



Donald R. Davis

28 March, 1934 – 12 October, 2024

collector

scholar & prolific author

teacher/mentor

devoted father and husband

amateur astronomer,

archaeologist

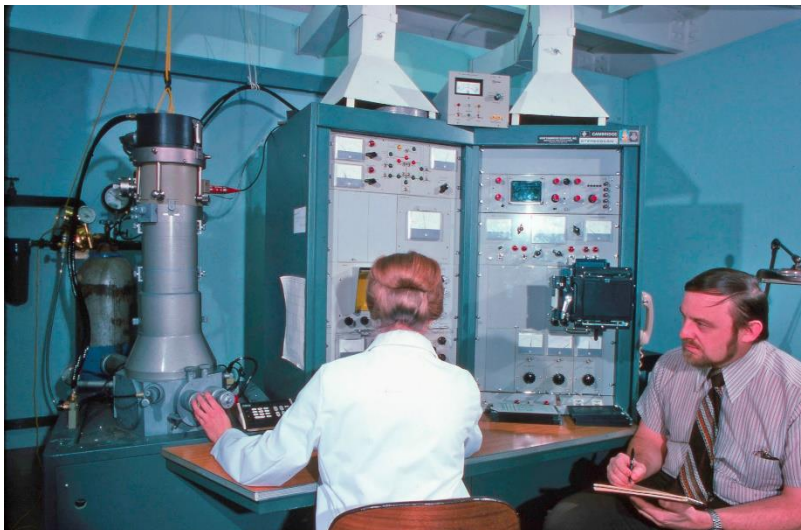
world traveler

adventurer and hiker

caver

administrator

athlete

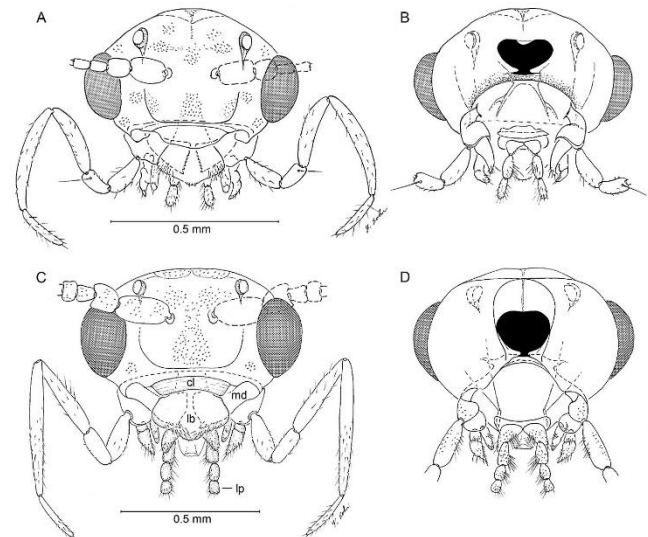
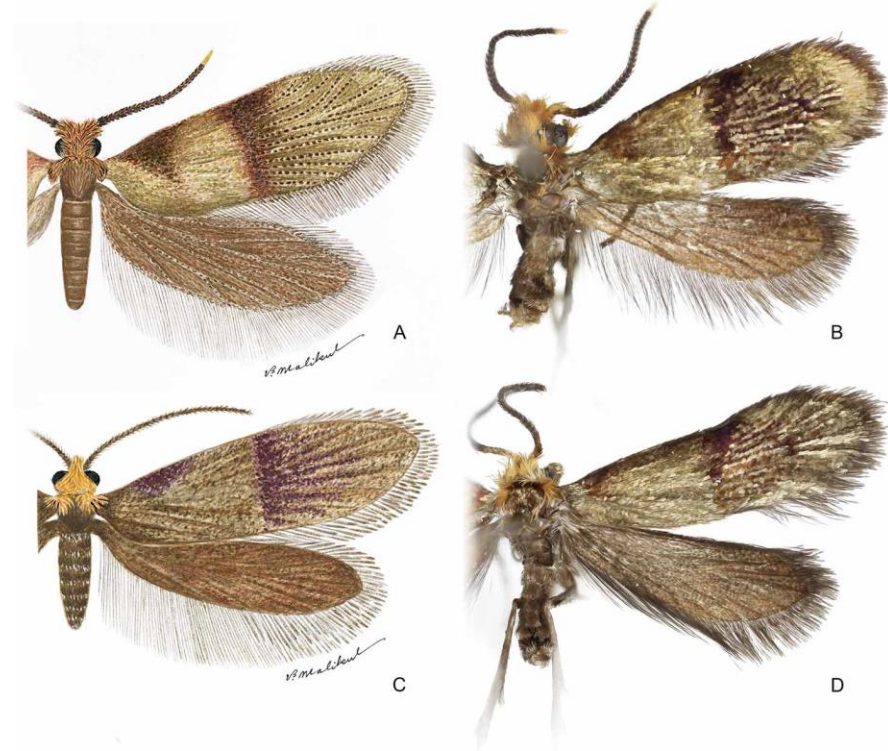




