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Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens' Dr. Terry Maple Honored with Inaugural Animal Welfare Lifetime Achievement Award

September 27, 2018 – *Jacksonville, FL* – Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens (JZG) is proud to announce that Dr. Terry Maple, the Zoo's Director of Wellness and Professor in Residence, has been awarded the Association of Zoos and Aquariums' first-ever Animal Welfare Lifetime Achievement Award. The award was created in 2017 to recognize outstanding leadership and an individual who has significantly influenced the quality of animals' lives through their long-term, personal commitment to the field of animal welfare.

A visionary in the zoo community for nearly 40 years, Dr. Maple's passion for improving the quality of life for all animals has been shown through his continued research, advanced husbandry ideas, advocacy for the protection of animals, and his stewardship of the next generation of zoo and aquarium leaders.

"The professionals at accredited zoos and aquariums take very seriously the responsibility to provide AZA's high-quality animal welfare standards to the animals in their care," said AZA President and CEO Dan Ashe. "Dr. Terry Maple's outstanding contributions to animal care and wellbeing have advanced the zoological profession and benefited countless animals."

Just as he was able to elevate the once small Zoo Atlanta into one of the most prolific animal behavior and wellness institutions in the country, Dr. Maple and his diligent commitment to animal wellness is helping shape the future for the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens. How his philosophy and methodology are being applied in Jacksonville will inspire zoos across the globe.

"Dr. Maple is a brilliant man, a passionate advocate for zoo animal welfare, and a teacher who set out on a mission, decades ago, and accomplished that mission," said Tony Vecchio, JZG Executive Director. "He made life better for animals in zoos and aquariums and laid the groundwork through his research, publications and students to keep that passion moving into the future. By bringing such expertise to the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens, we are fully committing to being a leader in animal wellness and setting the standard for zoos all over the world."

With the completion of the wellness-inspired African Forest great ape exhibit, Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens has emerged as frontrunner in the charge to place animal wellness foremost in their mission and exhibit design.

As the preeminent authority on naturalistic exhibit design and how it relates to primate behavior, Dr. Maple is the best person to study the design and functionality of the 50-foot kapok tree that serves as the heart of Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens' newly renovated African Forest. A vertical exhibit that encourages natural climbing and swinging behaviors, the kapok tree epitomizes wellness-inspired design in a modern zoo.

Dr. Maple's expertise in forming and growing research divisions in zoo settings is unequalled. He is currently applying his previous successes at JZG with the creation of the Wildlife Wellness Department. Staff, students and volunteers collect data and analyze animal behavior in a scientific- research milieu. Dr. Maple continues his impressive track record of mentoring the next generation of animal welfare advocates in his leadership position.

He is considered the most qualified individual in the profession when it comes to recruiting talent, forging university partnerships, and identifying future trends in animal wellness.

“An award such as this one is meant to be shared,” acknowledged Dr. Maple. “I am grateful to the many students and employees who collaborated with my research team over four decades at many zoos and universities. Many of my former graduate students are now leading teams of their own. In Jacksonville, I work with an outstanding group of curators and keepers and my close associates Valerie Segura and Megan Morris. The support of Tony Vecchio and Dan Maloney have made my move to the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens easy and rewarding.”

Dr. Terry Maple’s contributions in animal welfare will be felt for generations. His contributions to exhibit design, husbandry, and research, along with his personal goal of encouraging all zoos to look foremost to the evaluation of the animals in their care and how their lives can be improved, inspire all in the zoo field to do better, to design better, and to endeavor for animals to truly thrive. Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens is privileged to have the illustrious professor instilling his principals of wellness and emboldening the Zoo to lead the way into becoming the zoo of the future.

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About Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens

For over 100 years, the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens has aimed to inspire the discovery and appreciation of wildlife through innovative experiences in a caring environment. Starting in 1914 with an animal collection of one red deer fawn, the Zoo now has more than 2,000 rare and exotic animals and 1,000 species of plants, boasting the largest botanical garden in Northeast Florida. The Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens is a nonprofit organization and a portion of every ticket sold goes to the over 45 conservation initiatives Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens supports around the world, and here in NE Florida. JZG is proud to be an accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. For more information, visit www.jacksonvillezoo.org.

About the Association of Zoos and Aquariums

Founded in 1924, the Association of Zoos and Aquariums is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the advancement of zoos and aquariums in the areas of conservation, education, science, and recreation. Look for the AZA logo whenever you visit a zoo or aquarium as your assurance that you are supporting a facility dedicated to providing excellent care for animals, a great experience for you, and a better future for all living things. The AZA is a leader in global wildlife conservation, and your link to helping animals in their native habitats. To learn more visit www.aza.org.