

THOMAS RISLEY ODHIAMBO

(1931 - 2003)

Field: *Physiology*

Subject: *Locusts*

Nationality: *Kenyan*

*Entomologist
of the
Month*



Among the numerous achievements of Thomas Risley Odhiambo's academic career, his founding of the International Centre for Insect Physiology and Ecology (ICIPE) stands out as the most influential. Odhiambo fervently believed that the nations of Africa needed to develop environmentally friendly strategies to increase agricultural production, address tropical and vector-borne diseases, and conduct scientific research in a way that centered small farmers and indigenous communities. Alongside the American scientist Carl Djerassi, Odhiambo garnered the support of 21 national academies of science from around the globe, who helped the pair launch ICIPE in 1970. Since its founding, ICIPE (headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya) has become a premier hub for entomological research and training, staffing hundreds of predominately indigenous African scientists, and collaborating with more than 200 research institutions and universities from around the world. Odhiambo's work did not stop there; he later went on to form several learning institutions, including the Third World Academy of Sciences, the Kenyan National Academy of Sciences, and the African Academy of Sciences. Odhiambo's contributions to the revitalization of scientific development in Africa led to a reemergence of indigenous knowledge and technology, and has helped to propel significant advancements in the fields of insect control and indigenous crop production.

References:

- Galun, R. and ole-MoiYoi, O. K. (2003). Thomas Risley Odhiambo (1931–2003). *Nature* 425, 142–142.
- This factsheet was produced by Staci Cibotti, Penn State Center for Pollinator Research Graduate Student

September 2021



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