



IN DEFENSE OF ANIMALS

October 13, 2009

Stuart D. Strahl, PhD, Director
Brookfield Zoo
3300 Golf Road
Brookfield, IL 60513

VIA FAX: 708/688-7309

Dear Dr. Strahl:

On Thursday, it will be five months since the sudden death of the elephant Affie, yet the Brookfield Zoo still has not released an official cause for her death, based on the final necropsy report. While the zoo stated that the preliminary report indicates heart failure, as a matter of public interest, we urge you to publicly release the final report, which should have been available weeks ago, as well as veterinary records for the year preceding Affie's death.

Having just turned 40 years old, Affie should have been in the prime of her life, yet the Zoo described her as "geriatric." It's well documented that female elephants in Kenya's Amboseli National Park – a relatively protected area – can breed into their 50s and live into their 60s. The famous elephant Echo died just this year at age 64. Yet, in zoos, African elephants are not living to a ripe old age, despite the fact they are provided high quality keeper and veterinary care and a controlled diet, and do not face threats such as drought, poaching or famine. Almost two-thirds of the African elephants who died in Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) accredited zoos since 2000 did not live to age 40.

According to the Brookfield Zoo's May 15, 2009, press release, Affie suffered for years from a condition that required "geriatric" care, including specialized flooring and a sand pile against which she could lie. Even if this ailment was not the cause of her death, it raises important questions about why a 40-year-old elephant was in this condition. As you know, elephants confined to small zoo displays, such as that found at Brookfield Zoo, often suffer from a range of problems including obesity, infertility, arthritis and foot disease. Cold weather compounds the problem, as the elephants are forced indoors into tiny cages for the majority of long, freezing winters, greatly restricting movement necessary to good health.

As you are aware, a study published in the prestigious journal *Science* last December found that the lives of elephants in zoos are dramatically shortened, and that the median life expectancy of African elephants living in a relatively protected wild population far surpassed that of elephants living in zoos. Although the study focused on elephants in European zoos, at least one zoo industry study has shown that those elephants live longer than their North American counterparts. It is important to note that the zoo industry's rebuttal to the study was rejected and refused publication by *Science*.

Letter to Stuart Strahl, Brookfield Zoo

October 13, 2009

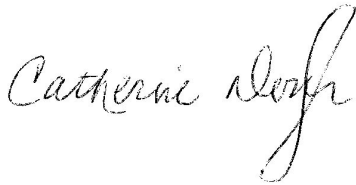
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Certainly, the zoo has an obligation to inform the public about the circumstances of Affie's unexpected death. Your own press release stated that she was "one of the zoo's most popular animals" and that "hundreds of her fans" would gather each year to celebrate her birthday. The zoo was gearing up for a June celebration when Affie died. So why would the zoo not share information about Affie's death with those who cared about her?

There are many questions surrounding Affie's untimely death that can only be answered by the final necropsy report and veterinary records. When an elephant dies without warning, especially at just 40 years of age, it makes the open release of her medical documents all the more compelling. This information may help to prevent similar problems for elephants living at the Brookfield Zoo and elsewhere.

We urge you to immediately and publicly release Affie's veterinary records and final necropsy report. It is simply the right thing to do for the elephants and for the public that cares about them. I would appreciate hearing a response from you on this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Catherine Doyle". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the "Sincerely," text.

Catherine Doyle
Campaign Director
323-301-5730