not handled by keepers.

When the kits are between 90 and 120 days old, they are sent to a pre-conditioning site in Colorado. This schedule corresponds to the time they would typically begin to live on their own. Before they are released at one of the 20 release sites, they spend about a month in a controlled environment

that allows them to hunt for prairie dogs. They are also vaccinated against canine distemper and fitted with a transponder, a small electronic chip that lets USFWS identify the ferrets in the wild.

The first kits born in Louisville were released in 1992 — 13 animals that joined 92 young ferrets from other institutions.

The Louisville Zoo has since produced almost 1,100 kits.

From only 18 surviving members of the species, the conservation partners together have produced nearly 10,000 black-footed ferrets.



Guy Graves and John Walczak at release site

1997

Betty White joins dignitaries for the opening of Phase II of the Islands Pavilion.



The Islands exhibit receives the "Project of the Year" award from the American Public Works Association, Kentucky Chapter.

The Cuban Crocodile Species Survival Plan Field Research Project receives an AZA Conservation Endowment Fund grant.

Bella and Segundo, Sumatran orangutans, arrive at the Zoo.

Tsavo the lion "disappears" to the alarm of Zoo officials and neighbors, but is discovered soon afterward hiding in his exhibit.

Bill Nye, "The Science Guy," visits the Zoo.



1998

The University of Louisville School of Dentistry offers an elective course, Exotic Animal Dentistry, with Dr. Tom Clark and Dr. Roy Burns, Zoo veterinarian.



The BOMA, an African petting zoo, opens and includes an intern program through a partnership with Jefferson Community College.

The Islands exhibit receives the AZA's "Significant Achievement Award."

The Metro Disability Coalition recognizes the Zoo with the "Breaking Barriers Award for Accessibility for the Disabled."

November – The African Outpost opens as a unique ecotourism lodge and the Zoo's first indoor restaurant.



Veterinary medicine has evolved significantly since the first days of the Louisville Zoo, which didn't have a full-time vet on staff until Dr. Bill Foster was hired in 1977. Dr. Roy Burns, hired in 1990, was instrumental in formalizing the preventative health program for the Zoo's veterinary department. Today, the Zoo is a leader in providing a "circle of care" — including veterinary staff, zoo keepers, and even local veterinary and human health care professionals who volunteer their expertise — all to provide the absolute best care and quality of life for the animals.



Staff veterinarian Dr. Zoli Gyimesi and hospital supervisor Jamie Huber x-ray an Amur tiger.



Associate veterinarian Dr. Julie Ter Beest and veterinary technician Elizabeth Hayden examine a Chilean flamingo.



Veterinary technician Catherine Smolinski anesthetizes a cane toad in a medicated bath.



Retired staff veterinarian Dr. Roy Burns and hospital supervisor Virginia Crossett examine a silverback gorilla.



Veterinary Technician Elizabeth Hayden monitors Qannik the polar bear's recovery from anesthesia.

THE EXOTIC VET'S TOOLBOX

The following figures are from 2019.



6
total staff in veterinary medicine



2,493
medical notes per year



1,845
total prescriptions per year (for preventive, general health/wellness, illness)



2,246
lab samples processed in-house



8,701
lab tests run and interpreted in-house



453
radiographs/ultrasounds taken and interpreted



31+
MD Specialists (medical doctors who volunteer their time in specialties such as anesthesiology, psychiatry, dermatology, pediatrics, surgery, dentistry, otolaryngology, cardiology, OB/GYN and neonatology)



20+
Outside animal care experts who volunteer their time, expertise or equipment.



250+
publications/presentations with Louisville Zoo participants/contributors

Close Encounters of the Chimp Kind

As a pediatric neurologist, Bill Holmes visited the primates in the Zoo's early years to consult on a chimp with suspected seizures.

"Now be careful," his associate warned. "They throw things, like feces." Holmes learned quickly. "I was no more than two steps into that area when a carrot hit my leg," he said. Holmes credits the chimp for being a good shot — and for throwing only a carrot.

A 48-year member of the Zoo, Holmes's relationship with the place began even before that fateful chimp encounter. The first house he remembers living in stood just across Poplar Level Road. As a young boy, Holmes, now 76, rode his bike on land that would become the Zoo.

Years later, Bill's wife, Joyce, started their family Zoo membership when their first child was born. Now they have four grandchildren. And always, there was the Zoo.

"We think the Zoo is not a luxury. It's a necessary thing," Holmes said. "A community like Louisville absolutely needs the Zoo. People need to appreciate the animals, and the kids need to learn about them, too."

While the big picture is important, Holmes said, the "little memory makers" make the Zoo special — like the time his oldest granddaughter became fascinated with one of the Zoo's big cats, got down

LOOKING BACK WITH BILL HOLMES, MD



Lori Taylor with chimpanzees

on its level and locked eyes with it. "It's like it went on forever," he said.

Then there's his own fascination. "It is the awe of standing in front of an animal that I really don't totally understand and is totally different from anything I've ever seen and wondering where it came from and what it thinks of me at the moment," Holmes said. "It's more of a spiritual experience than anything else."

1999

The African Outpost is awarded "Excellence in Architectural Design" by the Kentucky Society of Architects.

The School at the Zoo program begins, and for the third year, Zoo educators link with schools in Pike County using Male High School's Kentucky Tele-Learning Network, a distance learning portal.

The Zoo reveals its fourth master plan.

The meerkat and mole rat exhibit opens.



The Louisville Zoo takes part in the first study of denning behavior of timber rattlesnakes ever conducted in Kentucky, along with the Bernheim Research Forest and Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources.

A partnership with the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund is established.



Conservation Carousel

A Moving Family Experience

On any given day, guests can jump, climb, splash and eat their way through the Louisville Zoo. Take a ride on an exotic carousel. Meditate in a tranquil garden. Bang on an African drum. Cool off, swing on the monkey bars or savor a tasty burger.

Since its inception, the Louisville Zoo has focused on providing a venue for family fun, which doesn't stop at viewing and learning about animals. While showcasing a magnificent collection of animals, the Zoo provides lots of settings for play. Children — and adults — are encouraged to go a little wild and enjoy a variety of experiences throughout the Zoo.

Perhaps the most iconic of these attractions is the Conservation Carousel, located just off

the Main Plaza at the Zoo. The original carousel was built in 1919 by the Philadelphia Toboggan Company, long known for the craftsmanship of their carousels. The carousel was installed in 2000 with the help of the Adam Burckle Family, the Paul Ogle Foundation and several others who contributed to the refurbishment.

But this is no ordinary carousel. Over the years, the Zoo has replaced 24 of the vintage horses with hand-carved, wooden animals, many of which are endangered. Some of the animals that guests can ride include a polar bear, a giraffe, a black-footed ferret and a cheetah. The Conservation Carousel has lived up to its name, according to former Zoo director Bill Foster. "For young children, the carousel is a gentle introduction to the world of animals; for adults it's a reminder of the need to conserve our rich resources for the next generation."

The Zoo has always strived to be a well-rounded family destination, with plenty of opportunities for individuals to bond with each other as well as with nature.

“ I can see these children bringing their children to the Zoo, taking them on the carousel and telling them, ‘when I was your age, I always rode the cheetah.’ ”

— Bill Foster, Louisville Zoo Director

2000

The Zoo receives the "Accessibility Award for Achieving Distinguished Attitudes" from the ADA Action Network of Kentucky.

The Conservation Carousel makes its debut with 46 horses from 1919. Over time, the horses will be replaced with endangered and threatened animals.



KET produces "An Electronic Field Trip to the Zoo," which takes students behind the scenes to learn about the Zoo's conservation efforts.

Teachers from Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) participate with the Zoo in a two-week summer program at the Wildlife Conservation Society's Bronx Zoo to enhance the teaching of science using inquiry, made possible by a National Science Foundation grant.

Volunteer program hours increase 31% with volunteers contributing a total of \$1 million in service hours. The Docent program contributes an average of 24,000 volunteer hours per year.

Trapper, the Zoo's beloved 21-year-old lion, dies.





