About the Author

Book Title: Elephant whisperer
by Lawrence Anthony

Author Bio
• Birth—September 17, 1950
• Where—Johannesburg, South Africa
• Death—March 2, 2012
• Where—Johannesburg, South Africa
• Education—N/A
• Awards—French 28th Prix Litteraire 30 Millions d'Amis

Lawrence Anthony was an international conservationist, environmentalist, explorer, and bestselling author.

He was the long-standing head of conservation at the Thula Thula game reserve in Zululand South Africa and the founder of The Earth Organization, a private conservation and environmental group with a strong scientific orientation. He was also an international member of the esteemed Explorers Club of New York and a member of the National Council of the Southern Africa Association for the
Anthony had a reputation for bold conservation initiatives, including the rescue of the Baghdad zoo at the height of the US lead Coalition 2003 invasion of Iraq, and negotiations with the infamous Lord's Resistance Army rebel army in Southern Sudan, to raise awareness of the environment and to protect endangered species, including the last of the Northern White Rhinoceros.

Details of his conservation activities appeared regularly in regional and international media including CNN, CBS, BBC, Al Jazeera and Sky TV and featured in magazines and journals such as Readers Digest, Smithsonian, Explorers Journal, Africa Geographic, Men’s Journal, Shape magazine, Elle, and others.

Anthony was married to Francoise Malby and lived on the Thula Thula game reserve in Zululand. He has two sons (Dylan and Jason) and two grandsons. A brother-in-law, Graham Spence, co-authored his three books.

He died at age 61 of a heart attack before his planned March 2012 conservation gala dinner in Durban to raise international awareness of the rhino-poaching crisis. He was also to have launched his new book, The Last Rhinos: My Battle to Save One of the World's Greatest Creatures (2012).

Following his death, there were reports that some of the elephants he worked to save came to his family's home in accordance with the way elephants usually mourn the death of one of their own. two grandsons.
In April, 2012, he was posthumously awarded honorary Doctor of Science degree by College of Agriculture, Engineering and Science, University of KwaZulu-Natal.

**Background**

Anthony was born in Johannesburg, South Africa. His grandfather, who was a miner in Berwick-upon-Tweed, England had migrated to the area in the 1920s to work in the gold mines. His father, who ran an insurance business, went about establishing new offices across Southern Africa; Anthony was raised in rural Rhodesia (now called Zimbabwe), Zambia, and Malawi, before settling in Zululand, South Africa.

Following his father, Anthony also started his career in the insurance sector, though subsequently started working the real estate development business. Meanwhile, he started working with Zulu tribespeople, and by mid-1990s his passion for the African Bush inspired him to switch careers. He purchased the Thula Thula game reserve, over 5,000-acres, in KwaZulu-Natal.

**Career in conservation**

A turning point in career came when he was called by a conservation group to rescue a group of nine elephants who had escaped their enclosure and were wreaking havoc across KwaZulu-Natal, and were about to be shot. He tried to communicate with the matriarch of the herd through the tone of his voice and body language, eventually rescued them and brought to the reserve, and in time came to be known as "Elephant-whisperer."
His work with the elephants became the subject of his second book, *The Elephant Whisperer: My Life with the Herd in the African Wild* (2009).

In 2003 he established a conservation group, The Earth Organization, and his efforts led to the establishment of two new reserves, the Royal Zulu Biosphere in Zululand and the Mayibuye Game Reserve in Kwa Ximba, to provide local tribes income through wildlife tourism.

**Baghdad Zoo**

During the 2003 Iraqi invasion, Anthony launched a private rescue initiative for the Baghdad Zoo, then the largest zoo in the Mideast. However, safety, bureaucratic and transportation problems delayed Anthony's arrival for eight days. By the time he was able to reach the zoo, only 35 out of 650 animals had survived: bombing, looting for food, and starvation had taken their toll. Only the larger animals—bears, hyenas, and the big cats—tended to survive.

In the chaos of the war, Anthony used mercenaries to help protect the zoo, and he worked with the remaining zookeepers to buy donkeys off the Baghdad streets to feed the carnivores. Additional aid came from US Army soldiers, Iraqi civilians and various other volunteers (including former Republican Guard soldiers). Eventually L. Paul Bremer, then head of the Coalition Provisional Authority, lended his support, and with the help of American engineers, Anthony was able to reopen the zoo.

