



INTRODUCING MATTHEW TOBIN CAPPETTA

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What can a community say or do when a generous, intelligent, witty, and curious young man passes away 50 years prematurely? In the case of Matthew Tobin Cappetta (April 27, 1989–November 10, 2019), family and friends rallied to ensure his memory will live on by creating the Matthew Tobin Cappetta Archaeological Scholarship Endowment. Proceeds from the endowment will enable others to complete the journey left unfinished by this musician, artist, intellect, and archaeologist.

The Society for American Archaeology is honored to have been selected to receive this endowment. The fund will help one or more graduate students complete a graduate degree in archaeology or anthropology, with preference for students working on Native American culture and heritage. To date, the Cappetta

family, friends, and members of the archaeological community have raised \$200,000 for this endowment.

This article announces the scholarship to the SAA membership and introduces its honoree. Matthew had a lifelong passion for history. In middle school, his interests evolved from paleontology into a curiosity and fascination with the medieval period, crusades, castles, and the Knights Templar. Matthew was so interested in the medieval period that as a young child,



Figure 1. Matthew Tobin Cappetta at Dulles Airport on August 27, 2015. Photograph courtesy of Pat and Les Cappetta.



Figure 2. Matthew at the Roman Colosseum on May 13, 2018. Photograph courtesy of Pat and Les Cappetta.

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Figure 3. Matthew in 2015 participating in a pago (an offering to the earth) at the start of the excavation season at Tumulaca la Chimba, Peru. Also pictured are Justa Falcon Cuayla and Carmen Jorge Flores. Photograph courtesy of Nicola Sharratt.

he provided all the research and planning for two family castle trips, one to England and one to Wales, in which he and his parents and siblings canvassed 30 sites. A chance meeting and interaction with an archaeologist excavating a site along Hadrian's Wall captured his imagination and sparked an interest in how archaeological knowledge illuminates ancient societies and our current world.

After earning a degree in anthropology from George Mason University, and with the counsel of Tony Chapa, Matthew participated in Nicola Sharratt's excavations in Peru. Matthew's path later took him to Southern California to study and work with the

original peoples of the Mojave Desert. As a cultural resources specialist, Matthew trained Native American monitors and worked closely with tribal stakeholders.

Matthew Tobin Cappetta loved knowledge and reading and music. He fought to preserve and protect archaeological sites and artifacts on Native American lands, and this scholarship offers the opportunity to other archaeologists to complete the work he left undone. Details of the Matthew Tobin Cappetta Archaeological Scholarship will be available later this year, and the first award will be presented at the April 2021 SAA Annual Meeting.

To increase the number of scholars who may be helped with the Matthew Tobin Cappetta Scholarship Endowment, please go to saa.org