

Tribute to Lawrence Anthony

Through this new edition of the « star of the month » we would like to emphasize the importance of a great man: Sir Lawrence Anthony.



Lawrence Anthony was a fervent defender of nature, the founder of The Earth Organization and the author of three books. In 2004 he received the Earth Day medal presented at the United Nations by the Earth Society.

In 2003, he courageously rescued the animals of the Baghdad zoo taken in the fires of war. The book "Babylon's Ark " retraces this great fight and tells a unique adventure in which Iraqis and Americans had to work together, in the middle of the war, in the name of love and respect for animals. This book has won the 28th Literary Award of the Foundation "30 Million of Friends".

In his second book "The Elephant Whisperer", he tells the rescue of wild traumatized elephants in the South African Reserve of Thula Thula. He describes the unique relationship that he had with these fantastic creatures.

In his third book, « The Last Rhinos », he describes his fight to save the last white rhinos of the northern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo.



Indeed, in 2007, Lawrence Anthony flew to the Congo while the rebels had taken control of the Garamba National Park, threatening to kill the few remaining white rhinos. He then negotiated a ceasefire with the rebel leaders, by convincing them of the need to protect their environment. He fought for the adoption of a resolution by the UN for the protection of fauna and flora in the conflict zones.

Unfortunately, on the 7th of March 2012, this friend of animals died, leaving a wife, two sons, two grandchildren and many elephants.

"Two days after his death, wild elephants led by two matriarchs showed up at his home. Wild herds arrived separately in mass to say goodbye to their beloved human friend.

A total of 31 elephants patiently walked more than 20 kilometers to get to his house. Witnessing this spectacle, humans were obviously surprised not only by the supreme intelligence and precision when these elephants detected the death of Lawrence but also the manifestation of deep emotion that animals had organized: a slow march from their habitat to the house of Lawrence - for days - in a solemn single file.

So how, after Anthony's death, the elephants of the reserve, living in remote areas of the park, did they know? "

"A good man died suddenly," says Rabbi Leila Gal Berner, Ph.D., "and at several kilometers away, two herds of elephants that detected they had lost a dear friend, began to move as in a solemn procession to the house of the deceased to show respect to his family"

"If we had to have a proof of the wonderful interdependence of all living being, the story of the elephants of the Thula Thula Reserve would be one. The heart of a man stops, and the heart of hundreds of elephants is in mourning. The heart of this man offered healing to these elephants, and so they came to make a loving tribute to their friend. "

Lawrence's wife, Francoise, was particularly affected, given that the elephants had not returned home for over 3 years!

But yet they knew where they were going.

Elephants have obviously wanted to show their deep respect and honor to their friend who saved their lives, by remaining in front of the house for 2 days and 2 nights without eating anything.

Then one morning, they left.

Below are some quotes of Lawrence Anthony:

"Our inability to think beyond our own species, or to be able to co-habit with other life forms in what is patently a massive collaborative quest for survival, is surely a malady that pervades the human soul."

"The only good cage is an empty cage."

"There is more to life than just yourself, your own family, and your own kind."

"I don't think I have a mission in life. I just want to hold together the values that are important to us as human beings. The name of the game is to survive, and we can't survive without the plant and animal kingdoms."

"The green movement has become tainted with extremism and intemperance resulting in lack of credibility. It needs new direction, new priorities and new leadership."

"Workable solutions for Earth are urgently needed. Saving seals and tigers, or fighting yet another oil pipeline through a wilderness area, while laudable, is merely shuffling the deck chairs on the Titanic."

"Man's cultural and traditional links to nature that used to be passed down, generation to generation, have become lost in a sea of 'civilization', bureaucracy and technology."

"Thankfully the Earth has an incredible capacity to sustain life, so perhaps something can still be done about it."