



Indianapolis Zoo

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Lilly Medal Awarded to the Winner of the Indianapolis Prize

Original Art Reflects Cause of Animal Conservation

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John W. Terborgh, Ph.D.

Jeff Trandahl

*Deceased

INDIANAPOLIS – The Lilly Medal, a beautifully designed piece of original art, will be awarded to the winner of the Indianapolis Prize, which also includes a \$100,000 unrestricted award to an individual who has made a significant contribution to the conservation of an animal species. This cast bronze commemorative medal reflects the commitment of the [Eli Lilly and Company Foundation](#), which has provided funding for the Indianapolis Prize since 2006. In its design, the Lilly Medal reflects the relationship between man and the natural world and will provide a fitting remembrance to each of the Indianapolis Prize recipients for years to come.

The Lilly Medal was designed by Rik Tommasone, then a senior student at the Herron School of Art and Design, Indiana University. The Indianapolis Prize Organizing Committee instituted a design competition for the medal that was open to faculty, alumni and senior students at the prestigious Indianapolis art and design school. Rik's design was chosen from the submissions by a panel of experts.

The design features a shepherd, who is associated with watching over his flock, a concept similar to a conservationist watching over a species. He is surrounded by nature, with plants growing upward to represent positive outcomes. The sun in the background is rising to represent the light that guides the individual to unselfishly help the cause of animal conservation. The round shape of the medal speaks to the circle of life.

Using Rik's finished artwork, a metallic art sculptor modeled in clay a large format bas relief master model that was used to make the dies that minted the Lilly Medal out of solid bronze using more than 1,200 tons of pressure. Each medal was then meticulously hand finished with a chocolate brown patina. The completed three-inch diameter medal features Tommasone's artwork on the front and a quote from naturalist John Muir on the reverse side: "When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe."

According to Prize chair Myrta Pulliam, "The look, the feel and the sheer weight of the Lilly Medal reflects the importance of the Indianapolis Prize as well as its place among major awards. We are very pleased with the final design and the artistry of people involved, from the original concept through the casting and the patina."

The biennial \$100,000 Indianapolis Prize represents the largest individual monetary award for animal conservation in the world and is given as an unrestricted gift to the chosen honoree. The Indianapolis Prize was initiated by the [Indianapolis Zoo](#) as a significant component of its mission to empower people and communities, both locally and globally, to advance animal conservation. This award brings the world's attention to the cause of animal conservation and the brave, talented and dedicated men and women who spend their lives saving the Earth's endangered animal species. It was first awarded in 2006 to Dr. George Archibald, the co-founder of the [International Crane Foundation](#) and one of the world's great field biologists. In 2008, the Indianapolis Prize went to Dr. George Schaller, the world's preeminent field biologist and vice president of Panthera and senior conservationist for the [Wildlife Conservation Society](#). The Eli Lilly and Company Foundation has provided funding for the Indianapolis Prize since 2006.