eScholarship
International Journal of Comparative Psychology

Title

Mini Symposia Highlighting the Hidden History of Comparative Psychology: Charles Henry Turner, A Case Study

Permalink

https://escholarship.org/uc/item/8fr4b6n8

Journal

International Journal of Comparative Psychology, 39(1)

ISSN

0889-3667

Authors

Beltran, Nicole Ann
Bingham, Stephanie
Abramson, Charles I

Publication Date

2026-11-24

DOI

10.46867/ijcp.65794

Copyright Information

This work is made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution License, available at https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

Peer reviewed

eScholarship.org Powered by the California Digital Library
University of California

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF COMPARATIVE PSYCHOLOGY

2026, 39
Jennifer Tobey
Editor
Peer-reviewed

Mini Symposia Highlighting the Hidden History of Comparative Psychology: Charles Henry Turner, A Case Study

Nicole A. Beltran[1], Stephanie M. Bingham[2], and Charles I. Abramson[3]

[1]Department of Fine Arts, Barry University

[2]Department of Biology, Barry University

[3]Laboratory of Comparative Psychology and Behavioral Biology, Oklahoma State University Department of Psychology

This article describes the use of mini symposia to highlight the richness of the history of comparative psychology and to promote experiential learning opportunities for undergraduates. As a model, we describe a mini symposium based on the life and contributions of the under-recognized African American comparative psychologist Charles Henry Turner (1867–1923). Information is provided on how to create mini symposia, considerations to keep in mind during planning, sample projects students created centered on the mini symposium theme, and student reflections on the experience. Further, we highlight the opportunity this format presents for cross-disciplinary collaborations on campus.

Keywords: Charles H. Turner, comparative psychology, mini symposium

比較心理学の隠された歴史を浮き彫りにするミニシンポジウム：チャールズ・ヘンリー・ターナーを事例として

本稿では、比較心理学の歴史の豊かさを浮き彫りにし、学部生の体験学習の機会を促進するためのミニシンポジウムの活用について論じる。モデル事例として、十分に評価されてこなかったアフリカ系アメリカ人比較心理学者であるチャールズ・ヘンリー・ターナー（1867-1923）の生涯と貢献に基づくミニシンポジウムについて解説する。具体的には、ミニシンポジウムの創出方法、計画中に考慮すべき留意点、ミニシンポジウムのテーマを中心として学生が作成したプロジェクト例、そしてこの経験に対する学生の振り返りについての情報を提供する。さらに、この様式がキャンパス内における分野横断的な連携の機会となることについても強調する。

キーワード：チャールズ・H・ターナー、比較心理学、ミニシンポジウム

Minisimposios para visibilizar la historia oculta de la psicología comparada: Charles Henry Turner, un estudio de caso

El presente artículo describe el uso de minisimposios como estrategia para destacar la riqueza de la historia de la psicología comparada y promover oportunidades de aprendizaje experiencial entre estudiantes de pregrado. Como ejemplo, se presenta un minisimposio dedicado a la vida y las contribuciones de Charles Henry Turner (1867–1923), psicólogo comparado afroamericano cuyo trabajo no ha recibido el reconocimiento que merece. Asimismo, se ofrecen orientaciones para la organización de este tipo de actividades, se examinan aspectos relevantes para su planificación y se presentan ejemplos de proyectos desarrollados por los estudiantes en torno al tema del minisimposio, junto con sus reflexiones sobre la experiencia. Finalmente, se destaca el potencial de este formato pedagógico para fomentar colaboraciones interdisciplinarias en el ámbito universitario.

Keywords: Charles H. Turner, psicología comparada, minisimposio

Please send correspondence to any of the authors NAB (nbeltran@barry.edu), SMB (sbingham@barry.edu), CIA (Charles.abramson@okstate.edu)

In higher education, we are consistently challenged to create and implement innovative and effective strategies for engaging students. For over three decades, the Laboratory of Comparative Psychology and Behavioral Biology at Oklahoma State University has developed an array of teaching resources to make comparative psychology accessible. These approaches include the use of both vertebrates and invertebrates for hands-on inquiry based experiences, turning pet stores into animal behavior research facilities, using the first-order transfer function for mathematical modeling, creating stickers/decals to highlight movements and individuals in comparative psychology, and a low-cost microcomputer suitable for field and laboratory use (for a review of this early work, see Abramson, 2020a; Abramson et al., 2024; Sandusky & Abramson, 2026; Wincheski et al., 2020; Wincheski et al., 2024).

The purpose of this article is to describe how a mini symposium can be added to the educational toolkit to make comparative psychology more accessible while strengthening appreciation and awareness of the field. With this goal in mind, we focused our initial symposium on the unsung African American comparative and behavioral psychologist Charles Henry Turner (Abramson, 2009; Abramson, 2024; Abramson et al., 2003). It should be noted, however, that such symposia lend themselves to any subject area and therefore will have broad application across disciplines.

The rationale behind the selection of Dr. Turner was threefold: First, as he is seldom discussed in psychology, we thought this was a good opportunity for students to learn about this largely forgotten comparative and behavioral psychologist. Secondly, we thought he would be an appropriate subject for our inaugural event because he is a scholar not typically profiled during Black History Month. Thirdly, as the field of comparative psychology is in decline (Abramson, 2015a, 2015b), we thought the mini symposium might attract new students' interest in and appreciation for this important area of psychology (Abramson, 2015a, 2015b; d'Isa & Abramson, 2023).

Organizing a Mini Symposium

During the initial planning of the mini symposium, we contacted department chairs and colleagues to identify potential classes in biology, fine arts, and psychology for a cross-disciplinary collaboration. For those classes in which the instructors were willing to participate, each student was assigned a research or creative project as part of their course grade. One advantage of this approach is that students from departments other than psychology learned not only about Turner's work, but also about comparative psychology as a discipline. Additional potential collaborators not included in this mini symposium were the Departments of English, History, and Sociology.

Depending on the course, students participating in such mini symposia will have a multitude of options for applying their discipline-specific skills to the symposium theme. For example, English classes could produce poems, sociology classes could produce essays from a social justice perspective, history classes could provide historical context for the period of time during which the scientist lived, and fine arts classes could create projects in multiple formats, such as posters, paintings, drawings, videos, and sculptures. In our case, the students in fine arts used their graphic design skills to create posters highlighting Turner's work, while the students in psychology and biology created research posters on some of his pivotal research findings; this article includes samples of projects created by graphic design and visual art students.

Once there was buy-in from collaborating departments, we completed the following tasks in our checklist:

1. Scheduled time for an orientation session for the students who would be working on projects for the mini symposium to become familiar with the subject of their research or creative activity.
2. Selected a date and time during which students and faculty from the participating departments could attend the mini symposium.
3. Reserved space on campus that could accommodate multimedia presentations, preferably a location that would also host the displays for a period of time after the mini symposium. The rationale here was to provide an opportunity for students, staff, and faculty who could not attend the mini symposium to learn about Turner even after the event.
4. Identified funding sources (intramural grants, departmental support, professional societies) for refreshments and other related expenses (printing and mounting supplies).
5. Secured a keynote speaker with expertise on the life and work of the mini-symposium's focus.
6. Advertised the symposium across campus using flyers, email notifications, and social media.

Mini Symposium Deliverables

Student Posters

The following are posters about Dr. Turner that were created by Graphic Design and Visual Art students at Barry University (Miami Shores, FL). Students were given the autonomy of creating projects that reflected aspects of Dr. Turner's life and work that resonated most with them. Some drew inspiration from his professional and civil rights struggles, while others highlighted his research accomplishments and contributions to comparative and behavioral psychology. They used a variety of graphic design software and techniques to bring their vision to life. In the process, this experiential learning opportunity culminated in the creation of original works of art that showcased their training, technical skill, and creativity (Figures 1-14).

