

# 'Chimpanzees' swinging into Science Station

Striking film examines career of Jane Goodall

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**C**EDAR RAPIDS — The striking thing about "Jane Goodall's Wild Chimpanzees" is the dogged dedication of one woman to devote practically her whole life to a passion for the study of monkeys in remote Africa.

Even she can't explain it.

In the original film, which opens Saturday at the McLeod/Busse IMAX Dome

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## REVIEW

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Theatre, the legendary wildlife biologist admits puzzlement about how she came to study the chimps as a "pale-faced ape" at the age of 23 and is still at it more than four decades later.

But, she explains in the rich movie about her life and work, the forests of Tanzania's Gombe Stream National Park became her "enchanted Garden of Eden."

The big-screen movie was co-produced by the Science Museum of Minnesota, where it debuted in October and continues until the end of May.

Executive producer Mike Day, director of that museum's Omnitheatre, says it was four years in the making and it took him to Africa four times.

It has a local connection, too, as the Cedar Rapids Science Station's education coordinator, Rachel DeMaris, was involved in editing the movie from an educational standpoint.

"Wild Chimpanzees" has a few of what Science Station Executive Director Joseph Nolte calls "IMAX moments," mostly swooping segments that simulate low-level flying. There are several booming, jungle sequences to show off the sheer power of IMAX surround-sound.

For the most part, however, it's a straight-forward documentary of Goodall's groundbreaking

science, mixing black-and-white vintage photography of her early years with the monkeys along with scenes today showing her as a gray-haired woman with the same focus.

"This film will help, in such a dramatic way, to bring a real sense of Gombe and its chimpanzees to a wide audience," Goodall says in the film, "so that many more people around the world will surely come to understand the importance of preserving this special place."

The movie points out that biologically chimps are more closely related to humans than they are to gorillas. They share 99 percent of the same DNA.

Understand the highly developed monkeys and you can better explain human behavior.

As Goodall has discovered during her life in Africa, chimpanzees mirror their human counterparts in that they display joy and sadness, fear and despair, love and empathy. Even violence, which came as a disappointing shock to the doctor.

"Wild Chimpanzees" is a film for the ages and for all ages. My granddaughter, Bailey, and her 4-year-old preschool friend Anna giggled as they watched chimps sail high through the trees and romp around at play.

Luckily, they didn't notice the distinction when rough-housing among two rival primate tribes turned deadly.