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In Memoriam: Michael C. Thomas
May 5, 1948–October 4, 2019

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Abstract. We honor the life and accomplishments of Michael C. Thomas with a short narrative of his professional life along with appendices listing his scientific artwork, bibliography and patronyms. This paper is the first of a Festschrift with contributed remembrances and separate papers honoring him with additional patronyms.

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Introduction

This and the following set of papers published in *Insecta Mundi* are dedicated to Michael C. Thomas, as tribute and thanks from a small number of those he mentored or assisted throughout his life. Mike's contributions to the study of beetles and as a member of the *Insecta Mundi* Editorial Board, editing and producing the journal for 30 years, were deemed significant enough to allow a paper outside our normal guidelines. The following pages highlight the life and accomplishments of Michael C. Thomas.

Michael Charles Thomas, PhD

May 5, 1948–October 4, 2019

Early years

Michael Charles Thomas (known to almost everyone who knew him as Mike) was born in Miami, FL, in 1948. His father (who worked for an airline) and mother were Charles and June. Mike lived in Miami until he was 20 except for a year spent on Guam. In 1966, he graduated from South Miami High School, and in 1968 from Miami-Dade Junior College South Campus with an Associate of Arts degree in Fine Arts. Then he attended the University of South Florida for two years, graduating in December 1970 with a Bachelor of Arts in Visual Arts, specializing in intaglio printmaking. In that month, he married his fellow-student, Sheila McCuiston, who of course had a passion for the arts. The couple subsequently had two daughters, Andrea and Erin.

Mike worked from early 1971 until late 1977 as a newspaper reporter and editor: 1971–1972 for the Punta Gorda Daily Herald-News, Punta Gorda, FL; 1972–1977 for the Orlando Sentinel-Star, Orlando, FL. In 1974 he was living in Vero Beach while working for the Orlando Sentinel-Star, when he heard that an entomologist with an interest in beetles had been hired at the Florida Department of Health's Entomological Research Center in Vero Beach [later renamed Florida Medical Entomology Laboratory and then transferred administratively to the University of Florida], Mike visited the Center and met Dr. Howard Frank where the two talked for some time. Howard quickly realized that Mike was enthusiastic, in part because of an appreciation for insects (acquired as a Boy Scout in Miami). Mike suggested that the two go collecting insects that coming weekend and this proved to

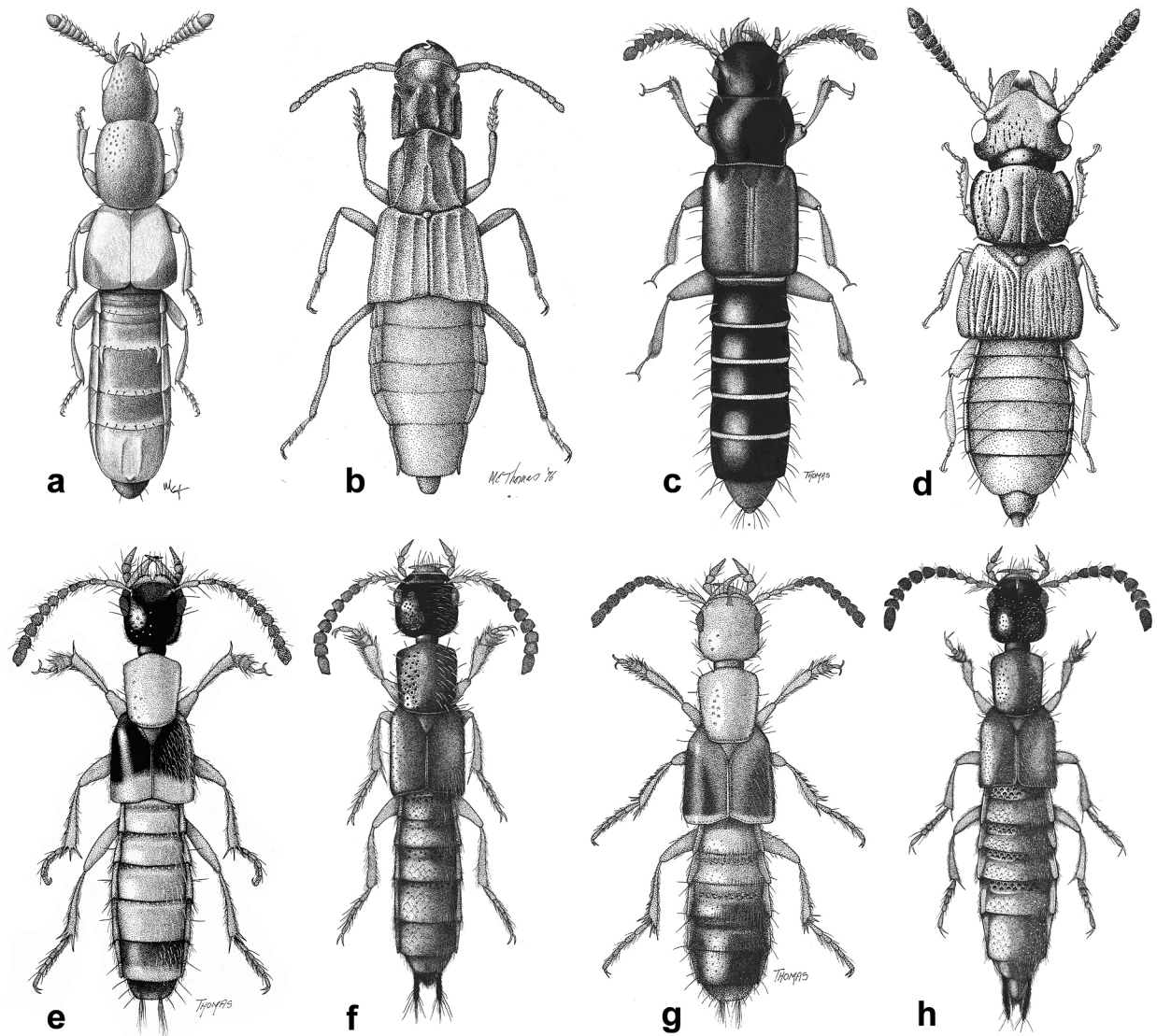


Figure 1. Staphylinidae art by Mike Thomas. **a)** *Charoxus spinifer* Frank (Frank and Thomas 1997). **b)** *Myrmecosaurus ferrugineus* Bruch (Frank and Thomas 1981a). **c)** *Tannea tenella* (Erichson) (Frank and Thomas 1991, published as *Nacaeus tenellus*). **d)** *Oxytelus incisus* Motschulsky (Frank and Thomas 1981b). **e)** *Neobisnius terminalis* (LeConte) (Frank 1981). **f)** *Neobisnius brasiliensis* Wendeler (Frank 1981). **g)** *Neobisnius semirufus* Bernhauer (Frank 1981). **h)** *Neobisnius edznai* Frank (Frank 1981).

be the first of many more weekend collecting trips including several to Miami-Dade County and the Florida Keys. They were allowed to use the workshop with its power tools at the Entomological Research Center on weekends to build insect cabinets with purchased materials. The families also became close friends because Howard had three daughters a few years older than Mike's two. So, some of these trips involved both families including stays in Florida City, Key Largo, and camping at Highlands Hammock State Park on a Fourth of July weekend.

In November 1977, Mike and his family moved from Vero Beach to Ocala, so that Mike could pursue a higher degree in entomology at the University of Florida in Gainesville. For employment there, Mike joined the University of Florida's Division of Information and Publications Services as an Information Specialist. So now, with Mike's home in Ocala, Howard would drive there on a Friday evening and the two would collect insects in northern Florida the following day.

