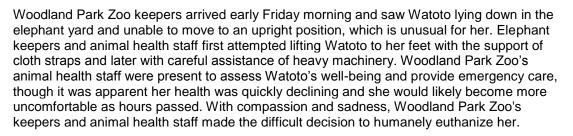
PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release | August 22, 2014 Media contact: Laura Lockard, Caileigh Robertson 206.548.2550 | woodlandparkzoopr@zoo.org

Woodland Park Zoo mourns the unexpected death of African elephant Watoto Press conference scheduled for Friday, August 22 at 2:30 p.m.

SEATTLE - With great sadness, Woodland Park Zoo regretfully announces the unexpected passing of 45-year-old African elephant, Watoto, who was humanely euthanized late Friday morning.

Woodland Park Zoo will be holding a press conference today at the zoo's ARC near the West Entrance at N. 55th St. & Phinney Ave. N.



"This is a very difficult time for our zoo family as we mourn the loss of Watoto, a beloved animal and dear friend to our staff and volunteers, members and community," said Bruce Bohmke, Woodland Park Zoo's Chief Operations Officer. "Watoto has lived a long, healthful life at Woodland Park Zoo under the care of dedicated keepers and staff. We will all miss her greatly."

Woodland Park Zoo's animal health team is currently conducting a full necropsy, an animal autopsy, and findings will be released in the coming weeks. The south end of the Elephant Forest exhibit will remain closed until further notice while staff attends to matters relating to Watoto's death.

Watoto was born in Kenya between 1969 and 1970, and joined Woodland Park Zoo's elephant herd in 1971 as an orphan from the wild. Her name is Swahili for "children," and she is considered to be the matriarch or leader of the zoo's herd. Watoto is the only African elephant at Woodland Park Zoo and is distinguished by her large ears, saddle-shaped back and visible tusk.

PRESS CONFERENCE

WHAT:

A press conference will be held at the zoo's ARC near the West Entrance at N. 55th St. & Phinney Ave. N. Parking may be limited.

WHEN:

Friday, August 22, 2:30 p.m.

Woodland Park Zoo Chief Operations Officer, Bruce Bohmke Woodland Park Zoo Director of Animal Health, Dr. Darin Collins

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