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Tufts graduate, 24, dies in Thailand

By **[Matt Rocheleau](#)** and **[Jennifer Smith](#)** | GLOBE STAFF | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT JANUARY 25, 2014

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The Tufts University community is mourning the loss of a 2012 graduate who authorities believe was trampled to death by elephants during her vacation in Thailand.

Lily Glidden, a 24-year-old native of Freeville, N.Y., likely was killed in a reserve in Thailand while trying to photograph the animals, authorities said Friday.

Her body was found by park rangers in a wooded area of a reserve outside Bangkok on Saturday, after being missing for five days, according to news reports.

She earned a degree in biology from Tufts in 2012 and had long been committed to her passion for wildlife and the outdoors. At one point, she was a member of a wilderness-training group based in Ithaca, N.Y., called Primitive Pursuits, according to a Tufts Daily article.

After leaving Tufts, Glidden worked as a researcher in a series of jobs. She trapped Mexican wolves in the West and handled venomous cobras and other exotic reptiles in Hong Kong.

On social media, she documented an active life of hiking and exploration in parks such as Yellowstone and Moab, Utah.

Family and friends described her as fearless. While attending Tufts, she was president of the college's mountain club.

Colin Orians, a Tufts biology professor who taught Glidden, "knew Lily well and cannot speak of her highly enough," according to a statement from the university.

A student in a tropical ecology and conservation course that Orians taught, Glidden "excelled, had an infectious personality and inspired so many others," the statement said. Students in the class describe her as vibrant, adventurous, and "a true inspiration." They recalled her "contagious laugh and incredible spirit."

"We will miss her dearly," Orians said in the statement.

In a statement, her family said she knew of the dangers of working with wild animals and was "not a person to court foolish risks."

In Thailand, a 70-member team searched for her after she left a campground alone and then disappeared in the Kaeng Krachan National Park, which encompasses 1,125 square miles.

Authorities said the severity of her injuries indicated she had probably been trampled by elephants, the Associated Press reported. Her body was sent to a medical examiner to confirm the cause of death.

"Looking at the pictures she took in her camera, we see a lot of animals, birds, snakes, lizards," police Colonel Woradet Suanklai told the Associated Press. "We assumed she wanted to take pictures of elephants because that's what the Kaeng Krachan National Park is famous for. We believed she wanted to find them and take some photos."

Matt Rocheleau can be reached at matt.rocheleau@globe.com. Jennifer Smith can be reached at jennifer.smith@globe.com.



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