

Go Wild!

The Story of Jack Hanna

By Kiara Pettaway

Photographs courtesy of Jack Hanna

Jack Hanna was born in Knoxville, Tennessee, USA. He always loved animals. He started working with them when he was eleven years old. He cleaned cages for a veterinarian.



Jack often got in trouble in college because of his animals. Once he got in trouble for keeping a duck in his dorm room. Another time he was caught keeping a donkey behind his fraternity house.

Jack Hanna did not become successful easily. In 1973, a lion attacked a three-year-old boy at Hanna's zoo, and the boy lost his arm.

Jack did not let this stop him though. He said, "My dad used to tell me if you work hard and you love what you do, you'll succeed in life."



Jack succeeded by hosting a television show called "Hanna's Ark." This show taught children about animals.





Jack liked to teach about animals, but he also liked to learn about them. He took many trips to Rwanda with one goal. More than anything, he wanted to see the famous silverback gorillas!



The first time Jack went to Rwanda, he and his wife Suzi tried to see the gorillas but there were too many people on the tour, so they were not allowed to go. Jack and Suzi did not give up hope of seeing the gorillas, though. Two years later they returned to Rwanda and achieved their goal.

Jack had many funny experiences in Rwanda. One time, he went on a tour to see the gorillas. He was supposed to tuck his pants into his socks, but he forgot. When they were walking, the ants crawled up into his pants. He could not get the ants out and so he pulled off his pants in front of everyone!



Now, Jack has a home in Rwanda. He loves the gorillas, but he also loves the people. “They’ve been through so much, but they still have beautiful smiles!” He says, “My favorite place in the world is Rwanda!”