Flutter Fest, 2018

BEARS OF ALL BACKGROUNDS

Over the years, the Louisville Zoo has hosted many family events, from Earth Day celebrations to “The World’s Largest Halloween Party!” One special event stands out to Debbie Sebree, retired communications manager for the Zoo.

“Many years ago, one of the Zoo’s events was called the Teddy Bear Picnic — it was part of the Derby Festival kick-off. Visitors were invited to bring their favorite teddy bear or stuffed animal and picnic at the Zoo. Some kind and talented seamstresses staffed a Teddy Bear Hospital where kids could bring bears that needed a seam re-stitched, stuffing replaced or an eye repaired.”

“I was talking to some visitors waiting in line and noticed a soldier who was tall and broad-shouldered, with buzz cut hair and dressed in fatigues,” Sebree remembers. “He was holding a teddy bear whose ear needed to be reattached. The bear was wearing the exact same fatigues as its owner.”

“A little boy was in line with his mom and sister and her bear in a pink tutu. The boy looked at the soldier and said to his mom, ‘See Mom, Army heroes have stuffed animals too.’ I later found out that the soldier was getting ready to be stationed overseas and he was getting his own childhood bear repaired to leave with his young son.”

WHERE WERE YOU WHEN ... ?

1969: The first birthday party is held at the Zoo.

1970: Christmas at the Zoo week is held with Santa and Mrs. Claus arriving on a firetruck.

1978: The first “Arts with the Animals” series includes performances from the Louisville Ballet, Stage One, Kentucky Opera, Louisville Orchestra Ensemble and Actors Theatre Apprentice Company throughout the month of September.

1980: The first *Zoofari!* is hosted by the Louisville Zoological Society (a volunteer fundraising organization, later renamed Friends of the Zoo.)

1980: The first “Run with the Animals” takes place. It would later be called Throo the Zoo 5K Race.

1982: The Zoo presents “Halloween at the Zoo” for the first time, featuring a pumpkin-judging contest. In 2007, “The World’s Largest Halloween Party!” is named one of the top 10 Kentucky events by the Kentucky Tourism Council.

1985: A record 4,630 people attend the Zoo’s Teddy Bear Picnic.

1988: The Zoo Loper Walking Club starts. It would later become the Get Healthy Walking Club, presented by Norton Healthcare.

1989: The Louisville Orchestra presents the first Roarchestra Concert Series at the Zoo.

1990: A celebration of the 20th anniversary of Earth Day brings 30,000 visitors to the Zoo in a single day.

1993: The World Bird Sanctuary presents the show, “Birds in Flight,” on the MetaZoo stage throughout the summer.

1998: The Kentucky Shakespeare Festival premieres its summer production of *Macbeth* at the Zoo.

1999: Dr. Earth & His Amazing Imagination Station performs at the Zoo over the summer.

2002: The Zoo hosts the legendary band, The Monkees – in a thunderstorm – to help celebrate the opening of Gorilla Forest.

2010: Dinosaurs! makes its debut, with 16 life-size robotic creatures.

2015: Sean Kenney’s Nature Connects® LEGO® Brick Sculptures exhibit is featured at the Zoo.

2017: The Zoo holds its first Flutter Fest, an annual butterfly festival.

2001

A 270-foot mural along Newburg Road is created by Byron Roberts of Unique Murals, funded by the Zoo and Aldermen Bill Allison and Cyril Allgeier.

Living Jewels of the Munro Maya, a temporary walk-through butterfly exhibit, opens in the rain forest of the HerpAquarium.



Dr. Tom Clark performs a partial pulpotomy procedure on the broken tusk of Asian elephant Sabu.

In anticipation of the new Gorilla Forest exhibit, the Zoo unveils a bronze silverback gorilla sculpture by Bill Wieger. The Zoo announces it will receive 10 western lowland gorillas on loan from Lincoln Park Zoo.

The first rockhopper penguins are born at the Zoo. The Zoo hosts International Family Festival.





Great Apes Have Great Impact

Opening day of Gorilla Forest on May 23, 2002, featured a ribbon-cutting ceremony with Mayor Dave Armstrong and actress Betty White and brought thousands of visitors to the Louisville Zoo.

In less than two months after Gorilla Forest opened, nearly a quarter of a million people had come to the Zoo to see the exhibit. Attendance spiked again in November when Jojo, a 430-pound silverback, made his Louisville debut, prompting a catchy musical theme as part of the Zoo's advertising campaign. Children would often sing Jojo's jingle

Kindi and Kweli

2002

May – Gorilla Forest opens with a gorilla family that includes Frank, Helen and Debbie. The groundbreaking exhibit is designed so that guests are surrounded by gorillas. Students from Bellarmine University's theater arts program serve as interpreters.



The Zoo receives numerous awards, including LEO Weekly magazine's "Readers' Choice Award – Best Family Outing" and the "Enterprise Cities Award – Entrepreneurial Approach to Government Through Special Projects and Unique Initiatives" from Kentucky League of Cities and The Lane Report.

Zoo director Bill Foster is awarded the "Spirit of Yes!" by the Leadership Louisville Foundation.

The Kids and Conservation Program magazine (later named Backyard Action Hero Guidebook) makes its debut, with 300,000 copies distributed to elementary students statewide.

The Zoo achieves a record annual attendance of 798,000.

September – Another group of gorillas arrives from Lincoln Park Zoo, including silverback Jojo and females Bahati, Makari and Tabibu.



when they saw him in person: “He’s really, really, really, really big.”

Once again, Louisville was at the forefront of zoo design with a groundbreaking exhibit that tells a story. As visitors trek through the wild jungles of Africa, they learn about the many threats facing these critically endangered primates. Past the elusive pygmy hippos, intrigued visitors discover an inner sanctuary where humans are surrounded by families of gorillas.

“We had a huge history of Dian Fossey, this iconic researcher and conservationist, who had lived in Louisville,” said Bill Foster, then director of the Zoo. “So, there was a lot of interest in gorillas from the community.”



A student entertains Jelani

The exhibit won top honors for exhibit design that year from the AZA and continues to enthrall children and adults alike. The gorillas, too, seem to be amused. One silverback, Jelani, particularly likes to look at photos on people’s phones. “He prefers pictures of gorillas or other apes, but he’ll also look at children’s photos,” said Jill Katka, assistant mammal curator and supervisor of Gorilla Forest. Jelani became an internet sensation when video of him interacting with a young guest went viral and earned more than 6.7 million views.

Katka loves Jelani’s notoriety and the attention it brings to the plight of gorillas in the wild. “When someone sees him looking at a phone, they think, ‘How smart are these gorillas?’ They really want to know more about them.”

BABY GORILLA FINDS NEW FAMILY

The native population of western lowland gorillas (like those in the Zoo) is declining rapidly due to threats such as deforestation, the bush meat trade and the Ebola virus. To maintain genetic diversity of managed populations, breeding of gorillas is carefully regulated and overseen by an expert committee through the AZA’s Gorilla Species Survival Plan (SSP). So, Gorilla Forest keepers were well aware of the significance of Mia Moja’s planned pregnancy in 2016.

Mia Moja was a young, healthy gorilla — active, energetic and curious. She was the alpha female of her family group. Her pregnancy was monitored with ultrasound, and everything seemed to be going well.



Kindi

“It’s one planet. It’s important to know that what we do is contributing to the good of the whole.”

– Jill Katka, Assistant Mammal Curator and Gorilla Forest Supervisor

But in the early morning hours of March 14, 2016, three weeks before she was due, keepers found Mia in distress. The Zoo had protocols in place, and human OB-GYN specialists were on call, as were the Zoo’s veterinary staff. It was quickly determined that an emergency cesarean section needed to be performed.

With help from a human neonatal specialist, the baby was delivered and was close to the average weight and length of a full-term gorilla baby.

Sadly, Mia never recovered and died the next day. She suffered from a condition called placenta previa, which may lead to labor complications and excessive bleeding.

Even as they mourned the death of Mia, Gorilla Forest keepers had a newborn gorilla that needed their immediate attention. “It’s extremely emotional to lose an animal, especially one that you’re so close with,” said Jill Katka. “And then to have to raise this infant and have that responsibility. Just like a human baby, you can’t just put it down and walk away.”

