Atty. Greg Wesley likes seeing the Milwaukee County Zoo through the eyes of his 4-year-old son, Cole. Last year, Wesley and his wife, Lisa, took Cole to a special summer exhibit that featured life-size dinosaur replicas. When father and son later read in a book that no human had ever seen a live dinosaur, Cole begged to differ, remembers Wesley, laughing. “He said, ‘I’ve seen dinosaurs at the Zoo!’” Wesley, who joined the Zoological Society of Milwaukee’s (ZSM’s) Board of Directors in 2004, takes Cole to the Zoo regularly. “Seeing him enjoy the Zoo experience is where I get the most pleasure from the Zoo,” says Wesley.

Wesley is an equity partner at the law firm of Gonzalez, Saggio & Harlan LLP, a corporate supporting member of the Platypus Society. He always liked animals as a child, but as an adult he has come to appreciate the value of wildlife and the environment. Joining the Board and the Platypus Society gave him a better understanding of the importance of the Zoo as a family attraction, he says. “The Platypus Society helps the ZSM make the Zoo a great place for families to interact in a meaningful way. The ZSM and the Zoo make it possible for children to see endangered animals they might not otherwise view in person.”

The ZSM’s education and conservation programs, too, make Zoo visits even more interesting, says Wesley. “The Zoo has jaguars on exhibit and the ZSM’s conservation and education programs tie animals into a broader perspective.” The ZSM and the Zoo support the Belize Zoo’s Problem Jaguar Rehabilitation Program, which provides a sanctuary for jaguars that otherwise would be killed because they prey on livestock. Some of the rehabilitated jaguars may come to Milwaukee to live at the Zoo.

The Zoo is also a vital economic resource, says Wesley, because it attracts people to Milwaukee. The business community is more effective when businesses support non-profits such as the ZSM. “Commerce is important, but commerce and quality of life are better,” he says. “A vibrant, growing, educated city is crucial if you want to attract good people. And people pay attention to places like the Zoo — it’s affordable and convenient.”

Wesley feels it is important to support diversity at the Zoo by exposing the African-American and Latino communities to ZSM programs. “I want more people from these communities to enjoy their experience at the Zoo.” Among the ways that the ZSM is meeting this goal, Wesley says, is having ZSM instructors go into schools to talk with students about animals and conservation, encouraging classes to come to the Zoo on field trips, and exposing children in youth groups such as the Silver Spring Neighborhood Center to the Zoo and to conservation programs. The ZSM’s Program for Disadvantaged Youth is a newer program that gives children from such youth centers a chance to attend ZSM summer camps. Wesley is pleased that Animal Ambassadors, one of the ZSM’s longest and most successful education programs, brings the world of animals and conservation to second- through fourth-grade students from metro-Milwaukee schools, many of them in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods.

In the future, Wesley would like to go on a safari in Africa to see animals in action. For now, he enjoys visiting the big cats in the Florence Mila Borchert Big Cat Country and devoting his time to the ZSM’s executive committee, where he assists the Board chair and helps with strategic planning. “The value of the ZSM and the Zoo is immense,” says Wesley. “They improve the quality of life for the city and surrounding areas.”

By Julia Kolker
The Simba Society is a special recognition program for people who make bequests in their wills or arrange lifetime gifts to the non-profit Zoological Society of Milwaukee (ZSM). Leaving a lifetime gift to the ZSM can help keep the Milwaukee County Zoo an important community resource well into the future. Simba Society donors also help to support ZSM conservation programs worldwide and wildlife education programs at the Zoo and in the community. Irrevocable trusts, wills, annuities and endowments are among the ways of leaving a legacy that will benefit the ZSM and all the animals at the Zoo. On these pages some Simba Society donors tell why they have left gifts to the Zoological Society. If you’d like to join the Simba Society or learn more about planned gifts, please contact Beth W. Carona at (414) 276-0843.

