



Michel E. Hendrickx, recipient of the 2016 The Crustacean Society Excellence in Research Award

Richard C. Brusca¹, Raymond Bauer², Marcelo García-Guerrero³ and Mary Wicksten⁴

¹*Department of Ecology & Evolutionary Biology, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ, 85721 USA.*

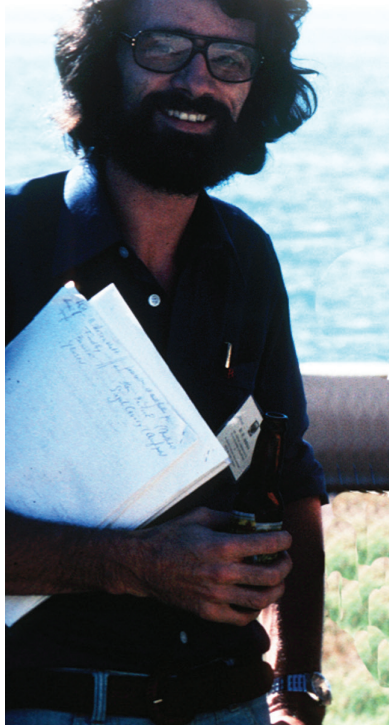
²*Department of Biology, University of Louisiana, Lafayette, LA 70504 USA.*

³*Acuacultura de Crustáceos. CIIDIR-IPN, Unidad Oaxaca, México; and*

⁴*Department of Biology, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843 USA.*

Correspondence: R.C. Brusca; e-mail: rbrusca@desertmuseum.org

(Received 3 February 2017; accepted 15 February 2017)



Michel E. Hendrickx, 1979. Sonora, Mexico.



Michel E. Hendrickx, 2016. Sinaloa, Mexico.

It is a great honor to offer this short tribute piece to our friend and colleague, Michel E. Hendrickx. His is a name well known and respected in the world of carcinology, and by all Sea of Cortez (Gulf of California) researchers in all fields of study.

Michel obtained his Ph.D. from the Free University of Brussels (Belgium). His dissertation was on the taxonomy and zoogeography of stomatopod and decapod crustaceans of the Sea of Cortez.

The great Dutch carcinologist, Lipke B. Holthuis (1921–2008), was on his dissertation committee. His first posting after university was to the Phuket Marine Biological Station in Thailand (1974–1976), where he worked on zooplankton communities. He then moved to Mexico in 1977 to work at the marine laboratory

of the National University of Mexico (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, UNAM) in Mazatlán, Sinaloa, where he was a “UNESCO Expert” for the UNAM-UNDP program in marine sciences. He met Mercedes Cordero-Ruiz in 1979, who would soon become his wife and mother of their two children (Jean-Michel and Philippe). When the UNESCO contract ended, Michel took a permanent position with the Instituto de Ciencias del Mar y Limnología (ICML) of UNAM (March 1981). He received tenure in 1984, and became Senior Scientist (Titular C) in 1993. He has been a member of Mexico’s prestigious National Investigator System (Sistema Nacional de Investigadores, SNI) since its founding in 1985 and reached its highest level in 1997. SNI gave Michel the title of “Emeritus Researcher” (even though he is still employed) in December 2016, thus making him the first person ever in the ICML to have an SNI Emeritus status.

Rick Brusca first met Michel in 1978 while working at the Allan Hancock Foundation, University of Southern California, Los Angeles. Michel was on a trip around the Sea of Cortez and Southern California, visiting institutions with carcinologists working in the region. He had already visited the Guaymas marine campus of the Monterrey Institute of Technology and Higher Education (Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey, ITESM), the Autonomous University of Baja California (Universidad Autónoma de Baja California, UABC) in Ensenada, the CICESE (Centro de Investigación Científica y de Educación Superior de Ensenada), various institutions in La Paz, and the Scripps Institution of Oceanography in San Diego. Michel also spent time at the Allan Hancock Foundation in Los Angeles, where Brusca had recently taken the position of Curator of Crustacea. There, he also met Janet Haig, John Garth, and Mary Wicksten. John was retired but still quite active, Janet worked for Brusca as Crustacea Collection Manager, and Mary was a postdoctoral researcher working in Brusca’s laboratory on various Eastern Pacific decapods.