The keepers named the baby Kindi in honor of her mother. Kindi means “squirrel” in Swahili, an affectionate nickname for Mia, who was playful, quick and agile.

For the next five months, keepers spent every minute of every day with Kindi, emulating a gorilla mom. A core team of nine keepers slept, ate and played with Kindi. They wore a furry vest so Kindi would strengthen her hand muscles and learn to cling to an adult gorilla. They made gorilla vocalizations, purring softly to comfort Kindi, or

2003

Gorilla Forest receives the AZA “Exhibit Award” for outstanding dedication to conservation issues and construction of exhibit space replicating natural habitats.

The Kentucky Veterinary Medical Association inducts Trapper, the African lion who lived at the Zoo for 21 years, to the Animal Hall of Fame.

To relieve arthritis, one of the Islands’ babirusas is treated with electrostimulant acupuncture.

An otolaryngologist assists the Zoo’s veterinary staff.



A grant from the Kentucky Division of Forestry allows the Zoo to purchase global positioning equipment to aid in the study of the botanical collection.

An extremely rare African open-billed stork hatches.

The Zoo begins a partnership with ECO-CELL to recycle cell phones.

Azizi is born to Makari and Jojo, the first gorilla birth at the Zoo.



squawking sharply when Kindi needed to be scolded. When she was old enough, they crawled around on all fours with Kindi on their backs, so she would learn this common mode of gorilla transportation. They took her into all the spaces in Gorilla Forest, sitting with her on the high shelves, clambering through the overhead passages. They took her outside so she could explore the grass and trees and sunshine.

But most important, they kept Kindi close to all the other gorillas, so that she would grow up hearing, seeing and smelling them. Because, from the start, the goal of hand-raising Kindi was to teach her how to be the best gorilla she could be. And ultimately, that meant she had to live with gorillas.

Since she would need to continue drinking formula, keepers taught Kindi to crawl to the side of the exhibit and take a bottle through the protective mesh. Meanwhile, a suitable surrogate mother had to be identified. They found one in Kweli.

When asked if she has any special memories of bringing up Kindi, Jill Katka said, “My favorite memory is the day that Kweli picked her up. Because the key to Kindi being as gorilla as she could be is to be raised by another gorilla. That’s just the very best thing for her.”

The keepers cheered when Kweli picked up Kindi, “because we had done what we had meant to do.” Today, you would never know that Kweli isn’t Kindi’s birth mother. Kweli keeps a close eye on Kindi and takes advantage of teachable moments. “She started from day one,” Katka said. “The first thing Kweli taught Kindi was to come to her when

she called. It was really fascinating to watch.” Today, Kindi vocalizes, climbs, eats and socializes just like the other gorillas.

But to Katka and the Gorilla Forest crew, Kindi will always be special — not just because they hand-raised her. “She doesn’t really distinguish between gorillas and gorilla staff,” Katka said. “That’s how Gorilla Forest was designed, so that humans become part of the family group.” In that sense, all of Louisville is part of Kindi’s extended family.



Jill Katka with Kindi

Mayor Raises the Roof

LOOKING BACK WITH JERRY ABRAMSON, MAYOR

Jerry Abramson, forty-seventh mayor of Louisville and the first mayor of Louisville Metro, has been a longtime advocate for the Zoo.

“I just thought the Zoo was a really important part of the fabric of our community and supported it as strongly as I could,” Abramson said.

But progress was occasionally impeded. “I remember when the Zoo was building the thatched café over by Gorilla Forest [the African Outpost]. That was built by African workers who came to the United States under a construction contract to thatch that roof. All of a sudden, I get a call from Dr. Foster one day, saying that OSHA — my people — shut them down for not wearing shoes. So, I called OSHA and said something to the effect of, ‘When your guys go back out to the Zoo, would you let me know?’ The next time they went to the Zoo, the men had their shoes on.”

That wasn’t Abramson’s last encounter with the African Outpost. “My going-away party, the first time I was mayor, was at that restaurant where we had our administration leadership and friends. And they surprised me with the Monarchs, a rock-n-roll band that was around when I was in high school, and they played for us that night. That was the first event ever held at that thatched roof café.”

Abramson is still an avid fan of the Zoo. “It has been a vision of this community to have a very

exciting, attractive, ever-changing zoo that would bring in folks from throughout the region and would be something we could be extremely proud of. It has evolved into just that — a fantastic asset for the community.”



Mayor Abramson with musicians at African Outpost opening

2004

March – John Walczak becomes the fourth Zoo director.



The Zoo receives the AZA’s “North American Conservation Award” for the Puerto Rican Crested Toad Species Survival Plan (SSP) Conservation Partnership. The Zoo now manages 40 SSP species.

Three Sumatran tiger cubs are born and appear on WHAS11 news with Islands staff.



“On the Wild Side – Babies” is the National First Place winner in the Government Profile Category, Professional Division of the 2004 Hometown Video Festival.

The Zoo hosts the AZA Regional Conference.

The popular Brew at the Zoo annual fundraiser launches.



A 1987 census showed that only 18 black-footed ferrets remained in North America. As of 2004, the Zoo has seen 503 kits born with nearly 300 released back into the wild.



John Walczak with baby wallaby

Bettering the Bond

**JOHN WALCZAK,
LOUISVILLE ZOO DIRECTOR
(2004-PRESENT)**

John Walczak came to the Zoo in 1985 to be the first HerpAquarium curator. “When I got the opportunity to interview, I was so excited,” he recalled. “I had the chance to design the facility, build the collection and hire the staff — it was a dream, especially to do it in such a wonderful town like Louisville.”

Walczak hit the ground running and hasn’t slowed down since. He’s had a hand in developing just about every major exhibit at the Zoo, from the HerpAquarium to Glacier Run to Snow Leopard Pass. If you want to suggest an exhibit, though, just don’t tell him you saw it somewhere else. “Whenever we’re interviewing architects for new projects, the worst thing you could ever say is, ‘Oh, we did this at this zoo, we did it at that zoo.’ We don’t want what’s been done, we want to know what the future is. Designers say we now have a reputation for amazing innovation. We do things that others don’t think are possible.”

He adds, “That’s what I think has been special about the Louisville Zoo over the past 50 years.”



John Walczak with schoolchildren

“*Every morning I wake up, I put my feet on the floor and think, ‘How can we make the world a better place today?’*”
— John Walczak

Walczak is especially enthusiastic about the compassion he sees throughout the community. In 2018, he was at the lion exhibit on the African savanna. “Our female was getting way up there in years. I was just standing there, hearing how everybody knew her story. They knew about her and they were connected to her and they cared about her. That’s one of the ways the Zoo offers common ground and brings us all together.”

What really thrills Walczak, though, is seeing humans make a personal connection with conservation. Several years ago, he went out to a site in Colorado to participate in the release of black-footed ferrets born at the Zoo. There aren’t enough national parks to sustain a reintroduced population of ferrets, so the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service often makes arrangements with private ranches.

“We’re getting ready to release these black-footed ferrets on a privately owned ranch,” he recalled. “Two sisters were on the ranch, and one was just so excited. She had all these great questions — how are they going to do and how long are they going to live? And the other sister said, ‘Are they going to eat enough prairie dogs?’ That was a perfectly good question, too. Together, these two sisters captured the essence of how we need to find ways to live in balance with nature.”

Walczak particularly remembers one participant from the release. “She was the daughter of the sister who wanted to know if the ferrets would eat enough prairie dogs. To see this young lady open up the crate door and watch that ferret go — to see the look on her face. It was pure joy. And that’s what conservation, in the field and at the Zoo, is all about.”



Black-footed ferret release site

2005

Lorikeet Landing at Rainbow Springs, a walk-through aviary, opens.



“The World’s Largest Halloween Party!” at the Zoo sets an all-time attendance record of 90,223 visitors in 14 nights.

After a three-year application process, the Zoo receives accreditation by the American Association of Museums (AAM) and becomes the only accredited botanical garden in Kentucky.

