



Dean & Prayeri Harrison

Their Story

In 1988, Dean and Prayeri Harrison founded Out of Africa Wildlife Park, a preserve born from their single-minded objective of bringing God, people, and animals together in a natural setting. In 2005, the park greatly expanded its operations, moving to the high desert foothills of Mingus Mountain in Camp Verde, Arizona, on 104 acres that look north toward the red rocks of Sedona and the San Francisco peaks of Flagstaff.

As children, Dean and Prayeri both enjoyed animals. Prayeri grew up in Southern California and had the usual assortment of cats, dogs, and birds as pets, but also loved the chickens at her grandparent's home in Oklahoma. Dean's fascination as a young boy was with reptiles.

United in their passion for animals, Dean and Prayeri married in 1980 and before long, they welcomed Saja, a baby African leopard, into their hearts and home.

Saja began her life in their house, taking her meals, sharing their bed, and playing with her human parents. In return, this wild and survival-oriented creature provided them the priceless experience of understanding life from a wild animal's point of view.

In retrospect, the Harrisons believe that Saja was their scout revealing for them their calling – that of illuminating for others the connectedness between human and animal spirituality.

As Saja grew, she needed companions with equal athletic abilities, thus directing the Harrisons to gradually add other big cats to their family, including a tiger, a cougar, and a lion, all of which they raised from cubs, caring for them and nurturing them just as they did Saja.

They moved from California to twenty acres in the Oregon forest where they built a fully integrated human/animal abode so that the animals could freely roam their own sections of the grounds and shelters, or they could choose to spend time with Dean and Prayeri in their own section of the house.

The Harrisons became known for their beautiful animals and meticulous care of them. They opened their home and facility to the public, calling it Tigerville, USA. But, the Harrisons wanted to live in Arizona, so they moved to the Phoenix area and then, after 16 years, moved again to a much larger property in Camp Verde where the animals could enjoy more spacious habitats.

Dean and Prayeri's knowledge and understanding of animal behavior and instincts necessarily intensified with each new addition. They've become experienced in preventive veterinary care, learning best practices in contemporary allopathic thinking as well as in the more esoteric options available in holistic medicine. They also have extensive experience in evaluating and collaborating on medical treatment and assisting at surgeries for injuries and illness.

They added to their intimate knowledge of African animals by conducting photo safaris in Africa. The trips have helped them construct authentic habitats and have enabled them to share true safari experiences with guests at Out of Africa Wildlife Park.

Perhaps most importantly, spending time in Africa imbued Dean and Prayeri with an overwhelming physical and spiritual sense of “home” and of being one with all life. Providing others with the opportunity to awaken to this concept has become their greatest pleasure.

Every day at Out of Africa, the concept of oneness is illustrated with unsurpassed majesty – children are kissed by giraffes, adults are surprised by hyenas’ playfulness, and little boys go home saying, “When I grow up, my wife is *never* going to wear a fur coat.”