

July 8, 2020

Amber M. Fite-Morgan, J.D.
General Counsel
University of North Alabama
Box 5169
Florence, AL 35632

Via email: afitemorgan@una.edu

Dear Ms. Fite-Morgan,

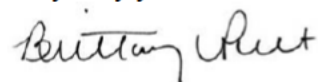
PETA is concerned that the university is unwilling to improve and ensure Leo III's long-term wellbeing following the death of his only companion by phasing out its archaic live-animal mascot program. I'm following up with more information, with hopes that UNA will reconsider and work with PETA to secure placement for Leo at an accredited sanctuary.

Lions live in large social groups that can be made up of dozens of individuals, and denying Leo the opportunity to interact with other lions compromises his welfare. Solitary confinement in captivity produces a constant source of stress in social animals and has negative consequences for an animal's physical and psychological health. Leo may begin displaying abnormal behaviors as a result of this stress. Solitary male lions have frequently been observed pacing in their enclosures, a sign of severe psychological distress.

Acquiring a new lion is not a humane alternative to sentencing Leo to a life in isolation. As documented in the Netflix series *Tiger King*, unaccredited roadside zoos and backyard breeders across the United States churn out litter after litter of big-cat cubs to be used in photo ops and cub-petting operations. In nature, male lions stay with their mothers for up to two years and female lions remain with their pride into adulthood, but breeders typically strip them from their mothers almost immediately after birth. In a matter of months, the animals grow too large to be handled and are commonly shipped off to other roadside zoos and left to languish in decrepit conditions. Obtaining an animal from a facility other than one accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA)—which is highly unlikely since lions are protected by the Endangered Species Act and governed by the AZA's species survival plan—contributes to the types of shady animal exploiters featured in *Tiger King* and continues this cycle of abuse. PETA maintains extensive records on roadside zoos and breeders and can provide further information on the practices of specific facilities and individuals upon request.

UNA can give Leo the best possible life and help end the exploitation of big cats by transferring him to an accredited sanctuary and ending the use of live-animal mascots. PETA stands ready to assist in this transfer, and I look forward to UNA's favorable response.

Very truly yours,



Brittany Peet
Deputy General Counsel, Captive Animal Law Enforcement

CC: Kenneth D. Kitts, President (president@una.edu)

PEOPLE FOR
THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT
OF ANIMALS
FOUNDATION

Washington, D.C.
1536 16th St. N.W.
Washington, DC 20036
202-483-PETA

Los Angeles
2154 W. Sunset Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90026
323-644-PETA

Norfolk
501 Front St.
Norfolk, VA 23510
757-622-PETA

Berkeley
2855 Telegraph Ave.
Ste. 301
Berkeley, CA 94705
510-763-PETA

PETA FOUNDATION IS AN
OPERATING NAME OF FOUNDATION
TO SUPPORT ANIMAL PROTECTION.

AFFILIATES:

- PETA U.S.
- PETA Asia
- PETA India
- PETA France
- PETA Australia
- PETA Germany
- PETA Netherlands
- PETA Foundation (U.K.)