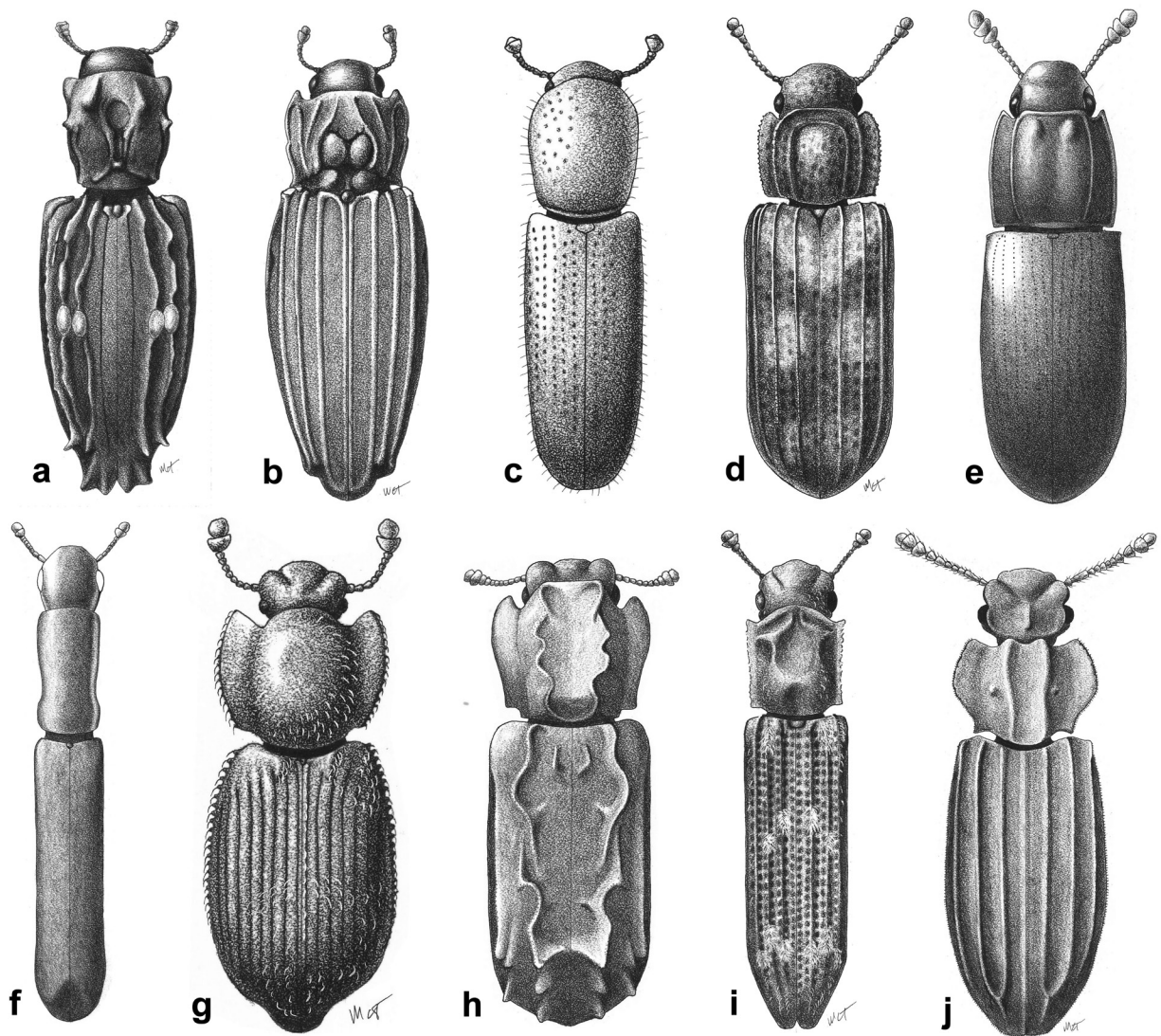


Figure 2. Mike Thomas art from Stephan (1989), **a–c**) Bothrideridae and **d–j**) Zopheridae (Colydiinae). **a**) *Lithophorus ornatus* Arrow. **b**) *Prolyctus exaratus* (Melsheimer). **c**) *Oxylaemus americanus* LeConte. **d**) *Bitoma quadriguttata* (Say). **e**) *Aulonium parallelopipedum* (Say). **f**) *Nematidium filiforme* LeConte. **g**) *Coxelus serratus* Horn. **h**) *Denophloeus nosodermoides* (Horn). **i**) *Eudesma undulata* (Melsheimer). **j**) *Rhagoderma costata* Horn.

In early 1979, Mike entered graduate school and began classes and research toward his Master of Science degree, with Robert Woodruff the coleopterist at the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Plant Industry (FDACS-DPI), which owns and curates the Florida State Collection of Arthropods (FSCA), as his committee chairman and Howard Frank, professor of the Department of Entomology and Nematology, University of Florida, as a committee member. The subject of his thesis was the genus *Placonotus* MacLeay (Thomas 1984a). Insect-collecting trips continued on occasional weekends. It is noteworthy that the subjects of Mike's M.S. (and later PhD) research were bark beetles, for he and Howard spent time on most of their collecting trips hunting for beetles under loose bark, Howard for Staphylinidae and Mike for Cucujoidea. Together they published several articles on Staphylinidae illustrated by Mike's original drawings, a demonstration of his artistic skill (Frank and Thomas 1981a–b, 1984a–d; also see Frank 1979, 1981; Frank and Kanamitsu 1987; Stephan 1989). A selection of Mike's beetle artwork is reproduced here (Fig. 1–4, 5c).

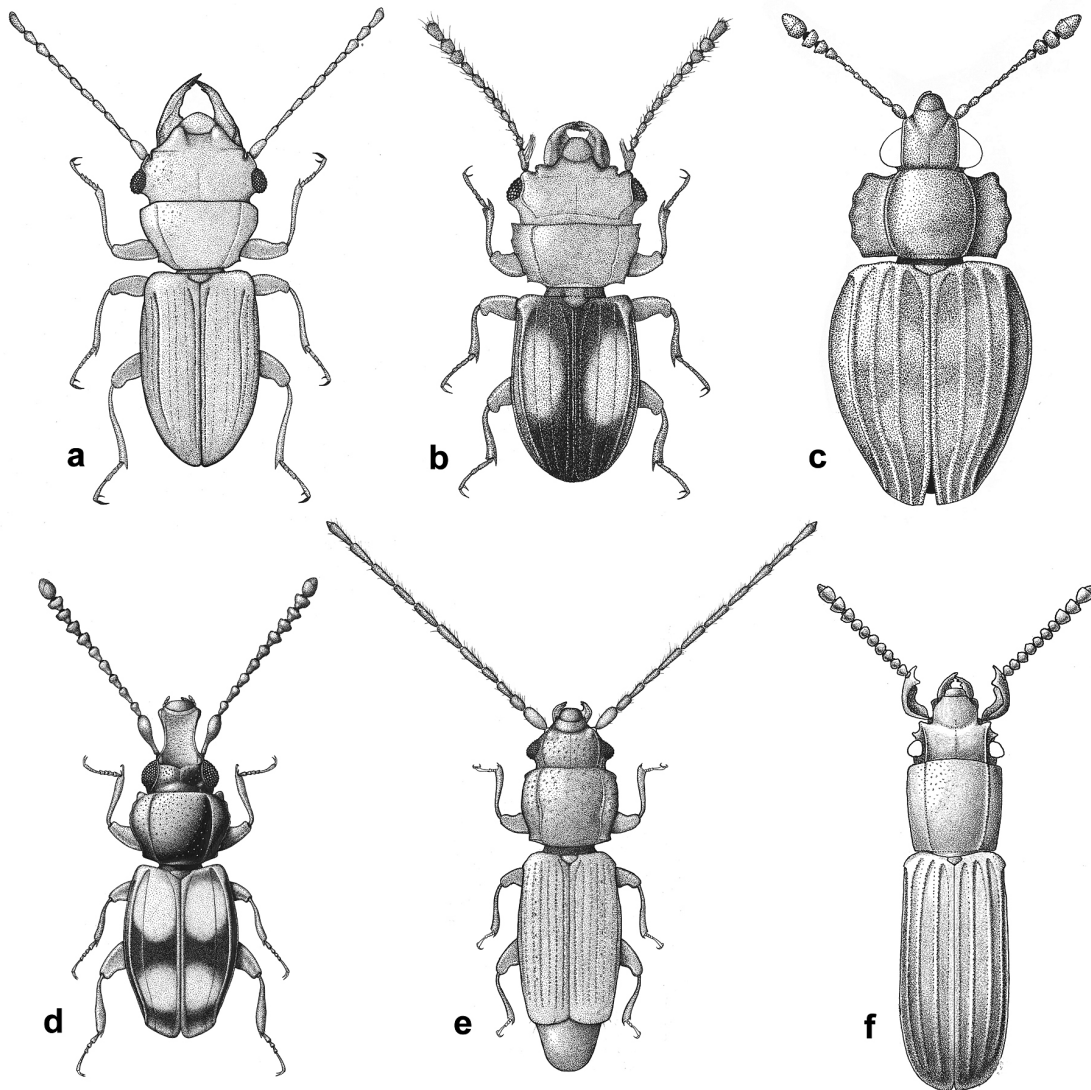


Figure 3. Art from Mike Thomas's taxonomic specialties, Laemophloeidae. **a)** *Charaphloeus bituberculatus* (Reitter) (Thomas 1993). **b)** *Laemophloeus megacephalus* Grouvelle (Thomas 1993). **c)** *Odontophloeus crybetes* Thomas (Thomas 1984c). **d)** *Metaxyphloeus zeus* Thomas (Thomas 1984b). **e)** *Placonotus modestus* (Say) (Thomas 1984a). **f)** *Dysmerus basalis* Casey (Thomas 1993).

Mike wanted to continue toward a PhD at the University of Florida, and he assembled his committee as Robert Woodruff, Howard Frank, Dale Habeck, Reece Sailer and Jon Reiskind. The subject was “The flat bark beetles of Florida” and his dissertation was completed in 1985 (Thomas 1993). Meanwhile, he was invited to participate in an expedition of the Florida Museum of Natural History to the southern mountains of Haiti for three weeks in May 1984. The focus of that expedition was the high mountains where the climate is cool and often wet, where the usual amenities of an abandoned logging camp were few. In Mike's words: “Actually, there were no amenities - no electricity, no running water, no indoor plumbing...or outdoor plumbing for that matter. The rats were friendly, though.” Many unusual insects were collected.

With his new PhD, he did what all graduates do and looked for a job. After graduation in 1985, Mike worked briefly with Gary Buckingham on biological control of an invasive aquatic weed, *Hydrilla verticillata* (L.f.) Royle (Hydrocharitaceae) conducting host preference experiments with *Hydrellia pakistanae* Deonier (Diptera: Ephydriidae) (Buckingham et al. 1989).

In 1986, he was offered a job as the Taxonomic Entomologist and Curator of the Insect Collection for the Plant Industries Division of the West Virginia Department of Agriculture. He and his family moved to the Charleston area and lived in hilly terrain for the first time. He spent a good part of his time collecting and documenting the Cerambycidae of West Virginia, and of course he expanded the collections and knowledge. He seemed to enjoy his time there, but meanwhile Robert Woodruff had retired from the coleopterist position with the Division of Plant Industry in Florida and Mike applied for Bob's former job. He got it, and in July 1988, less than two years from the time he left Gainesville, he returned as a Taxonomic Entomologist responsible for the curation and identification of Coleoptera (beetles) and Orthoptera (crickets and grasshoppers) for FDACS-DPI at the FSCA.

Mike soon realized that his new job was a lot of work. Both he and Howard Frank were asked by Ross Arnett and Bob Woodruff to serve on the editorial committee of the journal *Insecta Mundi*. Mike was a valuable asset because he had learned the internet code HTML (hypertext markup language) to create webpages and knew how to format journal pages, which he began to do for *Insecta Mundi*. One of Mike's duties was to identify beetle and orthopteran specimens submitted for identification by plant inspectors and others on behalf of the Division of Plant Industry.

