

# Robert J. Berry Named AFA's New Executive Director

by Sheldon Dingle

Effective 1 February, 1995, Robert J. Berry assumed his responsibilities as Executive Director of the AFA. In this position, he will oversee a number of the AFA's ongoing programs and will be charged with the creative furthering of the general aims and goals of the organization. He will assist in the long range planning and generally share responsibility for carrying the AFA into the future.

Some of Berry's immediate efforts will involve developing a funding base for several of the AFA's current projects, including the Red-fronted Macaw research program and the Red Siskin Project. He will seek the financial involvement of various corporations and individuals in the AFA's continuing conservation efforts as well as in the general operation of the organization. Berry already has plans to develop a system of public Sponsorship Programs and is working on a Planned Giving Program that facilitates considering the AFA in wills and estate planning.

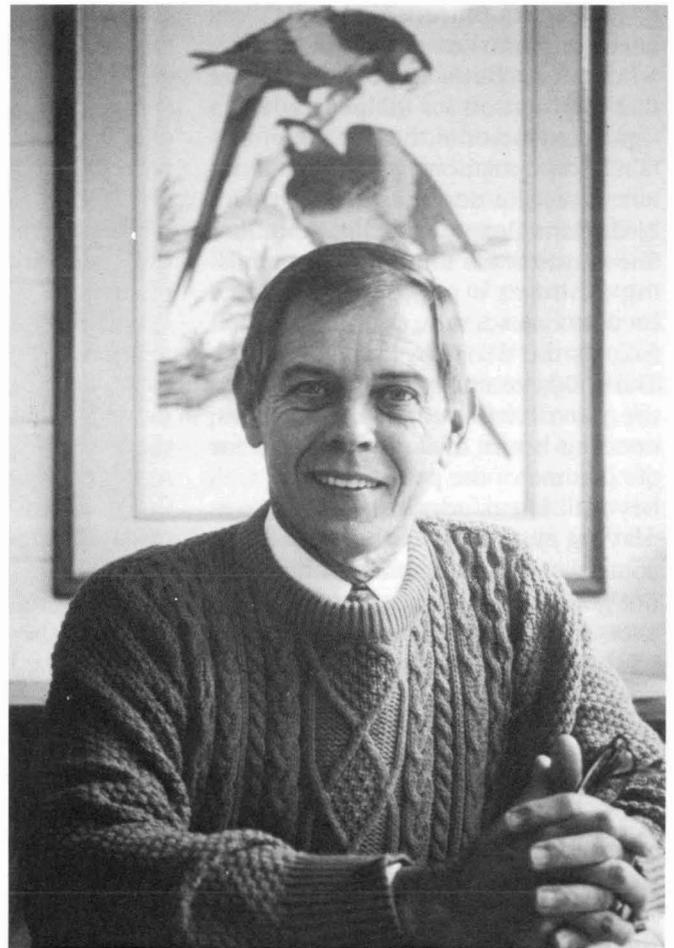
Another of Berry's efforts will be toward creating an advisory council comprised of top experts in their field or profession. These individuals would be available to lend their expertise to the AFA's Board of Directors when needed to help guide the AFA in its future endeavors.

No one is better suited to serve the AFA as Executive Director than Robert J. Berry. Many of you old-timers know him through his previous involvement as the founding chairman of the AFA's Conservation Committee. He is highly respected by his avicultural colleagues

in both the public and private sector and has been a staunch advocate of captive breeding as a significant component of wildlife conservation strategies.

Berry brings to the AFA a very broad knowledge of and involvement in aviculture and in various administrative functions. Indeed, he raised his first Budgie at the age of seven and has been going strong ever since. He has maintained a very fine private collection of psittacine birds for many years and has raised the beautiful Leadbeater's Cockatoo to the fifth generation. He began breeding this species in 1962! Berry's expertise has put him in demand as an avicultural consultant and he has worked in this capacity with a number of prominent breeding collections in this country. He was graduated from the University of Houston and later held an Adjunct Professorship with Texas A&M University School of Veterinary Medicine.

In addition to the above activities, Berry served for 15 years as Curator of Birds at the Houston Zoological Gardens where he compiled a very impressive record of achievement in zoo aviculture. Under his leadership the



Robert J. Berry

Houston Zoo's bird section received the prestigious AAZPA Edward H. Bean Award in 1978 and 1979, followed by the AAZPA Significant Achievement Award in 1980 for breeding the Red Bird of Paradise, the Scarlet Cock of the Rock, and the Golden-headed Quetzal, respectively. He is also the recipient of various other avicultural awards, including the AFA's AVY Award for Outstanding Contribution to Aviculture in 1981. Berry belongs to several professional organizations and has published numerous papers in both popular and professional journals and has long been a popular speaker at avicultural meetings and at conservation conferences.

Just as he served to establish a bridge between zoo curators and private aviculturists during his zoo career, his long and enduring efforts as a private aviculturist, spanning almost fifty years, give him a broad overview that will help bridge our avicultural past with our future.

Robert J. Berry is a learned and gracious gentleman who brings a wealth of professional experience and creative ideas to the AFA. It is a privilege to have him aboard. ➤