

**Savanna Elephant Vocalization Project**

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**To whom it may concern:**

I have spent the last 30 years of my life studying the behavior and communication of free-ranging, wild African elephants and promoting their conservation and welfare. I wish to give support to the proposal by the Chicago City Council that Wankie, a 35-year-old female African elephant, should be transferred to an elephant sanctuary where she will have space in which to roam and companions with whom to interact.

Wankie is the last remaining elephant at the Lincoln Park Zoo, two other elephants having recently died there. The conditions at the Lincoln Park Zoo, including the outdoor enclosure of less than one-third of an acre, deprive elephants of adequate space and forces them to stand on hard compacted surfaces, causing serious health problems. Chicago's cold winter climate is not appropriate for elephants and further exacerbates the limited spatial problem, as during low temperatures Wankie must be routinely confined to small, indoor facilities for extended periods. In short, the Lincoln Park Zoo does not have the space nor the climate to provide an adequate or appropriate environment for elephants.

Elephants in the wild roam over large areas and move considerable distances each day. They are intelligent, highly social animals with a complex system of communication. Few captive situations can provide elephants with the space they need for movement or with the kind of social stimulation and complexity that they would experience in the wild. The Elephant Sanctuary in Tennessee and the Performing Animal Welfare Society in California, accredited by the Association of Sanctuaries, provide elephants with a healthier physical and social environment more closely resembling their natural habitat.

Sincerely,

Joyce H. Poole, Ph.D.

Director, ElephantVoices

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