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Press Release  
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**"SAMANTHA"  
WESTERN LOWLAND GORILLA  
1972 to 2010**

**Tuesday, August 17, 2010, Toronto, Ontario:** Toronto Zoo officials announced today, with great sadness, that Samantha, a 37 year old Western Lowland gorilla, the eldest female of the troop's seven members, was euthanized after suffering a second serious stroke. Mid July 2010 Samantha had a first stroke which completely paralysed the right side of her body. Although in serious condition, Zoo keepers and veterinary staff, with the assistance of physicians, worked tirelessly with Samantha and within a few days she made remarkable progress. Samantha's subsequent stroke early Monday, August 16, 2010 put her in critical condition and, since the prognosis was now extremely poor, the difficult decision was made to euthanize her. As part of the mourning process, the gorilla troop was able to spend time with her and say good-bye following her death.

"With Samantha's recent stroke and after previous consultation internally and with other physicians, it became evident that euthanasia was the most humane course of action" notes Dr. Graham Crawshaw, the Zoo's Senior Veterinarian. "They are a family", comments Matt Stephenson, Gorilla Keeper. "Samantha has been Charles' favourite for decades and she was an integral part of the family. Over the years, I have spent a lot of one on one time with Samantha. I will particularly miss her "singing" at breakfast and dinner, and those purrs and rumbles she made that were like music to the soul and which always brought a smile to my face."

Samantha, one of the Zoo's original Western Lowland gorilla troop members, was born in Gabon, West Africa in 1972, and arrived at the Toronto Zoo in 1974. She was easily identified by the red hair on the top of her head and her perpetual pout. Samantha was strong willed and commanded respect from all. Establishing herself as the dominant female in the troop, she became the favourite of silverback Charles, the dominant male, who is the father of all of her five offspring. An important contributor to the Species Survival Plan (SSP) for the Western Lowland gorillas, Samantha, an excellent mother, produced five offspring of which two, Shalia (female) and Sadiki (male) are still at the Toronto Zoo. The SSP is a breeding program amongst North American zoos with the objective of maintaining a healthy captive gorilla population for the future.

Gorillas, which are vegetarian, are the largest of the primates and are very social, caring and intelligent creatures. They originate from the Congo River basin of Western Africa in the lowland rainforests and are highly endangered. This is the case with many species due to their primary threat from humans and habitat loss. Logging for timber and fuel wood, agricultural expansion and mining for charcoal and coltan, which is used in cell phones and other electronics, is the main reason for their habitat loss.

The Zoo's remaining gorillas include Charles (dominant male), Josephine (adult female), Ngozi (adult female), Johari (juvenile female), Shalia (juvenile female), Sadiki (juvenile male) and the youngest member of the troop Nassir (male), born on September 2, 2009. The Zoo's gorilla family can be found in the Zoo's African Rainforest Pavilion.

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**Current Zoo Hours to Sept. 6 – 9:00am to 7:30 pm. Last admissions one hour before closing. General Admission 13-64 incl. is \$23, Children 3 and under are free, Children 4-12 are \$13 and Seniors 65+ are \$17. Parking is \$10.**

**Prices, which include applicable taxes and events are subject to change without notice. The Zoo is located at Meadowvale Road and Hwy. 401, Exit 389 east and west bound. For general information, call (416) 392 5929. The Toronto Zoo is open year round except December 25th.**

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