

Charles H. Hoessle: Curriculum Vitae

Charles H. Hoessle, chasing bugs as a two-year-old and snakes as a teenager, his interest and passion brought him to a professional career as a zookeeper, educator, curator, and ultimately, zoo director.

Professional Experience

Zoo Director, Saint Louis Zoo, 1982–2002

His legacy includes building a professional staff that continues today. But what he considers most important is coordinating a transition from a zoo famous for animal shows (chimp, big cats, and elephants) to a center for endangered species propagation, conservation research, and open naturalistic displays (eliminating animals behind bars). His legacy also includes developing an advanced education facility and programs.

Two five-year strategic plans resulted in upgraded infrastructure and exciting new exhibits, like the Monsanto Insectarium, River's Edge (an outdoor exhibit of elephants, cheetahs, and rhinos, plus underwater viewing of hippos and more), Penguin & Puffin Coast, and the newly remodeled Emerson Children's Zoo.

In 2002, the zoo's Reptile House was rededicated as the Charles H. Hoessle Herpetarium, and a statue of Charlie with a python wrapped around his shoulders was installed outside the entrance.

Deputy Director, Saint Louis Zoological Park, 1972

General Curator, 1969

Curator of Reptiles and Education, 1968

Assistant Curator of Reptiles and Education, 1964

Education Coordinator, 1964

Reptile Keeper, 1963

Owner-Operator of Modern Aquarium and Bird Shop, one of the first pet shops in the United States to sell snakes and other reptiles as pets (featured on the cover of *All-Pets Magazine*), 1954–1963

Military service partly consisted of lecturing on snakes and snakebite treatment and prevention to troops prior to their transfer overseas, 1952–1954



Professional Accomplishments

American Association of Zoological Parks and Aquariums (AAZPA)

President, 1989–90

Vice President, 1988

Chaired and served on numerous committees during fifty-year membership

Recipient of Outstanding Service Award and the 2003 Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) Marlin Perkins Award of Professional Excellence

Represented AAZPA at the Species Survival Commission of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), in Costa Rica, 1988

Presented numerous papers at scientific conferences

Served as reviewer of Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) grants

Hosted *Saint Louis Zoo Show*, a weekly half-hour TV show, 1968–1978

Appointed Adjunct Professor, Department of Biology, Saint Louis University, 1973

Guest Lecturer at Saint Louis University, University of Missouri, Harris Teachers College, and Washington University biology departments

Board of Regents, Harris-Stowe State University, two six-year terms, 2000–2013

EXPERTISE

Travel escort for Zoo Friends Society–sponsored programs to all seven continents (five countries in Africa [climbed Kilimanjaro in 1978], Australia, New Guinea, Indonesia, Borneo, Sumatra, India, China, Amazon) and participated in World Zoo Organization conferences throughout Europe, United Kingdom, Japan, Singapore, and Hong Kong

Organized and conducted zoo reptile collecting trips all over the United States and Mexico (vampire bats in Mexico)

FORMAL EDUCATION

Harris Teachers College, St. Louis, MO, 1951, associate of arts degree

US Army 1953 Radar & Electronics, & Methods of Instruction certificate

AWARDS, RECOGNITION, MEMBERSHIPS

Honorary degree, Doctor of Laws, Maryville University, St. Louis, 1986

Honorary degree, Doctor of Laws, Saint Louis University

Honorary degree, Doctor of Science, University of Missouri-St. Louis

Honorary degree, Doctor of Humane Letters, Harris-Stowe State University
Distinguished Alumni Award, Harris Teachers College, 1987
AZA Leadership Award
Forest Park Keeper of the Park Award
2000 Perkins Partner in Conservation Award, Wild Canid Center, St. Louis
2001 Sold on St. Louis Award
2003 AZA honorary membership
2007 Saint Louis Zoo Conservation Award
2010 Citizen of the Year Award, Sunset Hills, MO
2011 Distinguished Community Service Award, Martin Luther King Jr. State Celebration
2015 Historian of the Year Award, Sunset Hills, MO

MEMBERSHIPS

World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA), formerly International Union of Directors of Zoological Gardens
Captive Breeding Specialist Group (CBSG) [later known as the Conservation Breeding Specialist Group]; member of CBSG Steering Committee
International Species Information System (ISIS) [now Species 360], member, board of trustees
Pan-Africa Association of Zoos and Aquaria (PAAZA) conference keynote speaker, 1993
Animal Protection Association of St. Louis, board of trustees
St. Louis Herpetological Society
St. Louis Naturalists Club
Saint Louis Ambassadors, board member
St. Louis County Counts, board member
Missouri State Hawthorn Society
International Rotary, St. Louis
Boy Scout Council of St. Louis; chairman of Reptile Study Merit Badge Counselors, fifty years
Past State Chairman, United Nations Day
Former Director of the Girl Scouts of St. Louis
Past President of St. Louis Museum Collaborative
The Explorers Club

