The international union for the study of social insects' Hamilton Award

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The Hamilton Award was established in 2006 in memory of William D. Hamilton (1936–2000) to honour a senior scientist for outstanding lifetime achievement in the biology of social insects. In addition to their profound contributions to the scientific field, awardees are also acknowledged for the influence they have had on colleagues and students. The award is presented at the quadrennial congress of the IUSI.

The first Hamilton Award was awarded to Ross Crozier in 2006. Charles Michener received the Hamilton Award in 2010 and Mary Jane West-Eberhard in 2014. Jacobus (Koos) Boomsma was the 2018 recipient of the fourth Hamilton Award.

The Editor-in-Chief of *Insectes Sociaux*, Miriam Richards, and the Secretary General of the IUSI, Madeleine Beekman, are pleased to establish a new tradition of publishing the acceptance speeches of Hamilton Awardees in *Insectes Sociaux*. In doing so, we will build a long-lasting record of the profiles of the influential scientists recognized by the Hamilton Award. Koos Boomsma's 2018 acceptance speech, given on Friday 10 August 2018, is the first to be published in a slightly edited version to accommodate key references and some of his slides as figures and a Table.

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