

Patterson Memorial Grant

The purpose of this award, named in honor of Dr. Bryan Patterson, is to support student field work in Vertebrate Paleontology. Particular consideration is given to proposals for field work that are innovative rather than routine, venturesome rather than predictable, unusual rather than run-of-the-mill.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- Applicants and their sponsors must be current SVP members. **You will not be able to apply for the award unless your membership is current in the system.**
- Both undergraduate and graduate students are eligible to apply.

HOW TO APPLY

Please utilize the SVP online award submission system to apply. **Any materials sent by e-mail, fax or mail will NOT be reviewed.** Once you click "submit" the award application is complete so be sure to double check that all fields and uploads are exactly as you wish **BEFORE clicking "submit"**. Be sure to name all uploaded documents with your name and a description of the attachment (i.e. John Smith Photo). Have the following items ready when you submit your application:

- Written statement of how the award would contribute to the success of the work (3000 character limit, includes ALL characters (letters, numbers, special hidden characters, spaces))
- Budget for the project covering major categories and detailing how the prize would be utilized.
- Title and description of the project (3000 character limit, includes ALL characters (letters, numbers, special hidden characters, spaces))
- Nominee photo

Learn more about Dr. Patterson

Bryan Patterson (1909 - 1979), called "Bryan" by his wife and some friends, but "Pat" by most of his colleagues, was a charter member of the SVP, its third secretary-treasurer (1946-48), and its seventh president (1948-49). He died of cancer in Boston on December 1, 1979, at the age of 70, a grievous loss to a multitude of people and to his profession.

Pat was born in London, England, on March 10, 1909. In 1926, when he was only 17 years old, his father arranged with a friend — the director of the Field Museum of Natural History — to send Pat there and to have him put to work at almost anything. He was soon made a preparator, first working on a skeleton of Homalodotherium and other fossil vertebrates that had been collected in 1922-24 and 1926-27 in Argentina by expeditions under Elmer S. Riggs. In 1930, he became an assistant in paleontology and

started a long and illustrious career in field work and research. He was placed on the curatorial staff of the museum in 1937.

In 1934, Pat married Bernice ("Bea") Maurine Caine. They had one son, Alan. Bea and Alan survive him. In 1938, he became a citizen of the United States and in 1944-45 his career was interrupted by World War II. He served as an enlisted man with the 16th Regiment, 1st Infantry Division, in the Army of the United States. He took part in the invasion of Normandy and was later reported missing in action. Happily, however, he was only slightly wounded but was captured by the Germans; he escaped twice, was recaptured, and was finally released as the war in Europe ended.

In 1955, Pat left Chicago for Cambridge, Massachusetts, and became an Alexander Agassiz Professor in The Museum of Comparative Zoology, a non-tenured position, and simultaneously a tenured professor of Harvard University. In 1970, he gave up the Alexander Agassiz professorship. His Harvard professorship continued until he reached retirement age in 1975 when he was made Professor Emeritus. He continued to work and to teach in the MCZ until the year of his death.

Before leaving England, Pat had what was approximately equivalent to an American prep school education. Early in his professional career he attended some courses at the University of Chicago, but his only university degree was an honorary MS from Harvard, which routinely makes this gesture for its tenured professors. Pat was essentially a self-educated scientist, but few have been so well educated. That is attested not only by his large body of published research but also by the testimony of colleagues and former students and by his membership and officership in many professional societies. These include the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, to which he was elected in 1956, and the National Academy of Sciences, elected in 1963.

Pat's professional interests were almost evenly divided between research and field work. His research was mostly devoted to fossil mammals, although his first paper (published in 1931) was on a crocodylian, *Allognathosuchus*. He later became a leading authority on an extinct family of South American birds, the Phororhacidae, on which in 1960 he published a monographic revision in Spanish written jointly with J.L. Kraglievich.

At the Field Museum Pat soon started research on the South American fossil mammals in that museum. In 1932, he published the first of a series of outstanding papers on the anatomy and classification of notoungulates and some associated mammals. Those studies were based at first on the Riggs collections, but expanded to include many others. In the 1930s, an agreement was reached between the Field Museum and the American Museum under which the former would study and revise the Deseadan and Colhuehuapian (early and late Oligocene) collections of both museums and the latter would similarly treat the Casamayoran and Mustersan (early and middle Eocene) faunas. Riggs insisted that the Field Museum nevertheless publish on his best Casamayoran specimens, and that was done by Patterson with Riggs as nominal coauthor in 1935. Patterson later published important monographs on Deseadan rodents (1960, with A.E. Wood) and marsupials (1978, with L.G. Marshall), but a general revision of the Deseadan and Colhuehuapian faunas was not published. Pat had detailed notes on these faunas from studies mostly in Argentina, supported by Guggenheim fellowships in 1951-53 and 1954-55. Those notes were made freely available to other students and were also fundamental for such general reviews of South American faunas as the one by Patterson and Pascual in 1969. However, there is still further important information in the notes never published in Pat's lifetime.

