

MARYLAND ZOO

NEWS

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DON HUTCHINSON STEPS DOWN AS PRESIDENT OF THE MARYLAND ZOO IN BALTIMORE

-- Kirby Fowler becomes President/CEO on July 1, 2020 --

BALTIMORE, MD – Don Hutchinson became 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 past 11.5 years. Today will be his last day at the Zoo, as announced in 2019. Kirby Fowler, formerly CEO of the Downtown Partnership, officially assumes the role of President & CEO on July 1, 2020.

“The Zoo of today is not the same as it was in 2008,” stated Hutchinson. “And despite all of the improvements, both large and small, what I am most proud of is the people who work here. The care, dedication and professionalism they bring to their jobs are second to none. We have built a team that rises to any occasion and I am continually impressed by them.”

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 in June 2019, 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.

Over \$65,000,000 in renovations and improvements have been made to the Zoo since 2008. While many of those improvements are obvious changes to animal habitats such as Penguin Coast and the new lion, giraffe and elephant renovations in African Journey, other less noticeable but very important improvements were updates to infrastructure – water and sewer, electric, gas lines, HVAC, a digital X-ray suite in the Zoo Hospital.

“In December when the Board announced that Kirby Fowler would become the next CEO, I felt that the Zoo was really in a good place to embrace the transition,” continued Hutchinson. “Of course none of us saw COVID-19 on the horizon. So, like many other nonprofits, this has been one of the hardest times in our history. Our unique challenge was that we could not simply close the gates and walk away. We provide continual care and enrichment for more than 1,500 animals at the Zoo every day, and this did not stop when we were forced to shut down. Kirby started here during the closure, making this a tougher introduction to the job than expected, but I know he will lead the Zoo out of this dark time.”

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During his tenure at Downtown Partnership, Fowler and his team oversaw the transformation of Downtown Baltimore into the City's fastest growing neighborhood, successfully advocated for adaptive reuse of more than 70 major properties, spearheaded the revitalization of parks and plazas, led the reinvention of the Pratt Street corridor, teamed with the City to launch the popular Charm City Circulator, and expanded homeless outreach services, among other initiatives. Fowler also led the creation of the Station North and Bromo Tower arts districts, launched Baltimore Restaurant Week, and oversaw the rebirth of the City's public markets.

"Don's positive and transformative impact on the Zoo cannot be overstated," said Fowler. "Thanks to his numerous years of dedication and hard work, Don was able to rescue the Zoo from the brink of closure and not merely save the Zoo but make it so much better. One cannot walk through any part of the Zoo without seeing the results of his vision and leadership. It will be impossible to fill his shoes, but I intend to honor Don's legacy and continue to push for the excellence that he so widely championed. The foundation of the Zoo is incredibly strong, thanks to Don's tremendous leadership."

The Maryland Zoo was closed from March 16 to June 24, 2020, creating a revenue loss of approximately \$4,000,000, 25% of the Zoo's annual budget. The public can continue to support The Maryland Zoo by making tax deductible donations to the Zoo at www.marylandzoo.org/donate. For more information on how to plan your visit, please visit www.marylandzoo.org.

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.

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