

Colbert Prize

Selected and presented onsite at the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology's Annual Meeting, the Edwin H. and Margaret M. Colbert Prize recognizes an outstanding student poster presentation. The prize was named in honor of the Colberts' contributions to Vertebrate Paleontology.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- Current membership in SVP is required.
- The competition is open to all students who wish to present aspects of their graduate, or in exceptional cases, undergraduate paleontological research.
- One submission per year is accepted.
- Previous Colbert Prize winners may not enter the competition again. Previous entrants and finalists are strongly encouraged to enter again if eligible.
- The research presented should be new and unpublished.
- The abstract and poster must be single or first authored.
- The poster itself must also:
 - 1) include the Poster Prize Icon, such that its printed size is 3 inches (7.5 cm) in diameter. Download the prize icon here [JPEG format](#) or [PSD format](#).
 - 2) if multi-authored, contain a section explaining author contributions.
 - 3) the title (matching that of the accepted abstract) and should be situated high up on the poster so that it can be read 15-20 feet away.
 - 4) include a title banner and an affiliation with the academic institution where the research was or is being done.
 - 5) be in English.
 - 6) not exceed the dimensions given in the meeting guidelines (see detail provided in poster acceptance letters)
 - 7) be set up by 9:30am on the day of the competition.

PRIZE INCLUDES

- A cash award of several hundred dollars (USD).
- A prize ribbon and certificate

HOW TO APPLY

Please submit an abstract using the Online Abstract Submission System. Any materials sent by email, fax or mail will NOT be reviewed. All presenting authors who are Student Members of SVP will automatically be considered for the Colbert Prize if selected for a poster presentation.

BE AWARE

- Posters in the competition will bear a specific marking in the abstract book to designate them as being part of the competition.
- Be alert for instructions concerning set-up times for posters. Venue permitting the posters may be set-up on day one and displayed for the full four days of the conference (but please wait for confirmation of this).
- A few days before the conference, it is appreciated if an A4 pdf of the poster is sent to the Colbert Panel Chair. This may be used by the Colbert Prize Panel when discussing the posters in private and for the powerpoint presentation at the Awards Banquet when the winner is announced.
- Preliminary judging of posters will occur after poster set-up time (without the presenters present) but prior to the regular poster session. Layout and content will count equally in the judging of posters. The panel will select between three and six finalists.
- All students are expected to be present at their poster during the afternoon poster session on the day of the competition (usually day two of the conference).
- The Colbert Prize Panel will visit finalists' posters during the afternoon poster session to evaluate each presenter's knowledge of the material covered in the poster.
- The winner will be contacted before the Awards Banquet and may be asked to set up their poster again prior to the Awards Banquet.
- Please note that any abstract that is not selected for the Romer Prize session will be moved to regular submission status. If designated as a poster, it may be considered for the Colbert Prize.

CRITERIA FOR JUDGING COLBERT POSTERS

MANDATORY

- The Poster Prize Icon must be included on the poster, such that its printed size is 3 inches (7.5 cm) in diameter. Download the prize icon here: [PSD format] [JPEG format]
- If multi-authored, the poster must contain a section explaining author contributions. The student is expected to have carried out the majority of the research in addition to being responsible for preparing the poster itself. Examples of acceptable co-author contributions include organization of fieldwork; provision of lab space, equipment, or specimens. You are welcome to send a draft of this section to the Colbert Panel Chair prior to the meeting for feedback.
- The title (matching that of the accepted abstract) must be included and should be situated high up on the poster so that it can be read 15-20 feet away.
- Author(s) and affiliation(s) must be included, ideally below the title.
- Consistent with JVP guidelines, posters must be in English.

- The poster may not exceed the dimensions given in the meeting guidelines (usually: 231.14 cm wide and 114.3 cm high) and a landscape orientation is preferred.
- The poster must be set up by 9:30 am on the day of the competition.

CONTENT

- The content of the poster should include the following sections: Introduction, Methods, Results, Conclusion and References.
- It is unnecessary, and a waste of valuable space, to repeat the abstract from the meeting's abstract book.
- The Introduction must provide the basis of investigation and the direction/approach to answer the question(s) being considered. Ideally a numbered list of aims or questions should be provided.
- The Methods of the investigation must be presented clearly.
- The Results must be presented in a manner that is understandable and must support the Conclusions drawn. Are there possible alternatives in interpretation?
- Conclusions should follow from the original intent as outlined in the Introduction.
- It is advisable to include a list of aims or questions in the Introduction, and a complementary list of conclusions at the end.
- References should include any references cited in the body text or figure captions.
- The poster should be self-explanatory, so that the main points (questions, methods, results) are communicated without the presenter being there.
- Overall, the investigation should display some degree of creativity and originality.
- You will also be judged on quality of science and scientific impact of investigation.

STYLE AND FORMAT

- The flow of information through the poster should be explicit (e.g., use of arrows or numbers) and should be organized in columns that are not excessively wide.
- Text should be visible from about an arm's length facilitated by appropriate choice of font, font size and line spacing.
- The poster should be proofread for correct spelling and grammar.
- Each illustration should have a headline title providing a take-home message with a more detailed caption below.
- Images should be of suitably high resolution.
- Use of color is encouraged but particularly for data points on graphs due consideration should be given to color vision deficiency (e.g. Wong B. 2011. Color blindness. Nature Methods 8: 441).

- Complex or distracting background photographs (no matter how pretty) are discouraged.
- There should be creativity in the presentation.

ORAL EVALUATION (FINALISTS ONLY)

- Familiar and comfortable with the layout and presented information.
- Enthusiastic about the topic.
- Knows more about the topic than is presented in the poster.
- Knowledgeable about similar or closely-related studies (if there are any), or the history of research on the topic.
- Communicates effectively and handles questions well.
- Has an idea about where to take the research next.

QUESTIONS?

Dr. Judd Case (jcase@ewu.edu) & Dr. Gabriela Sobral (gabisobral@gmail.com), Co-Chairs,
Colbert Prize Panel

ABOUT THE COLBERTS

Edwin H. and Margaret M. Colbert

Edwin Harris Colbert

Dr. Edwin H. Colbert was an authority on paleontology and helped popularize the study of dinosaurs through his work as a curator at the American Museum of Natural History in New York and as a prolific writer of dinosaur books for a lay audience.

In his 40-year career at the museum, Colbert organized its dinosaur displays. As curator of reptile fossils, he spent much of his time doing scientific research, preparing fossil specimens for the public and organizing exhibitions.

But he also found time to write extensively, publishing several heavily-illustrated dinosaur books that won him acclaim from both the public and scientists. His first book, "The Dinosaur Book: The Ruling Reptiles and Their Relatives" (1945), helped to feed a growing public interest in dinosaurs in the mid-40's and was so popular that it remained in print for two decades.

"Through his writings, he aroused public interest in dinosaurs because he was able to write in an entertaining manner and still make it scientifically accurate," said Dr. Gene Gaffney, who succeeded Colbert as curator of fossil reptiles at the museum. "He was known for writing the first popular books on dinosaurs, and really gave a human side to paleontology, and made the science more approachable."

In 1969, just before retiring from the museum, Colbert traveled to Antarctica as part of a field expedition sponsored by the National Science Foundation.

While there, he was part of a team that discovered and identified a 220-million-year-old fossil of a *Lystrosaurus*, an early relative of mammals. Similar fossils had previously been found in South Africa. Since *Lystrosaurus* was not a swimmer, the discovery lent evidence to the theory that the present-day continents must have once been part of a large land mass or supercontinent that slowly separated over millions of years.

The continental drift theory, originally proposed in 1912 by Alfred Wegener, a German meteorologist, had long been debated by scientists, but the discovery was a crucial piece of evidence. Dr. Laurence M. Gould, the scientific leader of Adm. Richard E. Byrd's first expedition to Antarctica, in 1928, described the discovery in an article in *The New York Times* as "one of the truly great fossil finds of all time."

Colbert's field studies in paleontology took him to all seven continents, but he preferred excavations in the southwestern United States. In 1947, while at Ghost Ranch in New Mexico, he unearthed more than a dozen complete skeletons of a primitive dinosaur, *coelophysis*. It was one of the largest concentrations of dinosaur deposits ever recorded.

Colbert wrote more than 400 scientific articles and more than 20 books. In addition to his long-selling "Dinosaur Book," he wrote "*Colbert's Evolution of the Vertebrates: A History of the Backboned Animals Through Time*" (Wiley-Liss, 2001), which is considered a classic textbook on evolutionary biology and paleontology and is now in its fifth edition. He was a friend of Henry Fairfield Osborn, and a foremost authority on the Dinosauria. He described dozens of new taxa and authored major systematic reviews, including the discovery and description of the small Triassic dinosaur *Coleophysis* at Ghost Ranch, New Mexico, and a review of ceratopsian phylogeny. He also discovered what later was named and classified as *Effigia okeeffeae*.

He received his AB from the University of Nebraska and his Masters and PhD from Columbia University. Among the positions he held was Curator of Vertebrate Paleontology at the American Museum of Natural History and Professor Emeritus of Vertebrate Paleontology at Columbia University.

After retiring from the museum in 1970, Colbert became the curator of vertebrate paleontology at the Museum of Northern Arizona.

Colbert passed away on November 16, 2001 at the age of 96.