



FERNDALE

*City of Ferndale
Resolution of Condolence*

Honoring "B'Wana" Don Hunt

At a Regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Ferndale, Oakland County, Michigan, held in the Council Chambers at 300 E. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale, Michigan 48220 on the 13th of June, 2016.

Mayor David Coulter, on behalf of the Ferndale City Council, extends the City's condolences to the family of B'Wana Don Hunt.

B'Wana Don Hunt was a long-time resident of Ferndale and an integral member of our community. He operated B'Wana Don's pet shop after serving in the US Army during the Korean War and hosted a local TV show to share his knowledge and love of animals. He later moved to Kenya and established the Kenya Game Ranch and Animal Orphanage with his wife Iris, and actors William Holden and Stefanie Powers.

B'Wana Don Hunt was a credit to his family and to his community, and it is with deep sorrow that we mourn his loss.

I, Marne McGrath, City Clerk of Ferndale, certify that this is a true copy of a Resolution duly adopted by the Ferndale City Council at a meeting held June 13, 2016.

Marne McGrath, City Clerk

Don Hunt taught of animal world on TV

By Tim Kiska

Special to the Free Press

“B’Wana Don” Hunt, who taught Detroit youngsters about the wonders of the animal world on his early-1960s metro Detroit television show, has died at age 84.

Hunt died April 29 at Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak after suffering a stroke in January, according to his brother, Pat Hunt. He lived in Brutus, near Petoskey.

His show, “B’Wana Don in Jungle-La,” which ran on Channel 2 between 1960 and 1963, featured Hunt in a safari outfit, explaining pets and animals to young Detroiters. Bongo Bailey, the pet monkey who served as Hunt’s costar, earned a celebrity status at least equal to Hunt’s. Don “always said that Bongo was the star, and he (Hunt) was the costar,” recalls Pat Hunt.

The show, driven by Hunt’s friendly style, was among the biggest hits in early Detroit TV. It would be syndicated



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Don Hunt starred in a TV show with his chimp Bongo Bailey.

across the country and overseas. At one point, Storer Broadcasting would shuffle both Hunt and Bongo Bailey on a private plane between Detroit and Cleveland on a daily basis. Hunt and Bailey would appear in Detroit in the mornings before flying off to the Storer station in Cleveland.

Even Hunt was astonished by the wealth the program brought him.

“When I went from \$75 a week from my pet shop, and

then, when I went to \$5,000 a week because they were doing syndication, I just couldn’t believe there was that much money anyplace in the world — and why they would pay it to a pet shop kid like me?,” he said in an interview for a Detroit Public Television documentary.

Hunt began his career at a pet shop in his native Ferndale while still a student at St. James High School. He bought the store with a partner while studying business at the University of Detroit, coming to the attention of Channel 2 officials when he brought pets to various local TV programs, including the Soupy Sales program on Channel 7.

“Don Hunt’s love of animals was very apparent on the small screen. From his African trading post set in ‘Jungle-La’ he taught a generation of young Detroiters about exotic animals,” said Ed Golick, creator of www.detroitkidshow.com.

Hunt would later move to Africa where he developed a

game preserve of more than 1,000 acres in Nanyuki, about 100 miles outside of Nairobi.

In addition to his brother Pat, Hunt is survived by three other brothers, Tom, Brian and Michael; and one sister, Diane; two children, Kevin and Kimberly, and two grandchildren.

A memorial is planned next month at St. James Catholic Church in Ferndale.

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