

Berkeley Professor (and Grad Alumnus) Wins E.O. Wilson Award

Friday, January 17th, 2014

In December, the Center for Biological Diversity presented Integrative Biology professor Tyrone Hayes with the E.O. Wilson Award for Outstanding Science in Biodiversity Conservation, in recognition of his work on pollution and amphibious creatures.

Hayes' research has focused on the threat of pesticides and other pollutants in the decline of amphibian species world-wide. His research, which has garnered harsh criticism from the chemical industry, found that the herbicide atrazine is harmful to amphibians, turning male frogs into females by disrupting normal hormonal development.

"I've been battling with the chemical industry for many years so to be acknowledged in this way for my work is significant for me," said Hayes.

After earning a B.S. degree from Harvard, Hayes received his Ph.D. from Berkeley in



E.O. Wilson Award. Photo courtesy of the Center for Biological Diversity.

1993 before becoming a professor in the Department of Integrative Biology the following year.

Considering that amphibians as a class survived the mass extinction that saw the end of dinosaurs— and yet today 70% of all amphibians are in some stage of decline — is a significant sign that chemical pollution is having a negative impact on the environment, said Hayes.

In addition to his work with amphibians, Hayes has worked to highlight health disparities among minority and low-income populations.

The award is named after Edward Osborne Wilson who was a professor of biology at Harvard, where he specialized in myrmecology, the study of ants. The award includes a \$1,000 prize and a handmade sculpture of an ant.