

# ABOUT JUNGLE JACK

## FAST FACTS

**FULL NAME:**

Jack Bushnell Hanna

**BIRTHDAY:**

January 2, 1947

**BIRTHPLACE:**

Knoxville, TN

**MARRIED:**

December 20, 1968

**WIFE:**

Suzi (Egli) Hanna

**CHILDREN:**

Kathaleen (b. 1969)

Suzanne (b. 1972)

Julie (b. 1975)

**PETS:**

Tasha, yellow labrador

Brass, golden retriever

**HOBBIES:**

hiking, eating,

cookies, causing chaos,

listening to country music

## learning the ropes

I got my first job when I was eleven working for our family veterinarian, Dr. Roberts, in Knoxville, Tennessee. I spent a lot of time cleaning cages, but didn't mind because I loved being around all the animals. I worked with Dr. Roberts for several summers, and developed a great respect for animals.

After spending a few years at Kiski, a boarding school in Pennsylvania, I attended Muskingum College in New Concord, Ohio where I graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree. I met my wife, Suzi Egli, while we were at Muskingum College and we were married in 1968.

Soon after Suzi and I were married, we opened a pet shop, Pet Kingdom, in Knoxville. I loved working at the pet shop but I knew that I always wanted to work at a zoo. When I received an offer to direct a small zoo in Sanford, Florida in 1973, I jumped at the opportunity. Suzi and I lived in Florida while I worked at the Central Florida Zoo from 1973 until 1975. In 1975, I had to take a break from the animal world because of an illness in my family. In 1978, I decided I missed working with animals and I answered an ad for a zoo director in Columbus, Ohio.

## transforming the columbus zoo

In 1978, I was named director of the Columbus Zoo. When I first started at the Columbus Zoo, attendance was low and the animal habitats were outdated. My top priority was to increase attendance by offering educational and entertaining events – a goal that the zoo is still working to achieve today with the addition of a new show called Animals on Safari and the interactive Animal Encounters Village. As a result of these and many other programs over the years, more and more people started visiting the zoo.

I was fortunate to meet many leaders in the community who helped me raise money to transform the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium into the state-of-the-art park that it is today. The Columbus Zoo continues to grow with the additions of Zoombezi Bay (waterpark), Jungle Jack's Landing, and the Safari Golf Club. Our next exciting addition will be a polar bear exhibit!

## media blitz

In 1983, I was invited to appear on *Good Morning America* in New York following the birth of baby twin gorillas at the Columbus Zoo. I eagerly accepted the invitation knowing that this was a great opportunity to educate people across the nation about animals. I have been a regular guest and wildlife correspondent ever since.

Two years later, in 1985, I appeared on *The Late Show with David Letterman* for the first time. Dave and I "hit it off" and now I am a guest on *The Late Show* several times each year. A few years later I started appearing regularly on *Larry King Live*. Other shows that I have appeared on with my animal friends include *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*, *Hollywood Squares*, *The Maury Show*, *Entertainment Tonight*, FOX News and CNN programs, and various other news programs

(as a wildlife correspondent). The animals that I bring on television are ambassadors to their cousins in the wilds, and are cared for by professionals.

### here and now

My media appearances were taking up so much time that I could no longer manage the day-to-day matters at the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium. In 1992, I became the Director Emeritus at the Zoo, a job I still enjoy today. Although I am traveling most days of the year, I still call Central Ohio home.

In 1993 I became the host of Jack Hanna's Animal Adventures, a nationally syndicated television series. After 10 plus years with Animal Adventures, I decided to start a new TV Series, *Jack Hanna's Into the Wild*. This unscripted and action-packed series began airing in October 2007. Be sure to tune in as my family and I explore the corners of the globe and discover amazing animals and cultures. I am thrilled to announce that in June 2008 *Jack Hanna's Into the Wild* was awarded an Emmy for Outstanding Children's Series!

### my family

Suzi and I have three daughters.

My eldest daughter Kathaleen is married to an Englishman and lives in the UK. For several years she was my co-host on Jack Hanna's Animal Adventures, but now she and her husband Julian are raising their beautiful family. They have two children, Gabriella and Jack. I was so excited to have a child named after me because, until now, my only namesake was a donkey!

My middle daughter Suzanne and her husband Billy live in Cincinnati with their four children: Brittany, Blake, Alison, and Caroline. We love spending time with them and watching their sporting events when we're in town. They also come visit me at the Columbus Zoo where my youngest daughter Julie works.

Julie works in the Promotions Department as an animal educator. She has a special touch with baby animals and often raises young orphans at home.

I have always had pets since I was a young boy. Today I have a Yellow Labrador, Tasha and a Golden Retriever, Brass.