

Louis Leo Jacobs III

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Louis the Vertebrate Paleontologist

Louis L. Jacobs III received the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology Joseph T. Gregory Award in 2005. His acceptance speech demonstrated his humility: “I am Louis Jacobs. I am a vertebrate paleontologist. Thank you for this honor.” Those of us who know him understand that Louis Jacobs is not only a vertebrate paleontologist but a scientist without academic or geographic limits, a teacher and mentor, and a friend to all who meet him.

This man who has contributed so much to the science of vertebrate paleontology was born on August 27, 1948, in Syracuse, New York. Louis spent much of his early life in Louisiana, graduating from DeRidder High School in DeRidder, Louisiana. He earned a B.S. from the University of Southwestern Louisiana (now the University of Louisiana at Lafayette) in 1970. While an undergraduate, Louis was employed as part of an offshore seismic crew in the Gulf of Mexico and briefly served in the United States Merchant Marine.

As a graduate student mentored by Everett Lindsay and George Gaylord Simpson at the University of Arizona, he began his vertebrate paleontology research by investigating Miocene (Hemphillian) rodents from Arizona. That research later expanded to include studies of rodent evolution and migration in Pakistan that have continued throughout his career. The Pakistan research began as part of an ongoing project directed by Dr. David Pilbeam. Louis’ research resulted in, among other discoveries, *Antemus*, a new genus at the base of murid rodents.

As a University of Arizona student, Louis was a prominent contributing member of the informal seminar group known as The Red Fireballs. RFB members attended a weekly lunch with Drs. Lindsay and Simpson. Occasionally, they were joined by Dr. Laurence McKinley Gould, the first geologist to work in Antarctica. The lunch and brief seminar that followed allowed the students to discuss vertebrate paleontology and geology with their mentors in an informal setting.

Upon receipt of the Ph.D. in 1977, Louis accepted a position at the Museum of Northern Arizona, where he continued his informal education by working with Edwin H. (Ned) Colbert. It was at MNA that Louis developed a working relationship with his long-time field partner, Will Downs. They spent many years together working in Asia, Africa, and elsewhere around the world.

Following short stints as a USGS geologist and a lecturer at The University of Arizona, Louis accepted a position as Head of the Division of Paleontology at the Kenya National Museum in 1981, working under director Richard E. Leakey.

Louis became a faculty member in the Department of Geological Sciences at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas, in 1983. At that time, he became affiliated with the Shuler Museum of Paleontology, ultimately serving as its director from 1987 to 2000.

WINDOWS INTO SAUROPSID AND SYNAPSID EVOLUTION



Photo 1. (L-R) Jim Honey, Louis Jacobs, and Everett Lindsay at the home of Ned Colbert, ~1976. Credit: Lou Taylor

Photo 2. Louis Jacobs in Bentiaba, Angola, 2010. Credit: Kalunga Lima.

Photo 3. Everett Lindsay greeting Louis Jacobs at Lindsay's 90th Birthday Party, June 2021. Jessica Harrison in the background. Credit: Kurt Lindsay

Photo 4. Louis and Bonnie Jacobs holding Louis' SVP Joseph T. Gregory award plaque. 2005 SVP annual meeting Mesa, Arizona. Credit: Lou Taylor. When he received the Gregory Award, he said, "My name is Louis Jacobs. I am a vertebrate paleontologist. Thank you for this honor."

Outside of his faculty duties, Louis was appointed *ad interim* museum director of the Dallas Museum of Natural History and also president of the Institute for the Study of Earth and Man (ISEM) at SMU, an organization "focused on interdisciplinary research and related education." Louis continues as President of ISEM to this day, in addition to his ongoing paleontological research in *Projecto PaleoAngola* (a collaboration with colleagues from SMU, Angola, the Netherlands, and Portugal) and as emeritus professor at SMU.