Entomological Career

After his two-year stint gaining agricultural and museum experience in West Virginia, Mike returned to Florida in July 1988 and continued his interests in art, insect identification, research, publication, and museum work, working for FDACS-DPI. In September 1991, he was appointed to the graduate faculty of the University of Florida Graduate School, subsequently serving as a committee member or chairman for several graduate students. In April 1992, he was appointed as Head Curator of the FSCA. In 1993, Mike became the Chief Entomologist and Administrator of the entire Entomology section of FDACS-DPI, replacing the retiring Harold Denmark. Mike held the position until retirement in 2013.

Professional Contributions

Working regulatory entomology at FDACS-DPI, there is the potential to perform foundational research for insect identification, and to put that knowledge to productive use. Mike was an expert with all aspects of the business, from museum work with unknown specimens and identification research to the ability to answer any question posed about the insect just identified. His regulatory career saw many exotic beetles arrive in Florida (e.g., *Metamasius callizona* (Chevrolat), *Aethina tumida* Murray, and *Myllocerus undecimpustulatus undatus* Marshall; respectively the Mexican bromeliad weevil, the small hive beetle, and the Sri Lankan weevil), as well as several fruit fly eradication programs including the massive Mediterranean fruit fly eradications in the late 1990s-early 2000s, and the beginning of the giant African land snail eradication program which started in 2011 and is nearing completion.

Mike's work at FDACS-DPI was primarily administrative and regulatory, but he made many additional contributions to the scientific community, some of which are discussed below. For all of his accomplishments, Mike was awarded the Edward W. Berger Award for sustained scientific contributions to FDACS Regulatory work. This is a once-in-a-lifetime award and the greatest honor a scientist can receive from FDACS-DPI.

Contributions to Science

Illustrations for colleagues. Mike was a talented artist. Before digital technologies, Mike illustrated his own papers, as well as assisted colleagues by providing artwork for them. The most notable are the staphylinid works for J. Howard Frank (Frank 1979, 1981; Frank and Kanamitsu 1987) and those in Stephan (1989), in which Mike created all habitus images. As digital photographic technologies developed, Mike used more of his photographic skills helping others and less of his drawing talents.

Center for Systematic Entomology (CSE). The CSE functions as a non-profit organization that supports the FSCA and systematic entomology. Soon after the CSE was founded, Mike returned to Florida and became an active member on the board of directors, serving in varied capacities for most of his career.

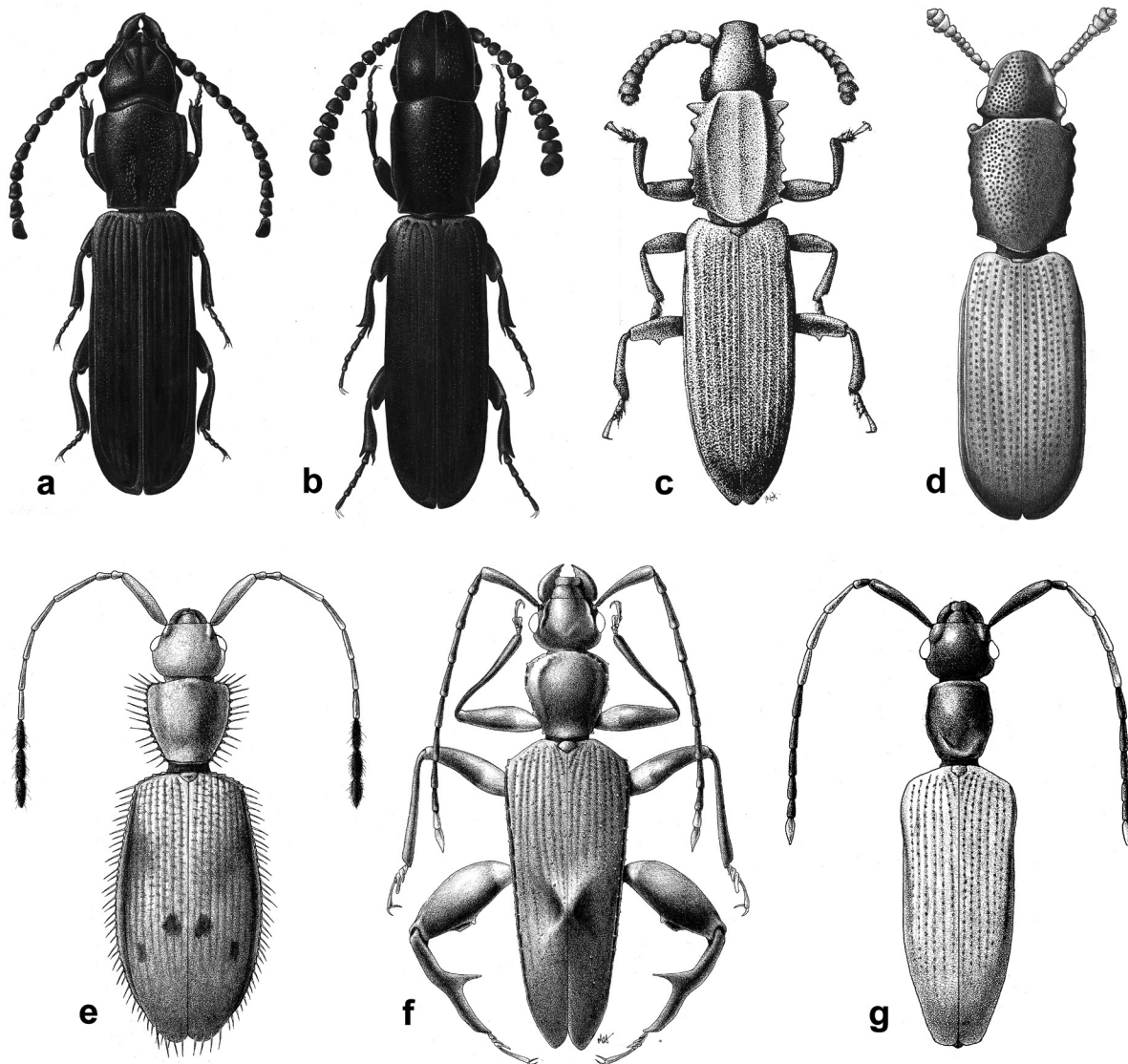


Figure 4. Art from Mike Thomas's taxonomic specialties, **a-b)** Passandridae and **c-g)** Silvanidae. **a)** *Catogenus rufus* (Fabricius) (Thomas 1993). **b)** *Taphrosclidia linearis* (LeConte) (Thomas 1993). **c)** *Oryzaephilus acuminatus* Halstead (Thomas and Woodruff 1984). **d)** *Nausibius repandus* LeConte (Thomas 1993). **e)** *Telephanus allaudi* Grouvelle (Thomas 1992). **f)** *Telephanus spinosus* Grouvelle (Thomas 1992). **g)** *Telephanus gracilis* Schauffus (Thomas 1992).

FSCA website. Mike was an innovator, loving new photographic and information technologies. With his understanding of the publication process and the importance of getting information out to people, in the early 1990s, he saw the growing value of the internet. Mike was part of the group to develop FDACS-DPI's internet capabilities and website. He and Bruce Sutton created and maintained the FSCA website for almost 20 years. FDACS-DPI recently took over management of the FSCA website, which has been re-released to conform with the new technological parameters, departmental requirements, and federal regulations.

Insecta Mundi production. Although *Insecta Mundi* was created primarily by Ross H. Arnett, Jr., and Robert E. Woodruff, Mike is presented as a member of the first Editorial Board on the cover of the 1985, Volume 1, Issue 1, and was part of the journal from its beginning. In 1987, Volume 2, Mike became head editor for the journal,

managing manuscript flow and completion. He remained active in various editorial roles (head editor, review editor, production editor, layout, etc.) for 30 years. In 2006, when the CSE and *Insecta Mundi* hit a financial crisis, the journal needed to be reformed. Mike and the rest of the Editorial Board suggested, and the CSE Board of Directors approved, the transformation of *Insecta Mundi* from a print-only journal into a more digital, openly accessible journal. In 2012, when the International Commission of Zoological Nomenclature ruled that electronic-only publications were valid if they met certain conditions, *Insecta Mundi* was already compliant, largely due to the efforts of Mike and Paul Skelley. After retirement, Mike stepped back from many roles to work on his own publications. The tasks Mike did are now performed by a team of people.

Books. Mike also helped others edit, layout and publish various large works. With Ross Arnett, he greatly assisted production of *American Insects*, Second Edition (Arnett 2000). With Robert Woodruff, he greatly assisted in creating the Checklist of the Insects of Grenada (Woodruff et al. 1998), being listed as a co-author. For other authors, he assisted with publishing their contributions in the *Arthropods of Florida and Neighboring Land Areas* and the *Occasional papers of the Florida State Collection of Arthropods*. Most notable of these are Stephan (1989), Peck (2005), and Bright (2019).

For many, Mike's most notable book is *American Beetles*, a project with Ross Arnett to create a single source to identify North American beetles to family and genus, with a paragraph for each genus citing relevant literature to species identification, immatures, and other topics. It is a portal for amateur and professional entomologists into all aspects of beetles in the region. Ross and Mike enlisted assistance from over 60 specialists to write chapters on their respective families, with Ross as a managing editor and Mike as a production editor. Ross died before Volume 1 (Arnett and Thomas 2001) could be completed, leaving Mike to shoulder the load. At that point, several contributing authors stepped up to manage different aspects of the book's creation, which was completed a year later (Arnett et al. 2002). This book has become a 'must have' reference for those interested in Coleoptera, and after 20 years it is still in high demand. Around the time of Mike's passing, discussions were initiated to create an updated Second Edition of *American Beetles* by The Coleopterists Society. Where the First Edition is dedicated to Ross and his wife Mary, the Second Edition will be dedicated to Mike.

