

REMEMBERING DOC MABERRY

Dr. Matthew Maberry, the veterinarian who famously attended Packy's birth, came to the zoo in 1958, one year before it moved to its current location. Maberry was part of a team working to design new facilities that would provide elephants with much more freedom than was common in zoos at the time. These facilities, built in 1960, allowed for normal social interactions and natural breeding among the elephants.

"Dr. Maberry's work helped provide the foundation on which we've built today's elephant-care programs," said Mike Keele, Oregon Zoo director of elephant habitats.

The zoo's new facilities led to a string of successful pregnancies and births — beginning, of course, with Packy on April 14, 1962. Not half a year later, Rosy, the zoo's original elephant, gave birth to Me-Tu. By 1971, the year that Keele joined the zoo and met Dr. Maberry, 10 Asian elephants had been born. No other elephants, Asian or African, had been born anywhere else in the U.S. during this time.

"During these first pregnancies, little was known about fetal development, neonatal care, maternal behavior and a host of other details associated with successful elephant pregnancies and births," Keele noted. "Dr. Maberry assembled a team to monitor a pregnant elephant's health and tried some fetal-monitoring approaches that had not been attempted before. He and his team were able to modify or create medical equipment to monitor the heartbeat of the fetus, thereby establishing a way to confirm a pregnant elephant. This was significant because most elephants don't show overt physical signs of pregnancy."

Keele, who went on to become a chief architect of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums' Species Survival Plan for elephants, remembers Maberry as a patient teacher, generous with his time and experience.

"During my first few years here, I served under his supervision as a keeper providing care for animals held in the hospital and quarantine areas," Keele said. "I was 18 when I started and had very little animal-care experience. Dr. Maberry was one from whom I learned much."

Maberry's most recent visit to the zoo was Jan. 19 for the grand opening of a new veterinary medical center. He died the following week at the age of 94.

"Dr. Maberry dedicated his life to the health and well-being of animals," Keele said. "We were very much hoping he would be here to help celebrate Packy's 50th birthday with us. We will certainly be thinking of him."

Maberry and his wife, Patricia, chronicled some of the veterinarian's early days at the zoo in "Packy and Me," a book published last year. For more information, visit www.packyandme.com.



Dr. Matthew Maberry, left, the Oregon Zoo's first veterinarian, attended the opening of the zoo's new Veterinary Medical Center Jan. 19, along with (left to right) his wife, Patricia Maberry, Mike Keele (the zoo's director of elephant habitats) and Dr. Mitch Finnegan, current zoo veterinarian.