

Mr. Rogers at the Zoo

by Mary Markey on June 18, 2013

Like

115

Tweet

4



Mr. Rogers and Ambika, by Terry Arthur, July 1982 issue of *The Torch* (The Smithsonian's internal newspaper, *The Torch* is a great source for information on Smithsonian events and staff), Record Unit 371, Box 4, Smithsonian Institution Archives

Does the jovial fellow riding Ambika the elephant look familiar? It's Fred Rogers, leaving his neighborhood for a visit to the National Zoological Park in the spring of 1982. The host of the children's show *Mr. Rogers's Neighborhood* met giraffes, tigers, and lions as well as pachyderms Ambika and Shanthi; Keepers Jim Jones and Barbara Bingham were featured guests.

Despite rainy conditions, everything went smoothly until the elephant ride. According to *The Torch*:

As soon as Mr. Rogers was perched atop Ambika's back, she decided she wanted a bath and lumbered eagerly towards the pool. While zoo keepers headed her off, "little" (4,000 pound) Shanthi's curiosity was piqued by the cameraman and his fascinating equipment. As she set off to investigate, our fleet-of-foot staffers quickly foiled a farcical finale.

The episode filmed at the zoo was titled *Mr. Rogers Talks About Pets*, broadcast on June 4, 1982. You can find a synopsis at *The Neighborhood Archive*.

Shanthi and Ambika still live at the National Zoological Park, enjoying their new home, the *Elephant Trails* exhibit. Now Shanthi is up to 9,000 pounds!

Related Collections

- Record Unit 371 - Office of Public Affairs, *The Torch*, 1955-1960, 1965-1988, Smithsonian Institution Archives

Categories: Smithsonian History

Tags: Cities/Places, Entertainment

Comments: View 3 comments, or Give us yours!

All comments are moderated and subject to approval. Further information is available in *The Bigger Picture's* Commenting Guidelines.

Comments (3) – Leave a comment



Wow. This brings back some memories. Used to watch Mr. Roger's when I was a kid.

Se7en Soft

June 18, 2013 at 8:05 pm

reply



Rare picture thanks for sharing the picture with us..

Smantha Webbur
June 19, 2013 at 7:06 am

reply



I love this photo! I grew up watching Mr Rogers; he was like a friend/parent on television every morning.

Samuel Jeffery
June 19, 2013 at 7:24 am

reply

Leave a comment

Your name: *

E-mail: *

The content of this field is kept private and will not be shown publicly.

Home page:

Comment: *

- Web page addresses and e-mail addresses turn into links automatically.
- Lines and paragraphs break automatically.

[More information about formatting options](#)

CAPTCHA

This question is for testing whether you are a human visitor and to prevent automated spam submissions.



Type the text



[Privacy & Terms](#)

By submitting this form, you accept the Mollom privacy policy.