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JANE GOODALL

BIOGRAPHY



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BIG HISTORY PROJECT



JANE GOODALL

BIOGRAPHY OF
A PRIMATOLOGIST

By Cynthia Stokes Brown

Born
April 3, 1934
London, England

In 1960 Jane Goodall pioneered the study of chimpanzees in the wild, showing the world how similar chimpanzee behavior is to that of humans, and helping to demonstrate the close evolutionary relationship of the two species.



An early interest in animal life

Jane Goodall's parents were Mortimer Herbert Morris-Goodall, a car-racing businessman, and Margaret Myfanwe Joseph, a novelist who published under the name Vanne Morris-Goodall.

When Jane was just over a year old, her father gave her a stuffed toy, a lifelike replica of a chimpanzee, named "Jubilee" after the first chimpanzee infant ever born at the London Zoo. The toy horrified some of her mother's friends, who thought that it would give Jane nightmares. They could not foresee the favorable influence it would have on her.

Goodall's interest in observing animal life showed up early. When she was 4, she wanted so badly to know how an egg came out of a hen that she hid inside a small henhouse for nearly four hours waiting to see it happen. Meanwhile, the whole household had been searching for her and had even reported her missing to the police.

Goodall's fascination with Africa was aroused by reading *The Story of Doctor Dolittle* by Hugh Lofting. Lofting depicts Dolittle as a kindly doctor who travels to Africa and talks to animals. Jane also read all of the Tarzan books. Her mother encouraged her dream of studying animals in Africa — assuring her that she could do it if she worked hard and believed in herself.

Goodall's parents divorced when she was 12, and when she graduated from secondary school in 1952, her family could not afford to send her to college. Instead, she went to secretarial school and then worked as a secretary, including a job at Oxford University typing and filing. In 1956, a school friend invited her to visit the friend's family farm in the highlands of Kenya. Goodall went back to live at home, worked hard as a waitress, and in five months saved enough money for the round-trip fare on a ship to Mombasa.

A meeting with Louis Leakey

In 1957, Goodall visited her friend's family on their farm outside Nairobi and subsequently found a job as a secretary in the city. Her interest in animals led her to contact Louis Leakey, the famous seeker of hominine bones, who was then working in Africa. He promptly hired her as his secretary. Leakey had been looking for someone to study chimpanzees in the wild and, after he got to know Goodall, felt that she would be perfect. Leakey believed that a woman would be more patient than a man in the field and would be less likely to kindle the aggressions of male chimps. She returned to London to study primates in the London Zoo while he raised funds to support her field studies and arranged her equipment.

In 1960, when she was 26, Goodall eagerly traveled 600 miles southwest of Nairobi to live at Gombe Stream Chimpanzee Preserve, on Lake Tanganyika. There, about 150 chimpanzees made their home in a 20- to 30-square-mile area. It took her months to accustom the chimps to her presence but, after nearly a year, most of them would allow her to approach closer than a hundred yards.

Observing chimpanzee culture

Goodall had little professional training in animal studies. She worked unconventionally, doing things like giving the chimpanzees names instead of numbers and perceiving the individual personality of each one. She also found that baiting the animals with bananas helped to attract them close enough for her to observe their social behavior and to photograph them.

Within four months, Goodall had observed behavior that contradicted a belief strongly held by archaeologists: that only humans used tools. "Man the tool-maker" was the phrase they used. But Goodall saw a chimp break off a twig, strip its bark, and insert it into a termite mound. When the chimp withdrew the twig, it was covered with delicious termites ready to be licked off. Since then, other researchers have observed chimpanzees using more than half a



dozen tools for assorted purposes. Chimp societies across Africa vary in their use of tools. Other animals, including some birds and dolphins, are now known to use tools.

Chimps were also widely believed to be vegetarians, but Goodall observed them hunting, killing, and eating small colobus monkeys. Goodall made her findings public in her book *In the Shadow of Man* (1971).

Leakey believed that having a PhD would help give credibility to Goodall's work. He raised the funds to send her to Cambridge University, where she received in 1965 a PhD in ethology (the scientific study of animal behavior) with a dissertation titled "Behavior of the Free-Ranging Chimpanzee."