Florida, the Caribbean, and Bolivia. Mike was interested in all beetles around the world, as well as insects in general, but he had particular interests in the beetles of Florida and the Caribbean. With Robert H. Turnbow, Jr. (Fig. 5a), he made many trips to multiple islands and co-authored beetle checklists of the Bahamas (Turnbow and Thomas 2008) and the Cayman Islands (Thomas et al. 2013).

Mike also assisted others in creating beetle lists for the region: Florida (Peck and Thomas 1998), Grenada (Woodruff et al. 1998), Tobago (Peck et al. 2002), Dominica (Peck 2006), Cuba (Peck 2005), Barbados (Peck



Figure 5. Mike Thomas in the field collecting with cerambycid researchers. **a)** Cabo Rojo, Dominican Republic May 1992, Mike Thomas and Robert Turnbow. **b)** Santa Cruz, Bolivia 2000, Byrd Dozier, Mike Thomas, Roy Morris, and Jim Wappes. **c)** *Derancistrus scabrosus* (Gahan) (Cerambycidae) (Thomas 1977).

2009a), the Lesser Antilles (Peck 2009b, 2016), St. Lucia (Peck 2009c), and the Guadeloupe Archipelago (Peck et al. 2014).

Mike made several expeditions to Bolivia to assist James Wappes' work on the Cerambycidae of Bolivia (Fig. 5b; e.g. Wappes et al. 2006, 2009, 2011, Wappes and Ledezma Arias 2016). Specimens from the many expeditions of Mike, Robert Turnbow, Robert Woodruff, James Wappes, and others, are deposited in the FSCA, which has one of the world's most extensive and diverse holdings of materials from those regions.

Revisionary works. Mike was a world specialist on the flat bark beetles, an old common name for members of the families Laemophloeidae, Silvanidae, Passandridae and Cucujidae. During his career, Mike published over 140 scientific works (Appendix 1), including major revisionary works for multiple genera, describing 17 new genera and 77 new species (Appendix 2). For his expertise, he was sought by many colleagues to work on special projects or identify materials in their institutions. For regulatory identifications, entomologists working for domestic and foreign governmental agencies consulted Mike because some members of these families are stored product pests.

Post retirement. Mike retired from his regulatory work in 2013, remaining active curating beetles in the FSCA as a Resident Research Associate, publishing revisionary works on flat bark beetles, editing *Insect Mundi*, and assisting others up to the time he fell ill. He continued with the same activities he performed on the job. Mike once claimed to have no hobbies. However, a hobby is defined as something done for pleasure. For someone with no hobbies he gained much pleasure from the time spent with his family, computers, photography, illustrations, and of course with beetles and insects in general.

Celebration of Life

Mike was loved and respected by all. The taxonomic community shows their respect for a person by naming a genus or species for them. Mike currently has four generic and 43 species patronyms (Appendix 3). After his passing, notes were received from various individuals recounting stories of Mike and how he affected their lives (Appendix 4). Mike was a blessed individual in his family life and being able to meld his interests for art-work, insects, and publications into a professional career. His guidance and willingness to help others pursue their dreams influenced many and will be missed. Mike's life is a testament to the accomplishments that can be achieved if one is unwavering in the pursuit of their passions.

Acknowledgments

We thank all the coleopterists, entomologists, and family members who provided information and stories while compiling this Festschrift which is the result of many peoples' efforts. First, we thank the following authors who contributed papers honoring Mike: Krystal Ashman (FDACS-DPI, Gainesville, FL, USA), Joe Eger (Florida State Collection of Arthropods, Gainesville, FL, USA), Héctor Gasca-Álvarez (Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia, Tunja, Boyacá, Colombia), David Halstead (Old Windsor, Berkshire, UK), Oliver Keller (University of Florida, Gainesville, FL, USA), John Leavengood, Jr. (USDA APHIS PPQ, Tampa, FL, USA), Weston Opitz (Florida State Collection of Arthropods, Gainesville, FL, USA), Gareth Powell (Brigham Young University, Provo, UT, USA), Jacques Rifkind (Associate, California State Collection of Arthropods, Sacramento, CA, USA), Edward Riley (Texas A&M University, College Station, TX, USA), Kyle Schnepf (FDACS-DPI, Gainesville, FL, USA), Adam Ślipiński (Australian National Insect Collection, CSIRO, Canberra, ACT, Australia), Trevor Smith (FDACS-DPI, Gainesville, FL, USA), and William Tang (USDA APHIS PPQ, Miami, FL, USA). In addition to our own remembrances, we thank the following for their kind words: Andrew Cline (California Department of Food and Agriculture, Sacramento, CA, USA), Laura Miller (West Virginia Department of Agriculture, Charleston, WV, USA), Trevor Smith (FDACS-DPI, Gainesville, FL, USA), and Robert Woodruff (Emeritus, FDACS-DPI, FL, USA). For presubmission reviews of this Memoriam paper, we thank Trevor Smith (FDACS-DPI, Gainesville, FL, USA), Robert Woodruff (Emeritus, FDACS-DPI, FL, USA), and all of those acknowledged as reviewers in the contributed works of the Festschrift. We thank the following for Review Editing the contributed papers: M. 'Zee' Ahmed (FDACS-FSCA, Gainesville, FL, USA), Adam Brunke (Canadian National Collection of Insects, Ottawa, ON, Canada), Oliver Keller (University of Florida, Gainesville, FL, USA), MJ Paulsen (University of

Nebraska State Museum, Lincoln, NE, USA), David Plotkin (University of Florida, Gainesville, FL, USA), Gareth Powell (Brigham Young University, Provo, UT, USA), and Kyle Schnepf (FDACS-FSCA, Gainesville, FL, USA). For years of service to *Insecta Mundi* and their assistance with this Festschrift, we thank David Plotkin (Chief Editor: University of Florida, Gainesville, FL, USA), Robert Forsyth (Layout Editor: Kamloops, BC, Canada) and Gino Nearn (CSE WebMaster: USDA APHIS PPQ, Washington, DC, USA). We thank the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Plant Industry for their support of this work. Mostly we thank Mike, who enthusiastically influenced so many people in so many positive ways.

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Appendix 1. Bibliography for Michael C. Thomas

References listed below are Mike's primary scientific and worldwide web publications listed in chronological order. Mike was prolific, some articles may have been missed in our searches. Work-related regulatory reports or internal publications are not listed.

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Worldwide Web Publications and Web Pages

Unlike primary published literature listed above, a major problem with all web-based resources is that links can be lost or files removed from sites. When the internet was young, the consensus was that sites would be available and archived by hosting institutions, like books in a library. This is not true anymore. In addition, many web publications are being regularly revised or upgraded to meet current standards and are no longer the same as they were when originally posted. This list illustrates Mike's productivity and diversity in web-based outreach. We are sure there are more web-based contributions of Mike's that have been overlooked or were unavailable at the time we compiled this list.

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2. **Thomas MC. 1999.** A preliminary checklist of the flat bark beetles of the World (Cucujidae (s. str.), Laemophloeidae, Passandridae, Silvanidae). <http://www.fsca-dpi.org/Coleoptera/Mike/chklist.htm> (Accessed December 31, 2019; inaccessible September 28, 2020)
3. **Thomas MC. 1999.** Small hive beetle *Aethina tumida* Murray (Coleoptera: Nitidulidae). Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Plant Industry, Pest Alert, DACS-P-01663 (updated 2016): 1–2. https://www.fdacs.gov/content/download/66177/file/small_hive_beetle.pdf (Accessed September 28, 2020)
4. **Frank JH, Thomas MC. 1999.** Rove beetles of the world. EDIS IN271. (updated 2019). [republishing of Featured Creatures EENY 114] <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/in271> (Accessed September 28, 2020)
5. **Frank JH, Thomas MC. 1999.** Rove beetles of Florida EDIS IN272 (updated 2019). [republishing of Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Plant Industry, Entomology Circular 343, republished as Featured Creatures EENY 115] <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/in272> (Accessed September 28, 2020)
6. **Thomas MC. 2003.** An illustrated atlas of the Laemophloeidae genera of the World (Coleoptera). <http://www.fsca-dpi.org/Coleoptera/Mike/LaemophloeidaeLink.html> (Accessed December 31, 2019; inaccessible September 28, 2020)
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10. **Thomas MC, Hill S, Morris RF II, Nearns EH. 2005.** The Cerambycidae of Florida. <http://www.fsca-dpi.org/Coleoptera/Mike/FloridaCerambycids/openingpage.htm> (Accessed December 31, 2019; inaccessible September 28, 2020)
11. **Thomas MC. 2005.** *Mylocherus undatus* Marshall, a weevil new to the Western Hemisphere. Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Plant Industry, Pest Alert, DACS-P-01635: 1–3. <https://www.fdacs.gov/content/download/66254/file/mylocherus-undatus.pdf> (Accessed September 28, 2020)
12. **Thomas MC. 2005.** *Phaedon desotonis* Balsbaugh (Coleoptera: Chrysomelidae), a *Coreopsis* (Asteraceae) pest new to Florida. Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Plant Industry, Pest Alert, DACS-P-01670: 1–2. <https://www.fdacs.gov/content/download/66257/file/phaedon-desotonis.pdf> (Accessed September 28, 2020)
13. **Thomas MC. 2005.** Two Asian ambrosia beetles recently established in Florida (Curculionidae: Scolytinae). <http://www.doacs.state.fl.us/pi/enpp/ento/twonewxyleborines.html> (Last accessed 2018; as of September 28, 2020, website reconstructed and not posted, cited only to be complete.)
14. **Thomas MC. 2005.** The Two banded Japanese weevil (*Pseudocneorhinus bifasciatus* Roelofs), an invasive pest new to Florida (Coleoptera: Curculionidae). Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Plant Industry, Pest Alert, DACS-P-01673: 1–2. <https://www.fdacs.gov/content/download/66258/file/Pseudocneorhinus%20bifasciatus,%20The%20two%20banded%20Japanese%20Weevil.pdf> (Accessed September 28, 2020)
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17. **Thomas MC. 2006.** A List of the Species of Cerambycidae in the Florida State Collection of Arthropods. <http://www.fsca-dpi.org/Coleoptera/Mike/FloridaCerambycids/CerambycidListJumpPage.htm> (Accessed December 31, 2019; inaccessible September 28, 2020)
18. **Mayfield AE III, Thomas MC. 2006.** The redbay ambrosia beetle, *Xyleborus glabratus* Eichhoff (Scolytinae: Curculionidae). Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Plant Industry, Pest Alert, DACS-P-01651 (revised 2009): 1–4. <https://www.fdacs.gov/content/download/66299/file/PEST%20ALERT%20-%20Xyleborus%20glabratus%20-%20Redbay%20Ambrosia%20Beetle.pdf> (Accessed September 28, 2020)
19. **Thomas MC. 2006.** A Neotropical longhorn beetle (Coleoptera: Cerambycidae) New to the Mainland of Florida. Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Plant Industry, Pest Alert, DACS-P-01656: 1–2. <https://www.fdacs.gov/content/download/66261/file/neotropical-longhorn-beetle.pdf> (Accessed September 28, 2020)
20. **Thomas MC. 2006.** Another Neotropical Longhorn Beetle (Coleoptera: Cerambycidae) Apparently New to the Mainland of Florida. Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Plant Industry, Pest

