

ZOO CENTENNIAL NEARS

by Ronald T. Reuther, Director

On July 1, 1974, the Philadelphia Zoological Garden will celebrate its 100th year of continuous operation. The Zoological Society of Philadelphia, which is the governing body of the Zoological Garden, celebrated its centennial on March 21, 1959.

This long, colorful history has seen the Garden become one of the top five or six zoological gardens of our nation and among the most distinguished of the world, although the number and the quality of our zoos have significantly increased since World War II.

This first 100 years have seen ten Presidents of the Zoological Society and seven Executive Directors of the Zoological Garden. These men along with a distinguished Board of Directors, an ever-growing Society membership (currently almost 5,000), and a dedicated, able staff have overcome adversity, reversals, and budget deficiencies to develop the Garden to its present eminence.

Extremely limited in acreage (42) in comparison with most other major zoos in our nation, the Garden has achieved remarkable world records for longevity and reproduction in many species of animals. Its nutritionally balanced and controlled diets developed through our famous Penrose Research Laboratory have been adopted by most zoos of the world. The Laboratory now is vigorously pursuing significant research in hypertension, arteriosclerosis, hepatitis, cancer, and behavior, among other studies.

The animal population is currently as large and diverse as ever in the Zoo's history and numbers approximately 590 species and 1,729 individuals.

The staff is one of the most experienced and well-trained in the nation and numbers approximately 159 full-time employees including seven biological scientists. The Garden's publications, the *Guide Book*, *America's First Zoo*, and Penrose Research Laboratory Reports are high-quality publications noted as outstanding throughout the world.

Art and culture are prominent in the Garden as they properly should be. There are 14 major sculptures, including the "African Elephant and Her Calf" by Heinz Warneke, the largest free-standing single monolithic stone sculpture in the U.S. In recent years, the Garden's own Exhibits Department has created excellent simulated backgrounds, sculptures, and art work adding much beauty and appeal. One of the latest and largest accomplishments is the life-size realistic baobab tree located in the soon-to-be-completed African Plains.

The Garden is presently joined with its sister cultural institutions in the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance working toward greater achievement and impact of the cultural community.

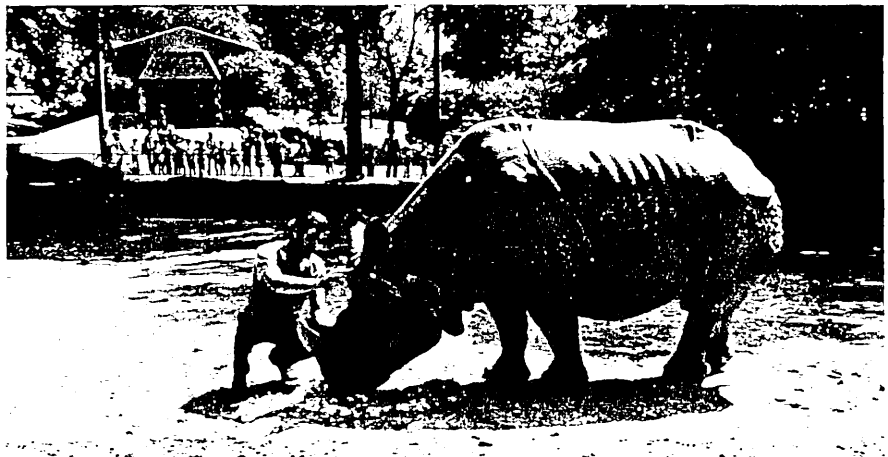
Although our Zoo, like any other, has always had passive educational benefit to its visitors and the community, it is only in the last year that this potential has begun to be developed to its ultimate significant role. Beginning in 1971, a Docent (unpaid volunteer lecturer) group has been developed and is playing an increasingly major role in the interpretation and educational impact of the Zoo. The School District of Philadelphia in 1972 appointed its first full-time schoolteacher

to the Garden. This teacher instructs City of Philadelphia school children in a classroom in the Zoo's new Educational Center-Administration Building.

Conservation education is a feature of our modern Zoo and \$8,473.50 has been collected for the World Wildlife Fund via money deposited by our visitors in the Zoo's Panda Banks.

This community asset provides fun, excitement, entertainment, and wholesome recreation for people of all walks of life. Approximately 1,250,000 people visit the Garden annually, making it the largest single attraction in metropolitan Philadelphia (population 5,200,000). America's First Zoo is first in age by calendar date and in the foresight and perseverance of its founders. It ranks among the first in quality by the cooperation and determination of the Zoological Society, the Fairmount Park Commission, and the administrators and people of the City of Philadelphia.

On this our centennial eve, we plan even more significant efforts and accomplishments in our traditional but enlightened role in research, education, conservation, and public recreation and ask all of you to join with us in this endeavor for *people and animals* in this increasingly less "natural" world.



Junior Keeper Mike Homola feeds Kanakbala (Golden Boy), the male Indian Rhinoceros, as Zoo visitors look on.