

# Memphis Minded

60<sup>th</sup> Annual AUBER Fall Conference,  
Memphis, TN, October 14-17, 2006



Hosted by the  
Center for Business and Economic Research at the University of Arkansas and the  
Sparks Bureau of Business and Economic Research at the University of Memphis.

## Memphis History

The Memphis Zoo and Aquarium owes its beginning in part to Natch, a Southern black bear, mascot for the Memphis Turtles baseball team. Natch, who was kept chained to a tree in Overton Park, won the interest and sympathy of Col. Robert Galloway, who in 1904 began a fund-raising crusade to build Natch a home. It took two years for the colonel to formulate a workable plan to house not only Natch, but also other abandoned wild animals for which Col. Galloway assumed financial responsibility during that time span. In 1906, the colonel won the support of the Memphis Park Commission and was given \$1,200 to build a zoo for the city. Not only had the colonel gained the backing of the Memphis Park Commission, but also a citizens' group that pledged to help raise

funds for an animal building and the purchase of large animals.

The early history of the Zoo initiated a tradition of community support and involvement that has grown throughout the years and has helped shape the vision and direction of the zoo today. When in 1986, the Memphis Zoological Society made a commitment to upgrade the 70-acre facility and turn it into a world-class facility, it did so with the backing of private citizens and area foundations and corporations, large and small. With the aid of a master plan and the consulting company, Design Consortium of New Orleans, the Zoo added exhibits such as Primate Canyon, Animals of the Night, Cat Country, Once Upon a Farm, and Dragon's Lair. With the addition of a \$2 million state-of-the-art veterinary hospital, the Zoo is well positioned to play

a major role in the conservation and preservation of wildlife.

In 1996, key leaders agreed to go for the gold and attempt to secure an agreement with China for the loan of giant panda bears. As a selling point to the Chinese, the Memphis Zoo proposed to build a three-acre cultural exhibit area that would include other animals native to China and immerse visitors into the culture of the bears' habitat. While the Atlanta, San Diego, and Washington Zoos house the giant pandas, only the Memphis Zoo will display them in their natural cultural environment. The dream of bringing the pandas to Memphis on a 10-year loan is now a reality. The prestige that this event will bring to the Zoo and the city for years to come is incalculable.

—The Memphis Zoo, <http://www.memphiszoo.org/>

## Memphis Links

- ▲ The Memphis Zoo, <http://www.memphiszoo.org/>

## Memphis Song of the Month

"Life Is a Highway," by Tom Cochrane,  
<http://www.tomcochrane.com/pages/lyrics/lifeisahighway.htm>.

## Memphis Facts

- ▲ Volney, the lion who roared at the beginning of all the old MGM movies, lived at the Memphis Zoo until his death in 1944.



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For more information, visit AUBER's web site at  
[www.auber.org](http://www.auber.org).



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