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**Media Contacts:** Sharon Dewar                      Steve Feldman  
Lincoln Park Zoo                      Association of Zoos & Aquariums  
312-742-2246                      301-562-0777 ext. 252  
[sdewar@lpzoo.org](mailto:sdewar@lpzoo.org)                      [sfeldman@aza.org](mailto:sfeldman@aza.org)

**LINCOLN PARK ZOO PRESIDENT AND CEO KEVIN BELL  
ELECTED AS ASSOCIATION OF ZOOS & AQUARIUMS CHAIR OF THE BOARD**  
*Literally raised in a zoo as a child, Bell now serves highest leadership role for zoo community*

**Portland, Oregon (September 16, 2009)** – Kevin J. Bell, President and CEO of Chicago’s Lincoln Park Zoo was sworn-in today as Chair of the Board of Directors for the country’s most prestigious zoological community – the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA).



Bell, a New York native was literally raised on the grounds of the world-famous Bronx Zoo. His family’s house was located behind the reptile house. His father was the zoo’s curator of birds. Bell, raised in a culture of deep commitment to wildlife, has devoted his entire life to conservation. In 1976, at the age of 23, he was hired as Lincoln Park Zoo’s curator of birds – the youngest curator in the zoo’s history. In 1993, he was named zoo director.

“AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums will benefit from Kevin’s strong leadership and extensive experience,” said AZA President and CEO Jim Maddy. “The entire AZA community recognizes Kevin’s total commitment to the highest standards in animal care and welfare and to global wildlife conservation.”

Bell was elected to the position of Chair by the AZA membership, which is comprised of 6,000 members representing 217 accredited zoos and aquariums. He will lead the 13-member Board of Directors for one year. As Chair, Bell will be involved in every aspect of the national organization, including strategic planning, accreditation, ethics, animal welfare, and conservation.

Bell is currently President and CEO of Chicago’s Lincoln Park Zoo, the nation’s most historic zoo, and is an active leader within the AZA community. Fellow zoo directors, conservationists, scientists and other AZA professional members first voted Bell to the AZA Board of Directors in 1999.

At Lincoln Park Zoo, Bell was instrumental in leading the zoo’s \$125 million capital campaign which created new, state-of-the-art, award-winning animal habitats and developed an endowment to secure the zoo for future generations. During his tenure, Bell has overseen the creation of one of the leading zoo-based conservation and science programs in the country, with ongoing

conservation efforts locally and around the world. Bell's most recent undertaking "Nature Boardwalk at Lincoln Park Zoo," slated to open Spring 2010, is a \$12 million ecological pond restoration effort designed to create a natural ecosystem in the middle of a city where people can immerse themselves in nature.

"Zoos and aquariums are vital education and conservation centers, connecting people with wildlife and inspiring young conservationists, while also serving as a hub for important scientific work," said Bell. "I'm honored to serve the AZA community and help lead our strategic efforts to build America's largest conservation movement."

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### **About AZA**

Founded in 1924, the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the advancement of zoos and aquariums in the areas of conservation, education, science, and recreation. Look for the AZA logo whenever you visit a zoo or aquarium as your assurance that you are supporting a facility dedicated to providing excellent care for animals, a great experience for you, and a better future for all living things. With its more than 200 accredited members, the AZA is a leader in global wildlife conservation, and your link to helping animals in their native habitats.

### **About Lincoln Park Zoo**

Lincoln Park Zoo, a historic Chicago landmark founded in 1868, is dedicated to connecting people with nature by providing a free, family-oriented wildlife experience. A leader in conservation science both globally and locally, the zoo exemplifies the highest quality animal care and educational outreach. The not-for-profit zoo, managed by The Lincoln Park Zoological Society, is a member-supported organization and one of the nation's only free, privately managed zoos. For more information, call (312)742-2000 or visit [www.lpzoo.org](http://www.lpzoo.org).