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Seneca Park Zoo Awards Dr. Patricia Wright with Inaugural Conservation Warrior Award

Dr. Patricia Wright has been named the inaugural recipient of the Conservation Warrior Award. Established by Monroe County's Seneca Park Zoo and coordinated by the Seneca Park Zoo Society, the Conservation Warrior Award was established to honor individuals whose innovation and commitment to conservation have led to lasting, meaningful impact on species survival. This award is also aimed at elevating awareness of the heroic work being undertaken around the world in partnership with the Seneca Park Zoo.

The physical award is a depiction of a tree growing out of rock, and was designed and created by artists at the Corning Museum of Glass. Drawing from the inspiring work of the conservation warriors it honors, this extraordinary piece embodies the resilience, strength, and passion the recipient brings to preserving wildlife and wild places. The award also includes an unrestricted operating grant of \$20,000, made possible by Claudia and David Weber.

Monroe County Executive Adam Bello issued a proclamation naming December 7th, 2022, as Dr. Patricia Wright day, in which he "call[ed] upon our citizens to continue to take steps to advance conservation efforts here in our County and around the globe, and to honor and celebrate the incredible work and contributions of Dr. Patricia Wright."

In remarks made at a small awards ceremony, Zoo Society President and CEO noted the need for conservation heroes in light of recent news headlines. "According to a recent report by the World Wildlife Fund, nearly 70% of all mammal, bird, and fish populations have declined since 1970," she said. "We need heroes. We need hope. We need warriors."

Seneca Park Zoo Superintendent Steve Lacy lauded the unique long-standing partnership Seneca Park Zoo has had with Dr. Wright and her work in Madagascar, noting there are only a handful of zoos with this kind of relationship of steadfast support over nearly three decades.

In receiving the award, Dr. Wright expressed her gratitude for the Zoo involvement and support, spoke of the important role zoos as ambassadors to nature, and called on everyone to join the crusade to save nature.

"I'm so glad to be back and to accept this award from a place I really respect," Dr. Wright said upon receiving the award. "I am fighting a war, I'm fighting it all the time, but I'm not fighting it alone. I have an army of people to help me including you. I am proud to be your Conservation Warrior."

Visit the Zoo's website to watch a brief video and learn more about Dr. Wright and her journey to becoming the Conservation Warrior she is today:
senecaparkzoo.org/conservationwarrior

About Dr. Patricia Wright

Dr. Patricia Wright is a renowned anthropologist and primatologist who, after discovering a new species of lemur in 1986, has devoted her life's work to the conservation of the extraordinary biodiversity endemic to Madagascar. In 1991, she co-founded Ranomafana National Park, protecting 41,500 hectares of rainforest. She is Founder and Director of Centre ValBio field station, a state-of-the-art research facility employing more than 80 Malagasy staff and focused on the integration of local people in saving the forest, and thus, the lemurs of the forest.

Her work was highlighted in "Island of Lemurs: Madagascar," a motion picture narrated by Morgan Freeman. She is author of five books and more than 200 publications, and recipient of three Medals of Honor from the Malagasy government. Through governmental coups, worldwide pandemics, droughts, and major typhoons, Dr. Wright's dedication to the biodiversity and the people of Madagascar has never wavered. She is a true Conservation Warrior.

Dr. Wright's early years were spent in Rochester, NY, and it is fitting that the inaugural Conservation Warrior award be bestowed upon arguably the most influential conservationist to come out of the Finger Lakes region.

About Seneca Park Zoo

Internationally, and in our own backyard, Seneca Park Zoo plays a key role in species survival. Chartered as an educational institution in 1957 by New York State, the Seneca Park Zoo Society plays an integral role in supporting Monroe County, the owners and operators of the Zoo. Together, we are working to bring animals back from the brink of extinction.