

Dear MVZ Community

With this newsletter, we are pleased to present the next eight awardees from MVZ's 40under40 list! This list highlights 40 alumni of the MVZ who are each under 40 years of age and have made substantial contributions in their chosen career. A call for nominations went out to the MVZ community last summer and nominees were chosen by a vote of the MVZ faculty and staff. Each of the winners will be featured in our upcoming newsletters. We hope the list will serve to acknowledge and promote the work and careers of MVZ's younger alumni! Congratulations to the winners!

Michael Nachman
MVZ Director

Theresa Barclay

Undergraduate Volunteer, Currently Senior Museum Scientist and Prep Lab Manager MVZ

Theresa (Terri) was an undergraduate volunteer at the MVZ. She graduated from UC Berkeley in 2011 with a double major in Anthropology and Integrative Biology. In 2012 she was hired to run the MVZ's Prep Lab. At the MVZ Terri learned the importance of being a supportive mentor, "I have been beyond fortunate to have had great mentors before and during my time at the MVZ... **I want to bestow the same kindness, patience, encouragement, and guidance to my students like others gave me (especially predecessor, Monica Albe). I strive to create a space for my students to both learn, decompress, and have fun while we hang around a bunch of "dead stuff."**" Today she continues to contribute to the MVZ as a senior museum scientist at the MVZ by overseeing all aspects of the prep lab: supervising dozens of undergraduate volunteers, creating and processing specimens for the museum collection (skeleton material via our Dermestid beetle colony, study skins, and fluid specimens), and managing equipment for the museum.



Dr. Noëlle Bittner

Graduate Student Nachman Lab, Currently Sequencing Application Specialist PacBio



Noëlle was a student in Dr. Nachman's lab. She received her Masters in 2013 in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology from the University of Arizona and her PhD in Integrative Biology in 2020 from UC Berkeley. Her favorite thing about the MVZ was the people, "I was glad to be in a community of such knowledgeable and passionate folks, and a place with so much history." During her time at the MVZ Noëlle learned how to communicate her research to the general public, "**Boiling down my research to be appreciated by our Cal Day visitors is a very different skill from sharing it with my fellow researchers at MVZ lunch and a very different skill from highlighting its impact for grant applications.**" After graduating she was a Data Science Fellow at Insight Data Sciences and later worked as a scientist for Arima Genomics. Noëlle is currently a sequencing application specialist at PacBio, a biotech research company in Menlo Park. She also serves on the MVZ Advisory Board.

Dr. Inga E. Conti-Jerpe

Postdoc Tarvin Lab, Currently Assistant Professor, Lingnan University, Hong Kong

Inga was an NSF Postdoctoral Research Fellow in Dr. Rebecca Tarvin's lab from 2021-2024. She received her PhD in Biological Sciences from the University of Hong Kong in 2019. One of the major goals Inga set for her postdoc at Berkeley was to gain experience with genomics skills. "**Thanks to guidance from Becca and support from Lydia, the manager of the Evolutionary Genomics Laboratory, I executed my first transcriptomics project. I am excited to apply the skills and experience I gained to new projects using similar tools in the future.**" Inga is a coral reef ecologist interested in the function and evolution of nutritional symbioses across systems. She is also the Scientific Development Lead for isoFoodTrace, a company she co-founded that has developed the application of stable isotope analysis to verify food labels and track food origin. Inga is currently an assistant professor at Lingnan University in Hong Kong.



Dr. Teresa Feo

MVZ Curatorial Assistant, Currently Research Director and Senior Policy Advisor, Megafire Action



Teresa started at the MVZ as an undergraduate volunteer and continued working for the museum for several years after graduating in 2007 with a BA in Integrative Biology. While at the MVZ, she helped digitize the MVZ sound collection, contributed to Grinnell resurvey trips, and began conducting research on feathers. Her favorite thing about the museum was the people, “I hold the friends, colleagues, and mentors from my MVZ days very dear to my heart and I stay in touch with many of them to this day... **The training and mentorship I received from so many at the MVZ was foundational in transforming me into the scientist**

I am today.” Teresa continued her museum-based research first at the Yale Peabody Museum, where she received her PhD in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, and then at the Smithsonian Natural History Museum as an NSF postdoctoral fellow. In 2017, Teresa began working as a California Council of Science and Technology (CCST) fellow. Today she is the Research Director and Senior Policy Advisor at Megafire Action, where she develops science-informed policy advice at the state and federal level to ensure that wildfire-resilient ecosystems and communities thrive.

