



IN MEMORIAM: OF LARRY DAVID WILSON (1940- 2024)

ELÍ GARCÍA-PADILLA

Foto: Vicente Mata Silva

Larry was the mentor, colleague, and friend of many herpetologists around the globe. With his near 500 written contributions to science, he is considered one of the most important researchers and contributors to the formal knowledge and conservation of the Mesoamerican Herpetofauna. I personally met him in Oaxaca during several field expeditions led by Vicente Mata-Silva and two of his students at UTEP. Together we explored the Sierra Madre de Oaxaca and Sierra Madre del Sur. In 2015, we published the paper entitled, "The Herpetofauna of Oaxaca: Composition, Distribution and Conservation Status" in the popular journal *Mesoamerican Herpetology* run by Louis W. Porras. In 2022, we published the actualization of the formal knowledge of the herpetofauna of this diverse Mexican state with the paper entitled: "A Reexamination of the Herpetofauna of Oaxaca, Mexico: Composition Update, Physiographic Distribution, and Conservation Commentary" in the journal *Zootaxa*. Also in 2022, we collaborated on a couple of important papers, one entitled: "The Amphibians and Reptiles of the Los Chimalapas Region, Isthmus of Tehuantepec, Oaxaca, Mexico: Composition, Distributional Categorization, Conservation Status, and Biodiversity Significance" and the second: "Biological and Cultural Diversity in the state of Oaxaca, Mexico: Strategies for Conservation among Indigenous Communities." Both were published in the journal *Revista Biología y Sociedad*. My last collaboration with him was the paper currently in press (*Revista Biología y Sociedad*) entitled: "Natural History and Conservation Status of *Crotalus pyrrhus* Cope, 1866 (Squamata: Viperidae) From Isla El Muerto, Gulf of California, México". To me it was a real undeserved honor to be a coauthor, a close friend, and student

of his. Larry was always happy to share his proven experience, knowledge, and friendship with his colleagues and collaborators. He always highlighted the necessity of producing more ethical and collaborative research. I still clearly remember one time when he told me in the field this epic phrase: "In science we must learn to build bridges and not walls."

According with his own biosketch, Dr. Wilson was born in Taylorville, Illinois, United States, and received his professional education at the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana (B.S. degree, 1962) and at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge (M.S. and Ph.D. degrees, 1965 and 1968, respectively). He spent a considerable time of his prolific career in Honduras, where he met his wife with whom he had two daughters. Larry was the senior editor of *Conservation of Mesoamerican Amphibians and Reptiles* (2010) and the co-author of seven of its chapters. His other books, all co-authored, include *The Snakes of Honduras* (two editions, 1982 and 1985), *Middle American Herpetology* (1988), *The Amphibians of Honduras* (2002), *Amphibians & Reptiles of the Bay Islands and Cayos Cochinos, Honduras* (2005), *The Amphibians and Reptiles of the Honduran Mosquitia* (2006), and *Guide to the Amphibians & Reptiles of Cusuco National Park, Honduras* (2008). He was also the co-author of 16 published entries in the Mexican Conservation Series dealing with the herpetofauna of the states of Michoacán, Oaxaca, Chiapas, Tamaulipas, Nayarit, Nuevo León, Jalisco, Puebla, Coahuila, Hidalgo, Veracruz, Querétaro, Tabasco, Guanajuato, Baja California Peninsula, as well as the tri-state Mexican Yucatan Peninsula. In addition, Larry was a co-author of several significant publications on the development

and extensive application of the EVS (Environmental Vulnerability Score) measure and on conservation issues related to the Mexican herpetofauna at the national level. He authored or co-authored the descriptions of 76 currently-recognized herpetofaunal species, and six species have been named in his honor, including the anuran *Craugastor lauraster*, the lizard *Norops wilsoni*, and the snakes *Oxybelis wilsoni*, *Myriopholis wilsoni*, and *Cerrophidion wilsoni*, as well as the coccidian parasite *Isospora wilsoni*. In 2005, he was designated a Distinguished Scholar in the Field of Herpetology at the Kendall Campus of Miami-Dade College by the then-campus president, Dr. Wasim Shomar. More recently, Larry became a Co-chair of the Taxonomic Board for the website Mesoamerican Herpetology.

but also due to his humane and ethical proceedings in his long life. He is still alive in our memories, through his vast work, and high quality contributions to the science of the study of life. We now have the commitment to reproduce his ethics, example of life, and philosophy of always prioritizing teamwork over individualism.

We will always remember Dr. Wilson, not only for his strong commitment and passion about the comprehension of the Mesoamerican herpetology,



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