Michel’s first professional publication was “Total particulate matter in the waters of a mangrove lagoon at Phuket Island” (1976). His most recent at the time of this writing is “First zoeal stage of the hermit crab *Enallopaguropsis guatemoci* Glassell, 1937 (Crustacea: Anomura: Paguroidea: Paguridea) obtained in the laboratory” (2017). There are 314 other publications between these two papers, mostly on Crustacea, but also on the taxonomy, biogeography, and ecology of molluscs, echinoderms, polychaetes, and fishes. His scientific work to date totals about 6,500 pages, and he is still going strong! He has published his work in more than 150 indexed journals, and he has authored 56 book chapters. He has also been editor (or co-editor) of seven books, including a series of five volumes “Contributions to the Study of East Pacific Crustaceans” (contributions in both Spanish and English) from 2002 to 2008. He has named and described over 50 new species and three new genera. Much of Michel’s field research has been from aboard Mexico’s national research vessel, the R/V *Puma*, and he was instrumental in the acquisition and assignment of that vessel as well as being the expedition chief on its inaugural research cruise in 1981. The *Puma* cruises have contributed greatly to our knowledge of the deep-sea crustaceans of the Tropical Eastern Pacific.

It would be hard to identify Michel’s single greatest contribution to the field of carcinology, but certainly his five Spanish-language monographs on Stomatopoda and Decapoda (which are used by marine scientists from Southern California to Peru), are among the most important and useful. Also notable is Michel’s series of

five edited volumes on Eastern Pacific crustaceans, with contributions from R. Brusca, R. Heard, W. Price, M. Retamal, A. Ross, M. Thiel, L. Watling, B. Werding, M. Wicksten, and many others. Since 1979, Michel has been publishing important and useful work on the crustacean fauna of the Tropical Eastern Pacific at the rate of 8–9 articles annually. In 2005, Michel and Brusca published the first complete listing of all known benthic invertebrate species in the Sea of Cortez (nearly 5,000 species), which became an interactive on-line database in 2008 (<http://www.desertmuseum.org/center/seaofcortez/database.php>). The invertebrate collection at UNAM’s Mazatlán laboratory, built largely by Michel, is one of the largest south of the US. The collection is the largest in Mexico’s Pacific region, and it is considered the main reference for marine species distributed on the Pacific coast of the country.

Education of next-generation scientists is an important component of a professional researcher’s life. Michel’s contributions to higher education and training of scientists from Mexico and throughout Latin America cannot be overstated. During his years at UNAM, Michel has supervised about 50 undergraduate and graduate students, and he has been a member of dozens of dissertation committees. These students have gone on to their own careers in science and education, and some of them, such as Marcelo García-Guerrero, are now his collaborators in various research projects. He has organized numerous workshops and short courses, which attract students and professors from Mexico from other countries.

Although Ray Bauer had known Michel from earlier meetings of The Crustacean Society, he had the pleasure of co-teaching a workshop on shrimp biology with him in 2014. Michel’s mastery of Spanish in teaching, university administrative tasks, research publications, and public education is remarkable and unusual for someone whose native languages are French (his mother tongue) and Dutch (Flemish). Listening to Michel speaking Spanish, one might think that he was born and raised in Mexico! He is fully integrated into Mexican society, which has been important in attracting graduate students and has enriched his life in countless ways. He has also been skillful in seeking funding from national agencies for educational and research activities.

Michel’s activities and recognition, and their importance to the diffusion of scientific knowledge at an international level, have been numerous and outstanding. He serves on editorial boards, as officers in scientific societies, and presents results of his research at international scientific meetings. He is a moving force behind Asociación Latinoamericana de Carcinología (ALCARCINIUS), the carcinological society based for Latin American carcinologists, and he has served as Latin American Governor of The Crustacean Society.

It should be finally noted that Michel’s congenial personality and his gift of communicating with colleagues and students have contributed to his impressive research impact. Despite his busy schedule, he is constantly posting on the internet information of interest to carcinologists, hard-to-obtain pdf reprints, as well as unselfishly fomenting collaboration among colleagues on Crust-L and other similar listserves. Michel also has an engaging way about him, a good sense of humor, and an appreciation for tequila, the national drink of Mexico.

Michel Hendrickx is a Charter Member of The Crustacean Society and a valued colleague of Crusty types the world over. We congratulate him on his Research Excellence Award!