

LILY TOMLIN

June 19, 2009

Dr. Steven Sanderson, President & CEO
Wildlife Conservation Society
2300 Southern Blvd.
Bronx, NY 10460

Dear Dr. Sanderson:

I have followed with great interest the news about the enormous budget-cuts affecting the Wildlife Conservation Society. Considering your financial straits and the fact that the Bronx Zoo has already announced it would phase out its elephant program, I cannot think of a better moment to retire the three elephants at the zoo, Happy, Maxine and Patty, to an elephant sanctuary. It's time to give them a golden parachute.

As you know, elephants are the most expensive animals to keep in a zoo, as well as the most challenging because of their great size, intelligence, and complex social needs. Relocating the three elephants from the Bronx Zoo to a sanctuary at this time would be fiscally responsible and would provide the elephants with a more natural and humane existence for the remainder of their lives.

Maxine, Patty and Happy have spent more than 30 years on display in less than ideal conditions. Though your staff may provide the best care possible, the earth's largest land mammals are not meant to live in cramped, urban zoo exhibits nor to withstand frigid winters during which these inquisitive and vigorous animals are confined to tiny, indoor pens.

With the three elephants nearing age 40 – all having spent nearly their entire lives confined at the Bronx Zoo – *now* is the time to give something back to them. A natural-habitat sanctuary offers elephants year-round access to large expanses of land, a more complex and stimulating environment, and a rich social experience. Like the zoo, veterinary care is of the highest quality.

You have already made the commendable decision to phase out the elephant exhibit at the Bronx Zoo, so why not let the elephants retire to a sanctuary and live a life far closer to what nature intended for them? At the same time, you would be saving your organization considerable resources.

I urge you to release Maxine, Patty and Happy to a sanctuary without delay and give them the life they deserve. I can't think of a more positive and beautiful way to conclude the Bronx Zoo elephant program – for both your organization and the elephants.

Thank you for giving serious consideration to my request.

Sincerely,



Lily Tomlin