The Frog Scientist

Sandra L. Tidwell

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Reviewer: Sandra L. Tidwell
Reading Level: Preschool, Primary
Rating: Outstanding
Genre: Informational book; Biographies;
Subject: Hayes, Tyrone--Juvenile literature; Frogs--Effect of pesticides on--Juvenile literature; Atrazine--Physiological effect--Juvenile literature; Frogs --Effect of pesticides on; Atrazine --Physiological effect; Books--Reviews;

As a youngster growing up in South Carolina, Tyrone Hayes was interested in frogs, turtles, and snakes. His parents encouraged his scientific interests. In his studies at Harvard University, Hayes was influenced by the dedicated mentoring of professor Bruce Waldman, who specialized in amphibians. Hayes began doing "real" research with frog, which expanded during doctoral studies at UC Berkeley. Today, Dr. Hayes continues to be one of the main scientists discovering the impact of the herbicide Atrazine on fragile world frog populations. Tyrone is also following professor Waldman's example: he takes other students under his wing and helps them find their niche. He encourages students to stick with and explore their interests and find ways to contribute to research.

Turner creates an informational book which can be enjoyed on a number of levels. A preschooler will enjoy looking at Comins' close-up photos of different frogs and toads. In some photographs, the frog appears to be smiling! For older children, this book would be an excellent read-aloud at the beginning of the science fair unit. As they read about Tyrone's experiments with frogs, students will better understand and be able to apply the steps of the scientific process to their own experiments: coming up with a question, developing a hypothesis, and testing the hypothesis. Turner's text emphasizes the importance of strictly controlling variables so the researcher can compare findings with the control group. Back materials include a detailed glossary, a listing with small photos of the frog and toads that are discussed, important websites and multimedia information, a link to lesson plans, and a detailed bibliography and index. What a great way to learn about the effects of a herbicide and to be introduced to a personable and knowledgeable researcher!

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