

Frederick Arthur Stanley, 16th Earl of Derby, AKA Lord Stanley (1841-1908)



Frederick Arthur Stanley was born in January 1841 and was known simply as Frederick Stanley until 1886, and Lord Stanley of Preston between 1886 and 1893. He was a Conservative Party politician in the United Kingdom and served as the Colonial Secretary (Minister for the Colonies) from 1885-1886.

Lord Stanley's experience with and knowledge of the British colonies led to his appointment as the sixth Governor General of Canada, a position that he served from 1888 to 1893. Despite being publicly very shy, he was a strong advocate for closer ties between Great Britain and its dominions and was known for his care and discretion when handling political situations. During his time as Governor General of Canada he travelled frequently across the country, and came to appreciate the untamed beauty of the West.

Lord Stanley developed a close personal friendship with Sir John A. Macdonald, and when he died in office in 1891, Lord Stanley was reportedly quite distraught by the loss. Lord Stanley additionally cemented the status of Governor General as non-political and non-partisan when he refused to agree to a controversial motion that would reverse legislation passed by the Quebec government.

He was an avid sportsman and his family is well known for its athletic activity and support of the sporting community.

Most notably, Lord Stanley is remembered as an important figure in Canadian history because in 1893 he donated a trophy that was intended to determine the Canadian hockey champion in a fair and open manner. The Stanley Cup is the oldest trophy competed for by professional athletes in North America, and is arguably the greatest in terms of its design and significance to the sport.

The Stanley cup was first awarded to the amateur Montreal AAA team in 1893. Before professional sports teams organized themselves into leagues the cup was competed for by challenging the current winner to a tournament. The first professional hockey team to win the Stanley Cup was the Ottawa Senators in 1901, and in 1926 the Stanley Cup came under the exclusive control of the emerging National Hockey League. In its over 100 years of existence, the Stanley Cup has been awarded in all but two years; the 1918-1919 season in which the Spanish Flu killed 21 million people worldwide, and in the 2004-2005 season when a labour dispute cancelled the entire NHL season. Throughout this period the cup has been lost and stolen, and the original Stanley Cup now sits on display in the Hockey Hall of Fame.