

Hair, Jay

(November 30, 1945 –)

President of the National Wildlife Federation

Jay Hair was head of the National Wildlife Federation (NWF), one of the most prominent and important conservation organization in the United States, for the 15 years from 1981 to 1996. It was largely during Hair's term as president that this organization began to assume the role of influence that it occupies today. Since leaving the National Wildlife Federation, Hair has acted as a consultant and as executive vice president of business development for a company called GreaterGood.com, which helps garner support for nonprofit organizations by utilizing Internet e-commerce.

Jay Dee Hair was born on November 30, 1945, in Miami, Florida. When he was three months old his parents divorced, and Hair moved with his mother, Ruth, and his two siblings, to Leota, Indiana, where Ruth's family maintained a farm. Hair lived on the farm for the first 11 years of his life, catching fish in the farm ponds and learning to hunt with the help of his uncles. In 1957, Hair's mother remarried, and the family moved to Landenberg, Pennsylvania. Hair's stepfather, William Johnson, was a DuPont chemical engineer, and he encouraged Hair to excel academically. Hair attended Avon Grove High School in West Grove, Pennsylvania, where he was president of his senior class. After graduating from high school in 1963, Hair entered Clemson University in South Carolina. He earned a B.S. degree in biology four years later, in 1967. He remained at Clemson for two more years to complete an M.S. degree in biology, as well.

Upon receiving his M.S. degree in 1969, Hair moved to Edmonton, Canada, to work as a graduate research fellow in the Department of Zoology at the University of Alberta. He remained in this post for one year. In 1970, he was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the United States Army,

and he left the United States for Vietnam, where he served as a public health specialist. After one year of service, Hair returned to the University of Alberta and completed his Ph.D. in zoology in 1975. In the meantime, Hair had accepted a position as assistant professor of wildlife biology in the Department of Entomology, Fisheries and Wildlife at Clemson University in 1973, a position he occupied until 1977. During his time as assistant professor at Clemson, Hair also worked as a research and management consultant to the South Carolina Wildlife and Marine Resources Department from 1976 to 1977. Hair left Clemson in 1977 for North Carolina State University in Raleigh, where he served as administrator of the fisheries and wildlife science division, as well as associate professor of zoology and forestry. He worked in Raleigh until 1981, holding a second position as well, this one with the U.S. Department of the Interior as special assistant from 1978 to 1980, in which he helped to develop national fish and wildlife policy.

The National Wildlife Federation is one of the largest, most influential private, nonprofit organizations in the United States.