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Animals Always: 100 Years at the Saint Louis Zoo

Mary Delach Leonard

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Observing exotic creatures, petting friendly animals, and riding the train through the park—no one can forget the enchanting childhood ritual of visiting the zoo. In reality, zoo visitors experience only the tip of the iceberg—*Animals Always* gives readers a glimpse into the unseen work and overlooked history of the renowned Saint Louis Zoo. Now celebrating its centennial, this expansive campus of naturalistic habitats houses more than 18,000 animals and is rated America's #1 zoo by Zagat, the well-known rating agency.

Overflowing with stories, photographs, and fascinating sidebars, this captivating volume covers the Zoo's rich history and its emergence as a modern-day center of research and conservation. The Saint Louis Zoo has earned its excellent reputation thanks to its forward thinking and its community support—not to mention familiar faces like Marlin Perkins and Phil the Gorilla. St. Louis was the first city in the world to support its zoo through public taxes, and the Zoo remains free to all visitors today. Mary Delach Leonard takes readers from the days when schoolchildren collected 238,400 pennies to purchase Miss Jim the circus elephant, through years of renovation and innovation, to the twenty-first-century realization of the River's Edge habitat, which elevates the concept of natural displays to a new level, and the WildCare Institute, launched in 2004 to support animal conservation centers around the world. Vintage photographs offer up animal shows and early visitors in period dress, and modern color images capture today's awe-inspiring wild exhibits.

Readers are treated to behind-the-scenes anecdotes and statistics visitors are normally not privy to. In 1970, a forty-day citywide search was launched for a spitting cobra that had escaped through his enclosure's water drain. Community members sighted the fugitive in a fan belt by the side of a highway, the pulley of a home furnace, and numerous banana peels before the snake was finally found in a crawl space near his cage. A peek at the current Zoo grocery list reveals a need for 43,056 red delicious apples per year—but also 122,000 mice and 16,750 rats!

Through page after page of surprises—pictures never before published and amazing historical facts—as well as anecdotes sure to stir memories, this delightful volume captures an institution that has always been one step ahead. And Jeffrey P. Bonner, president and CEO of the Saint Louis Zoo today, gives readers a peek at what's in store for the Zoo in the not-too-distant future. *Animals Always* is a vibrant tribute to the Saint Louis Zoo's innovation, dedication, and long-standing commitment to the people of St. Louis.

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