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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: January 10th, 2019

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SPRINGFIELD PARK DISTRICT MOURNS THE LOSS OF BELOVED LEMUR AT THE HENSON ROBINSON ZOO

[**Springfield, IL**] – The Springfield Park District and the Henson Robinson Zoo regret to announce the loss of Blossom, a 38-year old Black Lemur, on January 9, 2019.

Yesterday morning, she was found lethargic with a decrease appetite. The difficult conclusion was made that euthanasia was the most humane decision for Blossom.

Blossom outlived the median life expectancy of 25 years for Black Lemurs in zoos. Though as she grew older, like humans who live to advanced ages, she was afflicted with several geriatric ailments including degenerative arthritis and cataracts. The combination of these issues and recent struggles made it clear that Blossom's comfort level was declining.

"We have been blessed by Blossom," General Curator Jeff Mitchell said. "She was an amazing ambassador for her species, which is in decline in Madagascar, and for lemurs in general. She was charismatic and just an all-around joy to have at the zoo. The keeper staff and our visitors will miss her."

As a 38-year old animal, Blossom was the oldest animal at Henson Robinson Zoo and the oldest Black Lemur in any zoo in the world. Blossom was born on April 1, 1980 at the Lincoln Park Zoo in Chicago. She spent her first nine years there and then the next three years at the Saint Louis Zoo. On September 16, 1992, Blossom came to Henson Robinson Zoo where she lived for the next 26 years. Blossom is the mother of Daisy and Bud who were born at St Louis Zoo in 1990 and have made their home at Henson Robinson Zoo since 1992.

For more information, please contact Director John Wright or General Curator Jeff Mitchell at 217-585-1821

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Photo courtesy of Mary Lutes