



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

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To Whom It May Concern:

We the undersigned, all *Distinguished Herpetologist Awardees*, would like to voice our support for The Herpetologists' League's quick action in rescinding Dr. Richard Vogt's *Distinguished Herpetologist Award* due to what they considered an inappropriate lecture at the recent Joint Meeting of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists 2018, which consisted of The Herpetologists' League, the American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists, and the Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles. We also support the various initiatives taken by each of these societies toward establishing a more safe and equitable workplace for women. We hope that all of these actions are a harbinger of better times to come.

A number of online comments that have appeared after this incident make it clear that many women feel that our societies do not always provide a welcoming place, and perhaps not even a safe place for women scientists. Recent studies have shown that harassment of women in the STEM disciplines is as rampant as it appears to be in the entertainment industry and in politics (<http://sites.nationalacademies.org/shstudy/index.htm>). We might view this as a single isolated incident, but to treat this episode as a one-off aberration belies the seriousness of this issue confronting us.

Some of the male signees of this letter feel we are complicit in not speaking out more frequently and forcefully against inappropriate behavior, and in not always being supportive enough of those who have pushed for change—for this we apologize. The atmosphere at JMIHs and these three societies has improved since the 1980s and earlier (e.g. more women officers and editors, and increased female attendance), but clearly we have not yet done enough to encourage a professional environment that is fully welcoming and supportive to our female students and colleagues. It is unacceptable that even now young women attending these meetings are sometimes tutored by their mentors in how to respond to sexual harassment instead of how to benefit from scientific presentations, informal discussions, and the honest and wholesome collegiality of other scientists who hopefully will become future colleagues.

All of us below ask all of the societies' members to join us and pledge to speak out when we see misconduct, to listen to and amplify female colleagues when they express discomfort, to support and mentor female students, and to set a professional and respectful tone in conversations with peers and students of any gender. Although we applaud the action taken by all of these societies, this is a problem that ultimately will not be resolved by society committees but must be resolved at the level of the individuals of the societies. We all need to be diligent in contributing to an equitable and safe workplace for all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael J Ryan".

Michael J Ryan
Distinguished Herpetologist 1995
University of Texas at Austin

CO-SIGNEES ON NEXT PAGE

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University of California at Berkeley

Jay M. Savage
Distinguished Herpetologist 1986
University of Miami

Henry M. Wilbur
Distinguished Herpetologist 1990
Duke University

Raymond B. Huey
Distinguished Herpetologist 1991
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Stevan J. Arnold
Distinguished Herpetologist 1992
University of Chicago

Linda R. Maxson
Distinguished Herpetologist 1993
Pennsylvania State University

Richard Shine
Distinguished Herpetologist 1994
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Harry W. Greene
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Julian Lee
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