Animal Planet’s “Ultimate Zoo” devotes episodes to Islands and Gorilla Forest; Gorilla Forest is featured in the inaugural episode.

Kibibi is the first pygmy hippo born at the Zoo.



The Zoo partners with Polar Bears International with a program in which teens participate in a leadership program in Churchill, Manitoba, Canada.

King Louis, a six-foot long rare white alligator, arrives at the Zoo.

African elephant Mikki is pregnant, the result of successful artificial insemination.

2006

Wallaroo Walkabout and the Billabong Playground open.

Zoo to You, a statewide outreach initiative that promotes the Louisville Zoo as the State Zoo of Kentucky and provides core content curriculum to schools, reaches nearly 3,000 students in 13 Kentucky counties.

The Etscorn Garden, named for Irvin F. and Alice S. Etscorn, opens to provide a tranquil place for visitors, and includes a waterfall, a pond donated by Louise Judah and brick donation opportunities.



Two rare Rodrigues fruit bats are born in the Islands. In October, the Islands is home to the first-ever hatching of the white-throated ground dove in a managed environment. Thirteen more have hatched since.

Growing Paradise

Imagine selecting the perfect plant for your garden, nurturing it, making sure it has all the natural resources it needs — only to have it yanked out of the ground by an elephant.

“We’d occasionally underestimate the length and dexterity of their trunks,” said Mark Zoeller, former assistant director at the Louisville Zoo, who got his start managing the horticulture department. “We called it ‘selective pruning.’”

Planning and maintaining the landscape for the Zoo, which encompasses more than 90 acres, is challenging on many fronts. First, there is a lot of limestone just beneath the surface of the soil, and the site itself is very rocky and hilly. But there’s a much more serious concern.

“We had to be very, very careful about toxicity,” Zoeller said. “Because we weren’t just planting a horticultural showpiece — we were planting a salad bar for the animals.”

Zoeller recalls one project that didn’t quite go as planned. He and his team did a planting inside the Rodrigues fruit bat exhibit in the Islands pavilion. “We planted the heck out of it, and it really added to the exhibit, because before, it was artificial and looked kind of sterile. So, it went great and we were all patting each other on the back. We went and ate

“*The Zoo has a very special niche in the horticultural world. It has a landscape that’s totally unique in Louisville.*”

— Mark Zoeller, Former Horticulture Manager and Assistant Zoo Director

lunch and then came back. And the bats had mowed everything down — they had eaten and pulled the leaves off almost everything in the exhibit.”

Not surprisingly, Zoeller’s tenure at the Zoo also made an impression on his children. “I had to go to work on a Saturday with the Green Guerrillas, our horticulture volunteers. My wife was pregnant with our second child, so I brought my son, who was about three. He helped me out. He was really good, really tolerant of having to be there. So, at the end of the day, I took him up to the elephant exhibit and the keepers let him come back and feed one of the elephants some bamboo we had been trimming. That was pretty cool. When we got home, I said, ‘Tell your mom what you got to do.’ And he said, ‘I got to sit on a tractor!’”

After cultivating what began as a sandy lot, the Zoo ultimately achieved botanical garden status in 2005 after a thorough accreditation process by the American Association of Museums. For many years, the Zoo has had the help of John Korfhage of Korfhage Landscape and Design to plan and plant the exhibits and garden areas. For a new exhibit, Korfhage starts with the architects’ drawings, which only provide basic suggestions, and imagines a totally immersive experience for both the animals and the guests.

One setting that both Korfhage and Zoeller are especially proud of is Gorilla Forest, which makes

visitors — and, importantly, gorillas — feel as if they’ve entered a dense jungle. “Unlike some of the other exhibits where plants are mostly around the perimeter, we knew the gorillas were going to be very intimate with the landscape,” Zoeller said. As part of the exhibit, the Zoo created a bai — like a swampy clearing in the jungle where gorillas would go to forage. Korfhage used an equine pasture mix, thinking that since it was palatable to horses, it might be palatable for the gorillas. It took a year to grow. “When the gorillas were released,” Korfhage remembers, “they sat on a log, reached around and grabbed a handful of grass and started eating it — the first day. They just grabbed big handfuls of grass, and we knew we had it right.”



Gorilla Forest entrance



HerpAquarium

2007

The Zoo begins donating 25 cents of each admission and \$1 of each membership to support conservation projects.

Thirty Panamanian golden frogs are new additions to the HerpAquarium as part of an AZA effort to help stem the tide of their extinction.

March — Scotty is the first elephant born at the Louisville Zoo. More than 12,000 names are submitted for the naming contest.



September — In its 16th year, the Zoo’s black-footed ferret program has produced 600 kits with more than 330 reintroduced into the wild.

Three maned wolf pups are born, along with a female bongo and a male siamang. Bongos are considered near threatened, while maned wolves and siamangs are endangered.

Kentucky Tourism Council names “The World’s Largest Halloween Party!” one of the “Top 10 Kentucky Events.”



2008

Tiger Tundra is renovated and renamed Alice S. Etscorn Tiger Tundra.



The Louisville Zoo license plate becomes a charitable specialty option for Kentucky license plates.

September — The Zoo breaks ground for the new Glacier Run exhibit, which will house bears, seals and sea lions.

Attendance reaches a new record of 818,129.

Your Zoo Goes Green

When the Zoo was building Gorilla Forest in 2001, then-assistant director John Walczak got his first cell phone. Not long after, he heard a story on the radio about coltan, a metallic ore used in most mobile devices to make them vibrate. Mining for coltan contributes to the destruction of habitats in the Congo's forest, where gorillas live. Gorilla Forest told the story.

By offering education about the coltan crisis as part of Gorilla Forest, the Zoo inspired a new Louisville-based company called ECO-CELL, which recycles cell phones and other devices to reduce the need for coltan mining and to raise money for conservation. For nearly 20 years, the Zoo has been a prime drop-off site for conservation-minded citizens to turn in their mobile devices.

Here are some of the other ways the Zoo works to reduce its carbon footprint and build awareness for sustainable practices.

- Many of the Zoo's buildings have environmentally friendly features, including a green roof on the HerpAquarium and a bioclimatic interior design to save energy; extra thick insulation in the Conservation Center; and solar panels on the administration building and carousel.
- The Splash Park was the first recirculating splash park water system in the city of Louisville.

- The Zoo collects shoes for WaterStep to help support clean water projects in communities around the world.
- ZooPoopyDoo provides compost manure from elephants, rhinos and other herbivores to use on Zoo grounds and by home gardeners.
- In 2017, the Zoo switched to a waste removal service with a sophisticated recycling program to decrease the amount of waste going to landfills.
- Each year, the Zoo is the center for the community's celebration of Earth Day through April's Party for the Planet: A Monthlong Celebration of the Earth.
- Conservation education is woven throughout exhibit design, as in Gorilla Forest and Glacier Run, and offered to schoolchildren and guests every day.



Splash Park

A Walk on the Wild Side

LOOKING BACK WITH ANN SWANK, PHD

When Ann Swank goes for a neighborhood walk, new worlds open up. In just 15 minutes, her steps take her to the Zoo.

"I love to walk through the Zoo," she said. "I see something new and different every day."

One day stands out. As a special reward for her fundraising work several years ago, the Zoo offered Swank a behind-the-scenes look at an Amur tiger. She stood in the room as one of the world's largest felines got a health check and teeth cleaning.

"Here's this tiger that was just gorgeous," she said. "I'm touching this Amur tiger that otherwise would be having me for lunch."

Swank witnessed a host of people caring for the sedated cat and working to ensure its health. "It moved me to be a part of that," she said.

How else could she help, Swank asked. She learned the Zoo wanted a portable ultrasound machine, so she donated the money for it. Recently, she visited two animals who benefited — the Zoo's African elephant Mikki and her calf.

"He is so cute," Swank said of the baby elephant. "I could just watch those two interact with each other forever," she said.



Giving Mikki an ultrasound

A lifelong animal lover and longtime member of the Zoo, Swank stressed the importance of the Zoo's education and conservation efforts. Both the Amur tiger and African elephant are endangered.

