

February 18, 2013

News Release

For Immediate Release

Joy of Giraffe's Birth Tempered by Mother's Failed Health



Dickerson Park Zoo's staff has awaited the birth of the fourth calf in the giraffe herd for the fall and winter. The mother, 13-year-old Kamili, gave birth to her seventh calf Saturday afternoon, Feb. 16. The 164-pound female calf was born in the giraffe yard with zookeepers and zoo guests observing.

Zookeepers monitored the mother and calf to ensure the pair bonded and the calf nursed. The animal care staff became concerned by Sunday morning when Kamili's milk production seemed to be nominal.

By mid-morning Sunday, Kamili was showing physical signs of poor health, and zookeepers moved her and her newborn calf to the giraffe barn, closing the area to public view, so they could more closely monitor the two. Recognizing the calf's need for supplemental feeding, the zookeepers began bottle-feeding cow colostrum to the calf.

Kamili's health declined throughout Sunday afternoon. The veterinarian administered intravenous fluids and drew blood for analysis. Late Sunday afternoon, Kamili lay down and was unable to stand. She became extremely weak, and the decision was made to humanely euthanize her. Preliminary findings from the necropsy (animal autopsy) indicate heart disease as the

primary ailment. Additionally, there was considerable lung congestion and damage to the liver and kidneys. A final report will be forthcoming following lab analysis.

Zookeepers have moved the calf to an off-exhibit barn to reduce its stress and aid in their hand-rearing care. They began a round-the-clock feeding schedule Sunday evening.

Many people have inquired about how the zoo will select the calf's name. At this time, naming has been delayed while the animal care staff focuses their efforts on the calf's well-being, ensuring it receives appropriate and adequate nutrition.

Dickerson Park Zoo is open daily 10 a.m.-4 p.m., weather permitting. The zoo will be closed when the walkways are covered with ice or snow. For more information, visit the zoo online at www.dickersonparkzoo.org, or call the zoo's information hotline, 417-864-1800.

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