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### **OKC ZOO STATEMENT REGARDING MISINFORMED ALLEGATIONS BY DETRACTORS**

“The battle to save elephants from extinction and to preserve the species is waged in the wild and daily at accredited zoos and aquariums including the Oklahoma City Zoo,” said Dr. Dwight Lawson, executive director/CEO. “Our detractors with personal agendas to ultimately shut down and hinder these efforts come at a price. These groups have long been manipulating facts and science to meet their goal to forever close the very places that are working to help save these magnificent animals. Our accreditation standards are rigorous and the Zoo has been compliant with any concerns or allegations made against us. We will continue to be forthcoming and transparent about our elephant program. The Zoo’s director of veterinary services, Dr. Jennifer D’Agostino, has over 15 years of experience in caring for and studying elephants. She is a board-certified specialist in zoological medicine from the American College of Zoological Medicine. The complaints being lodged against her are coming from individuals with little to no experience with these animals.”

The Zoo has been contacted by the Oklahoma State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners that will work with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), which is already reviewing the move and death of Chai as a standard operating procedure. The USDA was alerted by the Zoo immediately upon Chai’s passing.

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