Leakey also sent a professional photographer, Hugo Van Lawick, to Gombe to record Goodall's work there. The two fell in love and married in 1964. Their son, Hugo Eric Louis Van Lawick, was born in 1967. They called him "Grub" and raised him in Gombe with the chimpanzees. In 1972, Goodall and her husband published a children's book about their son called *Grub: The Bush Baby*. But their marriage deteriorated. They divorced in 1974, and a year later she married Derek Bryceson, director of Tanzania's national parks, who proved to be a deeply compatible partner. However, he died of cancer after only five years of marriage.



After Goodall recovered from the death of her husband, she wrote her definitive scientific work, *The Chimpanzees of Gombe: Patterns of Behavior* (1986). In this book, she summarized and analyzed all the data gathered by herself and others at Gombe. By this time, the data included acts of warfare, murder, brutality, and even cannibalism by her beloved chimpanzees, challenging her belief in their inherent goodness. For the first 10 years, she had believed that they were “rather nicer than human beings,” but now she had to acknowledge that in certain circumstances, such as competition for food, sex, or territory, or under emotions of jealousy, fear, or revenge, their behavior proved as dark and troubling as that seen in humans.

At the same time, chimpanzees often demonstrated mutual sharing, helping, and compassion. Mothers, children, and siblings developed deep ties, often assisting each other throughout their lifetimes. Older siblings adopted younger ones if a mother died, and would even adopt an orphan from another mother if it had no relative to protect it. Some mothers were more attentive and playful than others, and Goodall observed that their chimps grew up less depressed and aggressive than the chimps whose mothers were less attentive.

Some primatologists have criticized Goodall’s methods, especially her use of bananas in feeding stations to attract chimps. They claim that the food causes higher levels of aggression and conflict, distorting normal behavior. But other research has shown similar levels of conflict without feeding stations.

