

Z.O.O. Appreciates: Vernon N. Kisling, Jr.

I would like to introduce our readers to Vernon N. Kisling, Jr., Secretary/Treasurer of Zoo Outreach Organisation's USA registered charity. Vernon serves ZOO not only as an occasional advisor on publications, zoo and wildlife matters but as the person who pays our bills, monitors transfers in USA and tackles our USA accounts including the dread IRS forms. Vernon very humbly claims a very minor role only but if it were not for his work, we would have a very hard time functioning.

It is not, in fact, solely his work for our organisation that I wish to highlight. It is his whole contribution to conservation throughout his professional life. He is one of those few people who greatly enrich the lives and careers of others and promote academic excellence without taking any or receiving much credit. Although I knew this earlier, it was only when I requested his complete *c.v.* that I learned whatever good opinion I had of him just wasn't good enough.

Vernon began his studies at University of South Florida, earning a B.A. in Zoology in 1968 and then an M.Sc. in Wildlife Management from University of Georgia in 1976. He followed up with a DPA in Public Administration at Nova University (1980) M.Sc. and then (MLS) in Library Studies at Florida state (1992). Thus armed, he spent time in the field in Papua New Guinea researching Montane ecology at Mt. Kaindi under Wau Ecology Institute in 1977, and in Nevados de Chillan, Chile, S. Central Andes mountains researching huemu, an endangered deer in 1980.

Vernon schooled and worked at the same time, as he was Curator of Atlanta Zoological Park from 1968-72 and Crandon Park Zoological Gardens Curator from 1972-79. Simultaneously he held down jobs which were more akin to the field he settled down in, that is publications in all aspects. He worked for Graphic Tehcnology, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, 1979-1982 as Graphic Arts Photographer- Lithographer while helping the owner of a company, the Zoo Book Service, in a voluntary capacity. He later bought the company, changing the name to Wildlife Publications, Inc., in Hollywood and Gainesville, Florida, 1982-1987 as a specialised bookseller of wildlife books. From there Vernon joined Marston Science Library of the Univ. of Florida, Gainesville, Florida where he works today in a senior post of Associate Chair MSL, Sr. Associate in Librarian and Chair, Libraries Faculty Assembly.

Not mentioned in his employment profile is his avocation as zoo historian which is how I came into contact with Vernon. Vernon chaired the Zoo History Committee for many years for the American Association of Zoological Parks and Aquaria (now known as The Zoo Association). He received the Outstanding Service award from the President of AZA 4 times 1993/94, 1996/97, 1997/98 and 1999/2000. He has authored and/or edited six books with

subjects ranging from a specialised stamp catalog, a Philatelic history of Pitcairn Island through histories of Aviculture to Avicultural history to the excellent Zoo and Aquarium History : Ancient Animal Collections to Zoological Gardens. He authored 8 scientific articles in refereed journals; 37 non-referreed but nonetheless technical articles; and 31 Papers, speeches and presentations on a variety of topics always having to do with the natural world, past, present, future - in wild or captivity - in the flesh or on paper.



Vernon raised funds for his and his institutions' various professional needs and projects. He is a Member of multiple conservation, biological, historical and library science societies and organisations and has served on myriad committees.

A person this active should not have time for any new thing but Vernon spreads himself very thin without neglecting any responsibility and doing justice to every activity. I can't actually remember how we met nor can he! But we have ample evidence of our association starting with my 3 chapters in his History of Zoos of the World, our combined efforts to promote zoo history in our respective countries. Vernon has been a big fan and encourager of ZOOs' PRINT magazine and Journal and now of JoTT.

Vernon Kisling has enriched my life immensely. I don't think I had much of an idea to become so involved in zoo history until Vernon, having been introduced to me through a mutual acquaintance, asked me to write the history chapter for India of his History of Zoos of the World. I agreed without knowing how deeply I would get mired in historical quicksand once having touched the subject. Vernon liked my India chapter so much he asked me to write the South Asia chapter and also to co-author the chapter on Africa. I spent weeks in London at different times, buried in various libraries and this led to other writing projects and interests.

We in ZOO are awed with the seeming ease and efficiency Vernon manages our finances and administrative obligations in USA, and honoured that he would devote time to us. He is, or should be, an inspiration to everyone if our field (at least) that there are many ways to be a conservation hero, including doing much behind the scenes work which benefits others in their conservation activities.

Sally Walker, Editor Emeritus, ZP