When Joan Wiegand was a young girl, she went to the former Washington Park Zoo every week. “Somehow, I got involved in a junior zoological society while I was there,” she says. “I learned about animals and what zookeepers did. I absolutely loved it and was active in it for years.” Wiegand’s childhood love of animals continues to inspire her. Several years ago, Wiegand, who now lives in Brookfield, decided to give a planned gift to the Simba Society. “I’ve always loved the Milwaukee County Zoo and decided to give something back to the community,” explains Wiegand, a ZSM member since 1983. She designated a fund at the Milwaukee Foundation, to which she adds varying amounts every year. The fund will give a percentage of the money to the ZSM. Why is leaving a designated gift worthwhile? “The Zoological Society has an amount it can count on, and can plan programs according to gifts,” says Wiegand. “I have seen many improvements to the Zoo grounds over the years thanks to the ZSM.” Her favorites include the Florence Mila Borchert Big Cat Country and the Miller Brewing Company Giraffe Experience exhibits, built as part of the ZSM’s joint capital campaign with Milwaukee County to improve the Zoo. Wiegand also enjoys supporting the ZSM’s mission to take part in conservation and to educate people about the importance of wildlife and the environment. “I’m really interested in making it possible for people to see endangered animals,” she says. “And my grandchildren love the [ZSM] education classes.”
Ten years ago, Judy Cafmeyer and her late husband, Ed, decided to leave part of their estate to the ZSM. “My husband and I had no children,” says Cafmeyer. “So we chose to designate particular groups as beneficiaries of our estate. The Zoo is one of them because we were always very fond of it.” Cafmeyer has been involved with the Zoo and the ZSM for many years. A former member of Zoo Pride, the Zoological Society’s volunteer auxiliary, she served as vice president of the Zoo Pride Board and joined many committees. She and her husband also supported annual appeals and sponsored animals. “I like the way the ZSM has goals for the future and is striving to maintain a high-quality Zoo for the animals and the visitors,” says Cafmeyer. To help keep the Zoo up to date, the Cafmeyers left a bequest to the ZSM in their will. “We didn’t know what our estate would be worth; so we didn’t want to leave a set amount. Instead, we left a percentage to the ZSM.” Cafmeyer is no longer active in Zoo Pride and spends half of the year out of state, but she always enjoys going back to the Zoo. “I’ve been to many zoos around the country and our Zoo is always a real treat to visit,” she says. “The ZSM helps the Zoo update the high-quality exhibits and take good care of animals.”

The Zoo is one of Mark S. Poker’s favorite places to visit with his wife, Mary Catherine, and their two sons, 5-year-old Michael and 3-year-old Matthew. “Some of my best memories of spending time with my family are at the Zoo,” says Poker, a partner at the law firm of Michael Best and Friedrich LLP. He wants to keep the Zoo a great place for families to visit; so last summer he designated a planned gift to the Simba Society. “My philosophy is to give back to the community with a charitable component,” he says. He also joined the Simba Society committee, where he encourages young professionals to leave planned gifts to the ZSM. “Designating a planned gift is not just for older people who have accumulated wealth,” he says. “Younger people with children can help make the Zoo a better place.” The Pokers have been helping to make the Zoo a better place for the past five years. They contribute to ZSM annual appeals, and Mary Catherine (shown in the photo with Mark) is a member of the Associate Board. The ZSM is a valuable support mechanism for the Zoo, Mark Poker explains. “It helps make the Zoo a tremendous place to bring families together in an environment that’s interesting and educational.”
New-Member Profile

Company Name: DigiCOPY
Representative: Paul Otero, District Manager
Address: 1681 N. Van Buren St.,
Milwaukee, WI, 53202
Phone: (414) 283-2679
E-mail: otero@dcopy.net
Web site: www.dcopy.net

Nature of business/mission: DigiCOPY is a digital printing company. We strive to provide the highest quality document solutions in each community we serve.

Company history: DigiCOPY, which currently operates four stores — in Eau Claire, Milwaukee, Stevens Point and Wausau — has been in business for more than six years. We provide digital printing and copying solutions for companies that otherwise may not be able to afford the costly technology investment. We recently opened our first Milwaukee location.

Impact on Milwaukee and surrounding communities: DigiCOPY’s goal is to become an integral part of each community we serve. We support the Zoological Society and other community-based organizations through donations, volunteers, sponsorships and non-profit pricing.

Why the company is a member of the Platypus Society: DigiCOPY wants the Milwaukee County Zoo to continue to be an educational and cultural treasure. Being a Platypus member allows us to share this special experience with all of our co-workers. I plan to spend many more afternoons enjoying the new attractions with my family and my co-workers.

Calendar of Events

March 10 & 11
Behind the Scenes Weekend at the Zoo, sponsored by Tri City National Bank

March 25
Feast for the Beasts Pancake Breakfast, sponsored by Tri City National Bank; fund-raiser for the Zoological Society

April 7
Egg Day at the Zoo, sponsored by McCormick & Pick ’n Save

April 11, 14, 18, 21, 25, 28
Zoo Pride basic orientation training for new volunteers; call (414) 258-5667 for more information.

April 14
Zoological Society bus trip to Chicago’s Brookfield Zoo; call (414) 258-2333 for details.

May 13
Mother’s Day at the Zoo, sponsored by Wilderness Hotel & Golf Resort

May 19
International Migratory Bird Day at the Zoo, sponsored by KAYTEE Products*

May 21

June 2 & 3
Conservation Weekend at the Zoo, sponsored by American Transmission Company

June 17
Father’s Day at the Zoo, sponsored by Chinet® & Pick ’n Save

June 23
Zoo Ball, sponsored by American Airlines & American Eagle

July 19
Platypus Society Family Picnic at the Zoo; 5:30 p.m.