- Alert, DACS-P-01678: 1 p. <https://www.fdacs.gov/content/download/66255/file/Pest%20Alert%20-%20Oxymerus%20aculeatusanother-neotropical-longhorn-beetle.pdf> (Accessed September 28, 2020)
21. **Skelley PE, Thomas MC. 2009.** Emerald Ash Borer, *Agrilus planipennis* Fairmaire (Coleoptera: Buprestidae), a Potential Threat to Florida. Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Plant Industry, Pest Alert, DACS-P-01636: 1–3. <https://www.fdacs.gov/content/download/68335/file/Pest%20Alert%20-%20Agrilus%20planipennis,%20Ash%20Borer.pdf> (Accessed September 28, 2020)
 22. **Okins KE, Thomas MC. 2009.** Another Asian Ambrosia Beetle Established in Florida (Coleoptera: Curculionidae: Scolytinae: Xyleborini). Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Plant Industry, Pest Alert, DACS-P-01675: 1–2. <https://www.fdacs.gov/content/download/66262/file/PEST%20ALERT%20-%20Xyleborinus%20andrewesi,%20Another%20Asian%20Ambrosia%20Beetle.pdf> (Accessed September 28, 2020)
 23. **Thomas MC. 2010.** Giant Palm Weevils of the Genus *Rhynchophorus* (Coleoptera: Curculionidae) and Their Threat to Florida Palms. Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Plant Industry, Pest Alert, DACS-P-01719: 1–2. <https://www.fdacs.gov/content/download/66344/file/Pest%20Alert%20-%20Giant%20Palm%20Weevils%20of%20the%20Genus%20Rhynchophorus.pdf> (Accessed September 28, 2020)
 24. **Thomas MC. 2011.** *Exophthalmus similis* Drury (Coleoptera: Curculionidae), a Jamaican citrus pest newly discovered in the Bahamas. Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Plant Industry, Pest Alert, DACS-P-01766: 1–4. <https://www.fdacs.gov/content/download/66251/file/exophthalmus-similis.pdf> (Accessed September 28, 2020)

Appendix 2. List of taxa described or co-described by Mike Thomas

References are listed in Appendix 1.

Coleoptera

New Genera Proposed (17 total)

Cerambycidae: (1)

Neoma Santos-Silva, Thomas, and Wappes 2011, Central America

Laemophloeidae: (5)

Acompsophloeus Thomas 2010c, United Arab Emirates

Lepidophloeus Thomas 1984c, Guadeloupe and Central America

Metaxyphloeus Thomas 1984b, Central and South America

Odontophloeus Thomas 1984c, Central and South America

Paraphloeolaemus Thomas 2017, South America

Silvanidae: (11)

Australodendrophagus Thomas 2004c, Australia

Australohyliota Thomas 2004c, Australia, Chile

Australophanus Thomas *in* Thomas and Nearn 2008, Chile

Brontoliota Thomas 2004c, Australia

Dendrophagella Thomas 2004c, New Zealand

Macrohyliota Thomas 2004c, Asia and Australia

Megahyliota Thomas 2004c, Southeast Asia

Microhyliota Thomas 2004c, Chile

Notophanus Thomas 2011a, Australia

Parahyliota Thomas 2004c, Africa and Asia

Protodendrophagus Thomas 2004c, New Zealand

New Species Proposed (77 total)

Buprestidae: (1)

Chrysobothris cerцерipraeda Westcott and Thomas 2014, USA (FL)

Cucujidae: (5)

Pediacus andrewsi Thomas 2004e, USA

Pediacus gracilis Thomas 2004e, USA

Pediacus hesperoglaber Thomas 2004e, USA

Pediacus ommatodon Thomas 2004e, USA

Pediacus stephani Thomas 2004e, USA

Laemophloeidae: (57)

Acompsophloeus arabicus Thomas 2010c, United Arab Emirates

Cryptolestes ampiyacus Thomas 1988a, Peru

Cryptolestes calabozus Thomas 1988a, Venezuela

Cryptolestes capillulus Thomas 1988a, Brazil

Cryptolestes cornutus Thomas and Zimmerman 1989, Thailand

Cryptolestes dissimulatus Thomas 1988a, USA

Cryptolestes dybasi Thomas 1988a, USA (FL)

Cryptolestes halevyae Thomas 1993a, Cyprus and Israel

Cryptolestes inyoensis Thomas 2003, USA

Cryptolestes mexicanus Thomas 1988a, Guatemala and Mexico

Cryptolestes obesus Thomas 2003, Brazil

Cryptolestes robinclarkei Thomas 2004b, Bolivia

Cryptolestes spatulifer Thomas 1988a, Argentina

Cryptolestes spectabilis Thomas 2003, Ecuador

- Cryptolestes trinidadensis* Thomas 1988a, Trinidad
Cryptolestes turnbowi Thomas 2003, Honduras and Mexico
Deinophloeus hirsutus Thomas 1981, Mexico
Deinophloeus sheilae Thomas 1981, Mexico
Dysmerus boliviensis Thomas 2009b, Bolivia
Dysmerus curvicornis Thomas 2009b, Argentina and Brazil
Dysmerus genaspinosus Thomas 2009b, Venezuela
Dysmerus hamaticornis Thomas 2009b, Costa Rica, Mexico, and USA
Dysmerus impolitus Thomas 2009b, Brazil
Dysmerus mexicanus Thomas 2009b, Mexico
Dysmerus monstrosus Thomas 2009b, Argentina and Brazil
Dysmerus politus Thomas 2009b, Bolivia and Brazil
Dysmerus rondoniensis Thomas 2009b, Brazil
Dysmerus skellei Thomas 2009b, Peru
Dysmerus symphilus Thomas 2009b, Central and South America
Dysmerus trinidadensis Thomas 2009b, Brazil and Trinidad
Laemophloeus apache Thomas 2015, USA
Laemophloeus buenavista Thomas 2013, Mexico, Central and South America
Laemophloeus capitesculptus Thomas 2014, Brazil
Laemophloeus concinnus Thomas 2013, Colombia and Panama
Laemophloeus corporeflavus Thomas 2014, South America
Laemophloeus dozieri Thomas 2014, Bolivia
Laemophloeus insulatestudinorum Thomas 2014, Ecuador (Galapagos Islands)
Laemophloeus planaclavatus Thomas 2014, Bolivia and Brazil
Laemophloeus taurus Thomas 2014, Mexico, Bolivia, and Brazil
Laemophloeus woodruffi Thomas 1993b, Canada and USA
Lathropus chickcharnie Thomas 2010b, Bahamas
Lathropus jamaicensis Thomas 2010b, Jamaica
Lathropus rhabdophloeoides Thomas 2010b, USA (FL), Bahamas, West Indies
Metaxyphloeus zeus Thomas 1984b, Bolivia
Odontophloeus crybetes Thomas 1984c, Trinidad
Paraphloeolaemus pterosiagon Thomas 2017, Honduras
Paraphloeolaemus vorticosus Thomas 2017, South America
Placonotus arizonensis Thomas 1984d, USA
Placonotus embuensis Thomas 1991a, Kenya
Placonotus falinorum Thomas 2011d, USA
Placonotus gladiator Thomas 1995b, Malaysia
Placonotus macrognathus Thomas 1984d, USA (FL) and Cuba
Placonotus maya Thomas 1984d, Guatemala and Mexico
Placonotus patruelis Thomas 1984d, Guatemala
Placonotus planifrons Thomas 1984d, St. Vincent
Placonotus pseudomodestus Thomas 1984d, Brazil
Rhinolaemus niueensis Thomas 2016, Niue
- Mycteridae: (1)
Hemipeplus chaos Thomas 1985, USA (FL)
- Passandridae: (1)
Catogenus slipinskii Thomas 1995a, Dominican Republic
- Silvanidae: (11)
Brontoliota indivisipennis Thomas 2004c, Australia
Brontoliota intermedius Thomas 2004c, Australia
Brontoliota lawrencei Thomas 2010a, Chile

Brontoliota monteithi Thomas 2004c, Australia
Notophanus bellicilifer Thomas 2011a, Australia
Parahyliota balli Thomas 2009a, Mexico
Protodendrophagus antipodes Thomas 2004c, New Zealand
Telephanus acrolophus Thomas 1984a, Jamaica
Telephanus bellus Thomas 2011c, Costa Rica
Telephanus gomyi Thomas 1992, Réunion Island
Telephanus monstrosus Thomas 2011c, Mexico

Staphylinidae: (1)

Coenonica cameroni Frank and Thomas 1984a (nom. nov.), Ivory Coast.

