

that the Aquarium and the new World of Coca-Cola will have a billion-dollar impact in just five years. Changes are already happening. People are moving into the downtown Atlanta area; new office buildings and apartments are going up.

"Urban improvement is not so different from home improvement," says Marcus. "It's all about making where you live a better place to live and being happy in it. In home improvement you have to have all the right tools to do the job—hammers, saws, nails, etc. With urban improvement, you also need to have the right tools—safety, places to visit, transportation, etc."

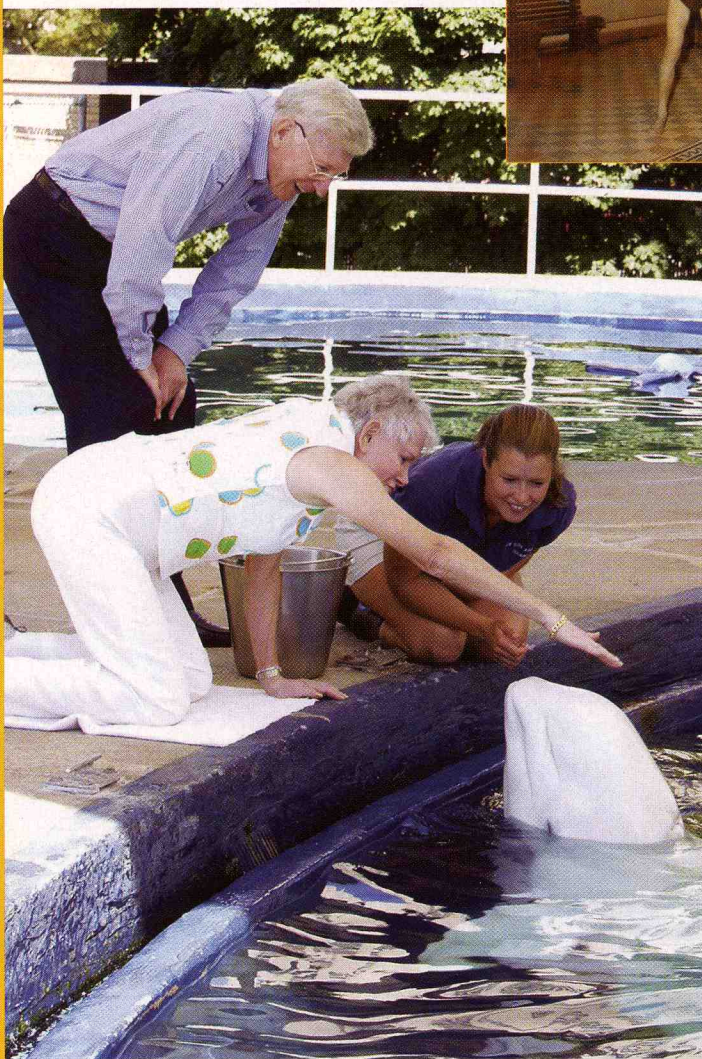
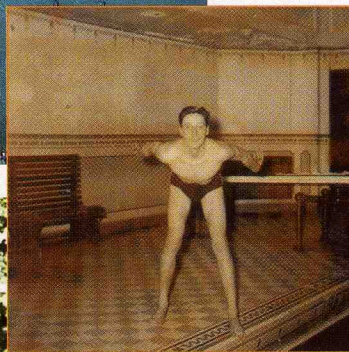
Whether it is urban renewal, home improvement or starting something from scratch, Marcus sees what can be and then surrounds himself with the people who will make it happen.

When envisioning the Aquarium, he brought on Jeff Swanagan as executive director because of the expertise Swanagan garnered in his years at the Columbus Zoo working with Jack Hanna, at Zoo Atlanta as deputy director, and then with the Florida Aquarium as executive director. "Jeff knew the top people around the world, and he put the team together," says Marcus.

"You're only on this earth for a very short time. Do something good while you are here," he says. On Nov. 23, Marcus's philosophy came to life. And Marcus was right there looking on.

His excitement over this great gift is hardly containable. He is proud of the conservation and research efforts the Aquarium is taking on: "Aquariums all work together so people understand how important fish are in our world—without them, we'd be dead ducks."

He is thrilled about the animals they've been able to bring into the Aquarium. When asked about his favorites, Marcus is quick with an answer. "The whale sharks are awesome. They're 20 feet long now and they'll grow to be 45 to 50 feet, like a schoolbus. You're gonna



**Left top:** Bernie and Billi feed Ralph and Norton, the Georgia Aquarium's resident whale sharks, the largest fish in the ocean, which will grow to be more than 45 feet long. **Inset above:** While he was a swimmer in his youth, an ear injury suffered when scuba diving prevented Bernie from his love of "swimming with his fishes." **Left:** Billi's dream was to have belugas in the Georgia Aquarium. Her dream came true when three females from the New York Aquarium and two males from an amusement park in Mexico City were moved to the Georgia Aquarium. Here, Billi meets one of the New York females as Bernie looks on.