



## IN DEFENSE OF ANIMALS

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May 13, 2008

**Via Fax**

Mayor Tom Leppert  
Dallas City Hall  
1500 Marilla Street, Room 5EN  
Dallas, TX 75201-6390

Fax: (214) 670-0646

Dear Mayor Leppert:

We share your city's sorrow at the tragic death of Keke, the elephant at the Dallas Zoo. You are now faced with an important decision regarding the future of your zoo's lone, surviving elephant, Jenny, as well as the broader issue of keeping elephants at the Dallas Zoo, which simply does not have the space and natural conditions that elephants need to thrive.

On behalf of our members internationally, In Defense of Animals (IDA) urges you to make the ethical, moral and financially responsible decision to close the Dallas Zoo's elephant exhibit and send Jenny to a sanctuary.

Elephants are Earth's largest land mammals. In the wild, elephants walk up to ten or more miles a day and live in large, tightly-knit family groups. At Dallas Zoo, and at most zoos throughout the country, elephants are forced to live in small, barren enclosures of a few acres or less. Social conditions are equally as unnatural; at Dallas Zoo, one to three unrelated female elephants have been forced to live together, and elephants have been shuffled in and out without regard to their often strong social bonds.

These unnatural conditions provide a poor quality of life for elephants. At Dallas, the elephants have suffered a variety of serious, zoo-induced health problems, including foot disorders, infertility, aggression and abnormal behaviors (including the habitual ingestion of rocks), all of which are reported in the Dallas Zoo's veterinary records. (These records can be viewed on-line at IDA's web site, [www.helpelephants.com/records](http://www.helpelephants.com/records).)

Unfortunately, no amount of care and medical attention that Dallas Zoo provides to the elephants can compensate for the failure of their cramped and unnatural exhibit to meet their physical and psychological needs.

At age 39, Keke may have been considered older by zoo standards, yet female African elephants in the wild can live into their 60s and breed well into their 50s. At the Amboseli National Park in Kenya, scientists report that "of the 20 big, old Amboseli females who are over 55, only five have stopped reproduction." One elephant matriarch, Echo, gave birth to a calf when she was close to 60. Contrast this with the alarmingly low life expectancy of 33 years for African elephants in zoos.

With Keke's passing, we now are extremely concerned about Jenny, who has a history of emotional instability. After her companion Vasha was transferred to another zoo in 2000, Jenny experienced two months of "isolation depression." Jenny was medicated with the tranquilizer Acepromazine between 1996 and 2001 because of aggression and extreme self-mutilating behaviors. The zoo weaned her off the medication when the U.S. Department of Agriculture expressed concerns about the "highly unconventional" use of the drug for such an extended period.

Elephants are highly social and it would be inhumane to keep Jenny alone. Yet bringing in another elephant is not the answer because, simply put, Dallas Zoo cannot provide a high quality of life for elephants.

The nation's two elephant sanctuaries, located in Tennessee and California, have set the bar for elephant care today by providing natural-habitat environments with large open spaces for elephants to roam. The sanctuaries have restored quality of life to numerous elephants debilitated by years of intense confinement in zoos and circuses.

Sixteen U.S. zoos have closed or plan to close their elephant exhibits. Last year, zoos in Los Angeles, Anchorage and Philadelphia joined a growing list of zoos that have opted to send elephants to sanctuaries.

It's too late for Keke, but it's not too late for the City of Dallas to do the right thing by sending Jenny to an elephant sanctuary and permanently closing the elephant exhibit at Dallas Zoo. Please make the right decision and ensure that no more elephants suffer and die prematurely at Dallas Zoo.

Thank you for your serious consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elliot M. Katz". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Elliot M. Katz, DVM  
President

Cc: Dallas City Council  
Gregg Hudson, Executive Director, Dallas Zoo