

Patti's Biography

by Elizabeth Vinson Lonsdorf:

Patti is a very different kind of mother than the rest of the females I study. She seems to be a bit annoyed by the burden of childrearing and is not very attentive to her offspring. Because of this, her children grow up to be very tough and independent. She seems to only be able to pay attention to one child at a time. I remember following her one day shortly after her current baby, Tarzan, was born. Her older son, Titan, had gotten separated from the group and was whimpering, trying to find his mother again. Most mothers respond to a whimper with their own call and the family reunites. However, Patti ignored Titan's cries until they had escalated into full, panicky screams. She let him scream for about 10 minutes until finally calling, causing Titan to come charging down the hill to meet back up with his mother. Patti does have a sweet side, however. I was following her one day way up high in Gombe and she came to an overlook perched out over the valley. She sat down to look out, and as Titan came up to sit down beside her, she pulled him close, and mother and son spent several minutes looking out over Gombe together before moving on.

by Joann Schumacher-Stankey:

Patti was not born in Gombe's main community, but joined the group as an adolescent in 1973. Even though she was an outsider, she was quite assertive from the beginning and is to this day Patti is usually found traveling alone with her offspring, rather than with other mothers or group members.

She didn't have the best luck as a mother at first, because she seemed not to know what to do with her babies. As a result, her first infant died shortly after birth. Her second son survived a rather rough childhood, but then died as a juvenile. However, she now has four surviving offspring, two daughters and two sons, and has recently become a grandmother. Both of her daughters, Tita and Tanga, live in the main community and are first time mothers themselves. Her son Titan is seven years old and has grown into quite a dominant, aggressive young chimp. Her new baby, Tarzan, is two years old and loves to roughhouse with his older brother.