

AWARD

## Daniel G. Roberts Award for Excellence in Public Historical Archaeology: The Tristán de Luna y Arellano Project

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The staff of the Tristán de Luna y Arellano Project in front of the University of West Florida Archaeology Institute Building in December 2017: *Left to right, back row:* John Worth, Warren Carruth, Fritz Sharar, Steve McLin, Roberto de los Santos, Roger Smith, Karen Mims, Cathy Parker, Judy Bense, and William Lees;

*middle row:* April Holmes, Greg Cook, Elizabeth Benchley, John Bratten, and Della Scott-Ireton; and *front row:* Jan Lloyd, Jennifer Melcher, Ramie Gougeon, and Mike Thomin. Not pictured are Norine Carroll, Tom Garner, Nicole Grinnan, and Margo Stringfield. (Photo courtesy University of West Florida.)

The 2018 Society for Historical Archaeology (SHA) Daniel G. Roberts Award for Excellence in Public Historical Archaeology was presented to the Tristán de Luna y Arellano Project on 5 January 2018 at the 51st Annual Conference on Historical and Underwater

Archaeology in New Orleans, Louisiana. The Tristán de Luna y Arellano Project is a long-term, collaborative effort by a project team of individuals from the four units of the University of West Florida (UWF) Division of Anthropology and Archaeology: the Department of Anthropology, the Archaeology Institute, the Florida Public Archaeology Network, and the Marine Services Center.

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In 1559, Tristán de Luna y Arellano entered what is today Pensacola Bay to establish a permanent settlement in La Florida. Less than two months later, six ships of

Luna's fleet were sunk during a hurricane that also ravaged a fledgling land settlement, ultimately leading to the abandonment of the settlement two years later. In 1992, one of these ships was discovered by state archaeologists. Excavation of this ship was the beginning of a sustained project that continues to this day. Two more ships of Luna's fleet were discovered in 2006 and 2016. In 2015, the well-preserved remains of the 1559–1561 settlement were found when a citizen noted 16th-century artifacts in a Pensacola neighborhood and brought these to the attention of UWF archaeologists. From the start, this project has embraced public engagement as a key outcome.

The original Luna wreck, predated in North America only by wrecks of the 1554 Spanish treasure fleet in Texas, was discovered during a state-funded survey project led by former state underwater archaeologist Roger Smith. A second ship was discovered by UWF only 400 m away in 2006, renewing hope for discovery of the rest of the fleet and the land settlement. Nearly a decade later, the site of Luna's settlement was identified, leading to the discovery of a third vessel from his fleet as well. Aztec pottery, Mexican obsidian, mid-16th-century Spanish olive-jar fragments, and crossbow bolts conclusively associate the sites with Luna's expedition from Veracruz and tie the ships with the land settlement. Contact and late prehistoric materials add to the depth of the archaeological record at this location.

The initial Luna discovery more than 25 years ago has become a multicomponent project that incorporates both prehistoric and historical period terrestrial archaeology, underwater archaeology, and documentary research as part of its overall research approach. The project offers a curriculum and training program for both undergraduate and graduate students, and a robust public program focused on public participation, including conducting exploration dives on the wrecks, engaging with the neighborhood in which the settlement is located, working with volunteers, and educating and informing the public through tours, lectures, social media, and extensive print and broadcast media exposure.

The UWF Archaeology Institute began to share in the investigations in 1997 and, through a series of grants and archaeology field schools, has continued the work started in 1992. Through the years, the Department of Anthropology, the Florida Public Archaeology Network, and the Marine Services Center were established at the university and became partners in the Tristán de Luna y Arellano Project. Since 2008, these units have made up the UWF Division of Anthropology and Archaeology.

The ability of the faculty, staff, research assistants, and students of the program to engage the public will be one of many long-lasting contributions of this project. Both the terrestrial and underwater components of the project have successfully demonstrated the importance of public outreach utilizing blogs and Websites, the news media, and the public at large as active participants and volunteers. More importantly, the project team has been able to communicate the importance of the work that is underway while promoting heritage preservation and protection. One important example comes from the remains of the terrestrial Luna settlement, which happens to be located in a Pensacola neighborhood with, not surprisingly, a wonderful view of the bay. Discovery of this important site prompted UWF to immediately engage and include the neighbors as part of the archaeological investigations, promoting a sense of pride and preservation of what is now referred to as Florida's "first neighborhood."

UWF's efforts in archaeological research, public outreach and education, and the instruction of students through the lens of the Luna Project ensures that future archaeologists will continue this outstanding work, and that the public will continue to benefit from the practice of professional scientific archaeology. In recognition of the outstanding use of public archaeology to promote and preserve our archaeological heritage, the SHA recognizes and honors the Tristán de Luna y Arellano Project with the 2018 Daniel G. Roberts Award for Excellence in Public Historical Archaeology.