

Ivan Timeline

**1960s: Infancy in Africa and a Trans-Atlantic Journey:**

* **Circa 1962**: Ivan and a female infant are born in the wild in what is now the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In an era in which many zoos still acquire baby apes directly from the wild, the infants are captured for their market value.
* **1964**: Ivan and his companion are brought to the U.S. and sold by wildlife traders to the owners of the B&I department store in Tacoma, Wash. The female dies soon after their arrival, and he spends his early years as a pet in a human household.
* **1967**: Great apes make poor pets, and Ivan is no exception. Although only 5, he is already too large, strong and *boisterous* (*boisterous:* energetic; rowdy) for life with a human family. As a solution, Ivan is moved to an indoor enclosure inside the B&I department store. He will not go outdoors again for nearly 30 years.

**1970s-1994: The “Shopping Mall Gorilla”**

* **1970s and 1980s**: Ivan is the star attraction of the B&I store, and he becomes Tacoma’s most famous non-human resident. Over the next two decades, he is visited by thousands of friends and fans, an adoring public who may not realize at this time that Ivan’s lifestyle is completely at odds with the physical, social and behavioral needs of his species. Meanwhile, across the U.S. in Atlanta, Georgia in 1988, another *solitary* (*solitary:* living alone) gorilla, Zoo Atlanta’s Willie B., enters a naturalistic habitat for the first time after more than 25 years in a small indoor enclosure.
* **1992**: The B&I department store is facing bankruptcy, and finances aren’t its owners’ only troubles. There is a movement toward naturalistic settings for wild animals in captivity. Ivan’s friends and fans now recognize that a 30-year-old male gorilla has specific needs – needs that aren’t being met within the limits of a glass-enclosed room.
* **1994**: Ivan’s solitary existence has by now brought forth national outrage within the zoological and animal welfare communities, and in 1994, his owners donate him to Seattle’s Woodland Park Zoo.
* Back East, Willie B.’s turn from longtime loner to successful silverback has lent national credibility to the gorilla program at Zoo Atlanta. The program has by now seen a series of births. With the approval of the Gorilla Species Survival Plan (SSP), the Woodland Park Zoo sends Ivan to Atlanta on permanent loan in October 1994.

**1995-2011: Sun, space and ladies:**

* **1995**: Ivan explores The Ford African Rain Forest at Zoo Atlanta in spring 1995 – the first time he has been outdoors in more than 27 years. Sunlight, trees, grass and fresh air are sensory enrichment he has not experienced since 1967.
* There’s another new experience, too – girls! Ivan makes his debut with females Molly and Kuchi, and he later meets Shamba, Kashata and Kinyani. He socializes well with his female companions, and is even flirtatious with Kinyani.
* **2010**: Ivan’s 15th anniversary in Atlanta is observed at Zoo Atlanta. He is photographed holding a sign reading, “Ivan ‘Hearts’ Atlanta,” and it’s obvious that Atlanta “hearts” him, too.
* **2011**: Ivan’s last “roommate,” Kinyani, leaves Zoo Atlanta for the Columbus Zoo – a departure Ivan hardly seems to notice. After more than 16 years in Atlanta, it’s clear that his strongest social relationships have always been with his keepers, with whom he has formed close personal bonds.

**Today: “Dear Zoo Atlanta …”**

* **2012**: Ivan’s fans have never forgotten the “Shopping Mall Gorilla.” While the Zoo might have expected the occasional call or email from a curious old friend with a wonderful memory, inquiries about Ivan have been far from occasional. He still receives birthday and holiday cards, letters and greetings, and his legacy has even continued into the age of social media. Of our more than 1,500 residents, Ivan is the most asked-about animal on the Zoo’s Facebook profile.