Photo 5. (L-R) Louis Jacobs, Lou Taylor, and Jim Honey in the Paleocene Nacimiento Formation, San Juan Basin, New Mexico, June 1975. Credit: Larry Flynn

Photo 6. Louis Jacobs and Nancy Stevens working on the humerus of *Angolatitan adamastor* in Iemba, Angola, 2006. Credit: Mike Polcyn or Octavio Mateus.

Photo 7. (L-R) Louis Jacobs, Fred Cropp, George Gaylord Simpson at Simpson's home for the annual Darwin's Day party, Tucson, Arizona, ~1976. Credit: Lou Taylor

Photo 8. Louis Jacobs and Will Downs at the Grand Canyon, Arizona, December 2005. Credit: Bonnie Jacobs



Photo 9. (L-R) Louis Jacobs, Mary Taylor, Will Downs, and Lou Taylor. Louis Jacobs and friends viewing *Malawisaurus*; Dallas, Texas, 1998, Credit: Bonnie Jacobs

Photo 10. Louis and Bonnie Jacobs on the occasion of Louis' 50th Birthday, 1998. Credit: unknown

Photo 11. (L-R) Everett Lindsay, Jim Honey, Larry Flynn, Yuki Tomida, Dick Haskin, Louis Jacobs, Lou Taylor. Red Fireballs after one of their weekly luncheons at the panda restaurant, Tucson, Arizona, ~1975. Credit: unknown

Louis, the vertebrate paleontologist, has been honored by ten patronymns (Appendix 1), the most recent of which was the oviraptorid dinosaur *Corythoraptor jacobsi*. It was described through the collaboration of three former students: the late Junchang Lü of China, Yuong-Nam Lee of Korea, and Yoshitsugu Kobayashi of Japan.

Louis the Man

In addition to his scientific and professional accomplishments, some of us have been fortunate to know Louis' generous spirit, manifested in his personal relationships as a husband, father, friend, colleague, teacher, and mentor.

Louis Jacobs and Bonnie Fine were married in Tucson on November 22, 1980. Their wedding was a vertebrate paleontology festival. Not only did the Red Fireballs attend, but also the Simpsons and Colberts. Louis continues to collaborate with Bonnie, a paleobotanist and SMU emeritus professor. Louis and Bonnie are the proud and doting parents of their son Matthew and their daughter Melissa, and they are thrilled to have two grandchildren.

Louis has maintained old friendships and created new friends throughout his time as a vertebrate paleontologist. Many of the Red Fireballs still meet annually or more often to work together or to celebrate special events in each other's lives. They often

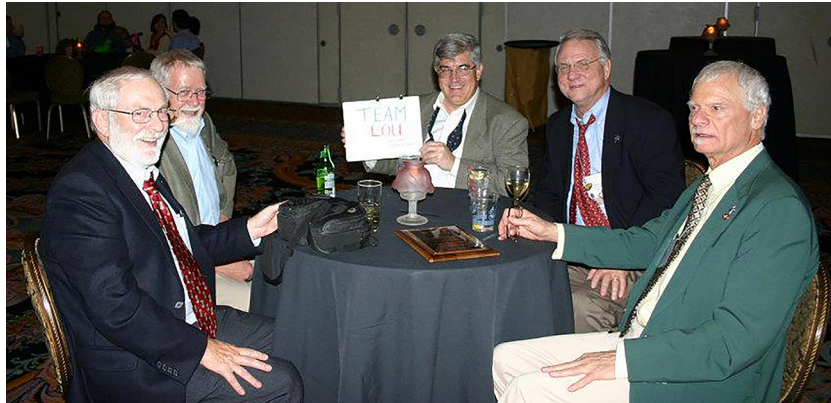


Photo 12. (L-R) Oldrich Fejfar, Emmie Ericson, Everett Lindsay, Tushi Fejfar, Charles “Rep” Repenning, Louis Jacobs, Dale Winkler, Lou Taylor, and Mary Taylor. The Repenning home, Lakewood, Colorado, 2004. Credit: Shiela Stephens

Photo 13. (L-R) Lou Taylor, Gary Johnson, Ted Vlamis, Louis Jacobs, and Steven Cohen at the 2011 SVP Annual Meeting, Las Vegas, Nevada. Credit: Rebecca Hunt-Foster

can be seen together at the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology annual meetings. Louis is one of the first to join any effort to honor a friend or colleague. He has been involved in a number of festschrifts as well as articles honoring historical figures and events.

