



**COALITION FOR DIVERSITY IN CALIFORNIA ARCHAEOLOGY (CDCA)  
STATEMENT ON EVENTS OF JANUARY 6, 2021**

The Coalition for Diversity in California Archaeology (CDCA) is a committee of the Society for California Archaeology (SCA), that is dedicated to striving for racial equity and justice in California Archaeology. Our mission is to provide a venue for members to seek support and mentorship in the profession, advocate and work toward increasing diversity, discuss issues and challenges related to ethnicity and race in archaeological practice in California, and work with the SCA to address equity in the profession. The following statement was reviewed and is supported by the SCA Board.

On January 6, 2021, a large group of domestic terrorists invaded the United States Capitol Building in an attempt to prevent Joe Biden from being confirmed as the 46<sup>th</sup> president of the United States. That same evening, the Society for Historical Archaeology (SHA) held the plenary meeting of its 54<sup>th</sup> annual conference. The plenary meeting was conducted virtually as the COVID-19 pandemic has prohibited all large, face-to-face gatherings. As historical archaeologists took brief respite from the dismay of witnessing a violent mob occupy one of the country's most valued public buildings, Robert Schuyler, an associate professor of anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania, attempted to hijack the plenary meeting by disrupting a female junior scholar's address to the association, talking over her and attempting to divert the discussion. When the meeting's moderator, who is also a woman, asked Schuyler to hold his questions until the end of the meeting, he refused to be silenced—citing his freedom of speech under the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and using a Nazi hand gesture and verbal statement when the two scholars who attempted to reign him in refused to relent to his verbal attack.

Within hours, Schuyler's actions had been widely reported in mainstream media and on social media. The SHA's conference anti-harassment protocols were evoked; Schuyler was removed from the conference and has been banned from future SHA conferences until 2025. These events are under review by his institution where students are calling for the university to fire him. A petition to remove him from the Register of Professional Archaeologists (RPA) is currently under way. While the U.S. Government is arresting those who stormed the Capitol, the SHA's swift action against Robert Schuyler is sending a message that archaeologists are no longer willing to allow this sort of behavior.

These actions—the uprising against the government, Schuyler's misogynistic attack on female archaeologists, and his evocation of Naziism under duress—are abhorrent to all archaeologists

who are committed to diversity, cultural relativism, inclusivity, and progressive values. They are also intertwined. In recent months we have seen conservative Americans embark upon a virulent backlash against public health mandates created in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and condemnation of the anti-racism protests that erupted in 2020. This backlash has also stirred latent, but deeply imbedded, white supremacist ideologies that are pervasive in U.S. society. The pandemic and protests against anti-black violence came on the heels of a multi-year conservative political campaign to stoke white supremacist currents in society to further political campaigns. After four years of encouraging supremacy, some insurgents were emboldened enough to break into the Capitol building and attempt to disrupt the government. Since all archaeology is political, our profession is not immune to these events. The actions of Robert Schuyler are just another example.

The CDCA is saddened by Schuyler's actions. The fact that this would happen at an international archaeology conference is appalling. We are embarrassed that someone in our field would evoke Nazi symbolism because two female colleagues cordially asked him not to derail their discussion. Our sympathies go out to the two scholars who were verbally attacked by Schuyler and all the archaeologists who have been adversely impacted by his actions. It is disheartening that a senior archaeologist would behave in this manner at a conference; but, we non-white archaeologists are not surprised.

As archaeologists who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), we are not stunned that a senior, white archaeologist would treat someone like this in public. We are not dismayed that someone with his privilege would feel emboldened enough, comfortable enough in his status and position, to elicit Nazi gestures and slogans when he felt like his privilege was being infringed upon. It is not surprising that a senior archaeologist's fragility would trigger such an emotional and destructive response when not allowed to take as much space, time, and attention as he pleases. We BIPOC archaeologists have experienced this before many times. Many of us have suffered even worse responses. We are sorry that this behavior continues to happen, but we are not shocked in the slightest at the continued misbehavior of white, senior archaeologists.

In the wake of the 2020 anti-black violence protests, archaeologists across the country launched a barrage of forums, webinars, discussions, conference panels, and podcasts that centered on anti-racism. Archaeologists around the world asked, "How can we stop being part of the problem?" Archaeology departments, organizations, and cultural resource companies issued statements committing themselves to the anti-racism campaign. As usual, the bulk of this work fell on the shoulders of BIPOC archaeologists, but we eagerly stepped forward to lead this movement because we thought that, for once, the rest of the field is listening. The unfortunate events of January the 6<sup>th</sup> show us just how far we still have to go. Now, the question is: "Are you all really listening?"

The CDCA stands firmly against racism, misogyny, LGBTQ+ discrimination, and any attempt to overthrow the government. We do not condone physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual violence committed by archaeologists or anyone at all. We are firmly committed to inclusivity, diversity, and collaboration. We are also equally committed to revealing racism, sexism, and LGBTQ+ discrimination in archaeology whenever it is encountered. We support those who have been harmed by discrimination. We are dedicated to increasing the number of archaeologists who

want to be partners in this work; just know this work is lifelong, difficult, and will be underappreciated by most of your colleagues. Nevertheless, as Schuyler's actions demonstrate, it is what archaeology needs right now.

Archaeology cannot control the actions of individual archaeologists. Robert Schuyler acted on his own, but his actions were rooted in the way he has been acculturated as a white American and his positionality in the field of archaeology. They are emblematic of the recent white supremacist resurgence that is connected to conservative political provocation. However, we want the world to know that the CDCA and all anti-racism archaeological colleagues are watching and ready to reveal discrimination in archaeology whenever it is encountered. We are collaborating with other archaeologists to create anti-harassment and anti-racism policies where they do not already exist so discrimination and racism will be harder to hide and indefensible. We are joining forces with BIPOC communities to let them share their history with the world, increase BIPOC sovereignty over heritage sites, and increase the number of BIPOC in archaeology. We will use all forms of media offensively to combat discrimination and defensively to increase the number of community-oriented, activist archaeologists. The goal is to reach a day when racist and misogynic actions will be a surprise to all archaeologists.

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