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CENOZOIC VERTEBRATES OF THE AMERICAS: PAPERS TO HONOR S. DAVID WEBB

Richard C. Hulbert Jr., Gary S. Morgan, and Jon A. Baskin, Editors

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PREFACE

The volume *CENOZOIC VERTEBRATES OF THE AMERICAS: PAPERS TO HONOR S. DAVID WEBB* was initiated as a tribute to Dave Webb, who spent 40 years as Curator of Vertebrate Paleontology at the Florida Museum of Natural History. The publication of this volume was originally meant to quickly follow Dave's retirement on 1 July 2003, but as with most projects of this magnitude, it inevitably took more time than anticipated.

The idea for a Webb volume was inspired during the early planning sessions leading up to the Webb retirement event that was sponsored by Bruce MacFadden and the Florida Museum of Natural History. This event, attended by more than 125 professional paleontologists, Dave's family and close friends, and the museum staff, was held at Powell Hall, Florida Museum's Exhibits and Public Programs facility, on the campus of the University of Florida during 9-10 May 2003. Festivities included a day of lectures by Dave's paleontological colleagues and a wonderful dinner party. Bruce also scheduled a sneak preview of the new fossil hall at Powell Hall to coincide with the celebration. It seemed appropriate to have this nearly completed exhibit open for the celebration since Dave played such an important role in its conceptual development.

The Webb volume had two separate beginnings. First, Gary S. Morgan and Jon A. Baskin developed the notion for a dedicated volume in early 2002. Unaware of their efforts, Richard Hulbert approached Bruce MacFadden with a similar idea. Bruce suggested that all four of them work together to produce a volume that would be published in the *Bulletin of the Florida Museum of Natural History*. This venue was particularly appealing since Dave and many of his students had previously published their research in the *Bulletin*.

The conspirators assembled a list of potential contributors, mostly picked from Dave's former students and close associates. It was decided that Gary Morgan would make the initial contacts and begin assembling the manuscripts. Altogether there were 23 contributions from 33 colleagues that were finally accepted for inclusion. Every paper was examined by at least two reviewers, and acceptance was based on their recommendations. Papers covered a wide variety of topics, including systematics, anatomy, biogeography, and paleoecology. There were two new fossil taxa described in the volume to honor Dave Webb and his contributions to vertebrate paleontology. Most papers centered on Florida and the southeastern United States, although several were based on faunas from the western United States, Central America, and South America.

Many people contributed to the production of the volume. Gary Morgan, Richard Hulbert, and Jon Baskin, all former students of Webb, served as guest editors. They were responsible for insuring that this incredible effort in Dave's honor met the high standards that the scientific community expected from the *Bulletin*.

We are particularly indebted to the authors of the papers and the more than 40 reviewers who insured scientific rigor for these contributions. We further thank Cathy Bester who worked so diligently to convert the manuscripts into publishable formats and the administration, faculty and staff of the Florida Museum of Natural History who provided both financial and professional support. We further acknowledge several anonymous contributors University of Florida Library and the Florida Paleontological Society, Inc. who financially contributed to the publication's production. I also personally thank all of those people who worked with me during the editorial and production phase to make this project a reality. I feel that it has been a great privilege to participate in this project, and I wish Dave my best as he pursues his new interests in his retirement years.

Richard Franz
Managing Editor,
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of Natural History