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# El Paso Zoo and Botanical Gardens Mourns Death of Beloved Asian Elephant Savannah

**EL PASO, Texas** — The El Paso Zoo and Botanical Gardens is mourning the loss of the much-loved, Asian elephant Savannah who was humanely euthanized due to a rapid and irreversible decline in her quality of life.

The 71-year-old elephant was suffering from advanced arthritis which was no longer responding to therapy. Savannah received special treatment for her arthritis from medical staff that included stem cell therapy, multiple oral pain medications, joint supplements, and an injectable joint supplement to help decrease the inflammation and pain of her joints, especially her most affected area, the left elbow.

“It has been a joy to help take care of Savannah for 18 years. She actively and voluntarily participated in her healthcare, as long as the reward was a tasty enough treat,” said El Paso Zoo Veterinarian Dr. Victoria Milne. “She allowed for regular blood collections, therapy for joints, and took her medication as needed. The whole veterinary team will miss our regular visits and check-ups with her, and pampering. It is never easy to say goodbye to our long-time residents, but we are out of options to keep her comfortable.”

Savannah participated in daily exercise routines that focused on maintaining joint mobility. Throughout her illness, she continued to socialize with Zookeepers, enjoy long soaks in her pool, and participate in enrichment activities.

Her last birthday in September was celebrated with the community singing Happy Birthday, a massive birthday cake, and guests signing an enormous birthday card in her honor. A lucky raffle winner took home a custom footprint painting created by Savannah.

“Savannah was a gentle giant with a great spirit. She was a great ambassador for her species and our zoo. She enjoyed meeting new people and showing off her harmonica and ‘fetch’ abilities,” said El Paso Zoo Director Joe Montisano. “The dedicated Zoo staff and veterinarian team did everything in their power to make sure she was comfortable as they managed her end-of-life care. We grieve her loss and are grateful for the many memories she gave us in her decades at the Zoo.”

Savannah lived a full life and helped guests learn about her wild counterparts and the challenges they face in their native range. The average life expectancy of an Asian elephant in North America is 45 years old. Savannah’s longevity is a testament to the high quality of whole-life care all animals receive from zookeepers, excellent nutrition, preventive and corrective veterinary care, and a safe environment.

## About Savannah

Savannah was brought to the U.S. from India at two years old. She resided at the Dallas Zoo from 1954 to 1975 but was moved to the Baton Rouge Zoo in 1975. The Baton Rouge Zoo transitioned to a breeding facility and Savannah was moved to the El Paso Zoo in 1997.

The El Paso Zoo supports a broad range of efforts to help wild elephants. The zoo supports elephant conservation through educational programs as well as providing funding to elephant conservation organizations worldwide. To learn more about the El Paso Zoo and Botanical Gardens, visit [www.ElPasoZoo.org](http://www.ElPasoZoo.org).

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Promoting **Transparent & Consistent Communication**  
Among All Members of the Community

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