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FRESNO CHAFFEE ZOO MOURNS DEATH OF RETICULATED GIRAFFE UZURI

Fresno, CA – Officials at Fresno Chaffee Zoo are deeply saddened to announce the death of female reticulated giraffe Uzuri, the Zoo's oldest giraffe. She was humanely euthanized after years of battling progressive arthritis.

Since 2017, Zoo staff have been monitoring and treating Uzuri's degenerative joint disease. In early stages treatment included supplements. As the disease progressed, animal care staff added additional medications to treat her disease as well as alleviate her pain from it.

"Recently, Uzuri began showing decreased activity and an abnormal gait. Radiographs confirmed worsening joint disease. Due to diminishing quality of life, the decision was made for euthanasia." said Dr. Shannon Nodolf, Chief Veterinary Officer.

At 26-years-old, Uzuri was one of the oldest reticulated giraffes in human care. She well surpassed the median life expectancy of 19 years for a female giraffe living in managed care. Zookeepers celebrated her recent milestone birthday with a cake made with some of her favorite snacks, including applesauce, honey, raspberry jello, apple slices and lettuce.

"Uzuri's long life at Fresno Chaffee Zoo is a testament to the dedicated care our zookeepers and veterinarians provide. She was well-cared for into her geriatric years and as she faced this progressive condition," said Scott Barton, CEO.

Uzuri, whose name means beautiful in Swahili, was well known to Zoo guests as a frequent presence at Twiga Terrace, the giraffe feeding platform. Zookeepers remember her as full of personality—stubborn and cheeky, but also eager to greet them every morning. Born in 1993 at Brookfield Zoo, Uzuri came to Fresno in 1995.

"Fresno Chaffee Zoo inspires wonder of our natural world, provides an engaging learning environment, and creates a passion for conservation."

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