Dr. Colin Jenkins

MVZ Undergraduate Volunteer, Currently Clinical Fellow in Critical Care Medicine at UCSF

Colin was an undergraduate volunteer at the MVZ. He worked for over two years analyzing Spotted Towhee songs for a collaborative project. “We spent a lot of time analyzing spectrograms of Spotted Towhee songs, breaking them down to their fundamentals (no pun intended), and using that simplified information to describe song performances across large and varied populations.

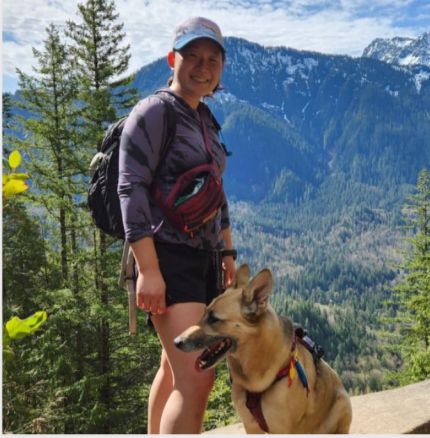
Not only was it technically similar to what I do now on a day-to-day basis with patients (e.g. analyzing sonograms of heart function), it showed how you could use basic principles from everyday life such as pitch and rhythm to distill complex biological systems into easily understood patterns and answer complex questions.” As an undergraduate he worked as an emergency medical technician and in 2015 received his

degree in Integrative Biology. He attended medical school at the University of Southern California, completed a residency in emergency medicine at UC Riverside, and is now completing a fellowship in critical care medicine at UC San Francisco.



Dr. Casie Lee

MVZ Undergraduate Volunteer, Currently Veterinarian BluePearl Pet Hospital



Casie was an undergraduate volunteer in the MVZ. She worked with former MVZ Graduate Student Dr. Jesyka Meléndez Rosa on a vole project and ran the prep lab class. She also worked with Dr. Eileen Lacey on the tuco tuco colony. Casie's favorite part of the MVZ was the community, **"From MVZ coffee to field work to afternoon prep sessions, there was always someone to nerd out with. Friends and mentors at the MVZ were a huge help in getting me to where I am today."**

After graduating from UC Berkeley in Molecular Environmental Biology in 2016 she attended veterinary school at UC Davis. She completed an internship in small animal medicine and surgery at the Pet Emergency & Specialty Center in La Mesa, California. She is currently a veterinarian at the BluePearl Pet Hospital in Seattle, Washington interested in surgery, emergency and critical care medicine, shelter and disaster medicine and exotic and small ruminant animal care.

Nikki Lemus

MVZ Curatorial and Lab Assistant, Prep Lab Class Coordinator, Currently Graduate Student at University of Kansas

Nikki started at the MVZ as an undergraduate research apprentice. Nikki worked in the prep lab, and helped with curatorial work. They were also an instructor for the prep lab course. Nikki also assisted in field work for Rauri Bowie's lab. Nikki's favorite thing about their time at the MVZ was working with people that were so excited about what they did and were willing to spread that excitement and wonder, **"The love for nature and animals was contagious and it really drove the research...the ornithologists were always ready to hand you some binoculars, the herpetologists ready to hand you a snake, and being exposed to so much wildlife in the field and in the collection by people who have so much love for it makes it impossible to not be interested."** After graduating in 2020 from UC Berkeley in Integrative Biology, Nikki worked as a technician for the Tarvin Lab. Nikki was awarded an NSF Graduate Research Fellowship and is currently attending graduate school at the University of Kansas.



Dr. Andrew Moeller

Postdoc Nachman Lab, Currently Assistant Professor, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology Department-Princeton University



Andrew was a Miller postdoc in Professor Michael Nachman's lab at the MVZ from 2015-2018. His favorite thing about his time at the MVZ was the exposure to the immense breadth of research topics and organisms being studied by the museum's scientists. **"I particularly miss the MVZ lunch seminar, which was one of my favorite seminar series of all time!"** At the MVZ Andrew "developed a much deeper appreciation for organismal biology and the value of collections for research in ecology and evolutionary biology." Andrew went on to Cornell University where he was an Assistant Professor in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology.

In 2024 he joined the faculty of the Ecology and Evolutionary Biology Department at Princeton University where he studies gut microbiomes.

Support the MVZ

To sustain our leadership in discovery and understanding of vertebrate diversity, and to protect the collection for future generations, we depend on donations. Any gifts, large or small, make a difference.

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