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Photo courtesy of Frans Lanting. (c) Frans Lanting.

My dear friends,

With the deepest sorrow, we said goodbye to Chewbaaka today. In late February, a rabid kudu jumped into Chewbaaka's enclosure. Despite being almost 16 years old, Chewbaaka attempted to kill the kudu, suffering bruises that covered his entire abdomen and hind legs. He did not appear to have internal injuries, but I think that given his age and the age-related kidney disease that was diagnosed last year, the insult to his body was too much for him to overcome. Despite our best efforts, he did not recover.



Chewbaaka has been my best friend since he was brought to me in 1995, only 10 days old and seriously ill. Even as young and ill as he was, he was such a fighter that he pulled through, and he and I developed a deep bond that lasted his entire lifetime. We trusted each other completely. We were partners.

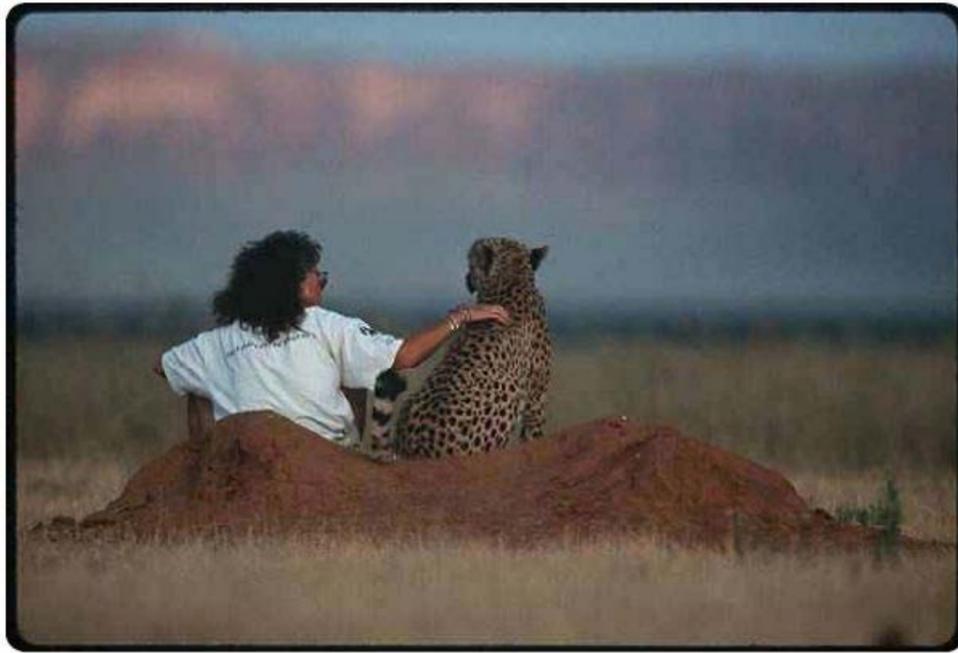
I've said before that Khayam, the first cheetah I raised, showed me the problem facing cheetahs, and Chewbaaka showed me the solutions. As a team, he

and I demonstrated to tens of thousands of Namibian children and adults that we could live together peacefully. He made Namibians proud of their natural heritage. He convinced men who had killed cheetahs all their lives to put down their guns and work to protect this fascinating animal. He was featured in television documentaries and articles in *National Geographic*, *Smithsonian*, *Africa Geographic*, and *Readers' Digest*. People all over the globe knew him or knew of him.

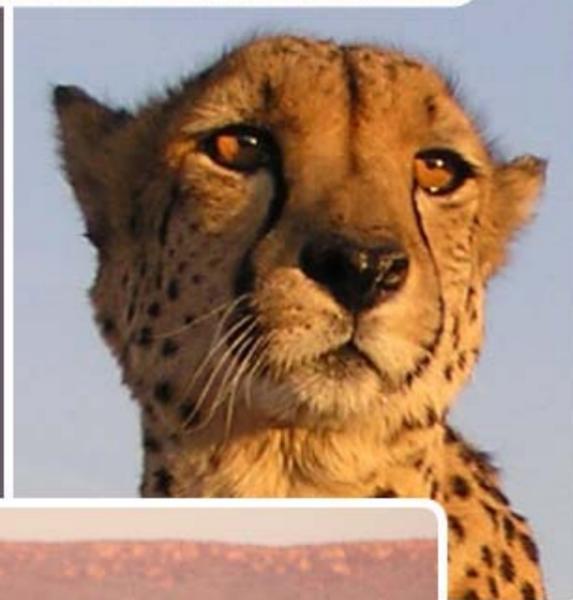
Even for a cheetah, Chewbaaka had a special bearing, a regalness that people often commented on. It was as if he knew he was the king of CCF. In my heart he will always be king of CCF.

We have been working to develop a planned giving program in Chewbaaka's honour, called the Chewbaaka Society, and I will provide more information about that in the next few months. But for now I wanted you to know the sad news of the passing of this legendary animal, my great friend Chewbaaka.

Thank you to everyone for your concern and support during this sorrowful time.



Lenny





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Cheetah Conservation Fund