In addition to his studies in the Field Museum, MCZ, and other North American and several South American museums and universities, Pat spent much time in European institutions. Visits there also resulted in important studies, among those published, for instance, one on fossil elephant shrews (1965) and one on fossil aardvarks (1975).

From the 1930s onward much of Pat's research was based on stratigraphic observations and specimens from his own field work. In 1932, 1933, 1937, 1939, 1941, and 1947, he led parties collecting from the late Paleocene and early Eocene of Mesa and Garfield Counties, Colorado. This resulted in remarkable specimens, especially of Pantodonta and Dinocerata, as published in several papers from 1933-1939.

In 1949, the first known early Cretaceous mammals from North America were found in Montague County, Texas, almost by accident by Rainer Zangerl and Robert Denison of the Field Museum. This discovery was immediately followed up by Patterson who worked jointly with the Texas Memorial Museum in 1950 to 1952 and again in 1954. Enormous quantities of matrix were screen-washed and the resulting collections, although fragmentary, added a whole new chapter to knowledge of mammalian evolution. The collections still have not been completely described, but the most important data were published by Pat, especially in an extensive monograph on "Early Cretaceous mammals and the evolution of mammalian molar teeth" (1956).

In 1956, Pat worked in Florida at the famous Thomas Farm (Miocene) fossil mammal locality with Arnold ("Arnie") Lewis, long the chief fossil vertebrate preparator of the MCZ and often a field companion with Pat. Although Pat himself did not publish on that collection, it has been fruitfully studied by others. In 1956 to 1964 Pat worked at various times in the Paleocene and Eocene of Wyoming, usually with Paul O. McGrew of the University of Wyoming. Some of the results were published jointly with Paul. Annually from 1963 through 1967 Pat led large expeditions to northern Kenya, usually with Arnie Lewis and always with some of Pat's Harvard students and a few others. Pat himself published only a few notes on that long campaign, but the rich collections have afforded much information researched by others, including several doctoral dissertations, and also pointed the way since followed prolifically by other institutions.

Although Pat had done much museum research in South America, his field work there before the 1970s was largely confined to a joint MCZ-Museo de La Plata expedition in 1958 with Rosendo Pascual to northern Argentina. Some fossil mammals were collected, but the party was primarily concerned with early Mesozoic reptiles.

In 1970, Pat was sent by the International Executive Service Corps to Estanzuela, Guatemala, to advise on the feasibility of establishing a local museum to house some Pleistocene mammals found there. As a result of his professional interest and exhaustive labors, the Museo de Paleontología Bryan Patterson was named in his honor, and offers the people of Guatemala a view of the riches their country possesses. Pat was given invaluable assistance by Señor Roberto Woolfolk, an engineer from the Instituto Guatemateco de Turismo.

In the early 1970s, Pat undertook a series of expeditions in central and northern South America: in 1972 to Venezuela with Arnie Lewis and two others; in 1973, with the Brazilian herpetologist and Director of the Sao Paulo Museum Paulo Vanzolini to the central Amazon basin, Manaus and some of the Amazon's

tributaries; and in 1974 with a party of four to the upper Amazon basin in eastern Peru. Pat's own evaluation was that the collections obtained were disappointing, but it appears that this was because they included relatively few fossil mammals, of most interest to Pat himself. They did include interesting reptiles.

Although teaching was not his primary occupation, Pat had been a lecturer at the University of Chicago and after going to Cambridge he was a devoted teacher to a select group of graduate students at Harvard. From 1962, when Al Romer retired from teaching, until his own retirement in 1975, Pat also took over primary responsibility for Harvard's formal course in vertebrate paleontology.

Such a necessarily condensed summary of Pat's professional activities gives little impression of his vibrant personality. He was always good company and a valued friend to most of the world's vertebrate paleontologists. In informal circumstances his activities were often unexpected and astonishing. Who will forget the momentous entrance that Pat made into the SVP banquet at Atlantic City riding a penny farthing bicycle? In addition to the highly social side of his character there was also a private side, not easily penetrated and rarely communicative.

Bryan Patterson was an outstanding person in all his aspects. He is sadly missed.

[By William D. Turnbull and Farish A. Jenkins, Jr., from the February, 1981 SVP News Bulletin.]

The 2020 awards application process is now closed.

QUESTIONS?

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