



## MEDIA ALERT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
May 22, 2009

### SHAMBA THE GORILLA TURNS 50

*Zoo Atlanta's senior great ape is one of the world's oldest gorillas*

**WHO:** Shamba, a female western lowland gorilla at Zoo Atlanta, turns 50 on Sunday, May 24. The Zoo's eldest primate is the sixth oldest member of her species living in North America and one of the 10 oldest gorillas in the world.

Born in Africa in 1959, Shamba is one of only three surviving members of the original group of western lowland gorillas that moved to Zoo Atlanta in the 1980s (The others are female Choomba and male Ozzie, both 48.) The first residents of the Zoo's Ford African Rain Forest, Shamba and her contemporaries, including the legendary late Willie B., were the founders of what is today the nation's second-largest collection of western lowland gorillas.

Since 1989, 17 gorillas have been born at Zoo Atlanta. Among these are Shamba's son Taz, 19, and his offspring Kali, Kazi and Macy Baby, all 3, and Gunther, 2. Shamba's contributions to the zoological community far exceed her Zoo Atlanta progeny: she has four children, seven grandchildren and four great-grandchildren living at other accredited institutions in North America.

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**ABOUT:** About Zoo Atlanta

An accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), Zoo Atlanta inspires value and preservation of wildlife through a unique mix of education and outdoor family fun. From well-known native wildlife to critically endangered species on the brink of extinction, the Zoo offers memorable close encounters with more than 1,000 animals from around the world. The Zoo's newest attraction, Boundless Budgies: A Parakeet Adventure, opened in April 2009. The interactive new experience is the largest of its kind in the Southeast. Zoo Atlanta is also the proud home of Xi Lan, the only giant panda cub born in the U.S. in 2008. Other highlights include one of the nation's most recognized collections of great apes and a global center of excellence for the care and reproduction of vanishing amphibians and reptiles. Zoo Atlanta is open daily with the exceptions of Thanksgiving and Christmas Day. Keeper talks, interactive wildlife shows, education programs and special events run year-round. For more information, call 404.624.WILD or go to [zooatlanta.org](http://zooatlanta.org).

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