Figure 1

Skye Alfonso, Junior, BFA - Graphic Design Specialization



Figure 2

Nicole Alvarado, Senior, BFA - Graphic Design Specialization

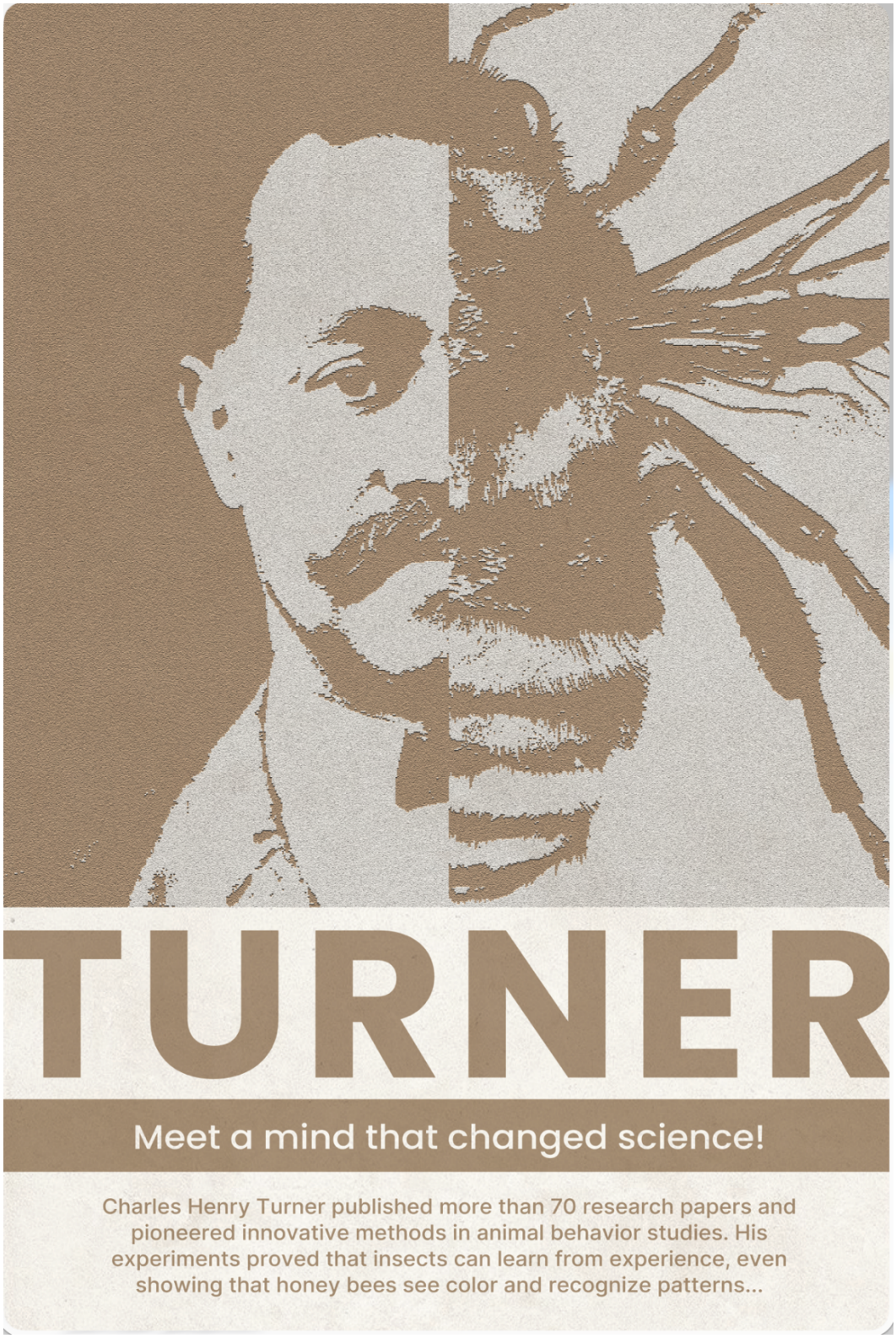


Figure 3

Marie Barrientos, Senior, BFA – Visual Art Specialization

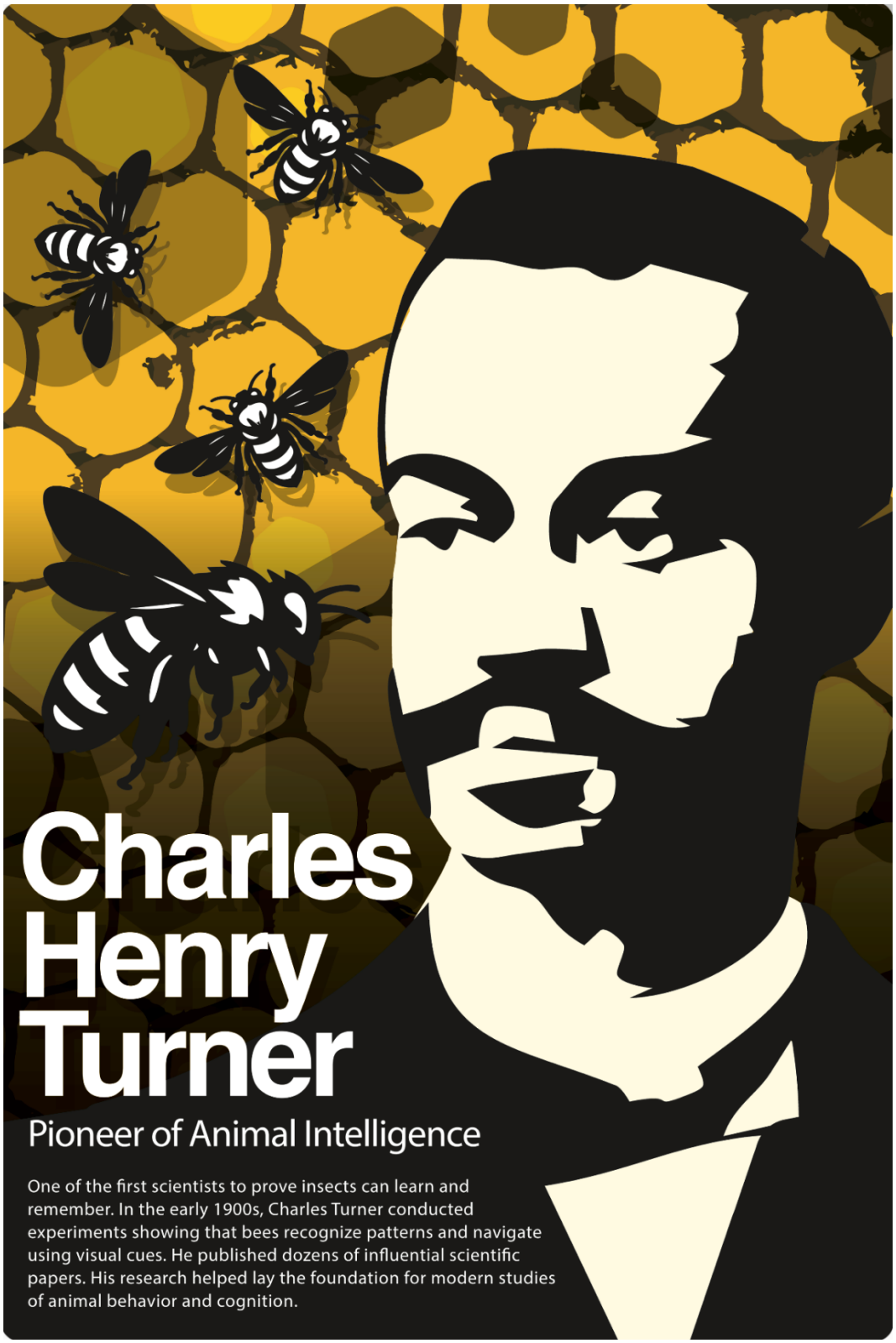


Figure 4

Brianna Bowe, Junior, BFA - Graphic Design Specialization

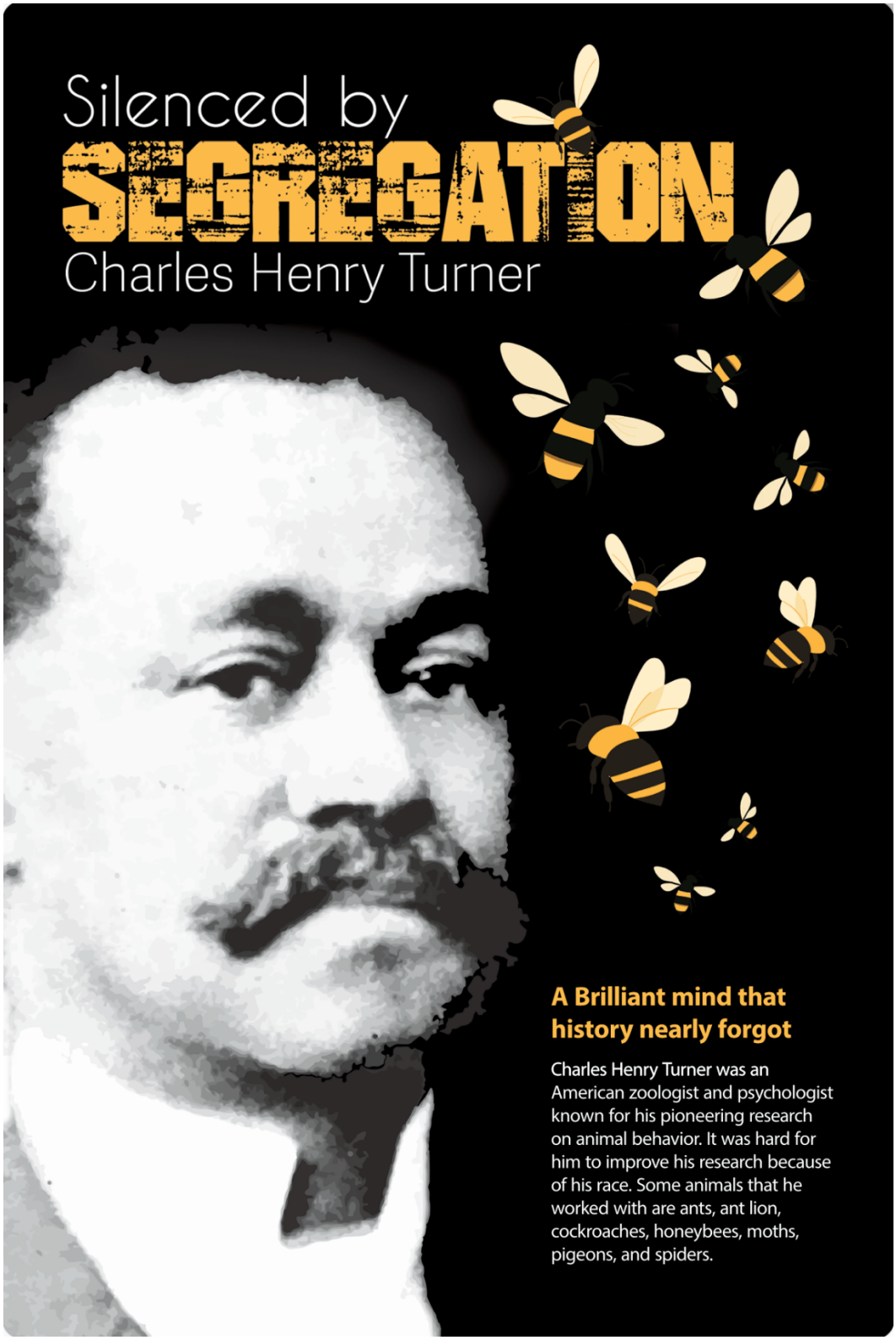


Figure 5

Dana Castro, Senior, BFA - Graphic Design Specialization

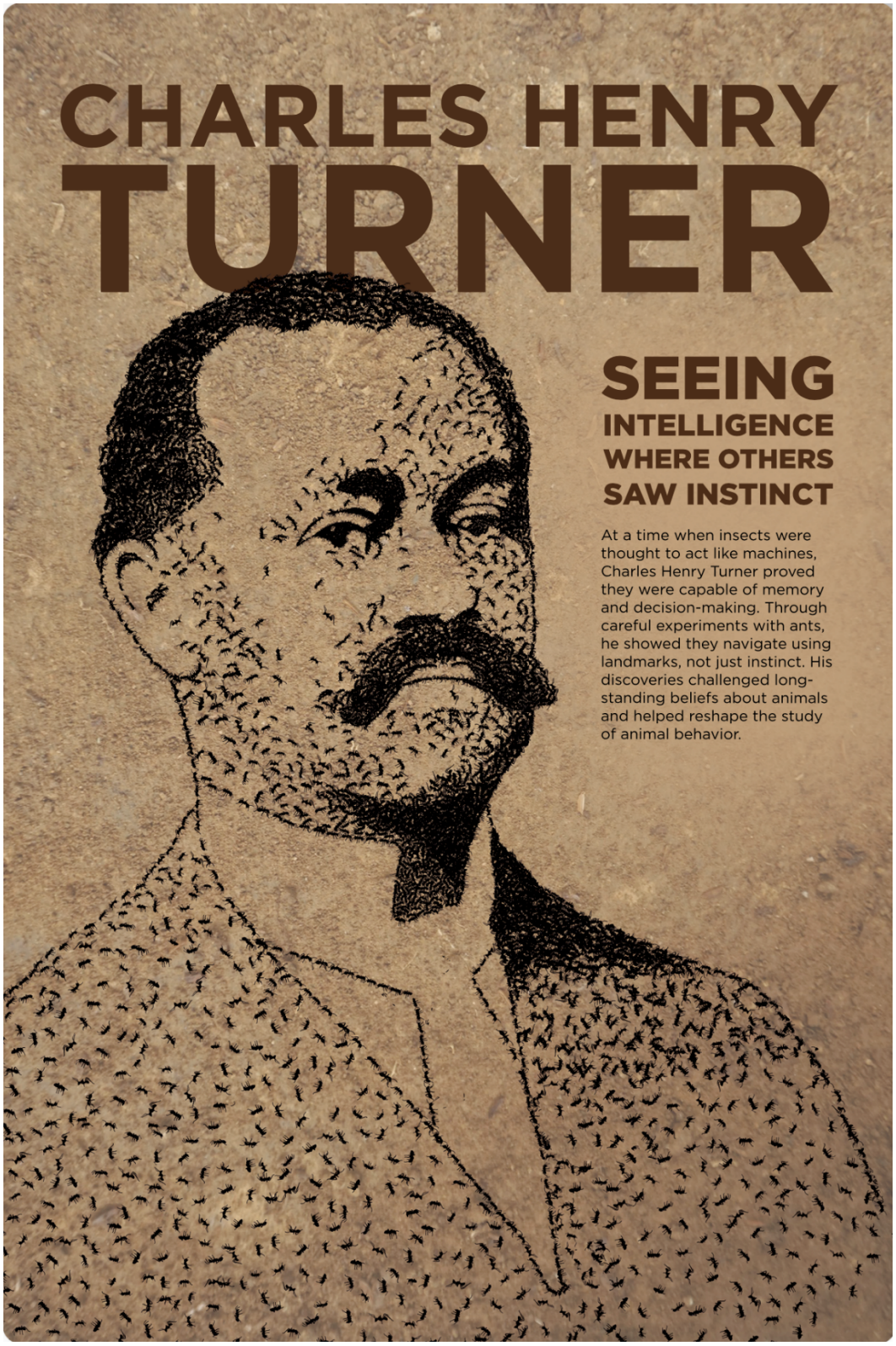


Figure 6

Garvens Cenat, Junior, BFA - Graphic Design Specialization

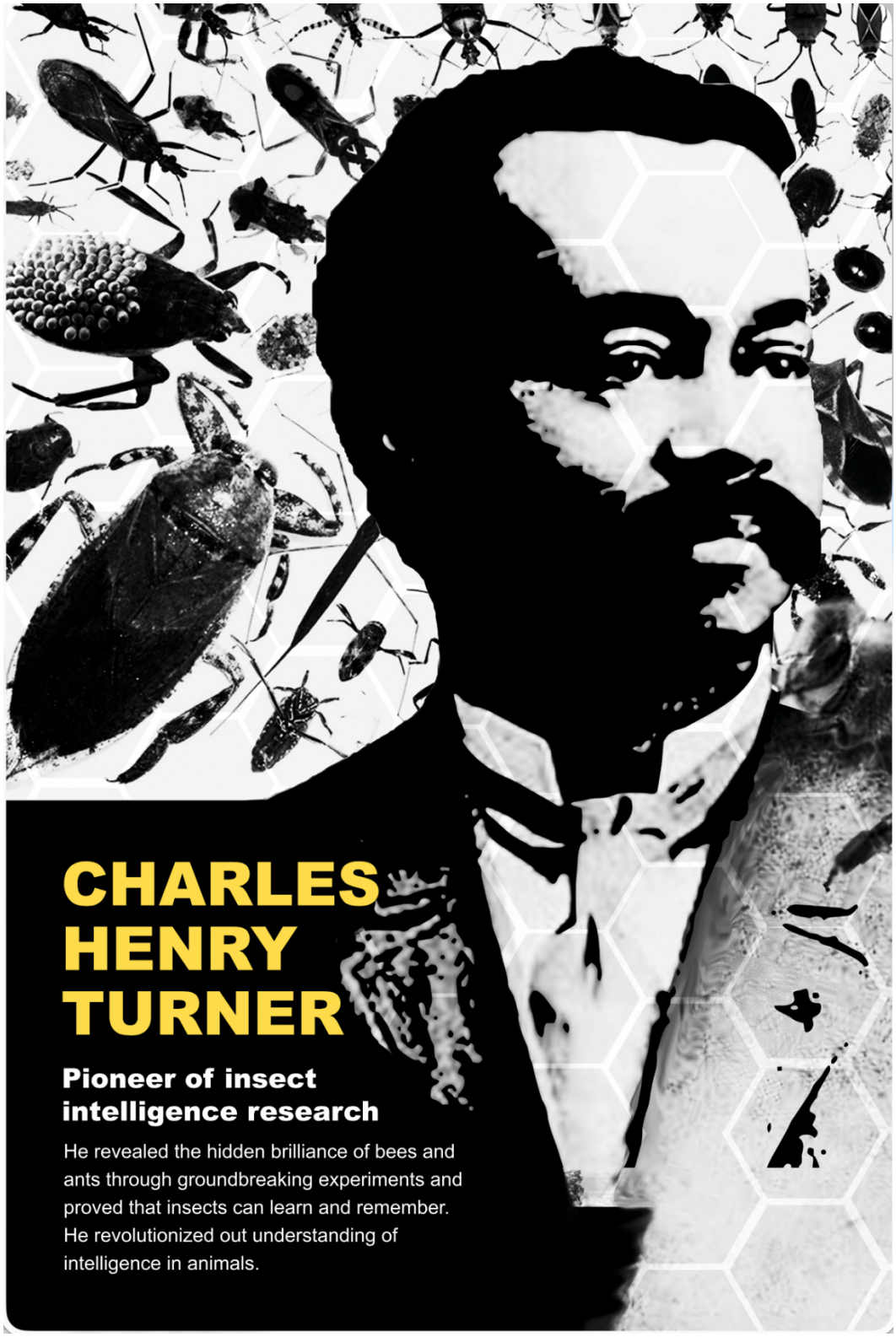


Figure 7

Hector Colon, Senior, BFA - Graphic Design Specialization

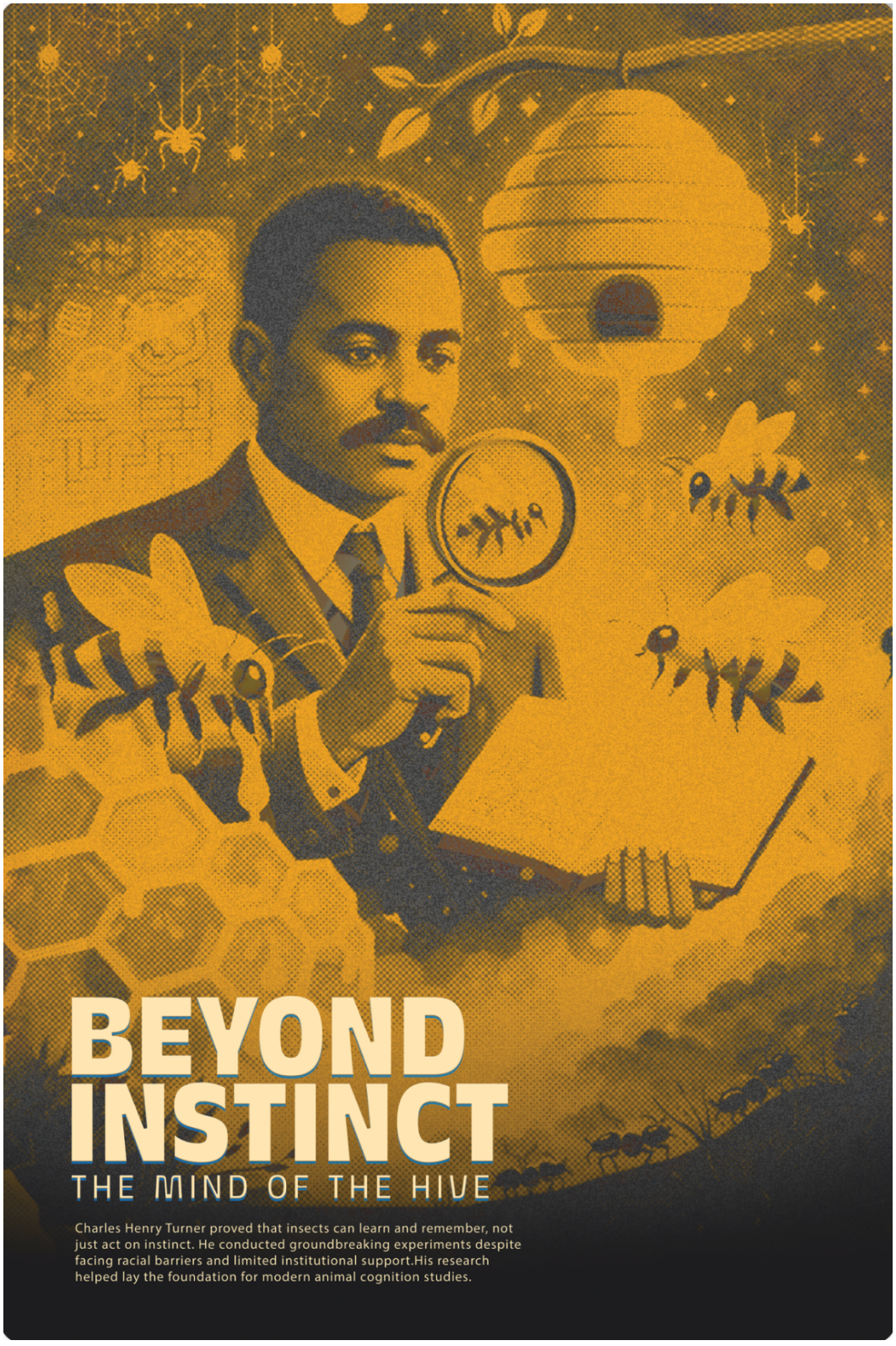


Figure 8

Kaumari Harden, Junior, BFA - Graphic Design Specialization

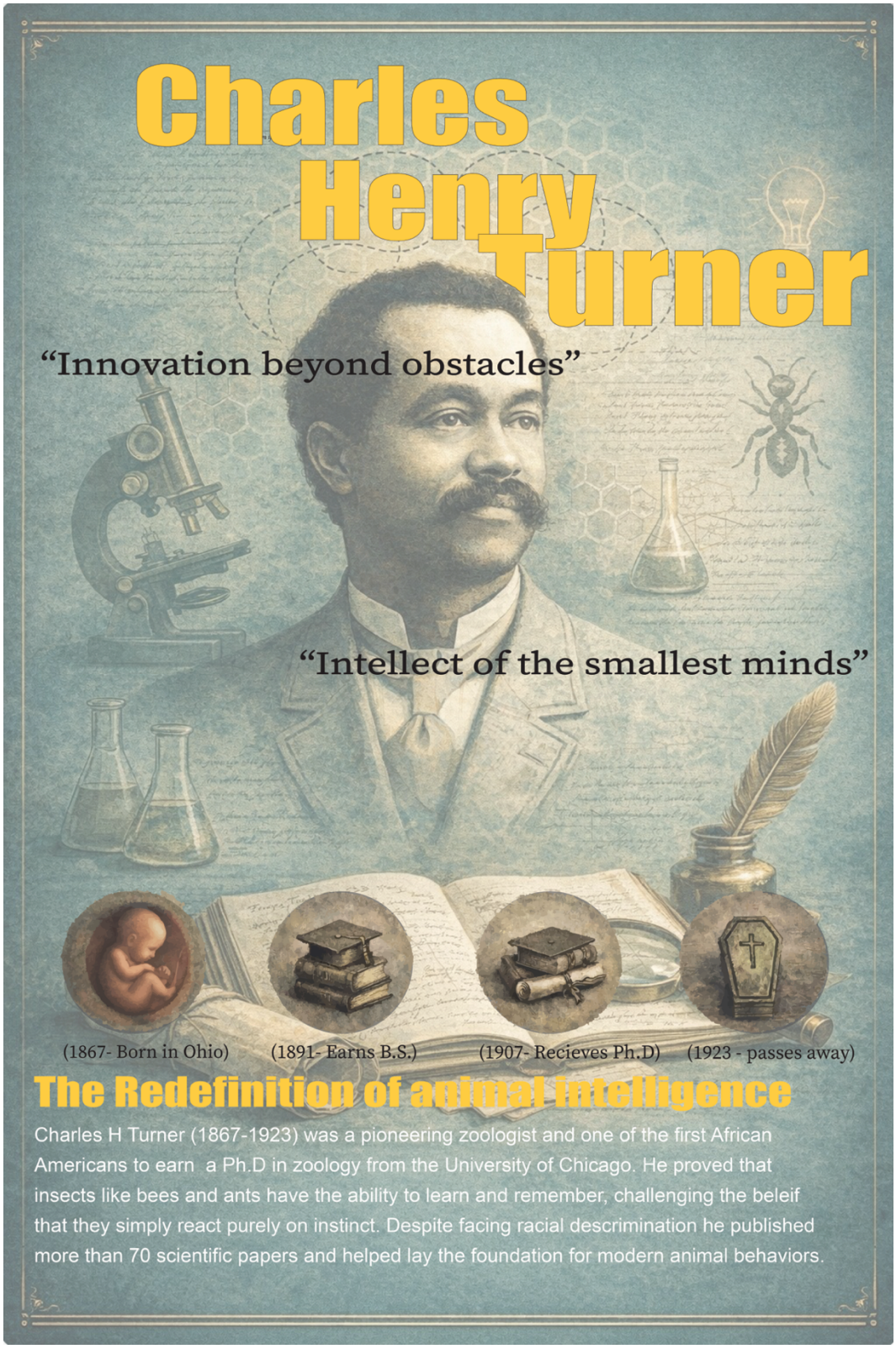


Figure 9

Sierra Johnson, Senior, BFA - Graphic Design Specialization

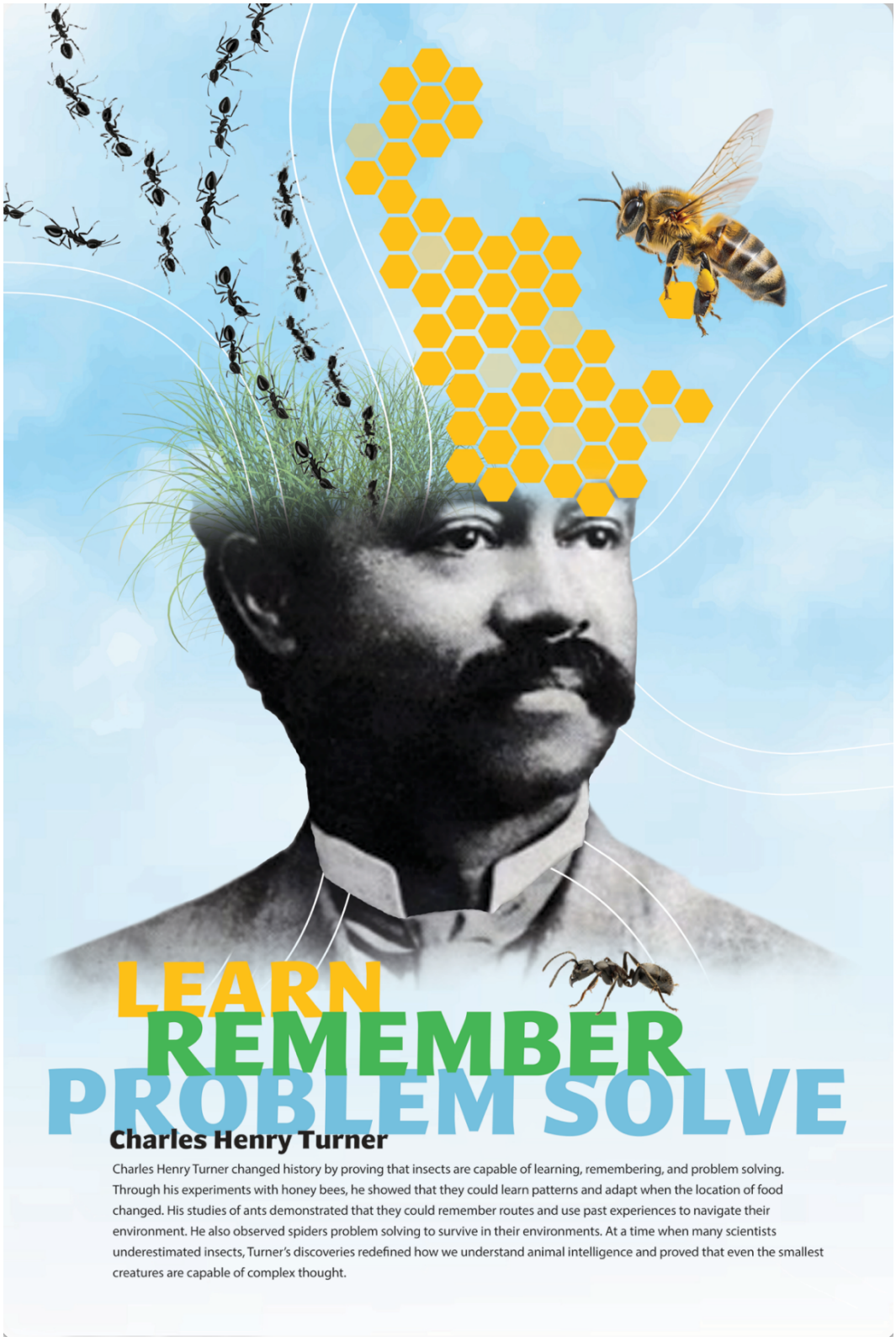


Figure 10

Alejandro Montejo, Junior, BFA - Graphic Design Specialization

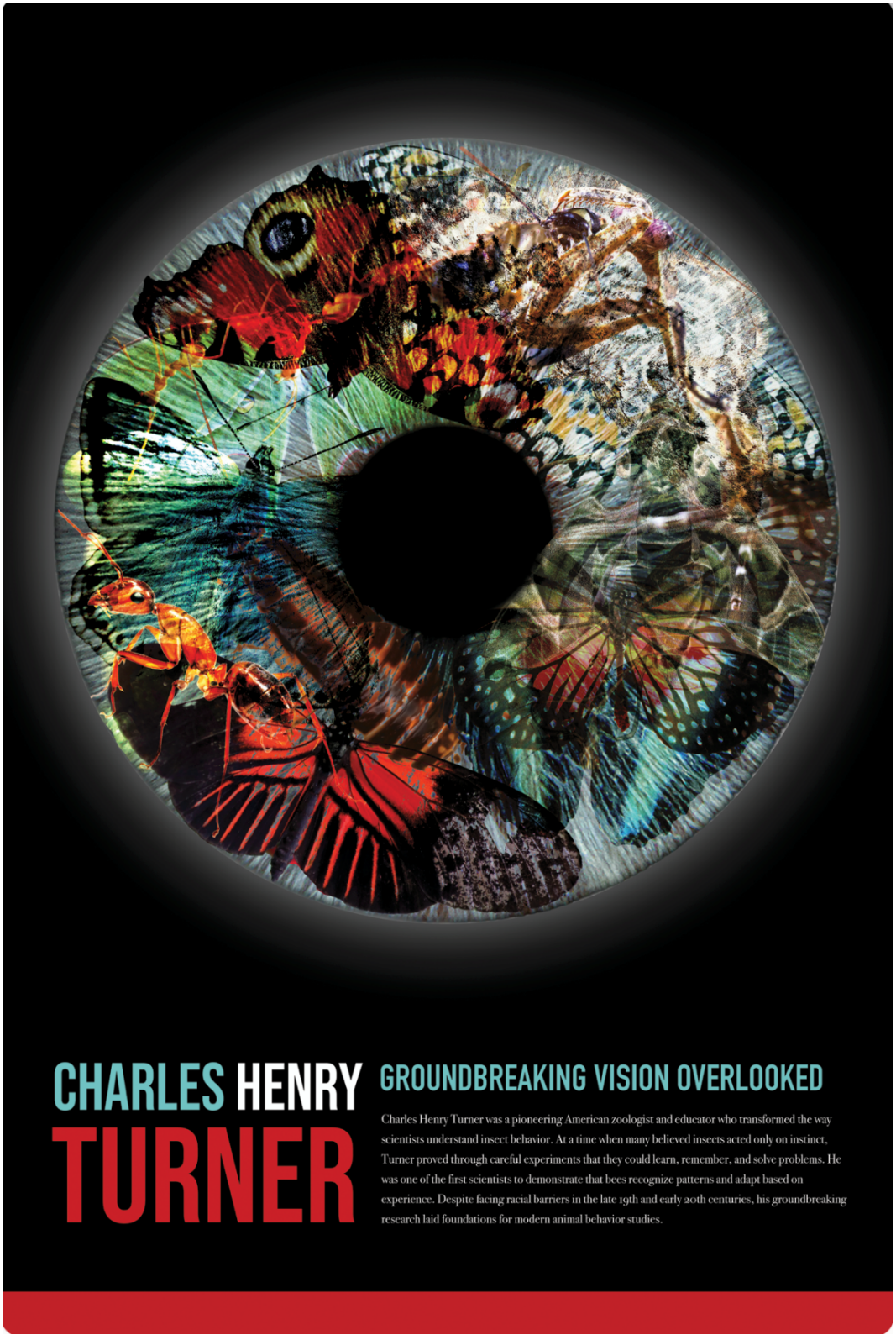


Figure 11

Ronny Orozco, Junior, BFA - Graphic Design Specialization

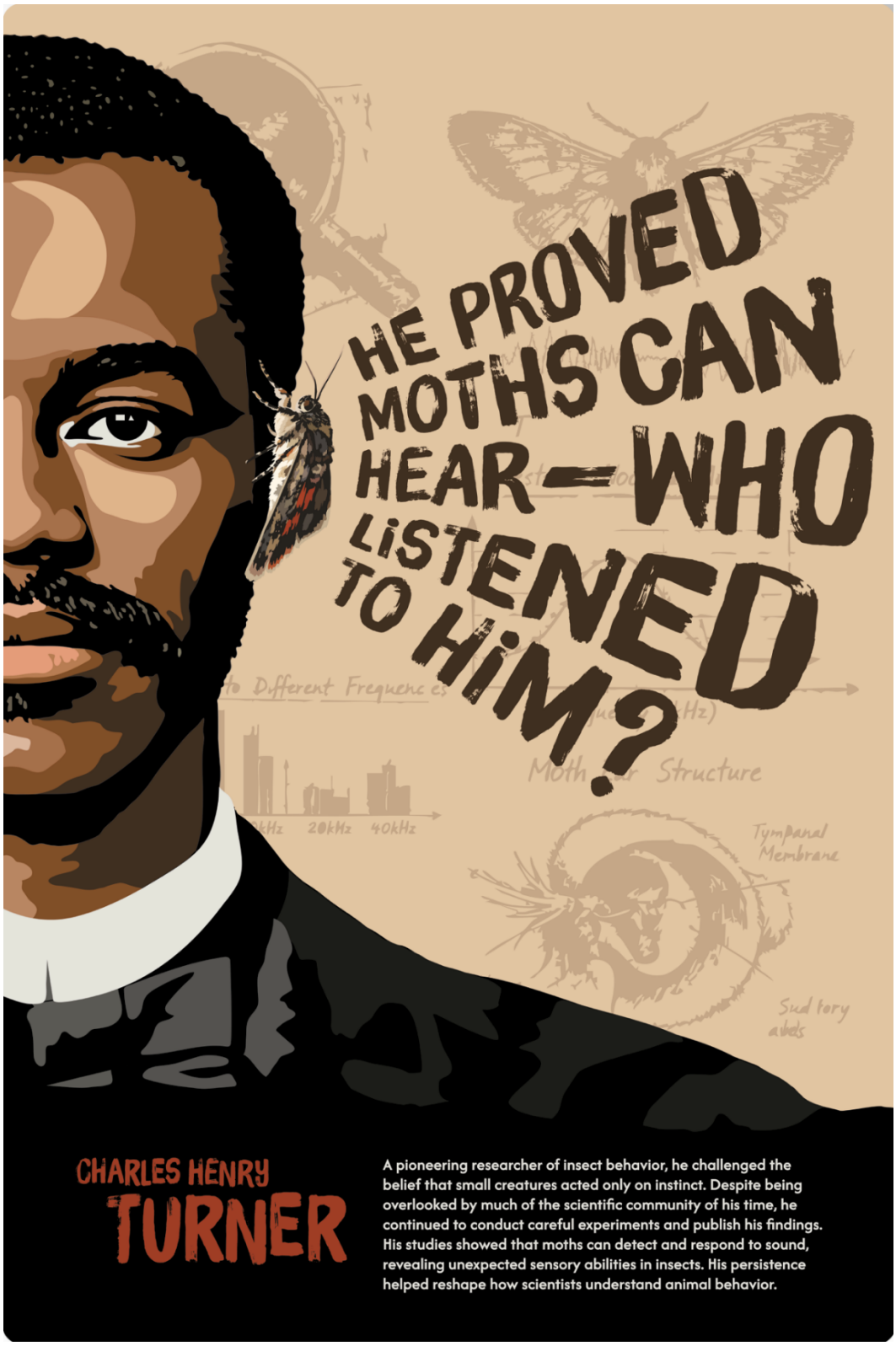


Figure 12

Steven Rego, Senior, BFA - Graphic Design Specialization

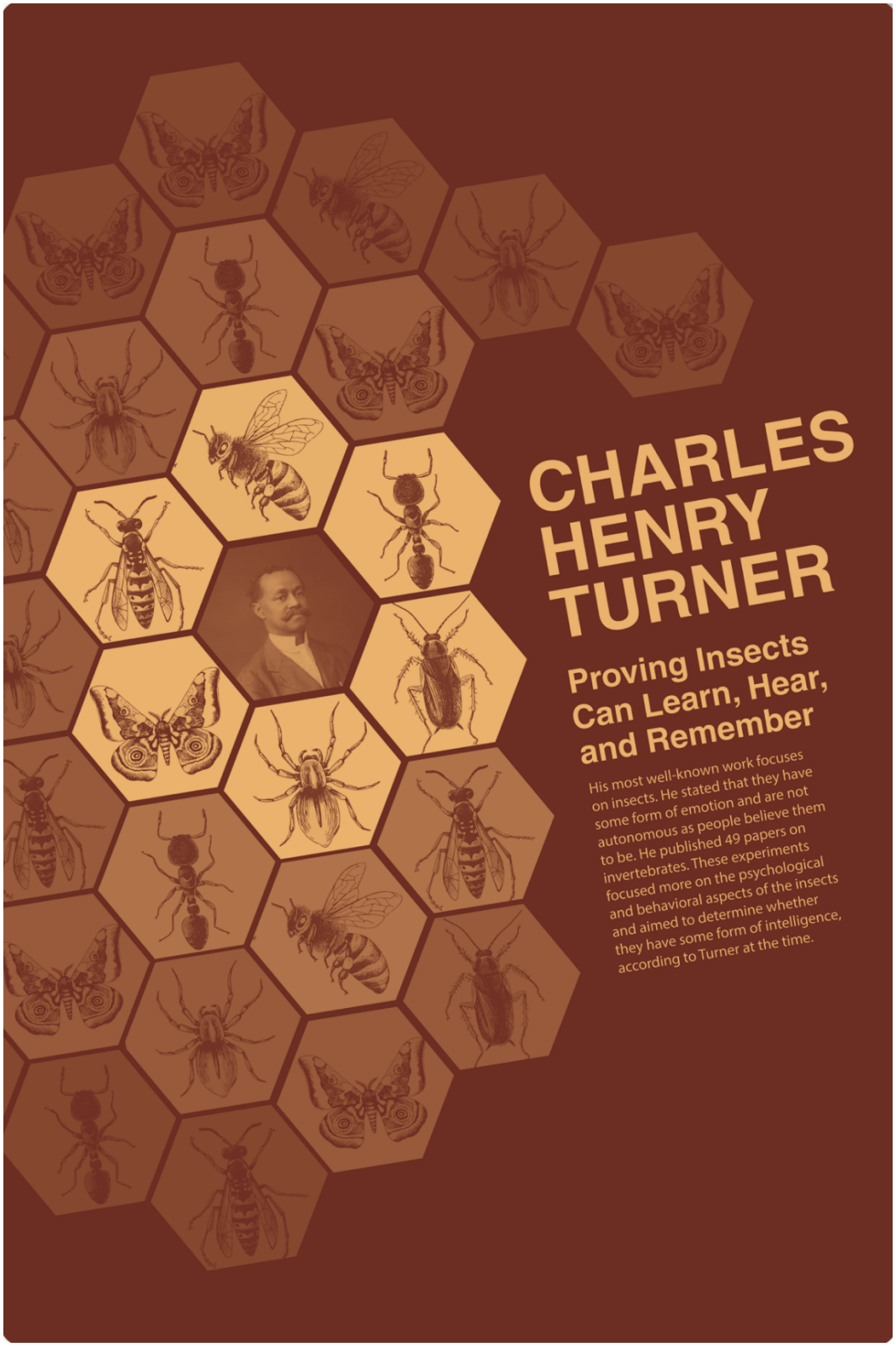


Figure 13

