

## Introduction

### Objectives

This book provides a glimpse into the lives of black entomologists. The term “black” refers collectively to people of color with origins on the African continent. Thus, African Americans and others of the African diaspora represent the people highlighted in this book. As you may know, historically, blacks and other “people of color” seldom choose careers in the natural or life sciences, including entomology, for reasons that are not completely understood (Richmond and Whitney 1990, Feir et al. 1990, Sammons 1990, Baker 2000, Armstrong et al. 2007). For example, blacks (Africans and African Americans combined; students and nonstudents) represented just 2% of the membership of the Entomological Society of America (ESA) in December 2012 (Stelzig, ESA, unpublished data). Moreover, most universities with departments that offer doctoral programs in entomology have no black students, postdoctorates, or faculty on their rosters (WWB and EWR, unpublished survey data). We believe this pattern of low representation of blacks in the entomology profession in North America can change. Because of the dearth of blacks (American born and African born) in the natural sciences, the objectives of this book are (1) to stimulate more interest in entomology as a viable profession for the undecided student and (2) to become a useful reference work to help high school, college, and university administrators recruit and retain students and faculty. We also hope this book will stimulate more communication among black entomologists currently serving the profession in various venues, including academia, industry, and government, around the world. In a broader context, this book might be of significance to researchers interested in the history and sociology of science.

In the first section of this book, we provide a tribute to the life and career of Dr. Charles H. Turner, who was most likely the first black professional entomologist in North America. In the second section, we provide memoirs of representative, living black entomologists. The third section includes an appendix of abbreviated biographies of five deceased black entomologists and an appendix of contact information for the authors who contributed to this book.