

# **Movie Stars Retire To Florida Great Ape Sanctuary**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

**March 1, 2005**

What happens to chimpanzees and orangutans who work in show biz once they're no longer young enough to handle? Usually, there aren't many suitable options for them because accredited zoos don't have room to take these ex-performers.

However, 16 chimpanzees and 6 orangutans owned by Los Angeles trainer, Bob Dunn, are heading to a life of permanent retirement in Wauchula, Florida. Dunn, owner of Bob Dunn's Animal Services, the largest supplier of great apes in show business, has himself decided to retire from 30 years of providing chimps and orangutans for movies, television shows, and advertisements. And, he's donating all his working and breeding apes to a Florida sanctuary, the Center for Great Apes.

In the entertainment business, chimpanzees and orangutans are only worked while they're infants and juveniles. Once they hit the adolescent years, they're usually too strong to be handled. Since intelligent great apes can live over 50 years in captivity, the issue of where they go when they're cycled out of entertainment is a concern to many. Since zoos usually won't take these animals, it's getting harder to find a place for them that's suited to their special needs.

But Dunn wants his apes to have a permanent home with a secure future, so he's sending them all to the Center for Great Apes where twenty other orangutans and chimps are now living. "These primates have worked on many shows, but I think it's the right thing to do to retire them to a sanctuary now."

Sammy, a 15-year-old orangutan, once had the starring role in the movie "Dunston Checks In" when he was just a kid. Now, with Sammy weighing over 200 pounds and having the strength of several grown men, it's not safe to work him around actors and actresses anymore. Sanctuary director Patti Ragan says her staff is looking forward to providing Sammy with a huge new habitat and a long, elevated tunnel system running through the wooded property of the Center for Great Apes. "Sammy can do here what he does best.... eat, roam through the woods, and hang around with other orangutans."

Twelve years ago, Ragan founded the Center for Great Apes which is now located on 100 acres of tropical forest and orange groves in central Florida. The sanctuary is not open to the public as an attraction, but is supported by individual memberships and private donations. ([www.CenterForGreatApes.org](http://www.CenterForGreatApes.org)).

Dunn has announced that he is out of the ape business and no longer intends to work with great apes in show business or provide them for commercial work in the future.