Louis is also well known to be quick to support the profession through public outreach and professional service. As an active and contributing member of the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology, Louis has served the society through various committees and as president for two years, beginning in 1996. He remains active as co-chair of SVP’s Steven Cohen Award for Student Research Committee. Louis has been instrumental in producing two videos for SVP. He and his colleagues produced the video *We Are SVP* to provide stories of vertebrate paleontologists from around the world and to present their research and fieldwork. The video also emphasized the value of vertebrate paleontology as a science and particularly as one of the avenues by which children are introduced to the world of science. They also produced a documentary on the development of the SVP logo by artist Margaret Colbert, wife of vertebrate paleontologist Ned Colbert, and the daughter of another, William Diller Matthew. For his service to the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology, Louis has been awarded the Joseph T. Gregory Award (2005) and Honorary Membership (2012). He aided the science community of Dallas in 1999 as director *ad*



Photo 14. (L-R) Katsuhiro Kubota, Louis Jacobs, Yuong-Nam Lee, Lou Taylor, Junchang Lü at the Heyuan dinosaur egg site, Heyuan, China, April 2005. Credit: unknown

Photo 15. (L-R) Yuong-Nam Lee, Louis Jacobs, Rinchen Barsbold, Yoshitsugu Kobayashi, Philip Currie, Anthony Fiorillo at Ulaan Khushuu base camp, Mongolia, September 2006. Credit: Namsoo Kim

Photo 16. (L-R) Louis Jacobs, Yuong-Nam Lee, Yoshitsugu Kobayashi, Junchang Lü at *Tarchia tumanovae* digging site at Hermin Tsav, Mongolia, September 2008. Credit: Michael Ryan

interim of the Dallas Museum of Natural History. To this day, he serves as a professional advisor to the Dallas Paleontological Society.

Louis the Educator

Throughout his years at SMU, Louis continued his research as a paleomammalogist, but also stretched his research to include other aspects of vertebrate paleontology, particularly dinosaurs and marine reptiles, and how they can be applied to answering questions about the Earth and the history of life on it.

He has eagerly included fellow faculty members and graduate students in vertebrate paleontology studies in Texas, Arizona,



Photo 17. Group photo at Rolling Hills Hotel for 2013 Hwaseong International Dinosaurs Expedition Symposium, South Korea, December 2013. Credit: unknown

Alaska, Mexico, Cameroon, Malawi, Mozambique, Yemen, Israel, Antarctica, and, most recently, in Angola through *Projecto PaleoAngola*.

Projecto PaleoAngola research has resulted in not only vertebrate paleontological discoveries but also provides great insight into the opening and effects of the opening of the South Atlantic Ocean. A collaboration among scientists from the U.S.A., Portugal, Finland, Sweden, The Netherlands, and Angola, this project has profited from contributions by many other colleagues and students.

SMU students and staff members, under Louis' leadership, created and constructed an exhibit highlighting the results of research in Angola. The exhibit, a long-term temporary installation at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History in Washington, DC., is designed to travel to other venues.

Louis has been an extraordinary "paleontological father" and is now a "paleontological grandfather." His research contributions, and those of the students he has trained and junior colleagues he has mentored, are impactful at a global level. His program has attracted 28 graduate students from around the world (Appendix 2). Not only has he mentored and trained new vertebrate paleontologists, but he has also encouraged them to apply their expertise to develop their own academic programs, create museums, and serve their respective communities as scientists and good citizens.

