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CHANGING TIDE BRINGS NEW LEADERSHIP TO NATIONAL AQUARIUM IN BALTIMORE

Baltimore (May 19, 2005) – The National Aquarium in Baltimore is one of the largest employers in the city with unique job opportunities ranging from water quality control to educators, from accountants to emergency medical technicians. Regardless of position, Aquarium staff share a commitment to maintaining high standards of care for both the animals that make the Aquarium home and the visitors who come to see them. The Aquarium announces three staff changes that will continue to support those standards:

1. Dr. Brent Whitaker, the Director of Animal Health, is promoted to Deputy Executive Director of Biological Programs.
2. Dr. Leigh Clayton, also of the Animal Health department, is named Acting Director of Animal Health.
3. Bill Minarik, Director of Visitor Services, is promoted to Senior Director of Visitor Operations.

Dr. Brent Whitaker, now Deputy Executive Director of Biological Programs, has been with the Aquarium for 15 years. In this new role, Whitaker is responsible for the teams in charge of husbandry and health of the Aquarium's more than 11,000 animals. "After a national search, it was clear that Dr. Whitaker has the superior credentials and personal attributes needed to assume this critical leadership role," says Executive Director David Pittenger.

An experienced veterinarian who is widely respected in the Aquarium industry, Whitaker has also consulted with many institutions, including the National Institute of Medical Research in England, the New England Aquarium, the National Aquarium in Washington, D.C and Ocean Park in Hong Kong. He is also well published, and has authored more than 100 papers and book chapters, including a co-authorship of an important text in amphibian medicine and husbandry.

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Whitaker earned a Master of Veterinary Science and a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree from the University of Florida, College of Veterinary Medicine. He holds Florida and Maryland veterinary licenses, a Drug Enforcement Agency license, Maryland controlled substance certification, and is USDA accredited. When he is not at the Aquarium or spending time with his family, Whitaker works weekly with some of the Baltimore area's less exotic animals, doing spay and neuter surgeries at a local animal shelter.

Dr. Leigh Clayton has assumed the role of Acting Director of Animal Health, responsible for the veterinary care of the more than 600 species of fishes, invertebrates, marine mammals, primates, reptiles and amphibians. Clayton obtained her Doctorate in Veterinary Medicine at Tufts Veterinary School and most recently completed her residency training in avian medicine at Angel Memorial Animal Hospital in Boston. "Dr. Clayton brings the latest knowledge in modern veterinary medicine to the Aquarium," says Whitaker. "We strive to give all of our animals the best care possible and are very lucky to have Dr. Clayton as a member of our staff."

Clayton is a published author and sought-after lecturer on avian topics, reptiles and South American primates. She is well prepared to handle the challenges of life as the Aquarium's top veterinarian, having previous experience at the National Zoo, the Lincoln Park Zoo and John G. Shedd Aquarium. In her free time Clayton enjoys rock climbing and spending time with husband Jay.

Bill Minarik, now Senior Director of Visitor Operations, is a 14-year Aquarium veteran who heads the Aquarium's largest department and oversees the operations that impact the visitor experience. In his new role, Minarik will lead his staff of 250 into new "Australian" territory as the Aquarium navigates its 64,000 square foot *Animal Planet Australia: Wild Extremes* expansion (slated to open at the end of 2005) and negotiates the continued challenge of providing the Aquarium's more than 1.6 million annual visitors a unique experience. "It is in part due to Bill's unflagging advocacy for visitors that the Aquarium has sustained excellent customer service ratings in spite of two years of construction activities," said Deputy Executive Director of Programs and Operations Paula Schaedlich. "Bill's positive approach to work and life makes the Aquarium a better place to work and to visit."

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Minarik is a recipient of the Aquarium's "Frank Gunther Employee of the Year" award given annually for excellence in work at the Aquarium and volunteer involvement in the community. Minarik resides in Kingsville with his wife Linda.

The National Aquarium in Baltimore, a non-profit organization, is Maryland's most exciting and popular cultural attraction, as well as one of the region's leading conservation and education resources, hosting more than 1.6 million visitors per year. The Aquarium's mission is to connect people with aquatic life in order to create a better world for both. It is dedicated to education and conservation through more than a dozen programs that serve the environment and the community.