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## S.W. Williston Diptera Research Fund

January 12, 2014

The S.W. Williston Diptera Research Fund is a Smithsonian Institution administered endowment fund established for the increase and diffusion of knowledge about Diptera. Samuel Wendell Williston (Fig. 1) was a great biologist, who made significant contributions to paleontology, entomology, medicine and education (Aldrich, 1918, 1919; Shor, 1971; Beckemeyer, 2009). He was the first native dipterist, the first to produce generic monographs of Nearctic Diptera, the first to curate and study the Diptera of the United States National Museum (USNM), and the first to make a contribution to that collection (his types of Nearctic Syrphidae, see, e.g., Fig. 2). In his own words, “The happiest hours of my life were those spent on the Diptera.” (Shor, 1971, p. 163). Thus, this man and his achievements epitomize what this fund was established to support.

The Williston Fund is administered by a committee of at least three members, two of whom (the majority) must be systematists actively working on Diptera, and one who must be a scientist affiliated with, but not necessarily employed by, the Smithsonian Institution (for example, a dipterist of the United States Department of Agriculture Systematic Entomology Laboratory (SEL)). The current committee consists of: Wayne Mathis, Chris Thompson, Gary Hevel, and Torsten Dikow.

While the income from the endowment is small (currently about US\$ 6,000 available annually), over the years the fund has supported the travel of graduate students and dipterists to the International Congresses of Dipterology, travel of students and researchers to the USNM Diptera Collection in Washington, DC, and field work.

The requirements for support are minimal: contact any of the committee members with a synopsis of what you need to increase and diffuse knowledge about Diptera. Summarize your research goals into a short proposal in PDF format (1–2 pages maximum) with a separate, itemized budget (anticipated transportation costs, *per diem* costs for lodging and food, and any other items). Proposals are reviewed annually in December, so submit by December 1st. Note that every awardee will need to comply with the rules of the Smithsonian Institution regarding travel and reimbursements, which require several forms to be filled out prior to any travel.

Contributions to the principal of the S.W. Williston Diptera Research Fund endowment are always welcome. For further information, please contact any member of the Committee.

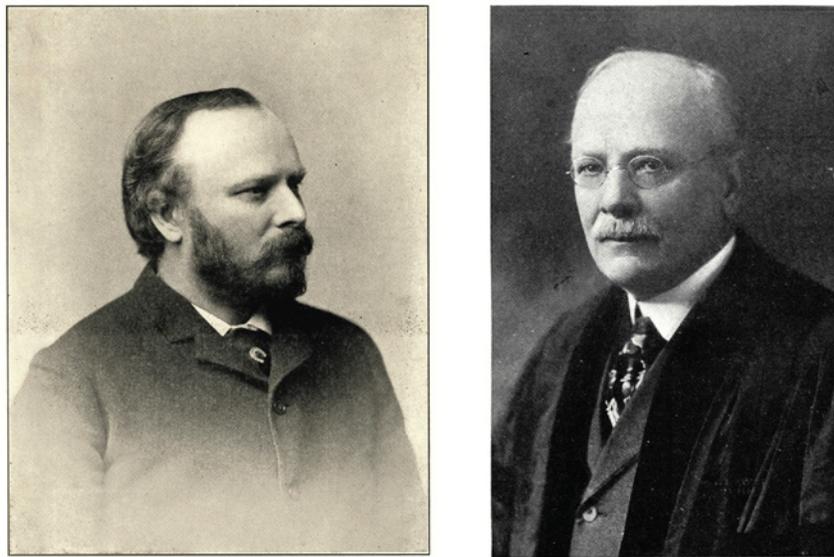
S.W. Williston Diptera Research Fund committee

### References

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**Figure 1:** S.W. Williston at two stages of his life. Left photo from [Aldrich \(1918, p. 29\)](#) and right photo from [Osborn \(1919\)](#).



**Figure 2:** Holotype of *Sphiximorpha loewii* (Williston, 1887) (Syrphidae: Eristalinae) originally described as *Ceria loewii* (see original description on [BHL](#)).

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