Appendix 3. Known patronyms for Mike Thomas

This list was compiled from multiple sources and may not be complete. Other patronyms will be published in the future. Patronyms in papers following this Memoriam paper are being published as a collective work at the same time. All names below are valid with authors as noted. References are presented in the Literature Cited.

Generic Patronyms (4 total)

Coleoptera

- Cleridae: *Thomasius* Opitz 2017, Bolivia and Brazil
 Cerambycidae: *Neothomasella* Santos-Silva and Bezark 2012. A replacement name for *Thomasella* Santos-Silva et al. 2012, Panama
 Cybocephalidae: *Microthomas* Smith 2020, Bolivia
 Erotylidae: *Michyrus* Skelley and Gasca-Álvarez 2020b, Panama

Specific Patronyms (43 total)

Coleoptera

- Carabidae: *Apenes thomasi* Ball and Shpeley 2009, Cayman Islands
 Carabidae: *Ginema thomasi* Ball and Shpeley 2002, Bolivia
 Cerambycidae: *Cacostola thomasorum* Wappes and Santos-Silva 2019, Brazil
 Cerambycidae: *Cometes thomasi* Hovore and Santos-Silva 2007, Peru (now in *America* Santos-Silva and Tavakilian)
 Cerambycidae: *Derobrachus thomasi* Santos-Silva 2007, USA (FL)
 Cerambycidae: *Dufauxia thomasi* Martins and Galileo 2007, Bolivia
 Cerambycidae: *Ephippiotragus thomasi* Clarke 2013, Bolivia
 Cerambycidae: *Hesperandra thomasi* Santos-Silva 2002, Bolivia (now in *Parandra* Latreille)
 Cerambycidae: *Leptostylopsis thomasi* Lingafelter and Micheli 2009, Hispaniola
 Cerambycidae: *Odontocera mthomasi* Wappes and Santos-Silva 2017, Guatemala
 Cerambycidae: *Parmenonta thomasi* Linsley and Chemsak 1984, USA (FL)
 Cerambycidae: *Plectromerus thomasi* Nearn and Branham 2008, Haiti
 Chrysomelidae: *Colaspis thomasi* Riley 2020, USA (FL)
 Chrysomelidae: *Erinacealtica thomasi* Konstantinov and Linzmeier 2020, Haiti
 Cleridae: *Aphelocerus thomasi* Rifkind 2020, Mexico
 Cleridae: *Enoclerus thomasi* Opitz 2020, Bolivia
 Cleridae: *Madoniella thomasi* Opitz 2011, Bahamas
 Cleridae: *Phyllobaenus thomasi* Leavengood 2020, Mexico and Belize
 Corylophidae: *Hoplicnema thomasi* Pakaluk 1987, Haiti
 Cucujidae: *Pediacus thomasi* Marris and Ślipiński 2013, Taiwan
 Curculionidae: *Sicoderes thomasi* Anderson 2018, Haiti
 Cybocephalidae: *Microthomas brevicornis* Smith 2020, Bolivia
 Dermestidae: *Cryptorhopalum thomasi* Háva 2011, Bahamas
 Erotylidae: *Dyslexia thomasi* Skelley and Gasca-Álvarez 2020a, Ecuador
 Erotylidae: *Michyrus thomasi* Skelley and Gasca-Álvarez 2020b, Panama
 Erotylidae: *Pharaxonotha thomasi* Skelley and Tang 2020, Honduras
 Eucnemidae: *Rhagomicrus thomasi* Muona, 2000, USA (FL)
 Euxestidae: *Euxestoxenus thomasi* Ślipiński 2020, Thailand
 Glaresidae: *Glaresis thomasi* Keller and Skelley 2020, Dominican Republic
 Laemophloeidae: *Cryptolestes thomasi* Hauth and Bremer 2020, Peru
 Mycteridae: *Hemipeplus thomasi* Pollock 1999, Mexico
 Nitidulidae: *Carpophilus (Ecnomorphus) thomasi* Powell and Schnepf 2020, Haiti
 Nitidulidae: *Cyllodes thomasi* Cline and Skelley 2013, USA (AZ)

Passandridae: *Catogenus thomasi* Ślipiński 1989, USA (AZ)
Scarabaeidae: *Ataenius thomasi* Schnepf and Ashman 2020, USA (FL)
Scarabaeidae: *Blackburneus thomasi* Dellacasa, Dellacasa and Gordon 2011, Bolivia
Silvanidae: *Neocorimus thomasi* Halstead 2020, Venezuela
Silvanidae: *Synoemis thomasi* Halstead 2011, United Arab Emirates
Staphylinidae: *Proteinus thomasi* Frank 1979, USA (FL)
Zopheridae: *Colydium thomasi* Stephan 1989, USA (FL)

Hemiptera

Scutelleridae: *Diolcus thomasi* Eger 2020, Cayman Islands

Diptera

Ceratopogonidae: *Stilobezzia (Acanthohelea) thomasi* Grogan et al. 2013, Guadeloupe
Ceratopogonidae: *Dasyhelea thomasi* Grogan et al. 2016, Guadeloupe

Appendix 4. Additional Memories, Short Stories, Facts or Notes from Colleagues

These are presented in alphabetical order by contributor.

Andrew R. Cline, Assistant Director, State of California, Department of Food and Agriculture, Sacramento, CA, USA.

I have many memories of Mike; all of them are representative of an engaging, encouraging and supportive beetle mentor and colleague. As an aspiring coleopterist, he was an early influence on my future pathway as a specialist in Cucujoidea.

In the early 2000's Mike heard of one of Chris Carlton's students at LSU working on Nitidulidae (Coleoptera). He reached out to me to see if I wanted to come and visit the FSCA in Gainesville and look through the beetle holdings there for any nitidulids of interest. Of course, I wanted to visit, and it being just a day drive from Baton Rouge, I was eager to be on my way and looking through the trove of beetles that had been amassed by so many great collectors through the years. I knew even then that the FSCA was a "must visit" place for anyone wanting to work on beetle taxonomy. The reputation of the FSCA as a repository for cool Coleoptera is well-known among so many of us.

Unfortunately, as a struggling graduate student I didn't have the funding to pay for the trip. Luckily those thoughts weren't long lasting as Mike graciously offered for me to stay at the Thomas home during my visit. I was appreciative and deeply moved by this gesture. This was one of my first visits to an insect collection outside of my home institution, and I was being hosted by its director. I was honored to say the least.

I arrived at Mike and Sheila's house late on a weekday after attending a morning class at LSU then hitting the road to get over to Gainesville. I was greeted with warm smiles and after introductions Mike prepared an absolutely fantastic yellow curry chicken and couscous dish. For those that didn't know, Mike was an excellent cook. I still haven't been able to repeat the flavors he conjured up for that dinner! As the evening progressed, the three of us had great conversation and I truly felt at home with Mike and Sheila. They made a genuine impression on me that has lasted for twenty years and one that I hope I have passed on to others that visited the California State Collection of Arthropods.

Mike, like myself, had a lot of different passions in his life. Unbeknownst to me, beetles weren't the only passion we shared... he was also a big-time college football fan! On that same first trip, I was supposed to leave on a Saturday morning, but turns out LSU (my team) and Florida (Mike's team) were playing their annual rivalry game and I was asked to stay and watch the game. Let's just say we were both very passionate about who would win that particular contest it was Florida. Thus, began a friendship and what would become multiple visits to Gainesville over the years to the collection and to the Thomas house. These are only a few of my Mike memories, there are many more. He will be missed.

J. Howard Frank, Emeritus Professor, University of Florida, Entomology and Nematology Department, Gainesville, FL, USA.

In 1989, an adventive weevil soon recognized as *Metamasius callizona* (Chevrolat) (Coleoptera: Curculionidae) by Charlie O'Brien was detected on imported ornamental bromeliads at a nursery in Broward County. Mike and Howard drove to Broward County and found the weevil present in native bromeliads in Broward County parks and then began to track its spread. In 1992, Howard had funds for exploration in southern Mexico to find the origin of the weevil *Metamasius callizona* which was by then an invasive pest of native bromeliads in Florida, and he invited Mike along and paid for his travel because Mike was the Florida Department of Agriculture's coleopterist. The two found the origin near Fortín de las Flores in the State of Veracruz. The horticulturist who had exported infected bromeliads to Florida admitted his guilt and allowed inspection of his shade houses in which Mike and Howard collected many weevils and their larvae and took them to quarantine in Gainesville. These weevils and the few the pair had found in nature unfortunately produced no parasitoids. Mike and Howard continued tracking and recording spread of the weevil in Florida until January 2009, recorded in this part: (<http://entnemdept.ufl.edu/frank/bromeliadbiota/wvbrom6.htm>, accessed September 28, 2020) of a larger website.



Figure 6. Business card of the “Forcados Queretanos”, a bullfighting act.