Don Davis, grew from his simple, self-taught beginnings on a farm on the outskirts of Oklahoma City, to one of the world's most productive, knowledgeable, and highly respected entomologists. His taxonomy, field work, and collaborations were global in scope—he traveled to some 50 countries and collected in more than 40 of these. Over his career, he published on over 30 moth families, which gave him special insight into the evolution and diversification of moths. He was the world authority on the biosystematics of many early diverging lineages of Lepidoptera: their phylogeny, fossil history, anatomy, and natural history—his wealth of publications and talks provided glimpses into the deep history of Earth past. Davis' detailed taxonomic works emphasized the study of whole-body preparations, all four life stages, life history, and molecular data—and set a high bar for the rest of lepidopterology. His monographs and other taxonomic publications were renowned for their rich collection of photographs, line drawings, scanning electron micrographs, and color renderings of adults. One of Don's greatest and underappreciated gifts, to biosystematics and the future, will be his collections which number in the hundreds of thousands from across the planet.

Publications

- >200 peer-reviewed pubs
- another 30-40 smaller non-peer reviewed efforts
- Nearly half single authored
- Over 150 co-authors, including many students and early career scientists
- Mignon and Steven both co-authors





- c.10 monographic treatments
- Treated some 30 families
- Described 3 new families
- Important works of fossil Lepidoptera
- Brought morphology, biology, biogeography to molecular phylogenies



Generic Revision of the Opostegidae,
with a Synoptic Catalog
of the World's Species
(Lepidoptera: Nepticuloidea)

Biology and Systematics
of *Greya* Busck and
Tetragma, new genus
(Lepidoptera: Prodoxidae)

DONALD R. DAVIS,
OLLE PELLMYR,
and
JOHN N. THOMPSON

A Revision of the
North American Moths of the
Superfamily Eriocranioidea
with the Proposal of a New Family,
Acanthopteroctetidae (Lepidoptera)

Generic Revision of the Opostegidae,
with a Synoptic Catalog
of the World's Species
(Lepidoptera: Nepticuloidea)

