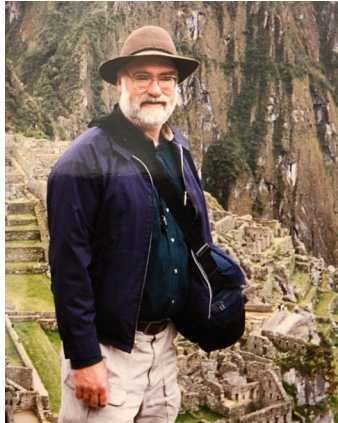


IN MEMORIAM

CHARLES MATTESON LOVE
1944-2024

Charles Matteson Love passed away quietly in his sleep on May 8th after six months of deteriorating health. Born in Laramie, Wyoming, in 1944, Charles was a proud third-generation Wyomingite, grandson of a Scottish immigrant, the second of four children born to John David Love, longtime director of the Wyoming branch of the US Geological Survey, and his wife Jane (Matteson) Love, also a geologist. The story of his father and grandparents' ranch life was detailed in the 1986 book *Rising from the Plains* by Pulitzer Prize-winner, John McPhee, and in the 1996 PBS series *The West* by Ken Burns and Stephen Ives.

Charlie spent his childhood between Laramie and Jackson Hole where his father did summer field work. A 1962 graduate of Laramie Prep High School, he attended Bates College in Lewiston, Maine, where he was active in the Outdoor Club and played folk guitar and banjo with friends. In the summers, he worked as a park ranger in Yellowstone National Park, playing folk music on the weekends. There he met summer employee, Karen Lepisto, and the two married in 1969 and had two children.

Charlie received a BS in Geology from Bates College in 1966, an MS in Geology in 1968 from Montana State University in Bozeman, and a second

MA in Anthropology in 1972 from the University of Wyoming. His mentor at UW was William Mulloy, who had traveled with Thor Heyerdahl to Easter Island on the 1955 scientific expedition. Under Dr. Mulloy, Charlie developed an interest in Easter Island research. After graduation Charlie and Karen settled in Rock Springs, Wyoming, where he taught Geology and Anthropology at Western Wyoming Community College. He continued research on Easter Island, taking a research year with his family on the island in 1979-1980. They also traveled widely throughout the Pacific including New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Fiji, Tahiti, and the Marquesas.

Charlie's archaeological research included pollen analysis, stratigraphic studies of excavation pits, and analysis of cultural destruction and tidal wave effects on the platforms and moai statues. He also developed a theory for how the statues were moved from the quarry to the platforms, theorizing that they were moved upright, rolling on logs. In 1986, he and a team at WWCC created a nine-ton concrete replica moai to test his theory, with local volunteers helping to move the moai with ropes over a stretch of desert behind the college. A film crew from the BBC traveled from London to film

the project for NOVA. Today, both the replica and a smaller moai still stand on display on the WWCC lawn. As his work became widely known, he was granted a year-long research assistantship at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, DC, as well as an invitation to lecture at the British Museum and the Royal Geographical Society in London.

In Wyoming, he also continued research in geology with his colleague and friend, Craig Thompson. The two conducted glacial fieldwork in the Wind River Mountains, measuring, mapping, and photographing the fast-melting glaciers. As early as the 1980s, Charlie realized that Wyoming was undergoing a major drought exacerbated by a warming climate that threatened the future of the state's water supply. He sounded the alarm at scientific conferences and to state politicians, frequently frustrated by their disbelief and inaction.

Charlie was known as an inspiring teacher at WWCC for nearly 40 years before retiring in 2011. He was mentor to many future geologists and anthropologists and awakened a passion for learning in his students. He was known for his field trips around Wyoming and Colorado. In 1989, frustrated that local students could not learn about Wyoming dinosaur bones because the skeletons were in far-flung museums, Charlie wrote grants and used his connections in paleontology to obtain life-size plaster casts. A *Tyrannosaurus rex*, a *Triceratops*, a *Stegosaurus*, a *Camptosaurus*, and a plesiosaur found at Como Bluff and Lance Creek are on display at WWCC for the benefit of the Sweetwater community. He also wrote grants for the purchase of a large fossil turtle, giant fossil palm leaf, and his favorite, a twelve-foot fossilized fish from local fossil beds.

His career allowed him to enjoy his love of the outdoors: hiking, camping, fishing, and skiing. In his twenties, he enjoyed rock climbing as well, but decided to give it up after a couple of close calls. In the 1970s he and Karen built a simple log cabin in the

mountains of Idaho by hand and enjoyed spending weekends there for decades. His career also enabled another great passion: traveling to exotic destinations and sharing his adventures with family and students. By the 1990s, he began to organize field trips for students and community members to Mayan and Aztec sites in Mexico, Inca sites in Peru, trips down the Amazon River, and visits to Easter Island. His children and other family members were lucky enough to join him on several of his adventures.

Charlie married a second time in 1989 to artist Sharon Dolan, who created many archaeological drawings to support his work. They divorced in 2002. He married a third time to the late Marilyn Fedrizzi in 2017. She cared for him after his dementia diagnosis until it became necessary to move him into Sage View Care Center. Marilyn passed away in 2018.

He is survived by his two children, M. Jordan Love (Matthew Loftus) of Charlottesville, Virginia, and Raleigh G. Love (Allison Yu) of Springfield, Illinois. He was a loving grandfather to John and Phoebe Loftus. He is also survived by his brother and sister-in-law, David and Jane Love; his sister and brother-in-law, Barbara Love and Steve Cutcliffe; his brother-in-law, Claude Froidevaux, and his former wife, Karen Love. He also leaves three stepchildren, numerous nieces, nephews, cousins, and hundreds of grateful former students and colleagues, many of whom have reached out to share his impact on their lives. He was predeceased by his parents, his sister Frances Love Froidevaux, and his third wife, Marilyn.

A memorial is being planned for early August. Donations can be made in his name to the Easter Island Foundation: <https://www.easterislandfoundation.org>

Submitted by M. Jordan Love