Messenger of compassion

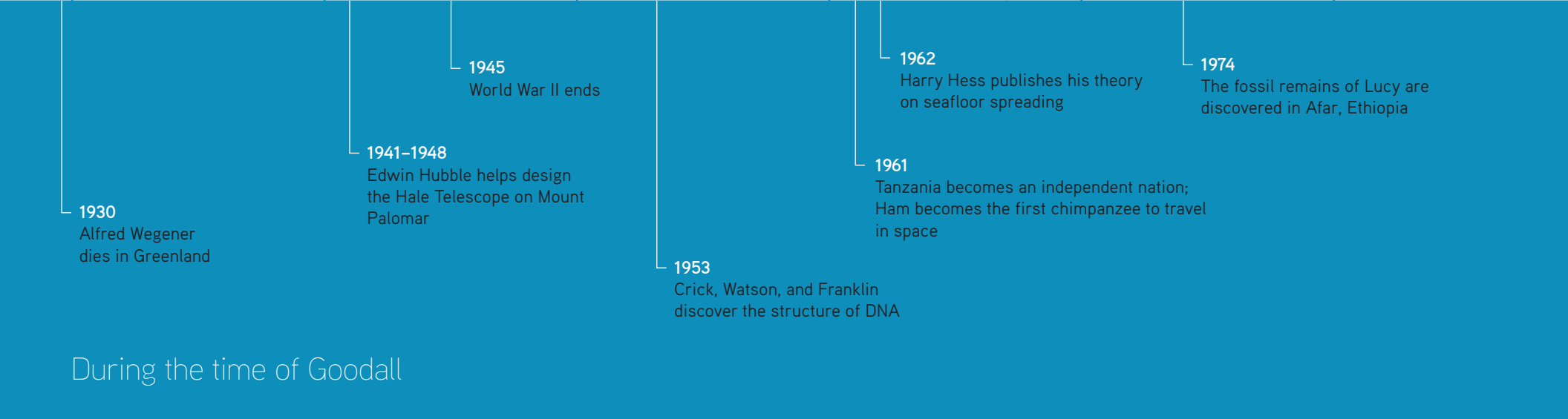
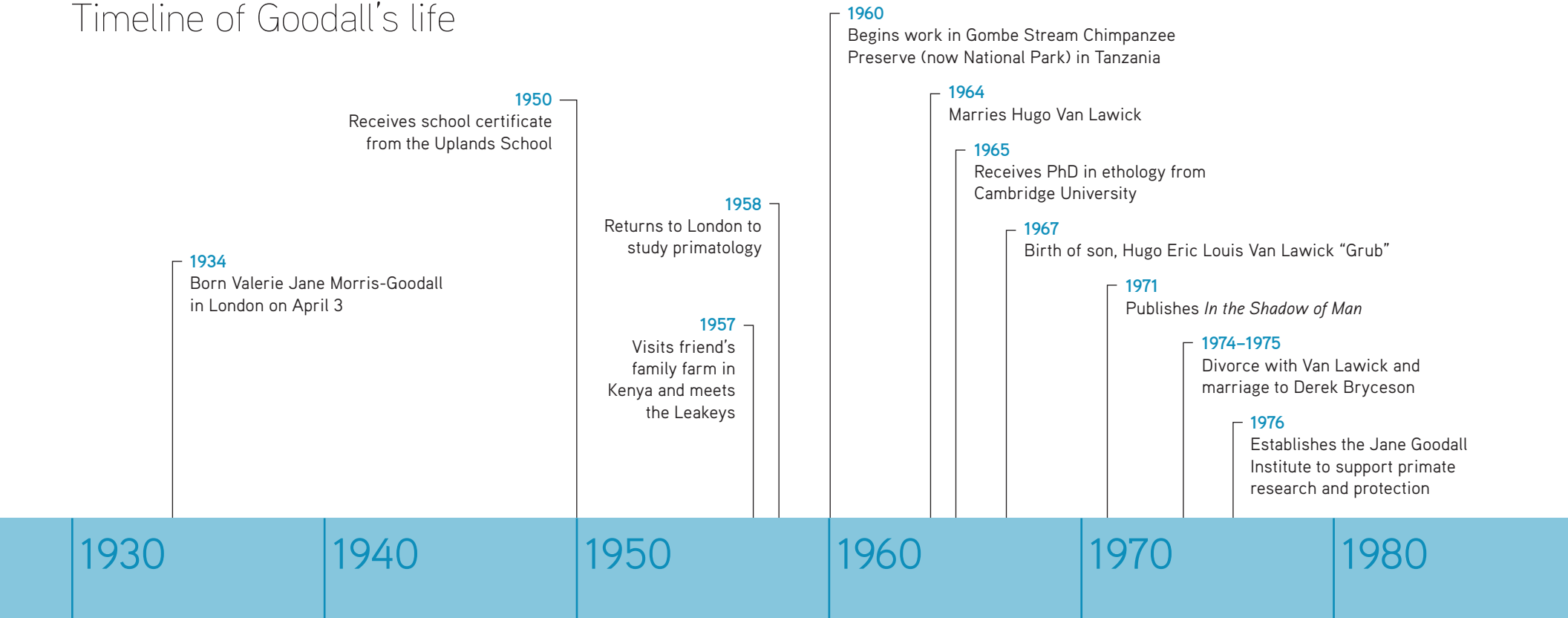
Since finishing *The Chimpanzees of Gombe*, Goodall has devoted herself to writing, speaking, and fundraising to support the study and protection of chimpanzees and other wild animals. In 1976, Goodall and a friend founded the Jane Goodall Institute to support research and efforts to protect chimpanzees and their habitats. It has many offices worldwide.

In 1991, a group of 16 teenagers met Goodall on the back porch of her home in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, to discuss what they could do to help the environment, animals, and the global human community. Out of that meeting Goodall organized Roots and Shoots, a global youth program that now has thousands of groups in more than 100 countries.

Goodall is a devoted vegetarian and in 2005 published *Harvest of Hope: A Guide to Mindful Eating*, one of more than 20 books she has written. Goodall remains extremely active in wildlife conservation work.