DONALD R. DAVIS

SMITHSONIAN CONTRIBUTIONS TO ZOOLOGY • NUMBER 478

Smithsonian
Scholarly Press

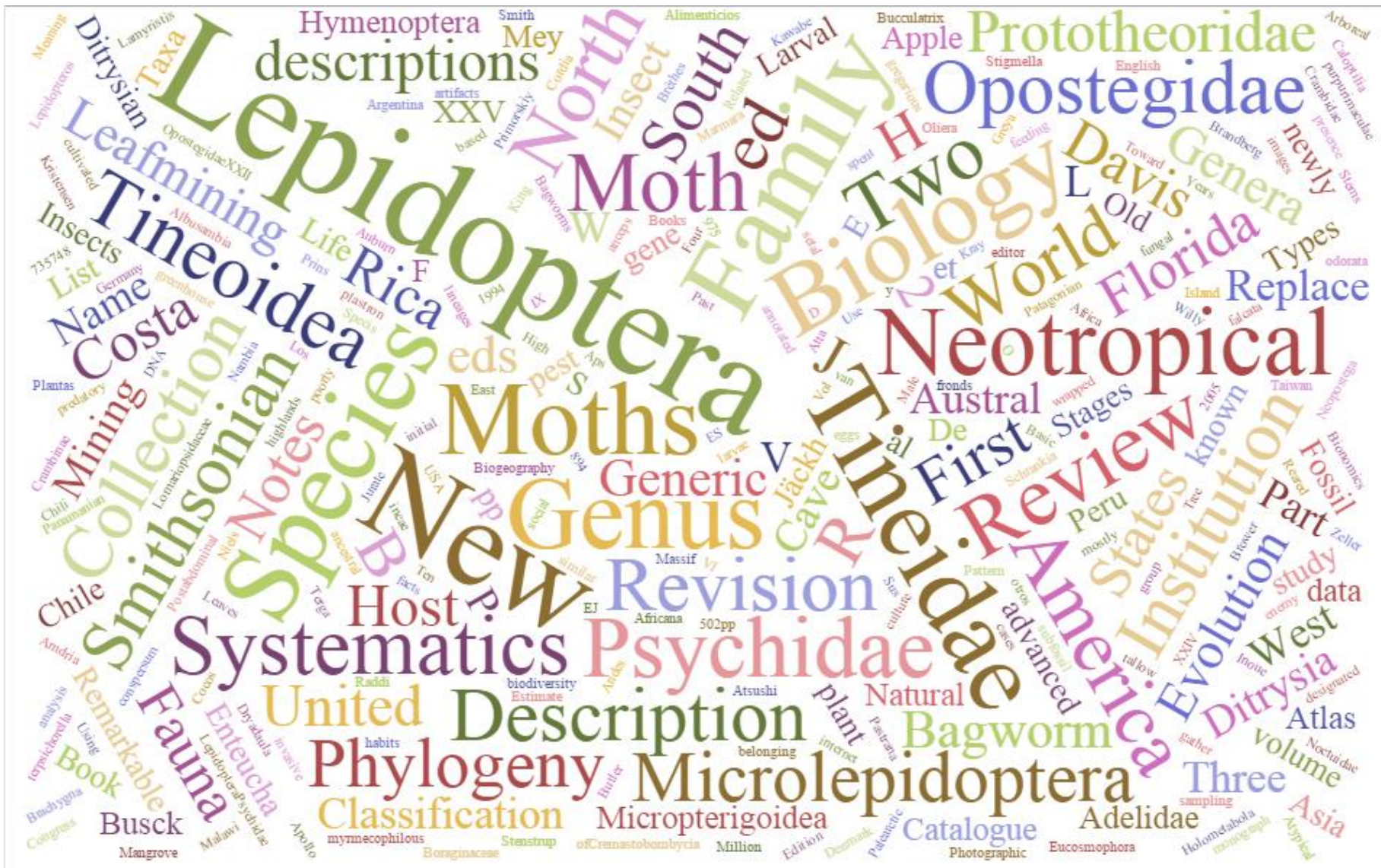
SMITHSONIAN CONTRIBUTIONS TO ZOOLOGY • NUMBER 656



A Revision of the Family
Adelidae of the
Western Hemisphere
(Lepidoptera: Adeloidea)

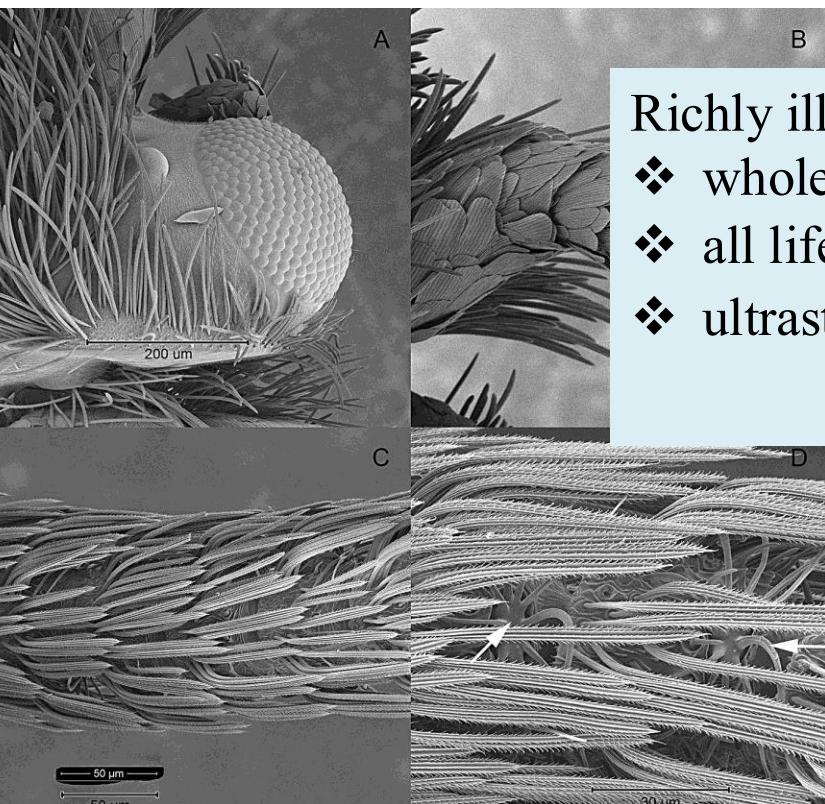
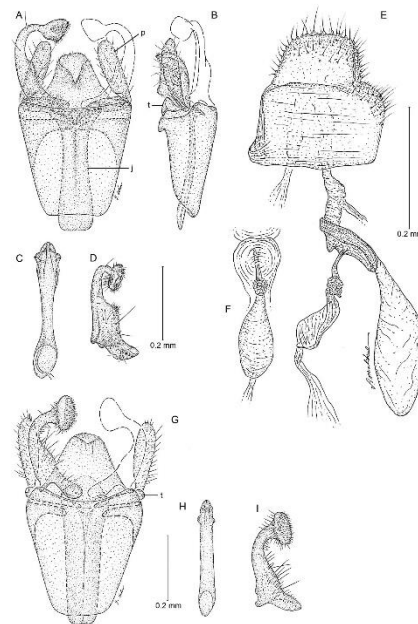
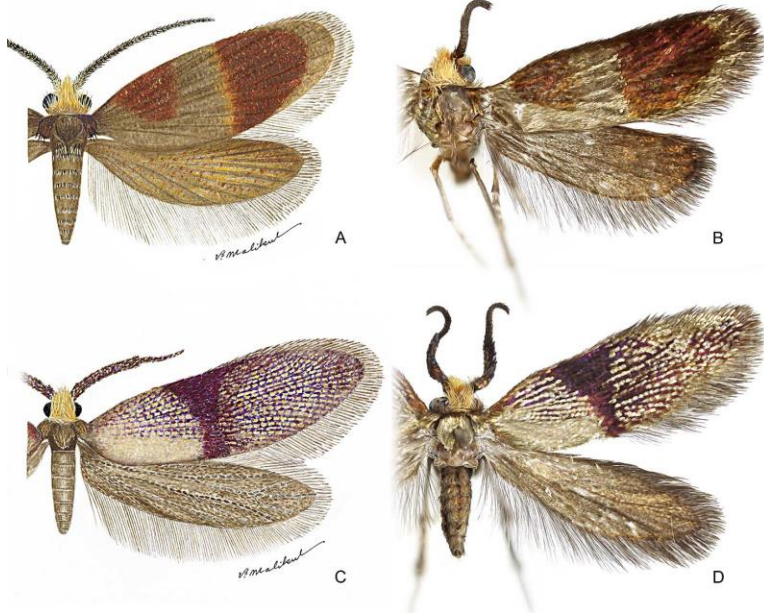
Donald R. Davis
and
Matthew J. Medeiros

