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A Visit to Remember Aquarium Welcomes 25-Millionth Guest, Reflects on Impact

Chattanooga, Tenn. (Nov. 24, 2018) – Today, the Tennessee Aquarium celebrated the passage of a major milestone with the arrival of its 25-millionth guest since opening in 1992.

Amanda, Michael, Michael, Jacob, and Taylor Roe from Bristol, TN came to Chattanooga to visit the Tennessee Aquarium for the very first time. Amanda was surprised to learn she was the Aquarium's 25-millionth guest. "We wanted to come down to Chattanooga to spend the weekend with our family," said Amanda Roe. "We had never been here before, so we were so surprised to win."

In recognition of their important place in the 26-year history of the Aquarium, the lucky group was surprised in the River Journey building with a collection of prizes valued at more than \$1,000 and guaranteed to inspire a return visit. The reward package included complimentary tickets to the Aquarium and IMAX 3D Theater, \$250 toward purchases in the Aquarium gift shops, a special behind-the-scenes tour, a VIP pass to more than 20 Chattanooga-area attractions and a voucher to return to Chattanooga to stay in the new Edwin boutique hotel.

The Roe's trip began with an unlucky delay that ended up working out quite well. "We got in the car to come here, but the battery was dead," said Michael Roe. "We would have been here a lot earlier today and would have missed out if we didn't have to replace the car's battery."

The Tennessee Aquarium opened its doors on May 1, 1992. In the years since, the non-profit organization has achieved remarkable success without drawing on city or county tax money. The Aquarium consistently receives top ratings in customer satisfaction on TripAdvisor and was listed as one of the world's top aquariums in 2018.

Since opening, the Aquarium has contributed more than \$3.3 billion to the local economy through non-local visitor spending.

Families like the Roe's, who come to Chattanooga to enjoy the Aquarium, create cherished memories together while generating a \$115 million dollar annual impact on the city and county.

Celebrating the Aquarium's 25 millionth guests also honors the generations of visitors who preceded them and who experienced countless unforgettable moments of their own, says Aquarium President and CEO Keith Sanford.

"The Aquarium and Chattanooga have come to hold a special place in the hearts of millions of people," Sanford says. "As we always have, we strive every day to earn their support, to inspire others and to show how connected we all are to the natural world."