In 2007 he published his book about the wartime rescue: *Babylon’s*
Africa

As an African wildlife expert, Anthony was long involved with programs to involve remote African tribes in conservation on their own traditional land, an activity he considered essential to the future well-being of conservation in Africa. He had created two new Game Reserves in South Africa. The Royal Zulu Biosphere in Zululand, which is expanding to join the world famous Umfolozi Hluhluwe reserve, and the Mayibuye Game Reserve in Kwa Ximba.

When he learned about the near extinction of the Northern White Rhino—only 15 were left—he journeyed into the Congo, an area controlled by the Lord's Resistance Army, to convince them to work with him in saving the animals. He gained their trust and saved the species...which, if lost, would have been largest land mammal to undergo extinction since the woolly mammoth.

Anthony's private focus was the rehabilitation of traumatized African elephant. He had developed a unique relationship with a wild herd of elephant on the Thula Thula Reserve in Zululand. Anthony's second book, The Elephant Whisperer (2009), tells the story of his working relationship with the African elephant.
When South African conservationist Lawrence Anthony was asked to accept a herd of "rogue" wild elephants on his Thula Thula game reserve in Zululand, his common sense told him to refuse. But he was the herd's last chance of survival: they would be killed if he wouldn't take them.

In order to save their lives, Anthony took them in. In the years that followed he became a part of their family. And as he battled to create a bond with the elephants, he came to realize that they had a great deal to teach him about life, loyalty, and freedom.

_The Elephant Whisperer_ is a heartwarming, exciting, funny, and sometimes sad account of Anthony's experiences with these huge yet sympathetic creatures. Set against the background of life on an African game reserve, with unforgettable characters and exotic wildlife, it is a delightful book that will appeal to animal lovers and adventurous souls everywhere.
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1. All the work involved in buying, building, and maintaining a refuge like Thula Thula, including the financial and political considerations.

2. What would it take to work with an elephant herd:
   - Setting up a refuge to receive so-called "bad elephants," working with and handling them;
   - Social aspects of the elephant family, including acceptance of a new member and isolation of a single male;
   - Elephant mother's attempt—and efforts by the author—to save the new baby elephant;
   - Gaining the friendship and support of the tribes surrounding the refuge.

4. The social interaction of the "family" at the refuge—Francoise, dogs, the workers, as well as the author's grandchildren and family visits, etc.

5. Importance of keeping in contact with the many agencies involved with animal refuges.

6. The marriage proposal: good or bad? Was Lawrence tricked into marriage?

7. We also mentioned the author's other books, especially The Last Rhinos.

Reviews

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In 1998, prize-winning conservationist Anthony...agreed to take in a herd of "troubled" wild elephants, the first seen in the area in more than a century.... An inspiring, multifaceted account, Anthony's book offers fascinating insights into the lives of wild elephants in the broader context of Zulu culture in post-Apartheid South Africa.

*Publishers Weekly*

Despite Anthony's awards and recognition for his conservation efforts, this book falls short in terms of holding reader interest. The writing doesn't do justice to Anthony's efforts to save these animals. It is drawn out and lacks the spark and engagement that descriptive writing creates in the reader. A disappointment even for those who like memoirs and African wildlife. —*Edell M. Schaefer, Brookfield P.L., WI*

*Library Journal*

The story of how Anthony saved his elephants by making friends with them...is both heartwarming and heartening. Life on a game reserve is never easy, particularly when elephants are added to the mix, but Anthony’s enthusiasm and obvious love for the bush shine through in hair-raising, sad, and funny tales. This life with elephants is a real winner. —*Nancy Bent*

*Booklist*

[An] uplifting story.... Though the prose occasionally becomes mawkish—as in his "born-free adolescence," remembered "as vividly as a lovelorn youth recalling his first heart-thudding kiss"—Anthony’s bone-deep mission is bracing and his courage is inspiring. Energetic firsthand reportage from the heart of the African wild.

*Kirkus Reviews*