

Acceptance of the Paleontological Society Schuchert Award

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Award/Citation

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I would like to begin by thanking my nominators and the Paleontological Society for this honor. I never imagined that I would be in this position when I first attended a Paleontological Society banquet as a 19-year-old undergraduate student, bewildered by the scientific terms and the complicated models presented.

I know that I have benefited enormously from the relative privilege I have been afforded in my life. I have received opportunities and resources that many others have not, and that goes a long way toward explaining why I am here today. I am heartened that our discipline is trying to make access to these resources more equitable, and our field more inclusive.

Although I have been incredibly lucky, I have benefited enormously from the efforts and mentorship of so many of you in this room. Far too many of you have helped me and supported me over my career to mention in just three minutes.

However, I should start where my paleontology story begins, with my undergraduate advisor who brought me to that very first Paleontological Society banquet—Larry Davis. Without him, I would not be a paleontologist today. I had thought that I wanted to be Indiana Jones.

I am incredibly grateful to Brian Huber at the Smithsonian for his mentorship during my undergraduate internship there. Paul Selden took a chance and offered me a M.Sc. project at the University of Kansas, and I am so grateful and glad that he did. Bruce Lieberman inspired my love for macroevolution and macroecology and served as my primary Ph.D. supervisor at the University of Kansas. Without Bruce, I would not be here today. He taught me how to think, to question, and he grounded me in evolutionary theory; I am forever grateful for his mentorship and his continued support. Derek Briggs was a champion for my bid for a Yale Institute for Biospheric Studies (YIBS) Fellowship at Yale, and his advice was invaluable for securing my future in the field.

There are so many more who provided support in myriad ways, and I cannot thank them enough: Town Peterson, Jorge Soberon, Seth Finnegan, Celli Hull, Corinne Myers, Alycia Stigall, Gene Hunt, Wolfgang Kiessling, Roger Benson, Michelle Casey, Una Farrell, Alex Dunhill, Doug Erwin, Wes Gapp, Curtis Congreve, and many others.

I have had the great privilege and honor to work with some of the best and brightest students and post docs. Much of what I have accomplished is due to their brilliance, and I am so grateful for everything they have done to move our field forward.

Last, but certainly not least, I would like to thank my family. They have always been supportive no matter what I wanted to be, from a princess ... to Indiana Jones ... to a paleontologist.

Thank you again for this honor. I am incredibly humbled.

