

PEOPLE FOR
THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT
OF ANIMALS

January 9, 2018

Larry Dietz, Ph.D., President
Illinois State UniversityVia e-mail: ldietz@IllinoisState.edu

Dear Dr. Dietz,

I'm writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and our more than 6.5 million members and supporters worldwide, including many throughout Illinois, regarding Illinois State University's Circus and Allied Arts Collection. In light of the sizeable donation of circus paraphernalia that the university recently received, PETA would also like to offer a substantial contribution to the collection.

As modern, humane circuses are leading the way with their commitment to using only willing human performers, the cruel use of animals in circuses is fading into the history books. Last year, Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus shut its doors after 146 years of cruelty and abuse and the owner of Kelly Miller Circus—which also frequented Illinois—retired after city officials and circus sponsors were buried in e-mails from people protesting the circus's 2017 tour.

Illinois also became the first state in the nation to ban all traveling elephant acts. And the Illinois-based Hawthorn Corporation—a notoriously cruel exhibitor that had been under fire from PETA and the USDA for years—recently closed. Dozens of tigers exploited by the company died on the road or at its facility, and it was ordered to relinquish 16 endangered Asian elephants, including one who had been forced to stand in formaldehyde, resulting in chemical burns to her feet that went untreated.

We would be pleased to donate a multimedia display that would include hundreds of U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) inspection reports and other government records documenting the neglect, abuse, and mistreatment of animals forced to perform in circuses. Visitors could read about Carson & Barnes Circus' gross neglect of animals, including in a report that details how the circus failed to provide an elephant named Nina—who was so thin that her hip bones and shoulder blades were visible—with appropriate veterinary care. And they could see [historical images](#) showing the way in which the now-defunct Ringling Bros. circus bound and beat baby elephants to make them perform.

Guests would also be able to view this [video](#) of Carson & Barnes' head trainer attacking elephants with a bullhook—a sharp steel-tipped weapon resembling a fireplace poker—and read a recent whistleblower complaint in which a former Garden Bros. Circus employee describes seeing elephants with blood dripping from behind their ears and camels being kicked, punched, and whipped.

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

Info@peta.org
PETA.org

Affiliates:

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

In addition, we'll supply a bullhook and a can of Wonder Dust, which is used to conceal the bloody wounds inflicted on elephants by their trainers.

Any history of circuses is incomplete without a discussion of the ways in which animals have been and continue to be treated in them. We're excited to contribute to Illinois State University's *true* representation of circuses that use animals.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "John Di Leonardo".

John Di Leonardo, M.S.

Assistant Manager, Animals in Entertainment
People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals