

## Romer Prize

The Alfred Sherwood Romer Prize recognizes an outstanding scientific contribution in Vertebrate Paleontology by a predoctoral student. Selection of Romer Prize session participants is based on the scientific value and quality of a submitted abstract summarizing an original research project. The prize is awarded based on the scientific value and quality of the oral presentation of that research during the Romer Prize session at the SVP Annual Meeting.

### **ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

**Current membership in SVP is required.**

- A predoctoral student is defined as a student in an undergraduate or graduate degree program who has not received a doctoral degree or has held a doctoral degree for less than one year at the time of the Annual Meeting.
- Previously published abstracts cannot be submitted.
- Only single-authored projects are considered.
- Past Romer Prize winners are not eligible to apply.
- The work is relevant to Vertebrate Paleontology with direct applications or relevance to understanding and interpreting the vertebrate fossil record, particularly for projects describing new methods developed from living organisms and/or actualistic studies.
- The work should address a question or a set of questions in a scientific fashion and provide results that have a robust scientific implication.
- The work should present a complete, comprehensive study including sufficient background and information on methods for the evaluation of the significance and suitability of the research and methods.

### **HOW TO APPLY**

Please use the Online Abstract Submission System to apply. Any materials sent by email, fax or mail will NOT be reviewed.

- Check the box on the online abstract submission form to indicate your desire to enter your poster in the competition for the Romer Prize during the regular abstract submission process.
- The abstract submission process includes a series of questions to establish eligibility:
  - the applicant's current degree program, estimated date of completion and institution;
  - all undergraduate and graduate degrees previously awarded, degree dates and awarding institutions;
  - the applicant's current position and institution in the case of an applicant who already has a doctorate but that will be within one year of the degree date at the time of the Annual Meeting

Those not selected as finalists to present in the Romer Prize session will have their abstract reviewed by the Program Committee for regular session consideration; the applicant may also withdraw their abstract.

- The winner is selected from finalists onsite and announced at the award 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.

## **ROMER PRIZE GUIDELINES**

Based on the Romer Prize Charter, applicants should note that:

- Abstracts must be well written and meet the minimum quality standards set for all abstracts submitted for presentation at the SVP Annual Meeting.
- Abstracts without exception must meet all formatting requirements as set in the Abstract Guidelines by the SVP Program Committee. The Abstracts Guidelines are available through the SVP Annual Meeting home page. Understanding these guidelines is the responsibility of the applicant.
- Abstracts should clearly state the question(s) or problem(s) addressed, the importance or significance of the research, the methods used with sufficient explanation, and the basic results and implications or conclusions.

The Romer Prize Committee will judge the oral presentations during the Romer Prize session at the Annual Meeting and will award the Romer Prize based on the quality of the research, satisfaction of the general criteria for the Romer Prize as outlined in the charter of the Romer Prize, and the overall quality of the presentation itself. Presentations should provide sufficient information on background and methods for the Committee members and the audience to evaluate the relevance or importance of the questions examined and the basis and suitability of the methods and data used to address the questions. Presentations that are complete, comprehensive and utilize the time format properly (12 minutes for presentation and three minutes for questions or discussion) will fare better than those that try to review too many projects at the expense of comprehensiveness and clarity and/or do not leave time for questions or discussion or go over time. Students participating should note the emphasis placed by the Committee on the time format for the oral presentations.

## **QUESTIONS?**

Dr. Ken Angeilczyk, Chair, Romer Prize Panel, [kangielczyk@fieldmuseum.org](mailto:kangielczyk@fieldmuseum.org)

## **Learn more about Dr. Romer**

Dr. Alfred Sherwood Romer (1894 – 1973) was the leading contributor to the discipline of vertebrate paleontology throughout much of the 20th century. He was founder and first president of the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology. His textbook *Vertebrate Paleontology*, published in three editions from 1933

to 1966, set the standards of excellence for anatomical investigation, systematic analysis and evolutionary understanding that continue to form the basis for our discipline.

He was a superb educator at all levels: public presentations, classroom lectures, and supervisor of more than 25 graduate students. These professional descendants, now extending into the 4th or 5th generation, are a living legacy of his contributions and aspirations. He integrated and promoted the study of vertebrate paleontology to a degree that may never be equaled, as well as being a model for professional colleagues and friends. His enthusiasm for the discipline and life in general was always evident and contagious, always with a human touch and a great sense of humor.

Romer's major contributions were in the areas of the ancestry of vertebrates, Paleozoic tetrapods, and the antecedents of mammals. But equally important was his capacity to unite the entire discipline with his concepts, text books, and general understanding. His publications spanned more than 50 years, from his epochal "The locomotor apparatus of primitive and mammal-like reptiles" in 1922, to the completion of 20 successive papers, collectively titled "The Chanares (Argentina) Triassic reptile Fauna," in 1973. His books included *The Vertebrate Body*, (in six editions), *Osteology of the Reptiles*, and major reviews of labyrinthodonts and pelycosaurs. All of these works were based on his own research, from lab dissections to field collection of fossils ranging from ancestral sharks through a wide spectrum of archaic amphibians and the earliest fossils leading to modern reptiles and mammals. Romer, or "Al" as he preferred when working in the field, spent a month or more each summer from 1926 into his post-retirement years with his wife and a succession of graduate student collecting in the Lower Permian of Texas, separated only by major excursions to the South African Karoo Basin, the maritime provinces of Canada, and the Triassic of South America. In all his activities, Romer provided the highest standards that we can hope to follow in the profession of vertebrate paleontology.