

Progress in Our Community

Well friends, my year as the 99th chair of the board for the Association of Zoos and Aquariums has simply flown by. It has included lots of change for me personally, and I've been fortunate enough to be at the helm to witness great progress among our AZA community.

I want to thank the AZA board, AZA leadership, colleagues from around the country and the world, and the broader support system and dedicated teams throughout our organizations who ensured a remarkably productive year.

As I reflect on this past year, I am filled with immense gratitude and pride at what we have collectively accomplished.

A year ago, I challenged us all to make a commitment to transformational change through key initiatives that centered around the wellbeing of our animals, our guests, and our teams. What I have seen is this community take those bold plans and turn them into tangible efforts that have been shared and put into action by many on our teams.



We are supporting our member institutions as they work to create a culture of animal wellbeing within their organizations. We are working even more cooperatively to find sustainable solutions for critical populations, both in our care and in the wild. We've seen tremendous advances in how our institutions are ensuring that belonging and inclusion are at the center of how we operate. And we are celebrating our colleagues who are finding ways to care for and develop the talent we have on our incredible teams.

I'm thrilled to welcome as your 100th AZA board chair, the incomparable Denise Verret, the chief executive officer and zoo director at the Los Angeles Zoo and Botanical Gardens in Los Angeles, Calif. She is a transformational leader and a dear friend. As I pass the torch to Denise, I am confident AZA will continue to coalesce around our singular purpose to conserve wildlife and wild places.

I know when we all gather in Calgary, I will again be inspired by your energy and effort. I look forward to continuing to support you all in what lies ahead.

With heartfelt appreciation,



LISA NEW
AZA Board Chair
Chief Executive Officer, Dallas Zoo

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