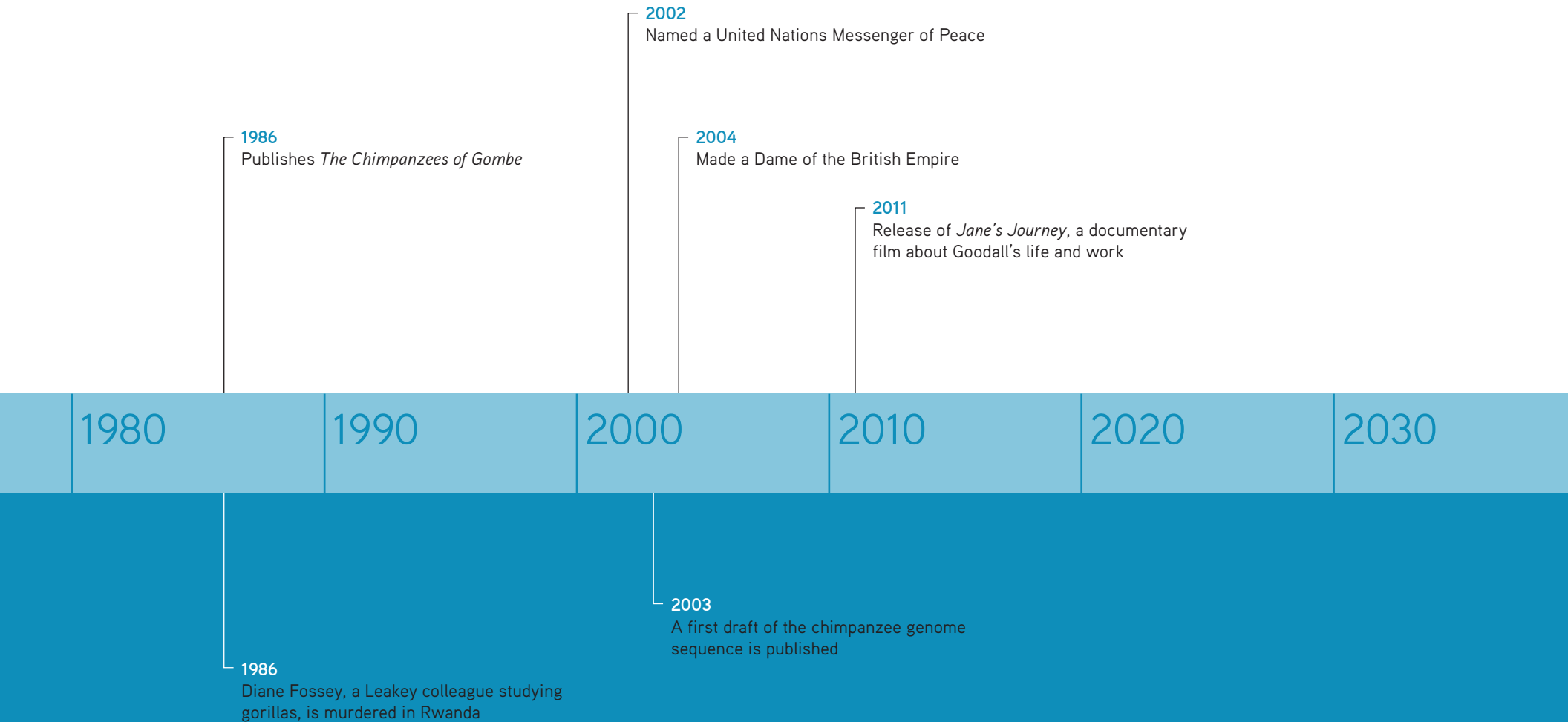
The world has recognized Goodall as a scientist and a special emissary of hope and compassion. Her awards include numerous honorary doctorates and Disney’s Animal Kingdom Eco Hero Award. In 2002, Secretary General Kofi Annan named her a United Nations Messenger of Peace.

Timeline of Goodall's life



During the time of Goodall

Timeline of Goodall's life



During the time of Goodall

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Image credits

Jane Goodall observes a chimpanzee named Frodo
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Goodall with a chimpanzee, in the Gombe National Park
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Portrait of a chimpanzee
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