



Alan Richard Mootnick (1951–2011)

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Alan Richard Mootnick (1951–2011)



White-cheeked gibbon,
Nomascus. Ricky and Pepper.
Photo © Gabi Skollar.

Alan Mootnick, from Los Angeles, California, founded the non-profit “Gibbon Conservation Center” (GCC) in Santa Clarita, California, in 1976. Today it houses the largest collection of endangered apes in the Western Hemisphere. Its mission and his mission: to prevent the extinction of gibbons and to advance the study, propagation, and conservation of the species. Completely self-taught in primatology, he was internationally recognized as a world authority on the taxonomy, biology and captive care of these apes. Alan travelled widely in Asia to share his knowledge, and to train, educate and help local people for the benefit of captive and wild gibbons. He published more than 30 articles in peer-reviewed journals and offered advice to zoos, government agencies, veterinary institutions, and gibbon rescue centers throughout the world. He was the studbook keeper for five species and Husbandry Advisor for the Gibbon Species Survival Plan. A lifetime of extraordinary and brilliant dedication to the conservation and study of gibbons. In the words of his friend and colleague Roland Wirth, Zoological Society for Conservation of Species and Populations (ZGAP), Munich, Germany: “The gibbons lost one of their greatest advocates, the world lost a wonderful person.”