Louis has also mentored undergraduate students and generously donated time through science outreach to interested amateur fossil enthusiasts and educators around North Texas. For his contributions to education, Louis has been honored by Texas Tech University with the Skoog Cup, which is "presented to higher education faculty members in appreciation for their outstanding contributions to the development of quality science education."

Louis, Our Friend

We have been honored to have been colleagues and friends of Louis L. Jacobs as he studied and fostered vertebrate paleontology around the globe. He included us and so many of his students in the research, enriching everyone involved.

He has spent a career not only adding to the body of vertebrate paleontology knowledge but also as a mentor to us all. Rarely does anyone encounter Louis and not come away with some new knowledge or a question to think about.

We are all fortunate to know Louis Jacobs.

APPENDIX 1. Patronymns

- Apatosciuravus jacobsi* Flanagan, 1986, *Vertebrates, Phylogeny, and Philosophy: Contributions to Geology*, University of Wyoming, Special Paper 3, p. 204.
- Jacobsomys verdensis* Czaplewski, 1987, *Journal of Vertebrate Paleontology*, 7(2), p. 191.
- Hadromys loujacobsi* Musser, 1987, *American Museum Novitates*, 2883, p. 12.
- Chinleogomphius jacobsi* (Murry, 1987), *Journal of Paleontology*, 61(4), p. 773.
- Chardinomys lousi* Zhou, 1988, *Vertebrata Palasiatica*, 26(3), p. 189.
- Microsteiromys jacobsi* Walton, 1990, Ph.D. Thesis, Southern Methodist University.
- Mus jacobsi* Kotlia, 1992, *Neues Jahrbuch für Geologie und Paläontologie*, 184(3):348.
- Karnimata jacobsi* Winkler, 2003, *Lothagam: The Dawn of Humanity in Eastern Africa*, Columbia University Press, p. 180.
- Paronychomys jacobsi* Kelly, 2013, *Paludicola*, 9(2)70-96.
- Corythoraptor jacobsi* Junchang Lü et al., 2017, *Scientific Reports*, 7(6393) DOI:10.1038/s41598-017-05016-6

APPENDIX 2. Student Advisees

- Anne Walton (Ph.D. 1990), USA
Alisa Winkler (Ph.D. 1990), USA
John Congleton (M.S. 1990), USA
Xiaofeng Xu (Ph.D. 1995), CHINA
Yuong-Nam Lee (Ph.D. 1995), SOUTH KOREA
Christine Rennison (M.S. 1996), USA
Jerry Harris (M.S. 1997), USA
Jack Whittles (M.S. 1997), USA
Elizabeth Gomani Chindebvuvu (M.S. 1993, Ph.D. 1999), MALAWI
Jack Rogers (M.S. 2000), USA
Jason Head (M.S. 1997, Ph.D. 2002), USA
Yoshitsugu Kobayashi (M.S. 1998, Ph.D. 2004), JAPAN
Junchang Lü (Ph.D. 2004), CHINA
Peter Rose (M.S. 2004), USA
Annat Haber (M.S. 2005), ISRAEL
John Robbins (co-advisor, Ph.D. 2007), USA

Timothy Scott Myers (Ph.D. 2009), USA

Diana Vineyard (M.S. 2009), USA

Yosuke Nishida (M.S. 2009), JAPAN

Martha Carolina Aguilón (M.S. 2010), MEXICO

Thomas Adams (M.S. 2008, Ph.D. 2011), USA

Ricardo Araújo (Fulbright Scholar, Ph.D. 2013), PORTUGAL

Yuri Kimura (M.S. 2009, Ph.D. 2013), JAPAN

Chris Strganac (M.S. 2008, Ph.D. 2014), USA

John Graf (Fulbright Scholar, Ph.D. 2016), USA

Kate Andrzejewski (Ph.D. 2018), USA

Matthew Clemens (M.S. 2014, Ph.D. 2018), USA

Juror for Emanuel Tschopp (Universidade Novo de Lisboa, Ph.D. 2014), PORTUGAL