Releases of a potential biological control agent against this pest in 2007–2008 were unsuccessful, most likely because the origin of the agent (a tachinid fly) was cloud forests in Honduras, which were certainly cooler than Florida summers. The trip to Mexico produced at least one memorable car ride when the pair decided to drive from Fortín de las Flores to the Pacific coast to try collecting weevils there. The outward journey was via Tuxtepec and highways 147 and 185 to Salina Cruz where we stayed two nights. We explored for weevils in the vicinity of San Pedro Pochutla. We tarried on our second day until noon, then decided to take a more direct route back to Fortín beginning with highway 176 to Miahuatlán. The road climbed and wiggled around, and rain began. Perhaps it was the rain that stimulated a cascade of rocks down the mountainside and onto the road in front of us. We stopped for a few seconds to assess the situation then gunned the motor and got though without being hit. From the peak in the road we descended to Miahuatlán, which was flooded by the rain. We followed the traffic which was taking side-roads to avoid the deepest floodwater, but it still was up to the car’s door sills. On to the big city of Oaxaca where rain was still falling, and traffic was heavy. On toward Tehuacán on highway 135. But we had intermittent problems with the car’s carburetor and decided to stop to tinker with it at an apparent parking spot beside the highway on a downward slope. It was now dark and as we stopped a minivan pulled in behind us and out of it jumped five young men. This did not seem good, but as they approached us they seemed friendly and asked us for “gasolina” as their vehicle’s tank was almost empty. The next problem was to transfer fuel from our tank to their tank, but we had two entomological aspirators with transparent flexible tubes. Thus, we managed to transfer fuel and they were happy. We followed them to the first open fuel station that they encountered. There they bought us soft drinks and gave us their business card which indicated they had a circus act with bulls! Yes, bulls as used in bullfights, and performed in bull rings and they were the “Forcados Queretanos” (Fig. 6), a risky business. We parted as friends. We still had to reach Fortín and it was then after midnight. We encountered a town with all streetlights off and in the middle of a main street a big hole marked simply by a leaning post inside it. We reached highway 150 and headed toward Orizaba when fog surrounded us. I had heard of this road with its precipices, and fog was not welcome. We were not alone as many trucks were creeping along at walking speed, and some had parked on the roadside, probably with intent not to move until the fog cleared. We drove on and somehow arrived alive at our hotel at Fortín long after midnight. Some short cut! Let’s not try that again.

In 1990, my main research program was biological control of pest mole crickets. I was determined to visit the West Indian Island of Grenada from which Bob Woodruff had collected many *Neocurtilla hexadactyla* (Perty) (Orthoptera: Gryllotalpidae) mole crickets at ultraviolet light. The year-round light trap samples had yielded 186 *N. hexadactyla* specimens but only a single *Neoscapteriscus didactylus* (Latreille): why was that when the latter was thought to be the pest species in Grenada? Mike was the Florida Department of Agriculture’s orthopterist. So, I invited Mike along and paid for his travel. In Grenada, we collected in many localities including a former Great House called Balthazar, which in 1990 was dilapidated and was a site of a plant nursery. It is no coincidence that in 1890 it was visited by the U.S. insect collector H.H. Smith who collected *N. hexadactyla* there whereas we

found *N. didactylus* there in seedling beds. Surprises were an enormous stick insect, and an old Aeroflot airliner beside the old airport (we suspect it had not moved since the U.S. invasion of 1983 expelled Cuban troops). The new airport at the southern end of the island was a product of the Cuban occupation. Our stay was helped by personnel of the Grenada Ministry of Agriculture and we were allowed to stay at its Mirabeau research station. We discovered that *N. didactylus* was the pest of vegetable plantings and golf courses there, whereas no damage could be attributed to *N. hexadactyla* despite its abundance in light traps, contrasting with assumptions of some scientists.

Laura T. Miller, Curator and Taxonomic Entomologist, West Virginia Department of Agriculture, Plant Industries, Charleston, WV, USA. (Reprinting of Miller 2019).

Mike was the Head of Entomology for the Division of Plant Industry at the Florida Department of Agriculture from where he retired in 2013, after 31 years of service. Mike remained active with the Division by helping with identifications, providing guidance on pests, and continuing to curate the Florida State Collection of Arthropods. He also served on graduate committees of many students from the University of Florida. Mike (Fig. 7) was well-recognized worldwide as a knowledgeable Coleopterist and an expert of several families of beetles. He was a groundbreaking collector and taxonomist who discovered several new beetle species in his lifetime. Before this job, Mike worked for the West Virginia Department of Agriculture for nearly two years as a Taxonomic Entomologist and Curator of the Insect Collection for the Plant Industries Division. As Dr. Charlie Coffman, Director of the Division at the time and responsible for hiring him said, “we were fortunate to get someone of his caliber on the staff and were lucky to keep him as long as we did”. During his time in West Virginia he became actively involved with the WVES. Mike had a characteristic sense of humor when it came to telling stories about insect collecting. He wrote an article for the newsletter entitled “*A collector’s Paradise, or how I learned that Tropical doesn’t necessarily mean TROPICAL.*” Here are some excerpts from the article. “The tropics are to an entomologist what Paris and Rome are to art lovers. So when I was invited to participate in a three week Florida State Museum biological survey of a new national park in Haiti in May of 1984 I naturally jumped at the chance... To most people Haiti is a dark land of the Duvaliers (Papa Doc and Baby Doc), voodoo, and the sinister tonton macoutes... Still, it is in the tropics and I was ready for all those spectacular insects... The drive to the park gave new meaning to the phrase ‘So that’s it. We’re all going to die’... After everyone kissed the ground for a while, we established our base of operations at the park headquarters, an abandoned logging camp with few amenities. Actually, there were no amenities - no electricity, no running water, no indoor plumbing... or outdoor plumbing for that matter. The rats were friendly, though. Never mind. This was an expedition, right? So, unpack and out after those spectacular tropical insects... I thought they had been kidding when they said to bring plenty of flannel shirts and a jacket... in fact it was always chilly and when it wasn’t chilly it was wet... usually both at the same time... So much for those spectacular tropical insects. But once I resigned myself to the fact that my great expectations weren’t going to be fulfilled, collecting turned out to be fascinating... Even in the tropics cool mountain tops often have a unique, highly adapted fauna that is of great biogeographical and evolutionary interest...”

Mike dedicated a good deal of his time in West Virginia collecting and documenting the Cerambycidae of the State, greatly expanding the distributional record of this family in West Virginia. Mike was also

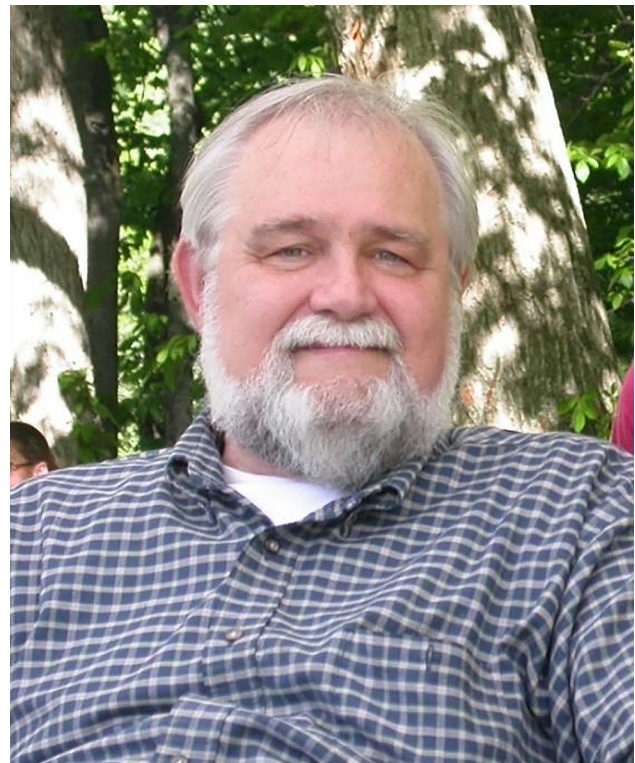


Figure 7. Mike C. Thomas.

an artist and I enjoyed having conversations about scientific illustration techniques with him. His insect illustrations were neat and precise, not to mention beautiful. I'm also fortunate to have met and been hired by him as his laboratory technician. He was an important part of my professional life as a young entomologist; his enthusiasm was contagious, and his teachings were invaluable. His support as a colleague and friend continued throughout the years and he will be terribly missed.

Paul E. Skelley, Assistant Bureau Chief of Entomology, Nematology and Plant Pathology [Diagnostics Bureau] and Chief Entomologist, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Plant Industry, Florida State Collection of Arthropods, Gainesville, FL, USA.

I have two short stories about Mike to share. The first account regards a 'passive' collecting method Mike employed that frustrated many of his companions. In his younger years Mike smoked, in his later years Mike did not have the stamina of his youth. During collecting trips, he would often sit down for a break to catch his breath (Fig. 8a). During these stops, he often saw and collected the prize specimen of the entire trip. On one occasion it landed on him. Over the years, I too have noticed that we all need to take a break, sit back, and observe small things in the world that we miss during our frantic activities. Conscious of it or not, Mike was a wise man.

The second story has to do with Mike's passion for photography. In 1996, FDACS-DPI learned that an exotic tarantula was established in St. Lucie County, Florida (Edwards and Hibbard 1996). To be precise, there are no native tarantulas east of the Mississippi River, so any tarantula in Florida is exotic. The species, *Brachypelma vagans* Ausserer (now *Tliltocatl vagans* (Ausserer); Araneae: Theraphosidae), Mexican red rump tarantula, is commonly kept as a pet. At the discovery of any exotic, our job at FDACS requires that we assess the situation and if FDACS needs to take regulatory actions. Mike and I took the opportunity to investigate the tarantula situation and visit the population. We met the local DPI inspector, Ken Hibbard, and traveled to the remote citrus grove surrounded on most sides by weedy canals, a perfect place for arthropods. Looking for them during the day, we saw many burrow entrances and webbing, but we wanted to collect some, which meant a night trip. That night, with headlights and collecting equipment, we successfully collected so many that the housekeeper at the hotel refused to service our room with the tarantulas in it.

But, this is an account of Mike's interest in photography not an arthropod story. Of course, we needed pictures for reports, and this was the pre-digital age. We had 35mm film and single-lens reflex cameras with manually metered flash units, making each nighttime picture an ordeal. Collecting was relatively easy because the tarantulas were out hunting, often sitting just outside the mouths of their burrows. We would simply sneak up and get them to run into a container. One young tarantula had other ideas and ran up my arm onto my back. Knowing I was in no danger as long as I did not panic, I called Mike over to remove it. He laughed and said, "Hold on,



Figure 8. In the field. **a)** Mike taking a break while collecting in Middleburg, Florida, 2012. **b)** Paul Skelley with Mexican red rump tarantula on back.

that will be a good picture.” I waited, and waited, and waited, as he fumbled with the camera, focused, refocused, checking distance on the lens, referencing the f-stop chart on the flash unit, adjusting the f-stop, and so on. I said, “Hurry up and get this thing off me.” Finally, I heard “Smile for the camera.” I saw a flash but heard a four-letter expletive. Mike touched the wrong button and the flash went off without taking a picture. We now needed to wait for the flash to recharge and began again. Because film needed to be developed, it might be weeks before we saw any picture. Thus, multiple pictures were required to be sure one was good. This photo session seemed to last half an hour. Finally, Mike was satisfied, he caught the tarantula and we continued our work.

