

Zoo Names Camp Entrance: Security Benefit Camp Cowabunga Gateway

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The [Topeka Zoo](#) and Friends of the Topeka Zoo will hold a groundbreaking ceremony at 10 a.m. Thursday at the zoo for “Camp Cowabunga,” an attraction designed to make visitors feel like they are on safari.

“When completed, Camp Cowabunga will transport zoo visitors into a rugged safari camp based on the safari experiences of Topeka Zoo Director Emeritus Gary K. Clarke,” said Amy McCarter, media relations coordinator for the city of Topeka.

Clarke, who directed the Topeka Zoo from 1963 to 1989 and then worked until 2006 as a safari guide, has played a key role in planning the \$4.4 million complex. Its construction is being financed through private donations and revenue from a countywide, half-cent sales tax.

Topeka’s city government said on its website that the development of Camp Cowabunga will be the first phase of the zoo’s master plan aimed at creating a much larger elephant habitat.

The camp will enable visitors to view lions, elephants, African Painted Dogs and Red Patas Monkeys.

The camp will also include an exploration play area, a campfire circle, a bucket shower, a lodge and four tent-like structures. One, called “Gary’s Tent,” will house artifacts Clarke collected as a safari guide.

During Clarke’s tenure as director, the Topeka Zoo opened the first-ever rainforest to be built in a zoo, became the first organization in the world to breed Golden Eagles under human care and became the first zoo to build a glass tunnel through a gorilla exhibit, the city website said.

It indicated the zoo recognized a donation it received from Security Benefit by naming the entrance to the camp the Security Benefit Camp Cowabunga Gateway.

[Read the complete article from *The Topeka Capital-Journal*.](#)

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