

“I Want a Hippopotamus for Christmas”

This catchy Christmas song was written by John Rox and performed by, Oklahoma City resident and 10 year old, Gayla Peevey in 1953.

A popular legend holds that this 1953 hit was recorded as a fundraiser to bring a hippopotamus to the Oklahoma City Zoo. However, according to Peevey, a local promoter picked up on the popularity of the song and launched a campaign to present her with an actual hippo on Christmas. The campaign succeeded and she would donate the animal to the local zoo. Known affectionately as Matilda, the hippo lived for nearly 50 years.

I want a hippopotamus for Christmas
Only a hippopotamus will do
I don't want a doll, no dinky Tinkertoy
I want a hippopotamus to play with and enjoy

I want a hippopotamus for Christmas
I don't think Santa Claus will mind, do you?
He won't have to use our dirty chimney flue
Just bring him through the front door
That's the easy thing to do

I can see me now on Christmas morning
Creeping down the stairs
Oh, what joy and what surprise
When I open up my eyes
To see my hippo hero standing there

I want a hippopotamus for Christmas
Only a hippopotamus will do
No crocodiles, or rhinoceroses
I only like hippopotamuses
And hippopotamuses like me too

I want a hippopotamus for Christmas
A hippopotamus is all I want
Mom says the hippo would eat me up
But then teacher says a hippo is a vegetarian

I want a hippopotamus for Christmas
The kind I saw this summer at the zoo
There's lots of room for him in our two car garage
I'd feed him there and wash him there
And give him his massage

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Creeping down the stairs
Oh, what joy and what surprise
When I open up my eyes
To see my hippo hero standing there

I want a hippopotamus for Christmas
Only a hippopotamus will do
No crocodiles, or rhinoceroses
I only like hippopotamuses
And hippopotamuses like me too!