"A big part of the Louisville Zoo is not just the entertainment value," she said, "but the saving of animals, the saving of species."

For Swank, out on her neighborhood walks, the Zoo's efforts also mean the saving of her neighbors.

2009

March – The new Sky Trail High-Adventure ropes course opens.

A new gift shop opens, featuring fair trade items.



Timmy turns 50, becoming the oldest male gorilla in North America.

Louisville teens Emily Goldstein and Brandy Farkas win Project Polar Bear, an international contest sponsored by Polar Bears International.



The new SpongeBob SquarePants 4-D ride opens, later followed by "Dora & Diego" and "Planet Earth: Ice Works."

The first-ever Madagascar teal duck is born at the Zoo.



Students at Fairdale High School, Newburg Middle School, Cane Run Elementary and Portland Elementary connect live via video link with John Walczak and Dr. Sheldon Berman, JCPS Superintendent, in Churchill, Manitoba, Canada, the polar bear capital of the world.

First Santa's Safari is held.





The Little Bear That Could

“This zoo is like no other zoo, and I’ve traveled around and been to lots of facilities. We have magic here.”
– Jane Anne Franklin, Mammal Curator and Animal Training Supervisor

The Louisville Zoo is one of only eight accredited zoos to have won three or more of the AZA’s top exhibit awards. But the award-winning Glacier Run, which opened in 2011, has meant a lot more for the Louisville Zoo than accolades.

Glacier Run was singled out by the AZA for two significant reasons: its authentic storyline about a frontier town on the edge of the Arctic Circle, and its groundbreaking work in animal enrichment.

Traditionally in other zoos, keepers interact with the animals in their charge maybe twice a day. Glacier Run is designed so that

Polar bear

2010

John Walczak receives the Leadership Louisville “Spirit of Yes!” award.



The largest capital campaign in the Zoo’s history raises \$25 million for Glacier Run. Three grizzly bears, who will move into Glacier Run when the facility is completed, arrive at the Zoo from Montana as part of a rescue program.

The Glacier Run seal and sea lion area opens.

Scotty, the first elephant born at the Zoo, dies of endotoxemia. The community shows its support and grief with an outpouring of notes, flowers and other items left at the Zoo.

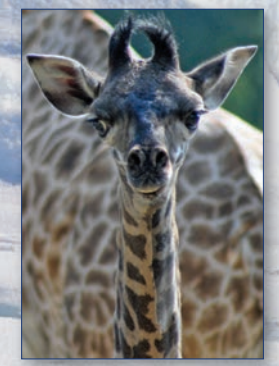


Pennies for Polar Bears campaign reaches out to schools in the Kentuckiana area.



The Zoo celebrates the 30th anniversary of AZA accreditation.

Baby gorilla Misha and baby giraffe Oliver are born.



The Pan African Sanctuary Alliance (PASA) becomes a new conservation partner.

Black-footed ferret 50 Cent gives birth to the 800th kit to be born at the Zoo.



the animals can see and hear keepers almost anywhere, a design pioneered in the Islands exhibit and replicated in Gorilla Forest. In all these exhibits, the goal is to facilitate close relationships between keepers and animals, so that keepers can provide veterinary staff with critical information about animal health and behavior.

“Training is really, really simple,” said Jane Anne Franklin, mammal curator and animal training supervisor. “Consequence drives behavior. And if you can keep it simple, you can move mountains.”

What’s also unique about Glacier Run is that several of the animals that currently live here are rescues — sea lion Riva; grizzly bears Inga, Otis and Rita; and, of course, Qannik.

The little polar bear cub was discovered in Alaska on the very day that Glacier Run opened. She was named Qannik, which means “snowflake” in the Iñupiaq Native Alaska language, because she was found by employees of ConocoPhillips on the north slope of Qannik oil field. She was five and a half months old, significantly underweight and alone. After quickly concluding that Qannik had no chance of survival on her own, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service decided to rescue her. She was then taken to the Alaska Zoo.

The Louisville Zoo was unanimously recommended by the AZA Polar Bear Species Survival Plan and Taxonomy Group as the best place to raise Qannik, due not only to the new state-of-the-art Glacier Run but also because of the Zoo’s extensive track record of animal training and enrichment. Qannik needed a stable home after her harrowing



Operation Snowflake

experiences as a young abandoned cub, and Louisville could provide that.

The first hurdle was a big one — transporting Qannik from Alaska to Kentucky. With support from Mayor Greg Fischer, UPS stepped up to the plate, and Operation Snowflake was officially underway. There are strict regulations for moving marine mammals, and UPS has its own requirements, so meticulous logistical planning was essential.

Zoo director John Walczak, Franklin and veterinarian Dr. Zoli Gyimesi flew to Anchorage to accompany Qannik to her new home. For four days, they met with staff at the Alaska Zoo to learn as much as they could. Qannik had been at that zoo for less than two months.

A VERY SPECIAL DELIVERY

The flight back to Louisville was five and a half hours nonstop. The Zoo crew brought supplies to be prepared for any medical emergency and formula popsicles in case Qannik got hungry. When she arrived in Louisville on June 27, 2011, Qannik

received a police escort for her ride from the airport to the Zoo.

Dozens of people from 10 different UPS departments were involved in Operation Snowflake.

“We had pilots, engineers, aircraft schedulers, security experts, operations experts in Louisville and Anchorage, cargo logisticians and communications personnel, just to hit the highlights,” said Mike Mangeot, UPS strategic communications director.

Mangeot flew with Qannik and her entourage, which included animal caretakers from Louisville and Anchorage, plus pilots Edward Horne, Wayne Jackson and Steve Jennings.

When Mangeot first saw Qannik, “she was breathtaking. She was about the size of a medium-sized dog, like my Boxer with a lot more hair!”

All the hard work and planning paid off, and Qannik arrived safely in Louisville. Jackie Blair, UPS public relations supervisor and Operation Snowflake coordinator, was standing with Zoo personnel as the 747-400 turned and taxied to the parking space. “The smiles on everyone’s faces filled me with great satisfaction and pride. I knew that once again UPS had managed the logistical challenge and delivered on our promise. I’m sure if I could have seen my own face, I was grinning from ear to ear, too.”

IT’S A MATTER OF TRUST

Caring for a wild-born orphan polar bear cub is not something that happens every day. In the previous 10 years, only two other cubs had been rescued



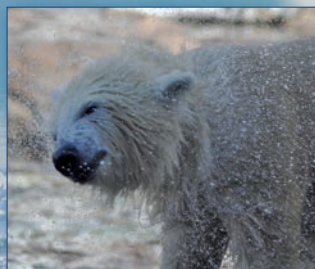
Qannik

2011

April – Glacier Run Village opens with the breaking of a ribbon made of ice.



June – Qannik, an abandoned polar bear from Anchorage, Alaska, is brought to the Louisville Zoo in “Operation Snowflake.”



2012

Siku the polar bear arrives from the Toledo Zoo.

The Zoo is awarded a Toyota Highlander with a polar bear design as part of the Toyota 100 Cars for Good program.



Gary Michael receives the Avian Scientific Advisory Group’s esteemed Plume Award for his work with the Species Survival Plan (SSP) for the white-throated ground dove.

Glacier Run receives the AZA’s top honors for exhibit design. For the 2011-2012 season, the Zoo sees record attendance with 945,184 guests.



from Alaska and raised in zoos prior to Qannik. Within days of their zoo residency, those cubs began exhibiting behaviors not typically seen in the wild, such as pacing. Franklin had seen this behavior before and was determined to prevent it in Qannik.

Polar bear cubs spend up to their first 30 months with their mother. Franklin's priority was to build trust with Qannik, who had been abandoned at such a young age. Qannik needed to feel safe.

"We would sit for hours together because that's what mom polar bears would do," Franklin said. "When she was asleep and then woke up, I was still there."

By the end of July, Qannik weighed a healthy 100 pounds. And her normal cortisol levels, taken to measure stress, indicated that she was adapting well to her new home.

Two years later, Qannik developed a serious fungal infection known as blastomycosis. As anyone who lives in the Ohio Valley knows, the local environment is ripe with allergens. Most likely, Qannik was reacting to something indigenous to the area that she had never before come in contact with and she had no immune defenses in place.