Venus Sobalvarro, Senior, BFA - Graphic Design Specialization

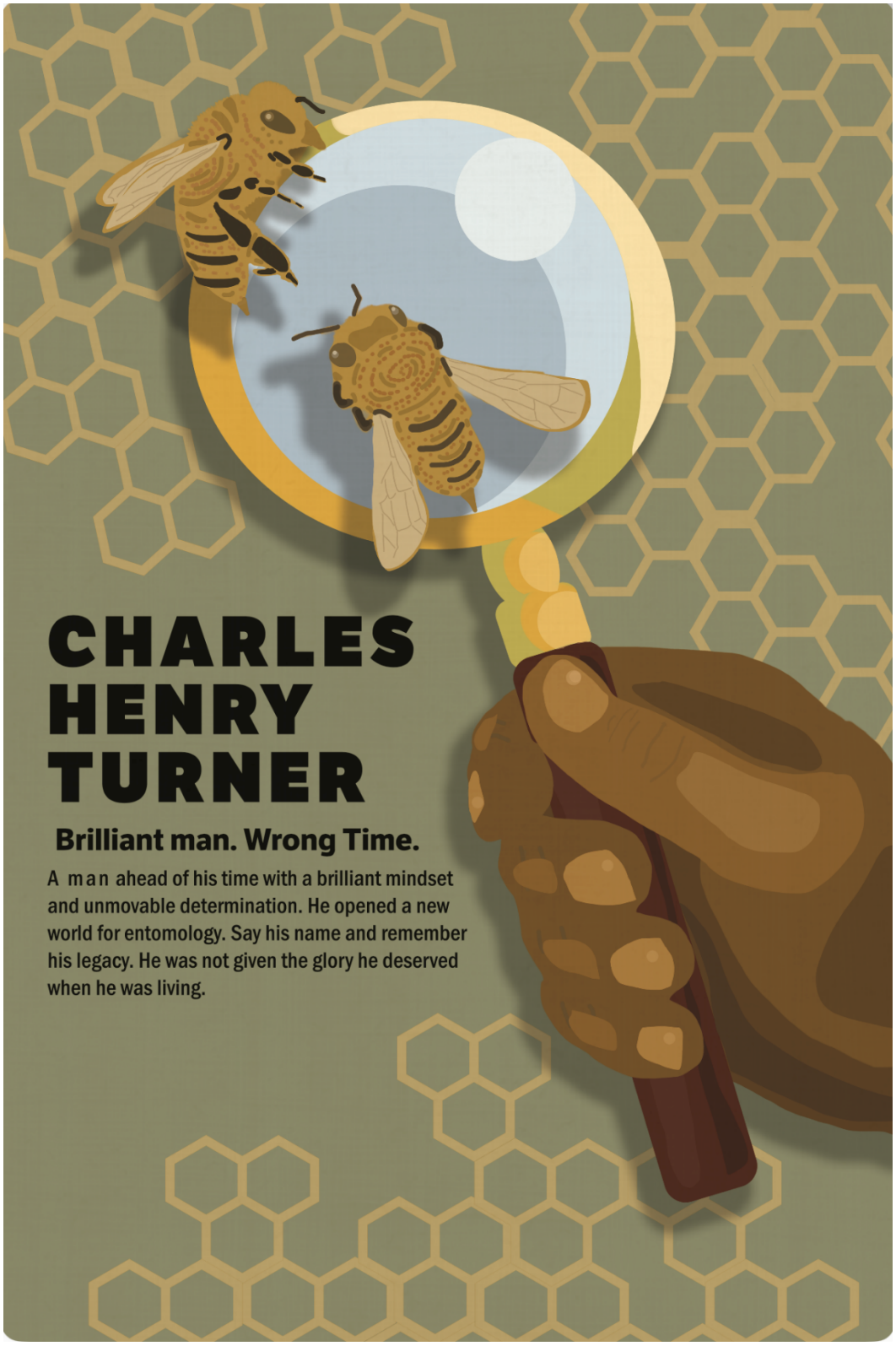
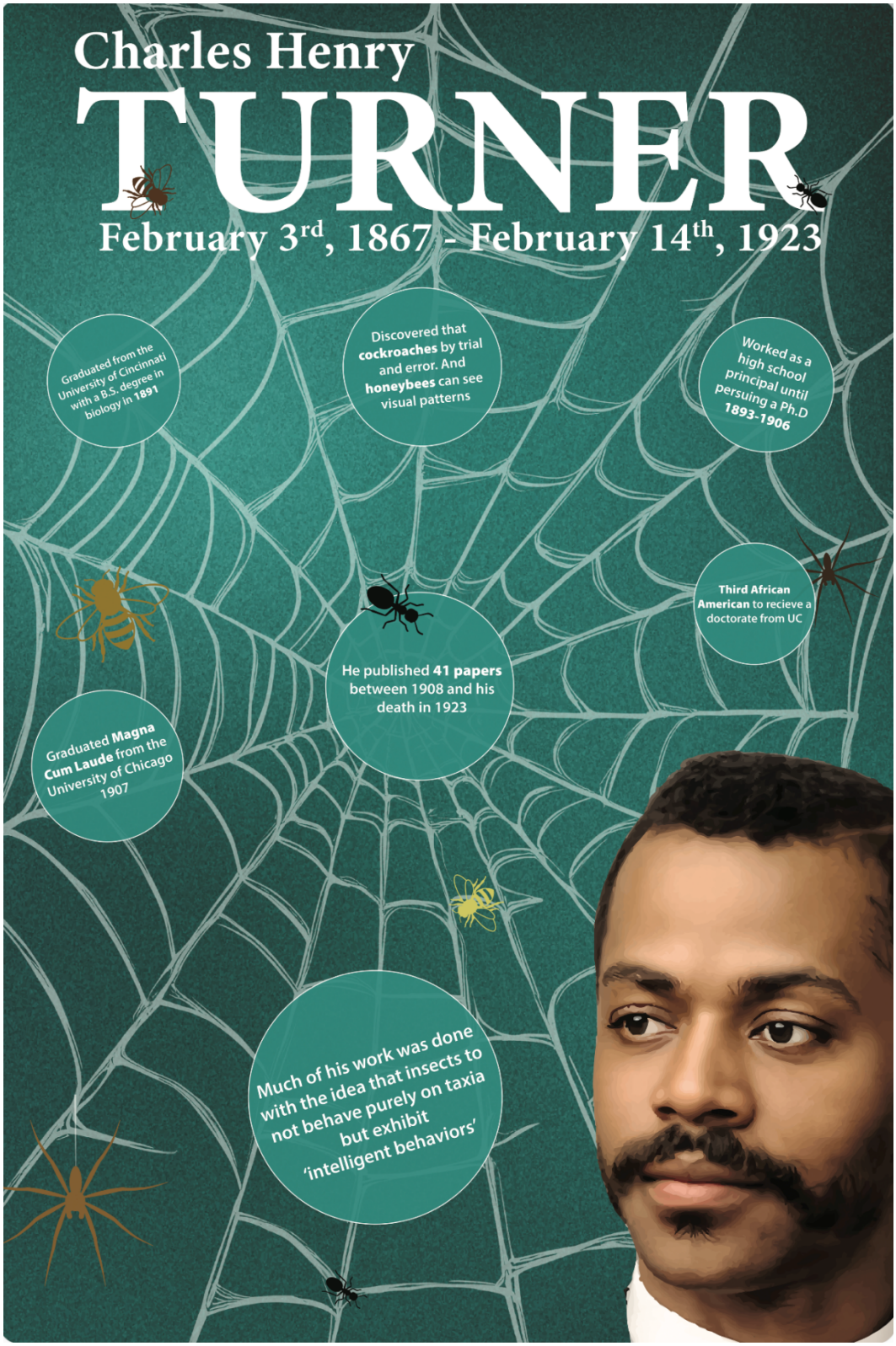


Figure 14

Jerome Warren, Senior, BFA - Graphic Design Specialization



Student Reflections

The following are students' reflections on their participation in creating projects for the mini symposium on Charles Henry Turner. Students were asked to recount technical details about how they created their compositions, whether the experience helped them to develop any new skills as graphic artists, what they found enjoyable, as well as what they found challenging about the overall experience.

> In this project, I gained knowledge about creating patterns, creating color palettes, and using different effects. I also learned how to create thin lines on the inside and thick lines on the outside of my cartoons. It added much-needed depth and made it seem more balanced. I encountered issues whilst using textures with outlines. It made the outline very pixelated and looked as if the program was glitching out. Thankfully, that was mostly due to how it looked on Adobe® Illustrator. When converted into a PDF, the poster's glitchy lines disappeared.
>
