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# El Paso Zoo Mourns the Loss of Beloved Giraffe, Juma

**EL PASO, Texas**—The El Paso Zoo is heartbroken to share the passing of its elderly Reticulated Giraffe, Juma, who was humanely euthanized on Monday due to a sudden and irreversible decline in his quality of life.

Juma, an 18-year-old male, had been living with arthritis for several years. Thanks to the dedicated care of his keepers, veterinary team, and ongoing medical treatments, he remained active and comfortable for much of that time.

“Unfortunately, some of the joints in his feet deteriorated to the point where they could no longer support his 2,000-pound frame,” said Dr. Victoria Milne, Chief Veterinarian. “This progression was irreversible, and to prevent further pain or the risk of sudden collapse, humane euthanasia was the most compassionate choice.”

Juma had been part of the El Paso Zoo family for 15 of his 18 years and was one of the original residents of the Zoo’s Africa section.

“Juma will be deeply missed by our staff, his keepers, and the community,” said Zoo Director Joe Montisano. “He was a sweet, trusting, and social giraffe—curious, a bit mischievous, and always eager to engage with guests. If you ever fed a giraffe at the Zoo, chances are it was Juma. While end-of-life care is a necessary part of our responsibility, it never gets easier. We share this loss with our animal care team and the entire El Paso community, but take comfort in knowing we gave him the best life possible.”

## About Juma

Born on June 1, 2007, at the Albuquerque Biological Park, Juma arrived at the El Paso Zoo at the age of three. In 2020, he was joined by female giraffe Gigi, and together they had two male calves: Obi, now two years old, and Tesoro, who recently turned one. Both calves remain at the Zoo and are often seen on exhibit with their mother.

Juma was known not only for his role as a father within the herd but also for his close bond with his care team, with whom he participated in daily training and enrichment activities.

The El Paso Zoo actively supports giraffe conservation efforts across Africa, partnering with organizations such as the Giraffe Conservation Foundation, the Kenyan Giraffe Project for solar lighting, the Reticulated Giraffe Solar Chargers initiative, and the documentary *Last of the Longnecks*.

## About the El Paso Zoo and Botanical Gardens

The El Paso Zoo and Botanical Gardens spans 35 acres and is home to over 220 animal species, including many that are critically endangered. For more information, visit [www.ElPasoZoo.org](http://www.ElPasoZoo.org).

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