Franklin and her team did everything in their power to nurse Qannik back to health. They used any type of food they could think of to get Qannik to take her medicine — marshmallows, lard, ice cream, corn syrup, Nutella. But in the end, it was the relationship between Franklin, the other keepers and Qannik that saved the cub.

"This little bear was splayed out on the floor," said Zoo director John Walczak. "But she'd get up to



Qannik the polar bear

take her medicine because Jane Anne asked her to come over, and she trusted Jane Anne. That bear is alive today because of Jane Anne, Kevin Grizzle, the veterinary staff and the Glacier Run team."

Today, Qannik is as healthy as ever. Her weight averages 500 pounds, and she exhibits none of the stereotypical behaviors sometimes found in hand-raised animals. And Franklin is as enamored of Qannik as she was the first day they met.

"She's cute, her behavior's cool, she's really forward in her thinking and how she does things, and it's been evident since the minute I saw her."

Franklin's relationship with Qannik is not something she takes for granted. "It's an experience that most people will never have, and to be let into her world is an amazing thing. I understand that, and I can protect it, and that's what needs to happen."

Taking Action on the Tundra

Today a successful attorney in Chicago, Sam Leist was involved with the Louisville Zoo from a very early age. "I grew up just around the corner and spent many summer days there with my family or in camp." He started volunteering as a teenager at age 13 and later joined the Youth Board to help raise funds for the Zoo.

One day at the Zoo, he heard a presentation about Polar Bear International's Arctic Ambassador program, where teens from around the world gathered in Churchill, Canada, to learn about the arctic ecosystem and environmental issues. PBI is a nonprofit organization dedicated to securing a future for polar bears. Sam could barely contain his excitement. "It felt like all my time at the Zoo had been leading to this experience."

In 2008, Sam participated in PBI's Teen Leadership Camp as an Arctic Ambassador. "It was one of the most fulfilling experiences of my life. It made environmental concerns much more real for me," he said.

The experience would continue to inspire Sam. "Being an Ambassador led me to the DePauw University Environmental Fellows Program, an honors program that focuses on environmental issues, as well as the DePauw Environmental Policy Project, a semester-long environmental policy

experience. It's also something I talked about in my successful applications to law school and the Fulbright Scholarship."

Sam's enthusiasm for the Louisville Zoo hasn't waned over the years or miles. "I wish people knew how much the Zoo does for the community and the larger environment," he said. "People, especially children and young adults, who visit the Zoo can leave with a new world of knowledge and a renewed desire to support their communities and the world."



Sam Leist

2013

Helen the gorilla turns 55. As of 2019, Helen is the third oldest gorilla in a managed environment in the U.S.

The new Steller's sea eagle exhibit opens and also includes the red-breasted goose and azure-winged magpie. The new snowy owl exhibit opens as well.



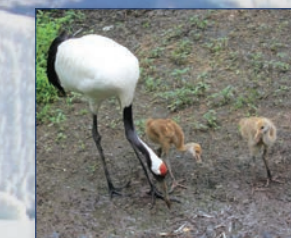
New animals at the Zoo include snow leopard Kimti, California sea lion Gremlin, jaguar LeBron and new meerkats.

April – The Zoo holds the first "Trashformation" contest in conjunction with the Party for the Planet: A Monthlong Celebration of the Earth.



The Louisville Zoo receives the "Significant Achievement in Education" award from the AZA for its School at the Zoo program, a core-content based and hands-on experience for students.

Rare red-crowned cranes are successfully bred for the first time in Zoo history. Ziva is the first Hartmann's mountain zebra born since 2000.



WHAT'S FOR LUNCH TODAY?

The Louisville Zoo **Commissary** is the “engine” where excellent care for the animals begins. Here’s a glimpse into the present-day diet requirements that help keep all of the animals at the Zoo healthy, happy and active.



An Extra-Sweet Treat

LOOKING BACK WITH MARTY PRAY, GUEST SERVICES

Children across the region look forward to “The World’s Largest Halloween Party!” hosted annually by the Louisville Zoo. But one little boy wasn’t able to participate — until the Zoo’s guest services got involved.

volunteers would then hand out the special treats Trevor’s father had provided.

Several years ago, the Zoo received a call from five-year-old Trevor’s father. He explained that his son had severe food allergies, but the father had a proposal: could he bring his own candy, so that Trevor could join in the Halloween festivities with all the other children?

The family returned year after year, and many of the volunteers who handed out candy came to recognize young Trevor. And every year, a staff member would shadow them, being careful to stay hidden so Trevor wouldn’t feel like he was being treated differently.

Marty Pray, then manager of guest services, gave the dad his cell phone number and told him to call when he arrived at the Zoo. Staff met the father at the front gate and picked up the bag of non-allergenic sweets. For the rest of the evening, a staff member followed the family around the Zoo. As they approached each candy station, the staff member would sneak ahead and alert the volunteers that Trevor was coming. The

Soon, the Zoo realized that there were many other children like Trevor and instituted allergy-friendly nights for “The World’s Largest Halloween Party!” where children can receive fun toys like plastic spiders and crayons instead of candy. On other nights, children have the option to see the “Switch Witch” to swap their candy for non-allergenic options.

“It all started with one family,” Pray said. “They had a need, they approached us and we could help them. And now everybody gets to have a great experience.”





On Wings of Hope

“ *We joke that with some mammals, you have to keep them from breeding — but with many birds, you have to do everything you can think of to get them to breed.*”
 — Gary Michael, Curator of Birds

Before coming to Louisville, curator of birds Gary Michael discovered the last Guam Micronesian kingfisher that remained in the wild. He recognized the bird’s call when it tried to attract a female mate that no longer existed in nature.

So that the bird wouldn’t perish alone, the group of biologists decided to bring it into a managed

environment to live with others of its species. The experience left Michael feeling conflicted.

“I call it a dubious distinction, that I helped collect the last Guam Micronesian kingfisher. We were successful in saving him. But in catching that bird, how sad it was to be directly involved with a species becoming extinct in the wild.”

The Guam Micronesian kingfisher now exists only in managed environments. There is some hope for reintroducing the subspecies in nature, but suitable habitats are shrinking due to deforestation, human encroachment and an invasive population of brown tree snakes.

His experience with the Guam Micronesian kingfisher renewed Michael’s passion for his work. “It heightened my sense of responsibility that we have for these animals, and I felt much more intense about wanting to contribute to their welfare.”

Michael joined the Louisville Zoo in 1989. Today, he and his team care for 400 birds housed at 28 different locations throughout the Zoo. The Zoo participates in several Species Survival Plans (SSPs) for birds, and Michael manages two of them: one for the white-throated ground dove and the other for the beautiful fruit dove. The Zoo has led breeding efforts for both species among other AZA-accredited institutions.

White-throated ground dove

2014

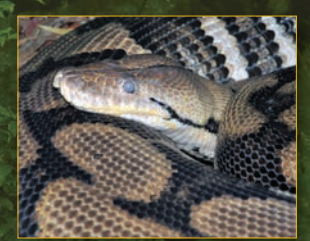
Thirteen larger-than-life animatronic bugs make their debut in a temporary exhibit called “Big, Big Bugs.”



June – Joel Sartori, a National Geographic photographer, takes pictures of several animals at the Zoo, including woolly monkeys, for his Photo Ark project.

New pygmy hippo, Jahari, is born. The Zoo receives 2,500 names in a contest. With fewer than 2,000 pygmy hippos in the remnant wild, the Zoo could have named all of them with the contest entries.

The Zoo’s reticulated python, Thelma, gives birth without the benefit of a male snake. This is the first documented case of parthenogenesis for the species in the world.



The Louisville Zoo places 12th in USA Today’s Best U.S. Zoo Readers’ Choice awards. The 1,000th black-footed ferret kit is born at the Zoo’s Conservation Center.

2015

Wild Burger restaurant opens in the Australia zone. The Zoo participates in the AZA’s Saving Animals from Extinction (SAFE) program.