> I had no knowledge of Charles Henry Turner before this project, but I enjoyed researching about his story and learning how to include references of his work into the poster. It is mind boggling to learn that someone who did so much for zoology and psychology was pushed aside by his own community. Thankfully, this project done by me and my peers will hopefully put the spotlight on Charles Henry Turner after decades in the shadows. My poster is supposed to draw attention to the scientist himself and some of the animals he observed. These animals included moths, honeybees, ants, and cockroaches. The bee covering Turner's eye is supposed to represent the fact that all that he wanted to focus on was his studies.
>
> I thought that exaggeration in both features and overall visuals was needed to make the poster look unique in any space. I had to really think about how I wanted my poster to stand out from other posters used to promote different scientists. I thought the cartoon route was the best to go on since its main goal is to grab people's attention and get them interested in Charles Henry Turner's story.
>
> - Skye Alfonso

> What I enjoyed most about this project was the opportunity to experiment with new ideas and push my creativity. Although I initially struggled to realize my final design, the process of exploring different directions ultimately led me to a solution I am proud of. Overcoming that challenge made the outcome even more rewarding.
>
> I used Adobe® Illustrator and Adobe® Photoshop to develop my poster. By combining imagery of Charles Henry Turner with a bee, I was able to create a cohesive visual concept. I also applied filter effects to achieve a subtle relief texture, adding depth and visual interest to the composition.
>
> Throughout this project, I developed stronger control over filters and learned how to use them more intentionally to create a harmonious final image. I also improved my understanding of visual hierarchy and text composition, which helped me communicate information more effectively within the design.
>
> One of the main challenges I faced was in the early stages of composition and translating my ideas into a clear visual direction. However, through constructive feedback and persistence, I was able to regain clarity, refine my concept, and move toward a more sophisticated and elegant minimalist design.

This project introduced me to Charles Henry Turner, a scientist I was not previously familiar with. Through research, I gained a deeper appreciation for his groundbreaking work in animal behavior, particularly his studies on bees. I also learned about the lack of recognition he received during his lifetime, which made his achievements even more impactful to me. His story is both inspiring and deserving of greater acknowledgment.

- Nicole Alvarado

When working on our project creating a poster for Charles Henry Turner, what I enjoyed the most was learning about his experiments and the animals he worked with. When creating my poster I used the program Adobe® Illustrator. I experimented with different types of layers for the background and worked with the image trace tool for the portrait. What I struggled with the most was the placement of the text on the poster. Before working on this project, I didn't know anything about Charles Turner, so thanks to it I have learned about his work and how important it was to the studies of animals in science.

-Marie Barrientos

During the process of the Charles Henry Turner poster project, the part that I enjoyed the most was the critiques. Seeing the brilliant poster design concepts and creativity that everyone else got from researching his work was mind blowing for me.

The software that I used to create my poster was Adobe® Photoshop because I am more comfortable using that software for creating designs. From this project, I've gained the skill that less is more. Throughout the process of this project, the challenge that I encountered was making my design come to life. I changed the direction of my design because I had trouble bringing my idea on paper so therefore, I went a simpler route.