Title Words



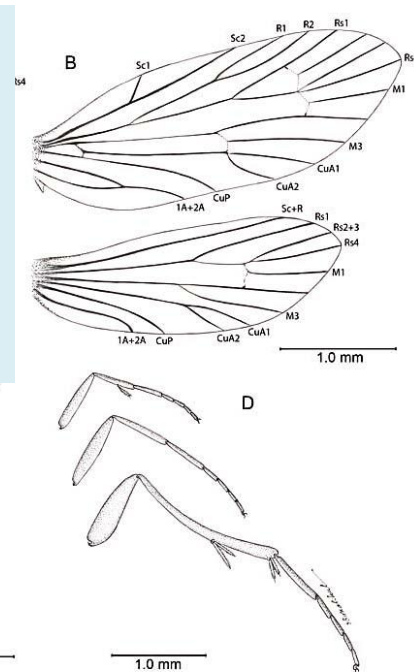
A word cloud of insect orders and suborders. The most prominent words are 'Tineidae' and 'Gracillariidae' in large green font. Other large words include 'Psychidae' (green), 'Acrolophidae' (orange), 'Prodoxidae' (red), 'Heliozelidae' (purple), 'Eriocraniidae' (yellow), and 'Opostegidae' (light green). Smaller words include 'Lyonetiidae' (pink), 'Tineoidea' (blue), 'Palaeosetidae' (orange), 'Palaepharidae' (purple), 'Eriocottidae' (dark blue), 'Micropterigidae' (light green), 'Andesianidae' (dark blue), 'Epipyropidae' (purple), 'Adelidae' (blue), 'Protetheoridae' (green), 'Tineomorphica' (blue), 'Zygoseptidae' (blue), 'Yponomeutidae' (blue), 'Alecantariidae' (red), 'Gastropodidae' (red), 'Ditrysa' (red), 'Crambidae' (blue), 'Balceridae' (blue), 'Incurvarioidea' (blue), 'Ungulicidae' (blue), 'Hepialidae' (blue), 'Megaloptera' (purple), and 'Blastobezidae' (blue). The words are arranged in a circular pattern, with some overlapping.

- * 36 families
- * three of which he recognized!: Acanthopteroctetidae, Andesianidae, and Palaephatidae
- * several higher-level studies



Richly illustrated publications

- ❖ whole body anatomy
- ❖ all life stages
- ❖ ultrastructure







Don Davis setting up a light trap in Taiwan, 1980

The sum of Don's contribution to lepidopterology, entomology, and biodiversity science have been exceptional and will be precious gift to posterity. The full significance of his publications and other scientific contributions will not be known for decades or more as the accomplishments of his mentees are still coming to fruition. His 62 binders will be tapped for revisionary studies long into the future. The hundreds of thousands of moths that he collected from around the world will be used by lepidopterists for centuries to come. These will be an unsurpassable legacy contribution given that many of his collecting sites have since been lost to agriculture and development, permitting has become a significant impediment to scientific collecting, and because the impacts of climate change are accelerating, threatening nature's biodiversity even across remote, pristine wildlands. Don Davis' stature as a biosystematist will be waxing for centuries to come.