Western lowland gorilla Jelani becomes an international sensation after video of him interacting with a visitor goes viral.



The Zoo institutes the “Round Up for Conservation” program at gift shops and food stands.

Thirty of Sean Kenney’s Nature Connects® LEGO® Brick sculptures are exhibited throughout the Zoo.



Beautiful fruit doves

A TALL ORDER

No zoo had successfully bred the white-throated ground dove until Louisville hatched two squabs in 2006. Native to the Northern Mariana Islands in the tropical Pacific, they have been extinct on the island of Guam since 1986 and are considered a vulnerable species in the wild.

But success didn't happen overnight. The breeding took methodical planning. "For starters, we studied them in the field at the request of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services," Michael said. "What we found is that they like to nest up really high. They like to be in a canopy tree but out of view of the all-day parade of seabirds that come in off the ocean."

The Zoo's best breeding efforts have occurred in the Forest Bird Trail inside the Islands Pavilion, where the ceiling is 50 feet high at the peak. "So, you have to have a high ceiling — that's tough for a lot of zoos," Michael said. "The birds may also try to push other birds out of their nests, so that can be a challenge, too."

For his long-term successful breeding and management of the white-throated ground dove, Michael received the prestigious AZA Plume Award. He's both practical and modest about the achievement. "You're dealing with living things, and I'm imperfect. So, it works some of the time and other times it doesn't."

LITTLE SQUIRT

Life in the natural world can be tough. In the case of little penguins, which are found on the coastlines of Australia and New Zealand, the start of life can seem particularly cruel.

"Adults play the odds," Michael said. "They produce two eggs, and they incubate both of them. But as soon as they have one normal-behaving offspring, the other egg gets pushed out with a webbed foot."

That was the case with little Squirt. She was the egg that was pushed off to the side within the nest-box chamber, which was dangerously cool. She was going to die.

Michael and his team intervened. "It started with taking four days just to get her out of the shell," Michael explained. "I was giving her drinks of water and an electrolyte solution we would feed to humans, just to keep her sustained and try to keep her muscles fit. It was like she was lying in bed. I opened that shell a little every day, gave her something to drink, and eventually I actually pulled her out of the shell. She never did have the energy to do it herself."

Michael spent more than 100 days in a row at the Zoo caring for Squirt. She came down with some infections, which the bird staff were able to treat with antibiotics. She also needed to be exercised. "With a bird that doesn't fly, you walk them. You have to get behind them or in front of them, whichever they'll respond to. It's very labor-intensive and very different from raising a duck or swan or hand-rearing a perching bird."

The plan is to reintroduce Squirt to the larger flock at the Zoo, along with several other baby penguins born around the same time. They're being raised in the bird propagation barn, where they can see and hear the other penguins. "There are a few characters in the adult group that are a little on the aggressive side," Michael said. "So, how do I reintroduce them? Slowly."

Caring for birds takes both science and art. Despite his successes, Michael said, "I worry about the future of birds, even in zoos. We all want to have more little penguins, but it took us two years just to get the ones we have. So, if we have a chance to breed them, we will."



Gary Michael with Squirt

2016

March – Kindi, a Western lowland gorilla, is born and fans follow her progress through the blog, "Kindi's Journey." Later in the year, Kindi is successfully matched with surrogate mother Kweli.

May – Penguin Cove: The Little Penguin Conservation Center opens.



A sculpture of a lion family by artist Tom Tischler is installed near the African Outpost.

Woolly monkeys Henry and Tomas retire to a behind-the-scenes area in the Giraffe House.

The Zoo is recognized as a "sustainability champion" when 30 solar panels are installed on the administration building.

"The World's Largest Halloween Party!" shatters attendance records with 92,817 guests.

The renovated Elephant Encounter exhibit opens.

A Saharan addax is born as part of the AZA's Species Survival Plan. The Louisville Zoo also partners with the Sahara Conservation Fund to restore and safeguard addax in the Sahara.





Fitz and Mikki

Little Calf Has Big Footprints to Fill

“Raising a calf is one of the most enriching things an elephant can experience.”
 – John Walczak, Louisville Zoo Director

Mikki, the 34-year-old African elephant at the Louisville Zoo, stands calmly in her yard, enjoying the beginning of fall weather. As she flaps her big ears, shaped like the continent of her birth, a small elephant weaves between her ankles.

Small, of course, is a relative term. The male calf was born on August 2, 2019. Two days after his birth, he weighed 275 pounds and stood just over three feet tall. He’s the spitting image of his mother, except in miniature. At two months of age, he was relatively sure on his feet, but still trying to figure out exactly how to use his trunk. And he hadn’t quite grown into his ears.

To celebrate this momentous birth, the community submitted more than 15,500 names for the calf and ultimately voted for Fitz. More than 194,000 fans followed the journey of Mikki and Fitz on social media.

2017

The new Butterflies n’ Blooms outdoor flight house with native butterflies comes to the Zoo. In addition, the Zoo holds the first Flutter Fest with Louisville’s Idlewild Butterfly Farm, and the Zoo becomes a certified Monarch Butterfly Way Station.



The Zoo celebrates its first Steller’s sea eagle hatchling, as well as the birth of two-maned wolf pups and two bongo calves. Other new animals at the Zoo include Becca the puma, warthogs Digger and Riggs, and Rona the gray seal.

Director John Walczak and former director Bill Foster are recognized as AZA inspectors of the year.

2018

New to the Zoo: snow leopard NeeCee, Romulus the Komodo dragon, Siyanda the male lion, Letterman the southern white rhino, plus a new giraffe and gray seals.

The annual 5K race “Throo the Zoo” offers its first virtual run option.



The Zoo announces that Mikki the African elephant is pregnant.

Solar panels are installed at the Conservation Carousel. The Louisville Water Company upgrades Zoo water fountains to include refill stations.



Punch, Mikki and Scotty

Young Fitz and his mother Mikki are important ambassadors for their species. In the 1970s, there were an estimated 1.6 million African elephants in the wild. Today, the population is less than one third that number, mostly due to hunting and the ivory trade.

As part of a Species Survival Plan (SSP), Mikki was recommended for breeding, particularly because she was born in the wild. Rescued from a culling operation in Africa, Mikki doesn't share DNA with any other elephants in managed populations. Her offspring helps maintain that genetic diversity for future generations, which increases the likelihood that these elephants will be better able to adapt and survive.

Mikki is a great mom, according to Steve Burton, elephant area supervisor at the Zoo. And the baby? "He's a typical toddler," Burton said. "He loves his mommy, and he even seems to like having us

around, but he's not too fond of being told what to do."

Burton has worked with Mikki for more than 20 years, and while the two have certainly built a rapport, Burton admits Mikki is easy to work with. "She's extremely food motivated," he explains. "If you've got a handful of treats, she'll do just about anything you ask her."

As many in Louisville know, Fitz is actually Mikki's second calf. Her first, Scotty, was born in 2007, but died after a short bout with endotoxemia in 2010. "Scotty had a great three years," said John Walczak, Zoo director. "But sometimes, even with the very best care, life happens."

The community mourned the loss along with Zoo staff. "Scotty made people care about elephants and their conservation," Walczak said. "That's his legacy."

The new calf is now part of Scotty's legacy, too. When Scotty was born, mom Mikki didn't take to motherhood immediately. "We taught her to be a mom," said Burton. "But when this calf came out, as soon as he arrived, she wanted her baby."

PUNCH EARNS HER NAME

Breeding elephants isn't easy. In fact, both of Mikki's pregnancies were the result of artificial insemination, because it's very difficult to transport elephants to other zoos for breeding. And male or bull elephants can be challenging to manage.

But years ago, the Zoo brought in a bull elephant for possible breeding with Punch, the Zoo's female Asian elephant. Punch is older and bigger than Mikki, and subsequently, she has always been the dominant elephant in their herd. Introducing a new elephant to Punch was going to be tricky.

At almost the same time every day, the bull elephant would approach Punch gingerly and start to touch her. Punch had no interest in cooperating. In fact, Burton said, "She would turn around and discipline him."

Meanwhile, the bull's tusks were growing longer and longer. Perhaps as part of his courtship, he made the mistake of putting one of his tusks into Punch's mouth. And she broke it off.