Creating a poster about Charles Henry Turner helped me better understand his groundbreaking research on insect behavior and recognize how his important contributions to science were often overlooked due to racial discrimination.

-Brianna Bowe

Working on the Charles Henry Turner poster was a meaningful and interesting process. I enjoyed doing research and learned about and his groundbreaking work on how insects act. I had never thought about how ants find their way around, and it was interesting to learn that they use memory and visual cues instead of just instinct. This idea was the main thing that inspired my design.

I used Adobe® Photoshop and Adobe® Illustrator to make the poster. I got pictures of ants, removed their backgrounds in Photoshop, and then used Illustrator to put together Turner's portrait by placing each ant individually. This method helped me add depth and shading to form a recognizable face. I went back to Photoshop to change the opacity of the background image, adjusted the contrast to make the ants stand out against the background, and added and arranged the text. I learned new technical skills through this project, especially how to put together many small visual elements to make a bigger picture.

Turner's work also helped me understand experimental design better. One big problem was keeping the file size down in Illustrator, since the program often crashed because there were so many elements. I fixed this by combining objects to make things less complicated, but it still took a long time to place each ant.

This project helped me learn more about what Turner did and the problems he had to deal with. Even though he didn't have many chances because of racial discrimination, his work helped shape modern studies of animal behavior. This experience taught me how important it is to recognize scientists who aren't talked about enough and show how their work can be displayed with design.

-Dana Castro

It’s great hearing about a historic figure. Turner was someone completely new to me and it’s always amazing hearing about a black figure achieving great things. I used Adobe® Illustrator and Photoshop to make my poster. I used mostly what I already knew to create the poster.

I never knew of Turner before making the poster but researching him was very interesting and I am very thankful for his contributions as they were breakthroughs in helping us understand animals on a deeper level through his research on insects.

-Garvens Cenat

Working on the Charles Henry Turner poster project was a valuable experience that pushed me both creatively and intellectually. What I enjoyed most about the process was the ability to take historical and scientific information and translate it into a visual format that could engage an audience. As a graphic designer, I’m used to creating visually appealing work, but this project required me to balance aesthetics with accuracy and clarity, which made it more meaningful than a typical design assignment.

For this project, I primarily used Adobe® Photoshop to design the poster and organize the layout for any image adjustments and visual enhancements. These tools allowed me to refine typography, create a strong visual hierarchy, and ensure the final product looked professional and polished. Throughout the process, I developed stronger skills in information hierarchy, layout design, and visual storytelling. I also improved my ability to simplify complex scientific ideas into digestible content without losing their meaning. Beyond design skills, I gained knowledge about Turner’s work, particularly his research on insect behavior and cognition, which challenged many assumptions in the scientific community during his time.

One of the main challenges I encountered was organizing a large amount of information into a clean, readable format without overcrowding the design. It was easy to include too much text, which would take away from the visual impact. To work through this, I focused on prioritizing key points, using concise language, and relying on visual elements like spacing, icons, and hierarchy to guide the viewer. Another challenge was ensuring that the design remained engaging while still respecting the academic nature of the project.

This project significantly deepened my understanding of Turner and his contributions to science. Before this, I was not fully aware of how groundbreaking his research was, especially considering the barriers he faced as a Black scientist in the early 20th century. Learning about his work gave me a greater appreciation for his impact on animal behavior studies and the importance of recognizing underrepresented figures in science. Overall, this project not only strengthened my design skills but also broadened my perspective on the intersection of science, history, and visual communication.

-Hector Colon

The most enjoyable part of the Charles Henry Turner poster process was the designing of the background. My goal was to achieve the look of a regular high school poster you might see in your average history or social studies class something historical and informative. Achieving the look of a grainy, simple, informative grade-school poster where students or anyone can simply look at it, catch the energy I was trying to portray, and learn mostly unknown historical facts and figures. Basically, the goal was to catch attention but at the same time be informative, and I believe it turned out successful.

For my creative process I used apps like Procreate on my iPad to sketch out thumbnail ideas as well as AI to give me a generic reference of what that grainy history poster look I was aiming for could possibly look like, and lastly I used Adobe® Illustrator for the implementation of text and some of the small imagery presented in the poster.

New skills I feel I've acquired as a result of working on this project, I can't say I learned too much outside of learning how to work a little more quickly and figuring out the specifics regarding details and info I want to include in my project, picking up on what information can be viewed and seen as the highest level of importance like not just presenting random information that somewhat relates to the topic of discussion making the details that matter the primary focal point of course with the addition of a well-crafted, attention grabbing visual background.

This project influenced my understanding of Charles Henry Turner simply by shedding light on who he was and his historical discovery that's not the usual topic of history. Individuals like Turner you don't really hear about in your ordinary history classes. Overall it's opened my eyes to the amounts of history many just don't know about, shedding light and providing the realization that there are major parts of history that are overlooked by the masses but contributed to something we know regularly today like the idea that insects have the ability to think.

-Kaumari Harden

To be honest, what I enjoyed most about the Charles Henry Turner poster project process was the final critique transitioning into the final showcase when all of our work was displayed at the mini symposium. I really enjoy admiring my peers' work and their creativity, and just seeing how everyone expressed Turner in their own unique ways. Even though we are all different, everyone found a way to represent him in a way they could relate to.

I started off in Adobe® Photoshop and pieced everything together in Adobe® Illustrator. There was a lot of fading, overlaying, and overlapping involved throughout the process.

I learned more about visual hierarchy, especially through using the text learn, remember, and problem solve in a staggered and slightly overlapping way, which is something I had never tried before. I also learned how to make the overall design feel cohesive without it becoming overwhelming. Initially, I had the three main words facing different orientations with different effects, and it took away from Turner as the focal point. I decided to make the text more consistent by adjusting the size and giving each word or phrase its own color instead. I learned that in design, all the pieces should work together rather than compete, and that knowing the order of what I want the viewer to see first, second, and third is really important.

Going from not knowing about him to now understanding his contributions says a lot. Awareness is important, and this project showed me how many people who have done great things do not always get the recognition they deserve. Even though Charles Henry Turner may not be widely known, learning about his work and sharing his story through this project allows his impact to continue reaching others.

-Sierra Johnson

For this project, I created a poster based on Charles Henry Turner, focusing on building a strong visual identity through typography, layout, and imagery. The goal was not just to make something visually appealing, but to communicate a deeper message about who he was and what he represents. Throughout the process, I tried to be intentional with every design choice and make sure everything connected back to a clear concept.

One of the main ideas I developed was using an eye made out of insects as the central visual. I chose this because I wanted to represent Charles Henry Turner's vision and passion in a creative and symbolic way. The insects come together to form the eye, which reflects how his interests and dedication shape the way he saw the world. Instead of showing something obvious, I wanted the viewer to look twice and discover the meaning behind it. This idea also connected to the typography. The colors used in his name were taken directly from the insects in the eye. At first glance, the viewer might just see bold and interesting colors, but once they realize those colors come from the insects, it creates a deeper connection within the design. This was intentional because I wanted everything in the poster to feel unified and meaningful, not random. The eye itself was also important for the composition. I used it as the main focal point to immediately grab attention and pull the viewer into the poster. Once their attention is captured, they begin to notice the details, like the insects and the color choices. This leads them to spend more time looking at the design and encourages them to read and understand more about Charles Henry Turner. In that way, the design works almost like a visual journey, starting with attraction and leading into discovery.

While working on this project, I also spent time learning more about Charles Henry Turner as a person, not just as a subject for a design. Understanding his passion, his way of seeing things, and the dedication he had toward what he cared about made me approach the project differently. It stopped being just an assignment and became something more meaningful to me. I wanted the poster to feel like a way of honoring him, not just representing him. Learning about him made me realize how important it is to have a strong vision and stay committed to what you care about. As a designer and also as an athlete, that idea connected with me personally. It reminded me that growth comes from passion and consistency, and that your perspective is what makes your work unique. Because of that, I felt a responsibility to do right by him with this project and create something that truly reflects his identity and energy.

I focused on creating a clear hierarchy so that the name stands out while still working with the imagery. I also made sure the layout guided the viewer's eye naturally from the focal point to the rest of the information. Keeping everything balanced without taking attention away from the main idea was something I had to adjust multiple times. One challenge I faced during this project was making sure the concept was clear but not too obvious. I didn't want to overexplain the idea visually, but I also didn't want it to be confusing. Finding that balance took time, especially when deciding how detailed the insects should be and how strong the colors should appear.

Overall, this project helped me grow as a designer by pushing me to think more conceptually. Instead of just focusing on aesthetics, I learned how to create meaning through visuals and connect different elements into one cohesive idea. It also helped me understand how important it is to guide the viewer's experience, from first glance to deeper understanding. More importantly, it reminded me that design can be used to honor people and tell their story in a powerful and creative way.

-Alejandro Montejo

Working on my poster about Charles Henry Turner was both a creative and meaningful learning experience. It didn't feel like just another design project, but more like giving a voice to someone history overlooked. First, what I enjoyed most about the project was the moment everything came together for me. At first, I was just gathering facts, but the deeper I went, the more I realized I wasn't just designing a poster but telling a story that deserved to be seen. From this moment on, I tried for every element within the poster to emphasize the struggle yet the ingenuity of Charles Henry Turner.

For this project, I mainly used Adobe® Illustrator, along with Adobe® Photoshop, to adjust some of the images used in the illustrations. These programs gave me the tools I needed to create a layout that is clear and easy for viewers to follow. One of the biggest skills I developed was understanding visual hierarchy, using each element not just to make the poster look good, but to help communicate its message. I also explored symbolism more than I have before, using visuals inspired by Turner's research on insects to convey ideas without burdening viewers with too much text.

One of the greatest difficulties I experienced was choosing a clear direction for the poster concept. Turner accomplished so much, and all his work interested me, so I came up with multiple ideas and felt tempted to include everything. However, I learned that strong design isn't about saying more, but about focusing on what matters most. In the end, I chose to center the design around the moth. To me, it was both ironic and meaningful that Turner devoted his work to understanding creatures many people saw as insignificant. In a way, that reflected his own experience of being overlooked and underestimated by society at the time.

