

**NORTH AMERICAN  
SAVE THE RHINOS  
CAMPAIGN**



**E-Newsletter**  
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**In Memory of Thomas John Foose (1945–2006)**

With great sadness, the International Rhino Foundation (IRF) announces the loss of its most beloved ambassador for rhino conservation. Dr. Tom Foose, 61, IRF Program Director, died on May 17th at his home in Waynesboro, Pennsylvania. Tom was one of the founders of IRF, which embodies his lifelong passion for rhino conservation, both in zoos and in nature. He dedicated his life to bridging gaps among people with diverse interests and perspectives, as well as using science to foster national and global collaborations for threatened species management.

Author of numerous scientific publications. Tom received a BA from Princeton University in 1969 and was awarded a PhD in biology from the University of Chicago in 1982. He served as the Conservation Director for the American Zoo and Aquarium Association (AZA) from 1981 to 1990, and along with Dr. Ulie Seal developed the first Species Survival Plan program for Siberian tigers in 1983. Species Survival Plans now are a cornerstone for captive species management for the AZA as well as other regional zoo associations. From 1990 to 1992, Tom served as Executive Officer of the IUCN/SSC Conservation Breeding Specialist Group, shaping its programs and focus to include using computer simulation modeling to examine the risks for species extinction, as well as global risk assessments of broad taxonomic groups including identifying species management and research recommendations. Over the past 20 years, his tireless efforts to facilitate cross-organizational and truly international conservation efforts resulted in integrated action plans for species groups ranging from primates to rhinos to tigers, involving zoo experts and field biologists from around the world.

Throughout stints as Program Officer of the IUCN/SSC Asian Rhino Specialist Group and the International Black Rhino Foundation, as well as through his work with AZA, CBSG and IRF, Tom touched people across the world and inspired them to set aside their personal, national and institutional agendas to focus on preventing species extinctions. Over the past ten years, his primary focus was leading development and implementation of global and national conservation strategies and action plans for rhinoceroses in Asia and Africa. Most recently, Tom initiated the North American Save the Rhinos Campaign with the goal of doubling the number of critically endangered rhino populations in select protected habitats in the wild within ten years.

The family has requested that in lieu of flowers, contributions in Tom's memory may be made to the International Rhino Foundation and will be designated for this Campaign.

We will miss Tom's many unforgettable characteristics – his sporty safari attire, his penchant for bow ties, his mischievous smile, and the twinkle in his eye whenever a rhino came into view. We will miss his dry sense of humor, and his love for the smelly-but-delectable durian fruit (which got him politely ejected from many Asian hotels), as well as many other things. Memories abound – many long-time colleagues can't see a Coca-Cola can without remembering the early days (before globalization) when Tom brought several suitcases filled with Coke wherever he traveled overseas.

Tom is survived by: his children, Rebecca Foose Nesmith and Thomas John Foose, III, and their mother Virginia Foose; and his children Susan Foose and Michael Foose and their mother, Ellen Foose.

The IRF sends its most profound condolences to the family of our beloved colleague, and know that all of his colleagues and friends around the world share in our sadness. Tom's dedication and integrity, his love for his family and colleagues, and his beloved rhinos – as well his unabashed appreciation for the contributions of all people with a love for wild species - will live on through all of our future endeavors.