But the story doesn't end there. "Punch understands when things aren't right, when she might get in trouble," Burton said. Not wanting

to get caught, Punch picked up the pieces of the broken tusk and dropped them in the pond so no one would find them. Then, she walked away nonchalantly (if an elephant can do anything nonchalantly.)

"She hid that tusk," Burton explained. "She knew exactly what she was doing. We only knew she had done it because some visitors saw it happen."

Elephants are considered exceptionally intelligent, but Punch may be the exception to the exception. "There's a spectrum of intelligence," Burton said. "And Punch is way up in the higher end. She likes to get what she wants, and she understands leverage. That's a big advantage when you weigh 10,000 pounds."



Punch with sparring partner

2019

January 31 – The Zoo hosts a kick-off event in celebration of its 50th anniversary.



Two new exhibits open: Snow Leopard Pass featuring the Cub House by PNC and Colobus Crossing featuring Colobus monkeys.



The Zoo enters a float in the Kentucky Derby Festival Pegasus Parade, commemorating its 50th anniversary, and wins the KDF president's award.



May 17 – Endangered Species Day at the Zoo challenges students in the region to support conservation efforts.

May 18-19 – The Zoo throws 50Fest, a public celebration for the 50th anniversary.

August 2 – Mikki the African elephant gives birth to a male calf, Fitz.





Your Zoo: Looking Forward

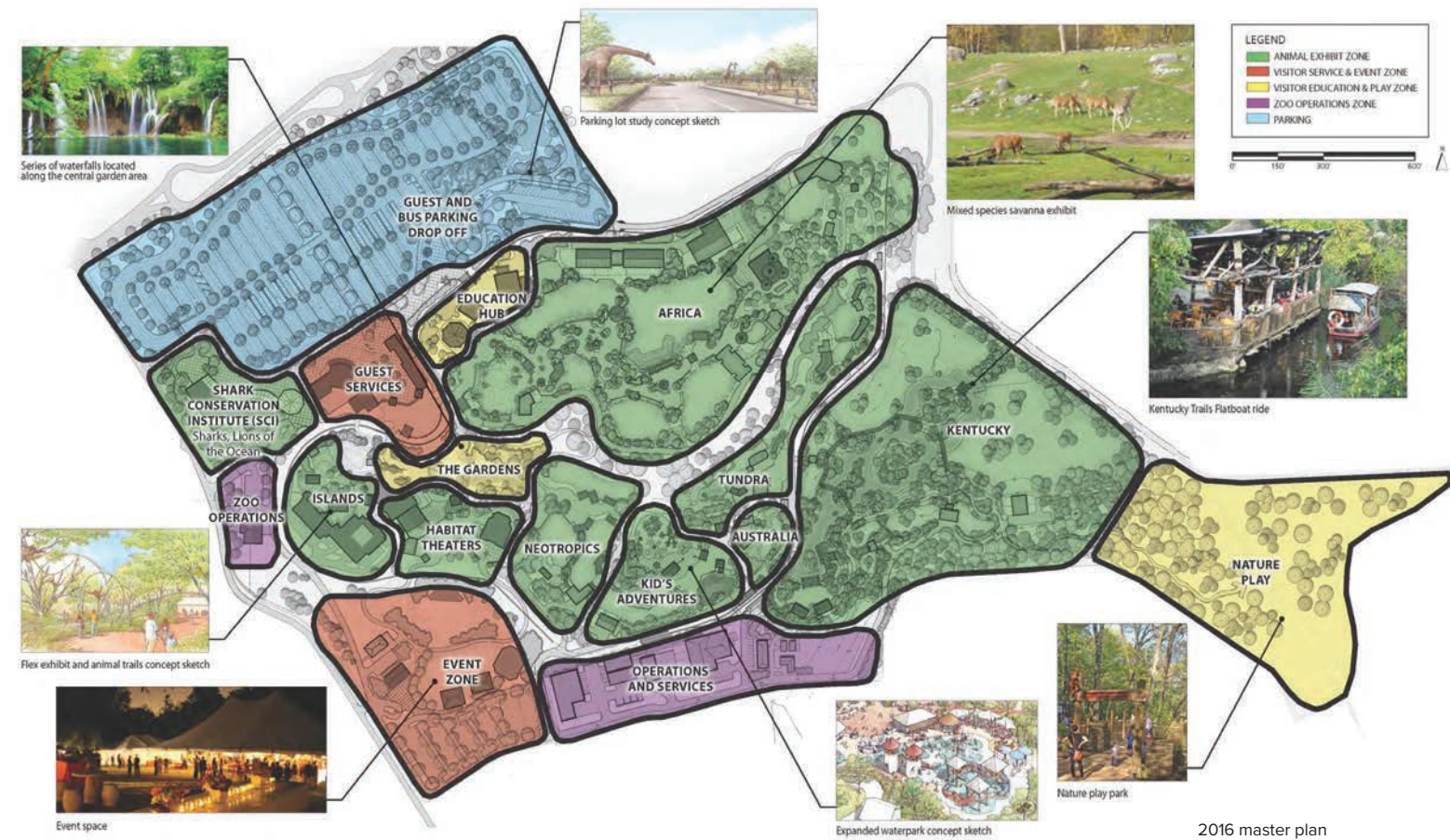
The only subject that excites Zoo director John Walczak as much as animals and conservation is the future of the Louisville Zoo. “We want the Zoo to tell a story. We want to turn the Zoo inside out so that every child gets the equivalent of a backstage tour. The more you love and understand the magnificent animals on the planet, the more you’ll do to protect them.”

Over the last 50 years, the Zoo has strived to achieve its mission to “better the bond between people and our planet” by providing excellent care for animals, a great experience for visitors and leadership in conservation education. Now the Zoo is looking forward to the next 50 years, so that the young visitors of today will have an equally magical place to bring their children and grandchildren tomorrow.

“I think what the Zoo does is it raises the question for everyone: What will be your planetary legacy?”

– John Walczak, Louisville Zoo Director

Snow Leopard Pass



In 2016, the Zoo updated its master plan, which outlines strategies for development for the next 10 to 15 years. It describes new exhibits and attractions, expanded strategic services and infrastructure improvement projects. Outdoor areas will feature passages where animals can cross our paths, like the recent Colobus Crossing and Snow Leopard Pass exhibits, which also facilitate natural roaming behaviors in the animals. The ambitious plan includes new immersive educational experiences for students and families, as well as renovations to existing exhibits like the African savanna and the Islands to make them even more engaging for guests. Enhancements to the Animal Health Center will accommodate anticipated veterinary needs.

All the elements in the master plan are designed to further the Zoo’s mission. “I think most people would agree that we have stewardship over this planet,” Walczak said. “Either we can take care of it or we can over-utilize it. The messages we share here at the Zoo hopefully help people realize that we have to take care of it.”

Potential new exhibits for guests include a Crocotorium and a Shark Conservation Institute. The Kentucky Trails would highlight native Kentucky and other North American animals, offering unique experiences such as birdwatching and a flatboat ride across meandering streams. “I’d love to see us develop the Kentucky exhibit,” said Walczak, “because that’s our front and back door. It would help people see that this beauty is right around the corner.”

While the future promises exciting developments for the Zoo and the community, Walczak believes that zoos serve a vital purpose in the present day. “There’s never been a more important time in history than today for the role of a modern, accredited zoo,” Walczak said. “Technology is wonderful, but it seems like we all have more to do. We work through our weekends, we’re always connected. We all need to relax, to catch our breath, and go to a place where we can reassociate ourselves with nature. And that’s what zoos help us do.”

“One of the biggest messages we can share is that we all have a role to play,” Walczak concluded. “We’re all part of the balance of this planet.”

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The Zoo also wishes to recognize our 50th Celebration presenting sponsor, Whittenberg Construction. Thank you for your support and hard work on so many Zoo projects.

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Maureen Horrigan, Kelly Grether,
John Walczak, Robert Kemnitz,
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PHOTOGRAPHY

Alan Shadburne, Cindy Rogers,
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