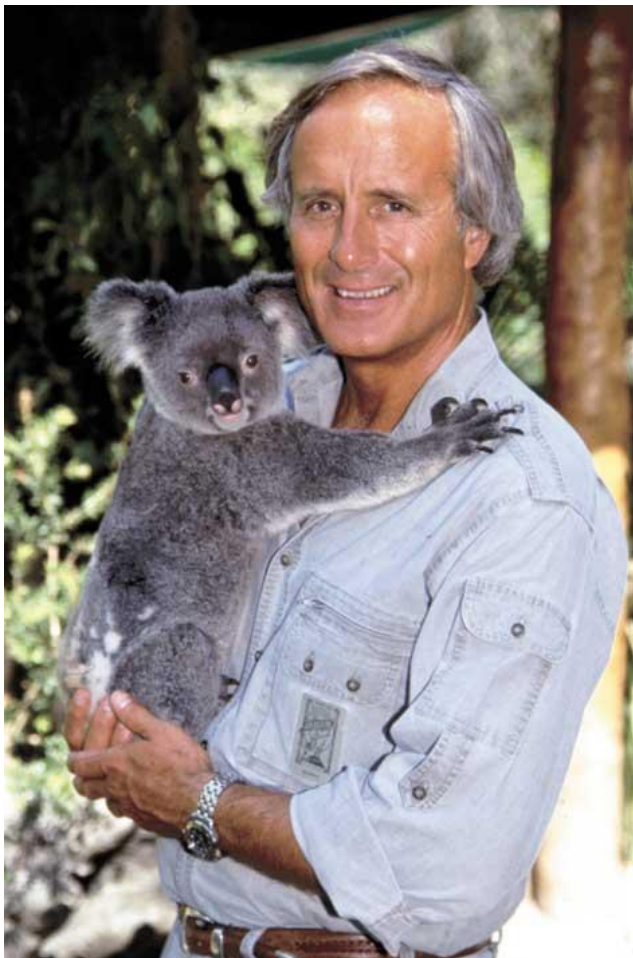


The Renaissance

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**Jungle Jack Hanna
at the Renaissance Theatre
January 25, 2009, 5:00 PM**

Jack Hanna

I got my first job when I was eleven working for our family vet, Dr. Roberts, in Knoxville, Tennessee. I loved cleaning cages and just being around all the animals. I continued working for Dr. Roberts for several summers and developed my love and respect for animals.

Soon after Suzi and I were married, we opened a pet shop, Pet Kingdom, in Knoxville. I loved working at the pet shop but I knew that I always wanted to work at a zoo, so when I received an offer to direct a small zoo in Sanford, Florida in 1973, I jumped at the opportunity. Suzi and I lived in Florida while I worked at the Central Florida Zoo from 1973 until 1975. In 1975, I had to take a break from the animal world because of an illness in my family. In 1978, I decided I missed working with animals and I answered an ad for a zoo director in Columbus, Ohio.

I was the Executive Director of the Columbus Zoo from 1978 until 1992. When I first started at the Columbus Zoo, attendance was low and the animal habitats were outdated. My top priority was to increase attendance by offering educational and entertaining events. As a result of these programs, more and more people started visiting the zoo. Over the years, I was fortunate to meet many leaders in the community. They helped me raise money to transform the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium into the state-of-the-art park that it is today.

In 1983 I was invited to appear on *Good Morning America* in New York. I eagerly agreed to appear knowing that this was a great opportunity to educate people across the nation about animals. I have been a regular guest and wildlife correspondent ever since.

In 1993 I became the host of *Jack Hanna's Animal Adventures*, a nationally syndicated television series. Every week we invite viewers to share in our adventures all over the world in the quest to learn about wildlife. After 10+ years with *Animal Adventures*, I decided to start a new TV Series, *Jack Hanna's Into the Wild*. It started airing throughout the country in October 2007. This time around, my family is involved, and we travel all over the world to see amazing animals, talk with local people, and have a little fun! The new series is unscripted and action-packed. I hope you'll tune it and accompany me on my next expedition.

For more info on Jack Hanna, go to: www.jackhanna.com

Columbus Zoo and Aquarium

In 1927, the Columbus Zoological Park opened in Columbus, Ohio. For the next thirteen years, the park maintained a small collection of animals. Beginning in the 1940s, local efforts increased the number of animals dramatically and improved the zoo's facilities. In 1951, the City of Columbus took over operation of the zoo. The zoo made history in 1956, when Colo became the first gorilla to be born in captivity. Local residents have repeatedly supported the Columbus Zoo. In 1967, 1984, 1990, and 1994, voters approved property tax increases to support the zoo. Local businesses have also donated millions of dollars to finance exhibits and cover operating expenses. This financial support helped the Columbus Zoo become one of the leading zoos in the United States.

In 1978, the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium hired Jack Hanna to be its Executive Director. He held the position for the next fourteen years. Hanna transformed the zoo. Attendance grew from approximately 350,000 people in 1978 to 1.4 million visitors in 1992. He eliminated cages and provided animals with more realistic habitats. Hanna also dramatically enhanced the zoo's educational efforts and actively campaigned for more donations to improve the facility further. He regularly appeared on *Good Morning America*, *Late Night with David Letterman*, *The Maury Povich Show*, and *Larry King Live*, as well as many other programs. Hanna's television appearances made the Columbus Zoo and Hanna himself nationally known. Funding for the zoo dramatically increased and the zoo was assisted in furthering animal conservation and education.

During the 1990s and the first decade of the 2000s, a number of new exhibits opened at the zoo. Among the more notable was *Discovery Reef*, an authentic representation of a coral reef from the Indian Ocean. In 1999, the *Manatee Coast* opened and the zoo changed its name to the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium. *Manatee Coast* is one of only three sites outside of Florida that provides care and rehabilitation to injured manatees. The Columbus Zoo also expanded the pachyderm facility and opened a Humboldt Penguin habitat. Exhibits entitled *Voyage to Australia*, *Islands of Southeast Asia*, and *African Forest* also were opened to the public.

At the start of the twenty-first century, the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium supports over 70 projects in 38 countries and more than one million people visit annually.

source: <http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/entry.php?rec=2117>



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Columbus Zoo official website:
www.columbuszoo.org

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