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SINCE 1922

AAIA Welcomes Eldred D. Lesensee as its Cultural Sovereignty Fellow

WASHINGTON – The Association on American Indian Affairs, the oldest non-profit organization advocating on behalf of Native Americans and Indian Tribes, has selected Eldred D. Lesensee as a Cultural Sovereignty Fellow, completing its inaugural fellowship class. Created by recently appointed Executive Director Shannon Keller O’Loughlin, the Cultural Sovereignty Fellowship is a magnificent opportunity for new graduates to gain professional experience advocating for Native Americans at a national and grassroots level.

Born and raised in northern New Mexico, Lesensee, a member of the Pueblo of Jemez and descendent of the Zuni and Hopi tribes, completed his Bachelor of Arts in International Relations at Stanford University in 2014. Following a brief tenure as an undergraduate admission officer for his alma mater, Lesensee then, received a Fulbright Scholarship to attend the Sciences Po Paris School of International Affairs. In June 2018, Lesensee graduated with a Master of Arts in International Development with concentrations in Human Rights and Latin American studies.

In conjunction with his graduate research regarding the illicit sale of Hopi and Pueblo cultural heritage in Paris’ auction houses, Lesensee recently completed an internship with the UNESCO World Heritage Centre. In this position, Lesensee worked closely with the Section for Moveable Heritage and Museums’ Program Specialist on the implementation and enforcement of UNESCO’s *Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (1970)*. Lesensee stated, “With great pride in my Pueblo heritage, I am humbled and excited to utilize my knowledge and strengths to best serve Indian Country.”

Lesensee will primarily concentrate his efforts on the issues of international repatriation and protection of cultural heritage, beginning with the organization and facilitation of AAIA’s Fourth Annual Repatriation Conference to be held from November 13-15, 2018 at the Forest County Potawatomi Hotel & Casino in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

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