In conclusion, this project changed the way I see Charles Henry Turner. Before this, I had never heard of him, which says a lot about how history can overlook important figures. Learning about his work on insect cognition made me realize not only the value of studying things people often dismiss, but also how advanced and cutting-edge his ideas were, especially given the challenges he faced as an African American scientist at the time. Overall, this project strengthened my design skills and reminded me that design can be an effective means for educating others and bringing attention to stories that deserve to be told.

-Ronny Orozco

The Charles Henry Turner poster project was a fascinating subject to research and design. Learning about Charles Henry Turner, his remarkable accomplishments, and the significant setbacks and adversity he faced helped me create a more meaningful and impactful poster. What I enjoyed most about the project was the design and research aspect of it. The research, although it was fascinating, allowed me to design the poster that I thought of with many trials and errors until I stayed on a design I liked and one that showed Turner's character.

The software I used to create the poster was the Adobe® Illustrator art application and Adobe® Photoshop to remove the background off the photos used. A new piece of knowledge I gained while working on this project was how to use the Navigator view to see only the design that is on the artboard.

The main challenge I encountered was that I initially wanted to use a honeycomb design, since it is a style I find very easy to work with. I planned to add a glass laboratory flask effect on top of the honeycombs, but I felt this combination would cause me to lose the meaning I was trying to convey to the audience. I decided to scrap that idea and instead masked the insect on top of the hexagonal shapes. The sketch-style design of the insects worked well, as it fit perfectly with Turner's theme as a researcher. I specifically focused on his insect research because I related strongly to the type of work he did with them. I also masked an image of Turner into the hexagonal shape, as I thought it would fit the overall design. After finishing the honeycomb design, I realized I had no clear place to put the title, sub-header, and supporting information. These elements are the most crucial aspects of a poster about a person, so I had to figure out where they would go. This prompted me to remove some of the honeycomb pattern to create space. After much trial and error, I found a good spot for all the text. Although I solved that problem, the overall composition still looked awkward when everything was straight. Tilting the design and text slightly made it much more readable and prevented the layout from feeling cramped.

This project greatly deepened my understanding of Charles Henry Turner's accomplishments, the setbacks he faced, and the adversity he overcame in his research. The more I learned about him, the more inspirational I found his story. His groundbreaking contributions showing that insects are not mindless creatures, but can hear sounds, possess vision, and exhibit complex behaviors such as ants building mounds and spiders creating patterned webs were especially eye-opening. These findings helped advance our understanding of insect intelligence and behavior, providing a strong foundation for future research. Overall, studying Turner's life and work has inspired me to adopt a similar mindset of perseverance and curiosity in my own life.

-Steven Rego

During my time working on my Charles Henry Turner poster project, I truly enjoyed connecting my illustration to the research part of the process. While brainstorming on how the illustration should connect to his legacy, I challenged myself on mostly just using the lasso tool in Adobe® Photoshop. I wanted my piece to look illustrated by hand but also clean to the eye. Using different layers of colors and illustrations, I was able to finish a piece that would catch attention with a simple but enjoyable illustration, connecting to one of Charles Henry Turner's greatest talents: entomology and the study of bees.

Mostly knowing how to illustrate by hand, using the mouse to select and color on Photoshop was a good challenge for my learning journey. When it came to making the Typography look connected to the illustration, it took a good amount of tries to get the final type to look in harmony with the illustration.

During this design process, I got to learn a lot about Charles Henry Turner, specifically about his findings on entomology, and how he was ahead of his time. Although discriminated against, Turner opened a path on knowledge that we will continue to use for many years to come.

-Venus Sobalvarro

I enjoyed doing the research and learning about who Charles Turner was, how he overcame the challenges he faced and how he continued to research and document his findings despite his circumstances. I used Adobe® Illustrator and Adobe® Photoshop to complete this project. To complete this project I learned about Illustrator's Image Trace feature; this feature was extremely helpful because all of the pictures of him were old and grainy due to the time period in which he lived in so

being able to take a small image and turn it into pixels so that I could infinitely scale his face without losing quality was integral for my successful completion of the project.

My main challenge was figuring out how to take all of his work and all of his accomplishments and narrow them down into just a few bullet points so it would be easily readable and able to relay the gist of who he was. I learned about how insects like humans don't just rely on instinct and exhibit intelligent behaviors to solve problems. Understanding Turner's work and how he advanced our knowledge of the animal kingdom, I believe that scientists and animal lovers alike should be eternally grateful for his perseverance and dedication to his love for his craft.

-Jerome Warren

Recognition of Projects

The students produced such impressive, high-quality illustrations that we decided to vote on the top four submissions (1st, 2nd, 3rd, and honorable mention). It was a difficult choice because each student committed to honing their craft while honoring the legacy of Dr. Turner. A sample certificate is shown below (Figure 15).

Figure 15

Sample Certificate of Achievement



Challenges and Future Considerations

Two issues were identified during the Symposium's planning and execution. First, it is important to market the symposium well in advance to ensure maximum participation. To increase participation, we suggest linking the Symposium to classes so that students receive course credit for both participation and attendance, and selecting a high-traffic venue on campus for the event so that members of the campus community who do not take note of the advertisements but find the topic of interest can be made aware and attend on the spot. Furthermore, hybrid events can also help to increase participation beyond those who are physically on campus. Second, a contingency plan should be in place in the event an in-person speaker cannot make it to the venue. This contingency plan can take the form of either a backup on-campus speaker or a videoconferencing link, providing flexibility.

Finally, we recommend that the mini symposium be held annually. In our case, we wanted to highlight the contributions a neglected African American scientist made to the field of comparative psychology. Future symposia can be developed to highlight other underrepresented scientists or topics related to psychology, comparative, or otherwise.

Discussion

The goal of our mini symposium was to develop an engaging experiential learning opportunity for undergraduate students while promoting awareness of comparative psychology as a discipline. We selected comparative and behavioral psychologist Dr. Charles Henry Turner as the focus for this inaugural event. The outcomes: 1) increased awareness of comparative psychology as a discipline, 2) appreciation of the impact of Turner's contributions, and 3) engagement in their program of study by applying their skills and training to creating original artwork inspired by this subject, collectively demonstrate that mini symposia offer a practical, engaging, and effective method for cross-disciplinary collaboration highlighting the field of comparative psychology. They also have the added benefit of presenting historical content in a format that encourages experiential learning and independent exploration.

We believe that mini symposia are ideal for experiential learning opportunities that encourage cross-disciplinary collaboration and allow students to apply and hone their craft. This will be particularly beneficial for universities that focus primarily on teaching and might have limited research infrastructure for students and/or faculty. Therefore, mini symposia can open doors to areas of psychology that students might not be familiar with, encourage students to learn more about the history of their field, and be adaptable to a wide range of subject areas and topics.

The mini symposium model is also ideal for universities that lack research opportunities for their students in disciplines outside of psychology. It can easily be incorporated into departmental activities, such as internships, job fairs, existing symposia, and student recruitment. Job fairs are especially useful as students can, for example, showcase the quality of their experiential learning portfolios with potential employers seeking individuals with those skills.

In conclusion, students felt that participation in creating projects for the mini symposium was enjoyable, informative, and meaningful. Prior to this project, most students who participated in and attended the mini symposium were unaware of Turner's contributions or of comparative psychology in general. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the students enjoyed creating the posters, and the exercise effectively revealed the importance of comparative psychology to both students and the general public. We are especially pleased that the mini symposium model can be easily incorporated into the stable of comparative psychology teaching exercises. A special issue of the *International Journal of Comparative Psychology* contains over 50 inquiry-based teaching exercises specifically designed to explore principles of comparative psychology (Abramson, 2020b); the mini symposium model is a noteworthy addition to this list.

References

Abramson, C. I. (2009). A study in inspiration: Charles Henry Turner (1867–1923) and the investigation of insect behavior. *Annual Review of Entomology, 54,* 343–359. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.ento.54.110807.090502

Abramson, C. I. (2015a). A crisis in comparative psychology: Where have all the undergraduates gone? *Frontiers in Psychology*, *6*, 1500. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2015.01500

Abramson, C. I. (2015b). A crisis in comparative psychology: Where have all the undergraduates gone? Additional comments 1,2. *Comprehensive Psychology*, *4*. https://doi.org/10.2466/10.IT.4.7

Abramson, C. I. (2020a). From flatworms to humans: Demonstration of learning principles using activities developed by the Laboratory of Comparative Psychology and Behavioral Biology – additional exercises. *International Journal of Comparative Psychology*, *33*. http://dx.doi.org/10.46867/ijcp.2020.33.05.04

Abramson, C. I. (2020b). The teaching of comparative psychology: Exercises, experiences, and philosophy: An introduction to the special issue. *International Journal of Comparative Psychology*, *33*. http://dx.doi.org/10.46867/ijcp.2020.33.05.01

Abramson, C. I. (2024). A hidden life of research. *American Scientist*, *112*(1), 24–29. https://doi.org/10.1511/2024.112.1.24

Abramson, C. I., & Jackson, L. D., & Fuller, C. (Eds.). (2003). *Selected papers and biography of Charles Henry Turner (1867–1923), pioneer of comparative animal behavior studies*. The Edwin Mellen Press.

Abramson, C. I., Stepanov, I. I. & Wincheski, R. J. (2024). *Mathematical modeling of the learning curve: A laboratory manual and source book*. Berlin: De Gruyter.

d'Isa, R. & Abramson C. I. (2023). The origin of the phrase comparative psychology: An historical overview. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *14*, 1174115. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1174115

Sandusky, A. C, & Abramson, C. I. (2026). The use of stickers to generate interest in Comparative Psychology: An extension of Abramson and Long (2012). *International Journal of Comparative Psychology*, *39*. http://dx.doi.org/10.46867/ijcp.61749

Wincheski, R. J., Abramson, C. I., & Somers, A. (2020). Tardigrades as a teaching model of learning. *International Journal of Comparative Psychology*, *33*. http://dx.doi.org/10.46867/ijcp.2020.33.05.10

Wincheski, R. J., Stauch, K. N., Grossner, L. M., Gruenes, S., Lewis, W. A., & Abramson, C. I. (2024). The use of dwarf octopus (*Octopus joubini*) as a model for hands-on research experience in comparative psychology. *International Journal of Comparative Psychology*, *37*. http://dx.doi.org/10.46867/ijcp20342

Financial conflict of interest: No stated conflicts.
Conflict of interest: No stated conflicts.

Submitted: *May 20th, 2026*
Resubmitted: *July 6th, 2026*
Accepted: *July 16th, 2026*