While examining Mike’s files preparing for this contribution, I found pictures from that trip (Fig. 8b). I will remember him fondly with his camera on every collecting trip, ever ready to capture something interesting on film (note the camera hanging on Mike’s neck in Fig. 8a and on his belt in Fig. 9). I will also fondly remember the many hours we spent in the lab discussing some strange beetle we could not identify. A few years ago, I heard the population of tarantulas in St. Lucie County was still present, but the grove was now partially a residential community. I wonder if the human residents appreciate this tarantula as much as Mike and I?

Trevor Randall Smith, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Plant Industry, Gainesville, FL, USA.

Mike Thomas was special to me in a lot of ways. I first met him when my general entomology class at the University of Central Florida took a tour of the Florida State Collection of Arthropods. As we approached the Entomology section, we could hear Mike’s voice down the hall. Mike’s “inside voice” was about 10 decibels higher than the average persons. As we got closer to his office the next thing, we heard was him typing. The reason for this of course was that Mike was one of the loudest typists I have ever heard. The man could type as fast as a court stenographer, but he only used his right and left index fingers. It was an amazing thing to watch and more importantly to hear as he pounded away at the keyboard. He met our group told a few funny anecdotes



Figure 9. Mike Thomas collecting on the beach in Great Inagua, 2007.

and blew us all away with his knowledge of pretty much everything. Some people asked about Coleoptera others about insects in general and still other wanted to know about some of the countries where he had gone collecting. In the van on the trip back to Orlando I couldn’t stop talking about this incredibly “cool” scientist whom we met while at the FSCA. Mike Thomas was one of the main reasons I chose to go to graduate school at the University of Florida. Mike and the FSCA were in Gainesville right next to the UF campus, and that was the most important factor in my choice of graduate school. Upon moving to Gainesville, I immediately started volunteering at the FSCA and Mike was more than happy to give me counter space. Of course, I was preparing and labeling thousands of his specimens, so he was certainly getting a good deal out of it as well. More than anything, Mike loved to pin or point specimens, but he absolutely hated printing and putting labels on specimens. Before I had even finished my Ph.D. program, a technician position under Mike opened and I jumped on it. So, Mike was my first boss at the Division of Plant Industry, home of the FSCA, and opened the door for me to work in one of the most extraordinary places on earth. He served on my graduate committee, was a mentor to me as a young scientist and was



Figure 10. Pictures from Bahama trips (Andros Island 2004, Great Inagua 2007). **a)** Trevor R. Smith maneuvering through Maidenhair Coppice on Andros Island. **b)** The cabin at Forfar Field Station on Andros Island. **c)** Silverpalm habitat in Great Inagua. **d)** Salt evaporation ponds divided by a road in Great Inagua.

my friend. I have hundreds of great stories about this man who had such an impact on my life, but I will limit it to just a few of the funny ones.

One of our favorite collecting locations was Andros Island in the Bahamas (Fig. 9). Andros is a large relatively undeveloped island in the Bahamas with massive pine forests, swamps (Fig. 10a), caves and blue holes. On one expedition in the summer of 2006, we were staying at a research station that provided cabins/shacks for researchers (Fig. 10b). One night I woke up in the middle of the night hearing a subtle rustling in the cabin. Mike was sleeping in a bed next to me snoring away. I looked around and finally found a flashlight and shined it on the ceiling through the mosquito netting. What I saw looked like a scene from “Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom.” There were literally hundreds if not thousands of roaches, *Periplaneta americana* (Linnaeus) (Blattodea: Blattidae), crawling around on the ceiling. I have no idea why they were there as we didn’t have any food in the cabin. Anyway, I shook Mike awake and pointed to the ceiling. Mike’s response was a huge yawn and a quick “Yep; those’re a lot of roaches,” and immediately began snoring again.

Another interesting collecting trip to the Bahamas took place in 2007. For this trip, Mike, Bob Turnbow and I traveled to the island of Great Inagua (Fig. 9). This is the southernmost Bahamian island and home to one of the largest seawater salt recovery operations in the world. Morton Salt Company produces over 1 million pounds of salt annually which is harvested from enormous salt evaporation ponds. Other than the large salt flats, the island is a rocky, scrubby habitat dominated by silverpalm forests, *Coccothrinax* spp. (Arecaceae) (Fig. 10c). On this trip we were able to rent an old 1995 Chevy Cavalier from a local resident to drive around the island for collecting.

Unfortunately, on the first afternoon out driving down bumpy rocky roads the exhaust piping between the muffler and the engine broke loose and was dragging on the ground. The pipe was still attached to the muffler but was dragging in such a way that the only way to drive the car without ripping out the entire exhaust system was to drive in reverse. Keep in mind we were miles and miles away from civilization and the only roads were crumbling dirt roads used to divide salt evaporation pools (Fig. 10d). So, the sun was going down, and Mike jumped in the driver's seat, opened the driver's side door, so he could hang out of the side of the vehicle and look backward. He proceeded to drive in reverse, in the dark, on single-lane, dirt roads through the backcountry of Great Inagua. I will always remember that moonlit ride in reverse through the seemingly endless salt flats of Great Inagua. We all took turns driving but Mike definitely took the lion's share and seemed to genuinely enjoy it. After about three hours, we made it back into town after dark. We arrived in Matthew Town (the only settlement on the island) driving down main street, backwards, with sparks flying out from beneath the car as we dragged a good portion of the exhaust system down the street.

Every time I go collecting, I think about Mike, and I always will. It was an honor and a privilege to have known and worked with him, and I am very thankful for the time we had. Naming a new genus after Mike was just a very small thank you to someone who meant so much to me.

Robert E. Woodruff, Emeritus Coleopterist, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Plant Industry, Florida State Collection of Arthropods, Gainesville, FL, USA.

I was extremely fortunate to be the first coleopterist at the Florida State Plant Board (SPB), now Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) with the Florida State Collection of Arthropods (FSCA). I held that position from 1958 until my retirement in 1988. During that time, I was an adjunct professor in the University of Florida, Entomology Department. As a result, I was lucky to be a mentor for several students. The two of which I am most proud have followed in my footsteps, and they became employed in the same organization. So, there have been only three coleopterists at the FSCA. Those two were Dr. Mike Thomas and Dr. Paul Skelley.

When I arrived in Gainesville there were four other taxonomists on the SPB staff. Harold Denmark (Chief), Howard Weems, Frank Mead, and Wallace Dekle. The beetle collection was housed in a 48-drawer cabinet with four drawers empty for expansion! I recall discussions about how many specimens we could keep, because of space limitation. Over the 62 years since that time, the collections have grown to approximately 22,000 drawers (7800 drawers for beetles) and is the largest and best curated collection south of the Smithsonian!

Personal friendships and our Research Associates have provided the stimulus and relationships for this huge increase. From 1945–2015, the SPB+FSCA recorded specimen donations from over 850 individuals (pers. comm., P. Skelley 2020), primarily from the mid-1970s to present. Mike Thomas, Paul Skelley, and I have all placed the collection development as our primary goal. I believe it was the famous Miriam Rothschild who said that taxonomists are born and not made. I firmly believe that after my long experience in the profession. They usually do not really retire but continue their studies until death. The three of us are no exception. We were so fortunate to be employed in the field we loved and enjoy. That is success.

When I retired formally in 1988, the unit was looking for my replacement. I had already decided that Mike Thomas was an obvious choice. He already knew Florida beetles, it was his passion, and he had many friends here. There was some opposition, but I lobbied hard for Mike. He never disappointed me or the unit. It was a smooth transition and he remained as the coleopterist and later also accepted role as chief of the Entomology unit. As an Emeritus Entomologist (the first so honored by Agriculture Commissioner Doyle Conner), I continued to support the collections and to continue my research. I was able to continue research and publication with full support of Mike Thomas and Paul Skelley. I have now devoted 62 years in support of the FSCA and the Center for Systematic Entomology.

Although Mike and I disagreed on some curatorial practices, we respected each other's knowledge and expertise. I recall each time that I came to the office when Mike was working, after he retired, he always lifted his optivisor to greet me. It always seemed strange that such a big guy would choose such tiny beetles as the Cucujodea as his specialty. But he was dedicated to revising taxonomically difficult genera. We did publish one paper jointly (Thomas and Woodruff 1984) on a new stored product pest (*Oryzaephilus acuminatus* Halstead: Coleoptera: Silvanidae) new to the Western Hemisphere. Mike also honored me with a patronym (*Laemophloeus woodruffi* Thomas 1993: Coleoptera: Laemophloeidae).

When Ross Arnett and I founded *Insecta Mundi*, we established an Editorial Board, and Mike was one of the first invited to become a member. His journalism experience was invaluable to our new journal. Later, when Ross donated the journal to the Center for Systematic Entomology, his computer and layout skills were critical to the success of *Insecta Mundi*. He was so knowledgeable in these fields that he was always the one we relied on for all expertise.

This volume is such a deserved honor for a dedicated scientist with unique skills. His works on Cucujoidea will serve as a permanent record of his abilities. These will be a legacy that few have attained. He will be sorely missed by all of his friends and colleagues. So, there are now only two of the three coleopterists left at the FSCA. Paul Skelley and I will continue to honor Mike by our dedication to young coleopterists and to the FSCA, making it the finest in the country.