

# MARYLAND ZOO

## NEWS

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### **DON HUTCHINSON TO STEP DOWN AS PRESIDENT OF THE MARYLAND ZOO IN BALTIMORE**

BALTIMORE, MD – The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore today announced that Donald P. Hutchinson will be stepping down from his role as President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) next year after twelve-and-a-half years with the organization. Mr. Hutchinson’s last day will be June 30, 2020.

“The staff, volunteers and Trustees of The Maryland Zoo will miss Don tremendously,” stated Maryland Zoological Society Board of Trustees Chairman Jim Witty. “Through some very tough times, his leadership has demonstrated his determination and ability to make The Maryland Zoo a first-class organization for animals, staff and guests alike. He has played an instrumental role in the overall transformation of the Zoo and his commitment to making the Zoo a better place going forward cannot be overstated.”

Don Hutchinson became the President & CEO of The Maryland Zoo on an interim basis on January 2, 2008. In 2009, the “Interim” title was dropped and he has remained in that role for the last 10 years. “I realized that the challenges the Zoo faced weren’t quite finished, and in fact there was a lot I thought we could accomplish,” noted Don Hutchinson. “And now here we are eleven years later having just opened the most extensive renovation in our history. It’s been an amazing chapter in my life and I feel privileged to have had this opportunity.”

Some of the highlights of Hutchinson’s tenure include the birth of Samson, the first ever African elephant born at the Zoo, the opening of the Giraffe Feeding Station, Prairie Dog Town, the Jones Falls Zephyr train, the Panamanian golden frog and Hellbender exhibits, the addition of Lemur Lane, grizzly bears and the return of bobcats to the Zoo. In 2014, the award-winning Penguin Coast was opened to great acclaim and just last week the Zoo celebrated the opening of the newly renovated and expanded lion, giraffe and elephant habitats, the most extensive renovation in the Zoo’s history.

“With all of these habitats, the Zoo is following the philosophy we have used over the last eleven years,” said Hutchinson. “We are designing habitats that simultaneously take into account animal welfare, staff safety and an improved guest experience. We want good working conditions for the staff, safe and exciting experiences for our guests and to continue to provide excellent care for the animals.”

“Over \$65,000,000 in renovations and improvements have been made to the Zoo since 2008,” explained Hutchinson. “Many of those improvements are obvious to Zoo members and guests such as Penguin Coast and the new lion, giraffe and elephant renovations in African Journey. Less noticeable,

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but also important are updates to infrastructure – water and sewer, electric, gas lines, HVAC, a digital X-Ray suite in the Zoo Hospital – may not be “sexy” improvements, but they are essential to ensuring that staff have the tools they need to do their jobs.”

Two historic buildings on the Zoo grounds also underwent major renovations. The Mansion House is the most iconic; built in 1801 by Colonel Nicholas Rogers, whose family estate occupied the land that was to become Druid Hill Park in 1860. “The Mansion House has played many roles here in the park, including that of the Zoo’s Bird House for many years,” recounted Hutchinson. “The Maryland Building, which was relocated to Zoo grounds after its use in housing the State’s contribution to the 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia, is one of only four remaining buildings from that Exhibition. Both buildings now house staff, and the Mansion House is also available for rent for weddings, corporate meetings and parties.”

“It’s been an honor to serve The Maryland Zoo,” stated Hutchinson. “I cannot overstate my deep appreciation for the opportunity to work with so many talented and enthusiastic professionals who are dedicated to saving animals from extinction. Every person at the Zoo is devoted to that mission from the ground up. I’ve seen tremendous change at the Zoo and I’m proud of where we are today. We’ve worked together toward a common goal and I’m tremendously optimistic about where the Zoo is headed.”

“Don Hutchinson has worn many hats in both the private and public sectors — Maryland Delegate, State Senator, Baltimore County Executive, Greater Baltimore Committee CEO and CEO of SunTrust Bank Maryland among them,” stated Witty. “He’s always been a champion for Baltimore and that is evident to all that have had the pleasure to work with him. The Zoo has come a long way since he took the helm - the changed landscapes of African Journey and other improvements to the Zoo are evident everywhere you look. He will be sorely missed.”

The Maryland Zoological Society has formed a search committee to find Mr. Hutchinson’s successor. The Committee plans to spend the next 60-90 days seeking input from various Zoo constituencies and then will decide whether or not to use an executive search firm to facilitate the search. A job announcement will be released in the upcoming weeks.

### **About The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore**

Founded in 1876, The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore is the third oldest zoo in the United States and is internationally known for its contributions in conservation and research. More than 1,500 animals are represented in the Zoo’s varied natural habitat exhibits in areas such as the award-winning Penguin Coast, Polar Bear Watch, the Maryland Wilderness, African Journey and the Children’s Zoo. Situated in Druid Hill Park near downtown Baltimore, the Zoo is accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums. For more information, visit [www.marylandzoo.org](http://www.marylandzoo.org).

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