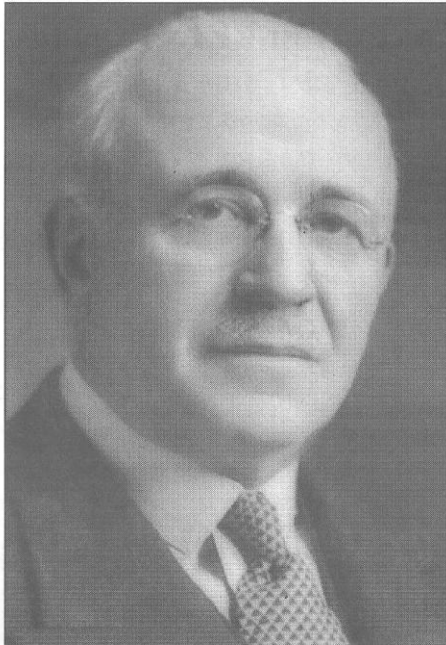


# Robert Samuel McLaughlin

1871 -1972

**It's Our History,  
Our Country**

BY RONALD WOLF



Some people become famous before Canada was formed, while others become famous by forming Canada. Robert Samuel McLaughlin became famous not only for being a businessman and philanthropist but for starting the McLaughlin Motor Car Company when Canada was still in its infancy.

Colonel Robert Samuel McLaughlin, was an influential Canadian businessman and philanthropist. He started the McLaughlin Motor Car Co. in 1907, one of the first major automobile manufacturers in Canada, which evolved into General Motors of Canada.

Born near Bowmanville in the hamlet of Enniskillen, Ont., the son of Robert McLaughlin, he started working in 1887 for his father's company, McLaughlin

Carriage Works, at one time the largest manufacturer of horse-drawn buggies and sleighs in the British Empire.

With engines from William C. Durant of Buick he produced the McLaughlin-Buick Model F, establishing The McLaughlin Motor Car Company, incorporated on Nov. 20, 1907. In 1908, its first full year of operation, it produced 154 cars. In 1910 he became a director of General Motors and sold his company in 1918 becoming president of General Motors of Canada, which continued to sell cars under the McLaughlin-Buick brand until 1942. He retired in 1945, but remained chairman of the board until his death.

His brother, chemist J.J. McLaughlin, founded the Canada Dry company. After

J.J.'s death in 1912, Sam also became President of this company briefly until it was sold about 1917.

McLaughlin was appointed Honorary Lieutenant Colonel of the 34th Ontario Regiment in 1921 and held this position until 1931, at which time he was appointed Honorary Colonel of same unit, later designated as The Ontario Regiment, a reserve armoured regiment based in Oshawa.

He was also a major contributor to Queen's University at Kingston, Ont. The University's Mechanical Engineering Department is housed in McLaughlin Hall which was his donation in 1948. The McLaughlin Hall in the Queen's University's John Deutsch University Centre is also named for him.

McLaughlin's horses won numerous races in Canada and in the U.S. his horses won important races including the 1942 Peter Pan Stakes at Belmont Park. A three-time winner of Canada's most prestigious race, the Queen's Plate, in 1934, his future Hall of Fame colt Horometer won both the Queens Plate and the Breeders' Stakes. In 1950, the nearly eighty-year-old McLaughlin retired from racing, selling his Parkwood Stable to E. P. Taylor under whom it would become known as Windfields Farm.

In 1951 he established the

Wednesday September 8, 2010

McLaughlin Foundation which donated nearly \$200 million to various causes, including the McLaughlin Planetarium to the Royal Ontario Museum. His mansion, Parkwood Estate, begun in 1916, was designed by the Toronto architectural firm of Darling and Pearson.

He remained on the Board of General Motors until the early 1960s, and was coincidentally replaced by Royal Bank of Canada President Earle McLaughlin, his first cousin once removed.

A long-time director of the Ontario Jockey Club, Col. McLaughlin was inducted into Canada's Sports Hall of Fame in 1963 and the Canadian Horse Racing Hall of Fame in 1977.

Affectionately known as "Colonel Sam," McLaughlin served as Honorary Colonel until 1967, earning the distinction as the longest continuously serving Honorary Colonel in the history of the Canadian Forces. In 1967 Sam McLaughlin was appointed a Companion of the Order of Canada.

He provided partial funding to build a college at York University in Toronto. Opened in 1968, it was named McLaughlin College in his honour.

McLaughlin Hall at St. Andrew's College in Aurora, Ont., which he unveiled in 1971 at age 99, is named after him in recognition of his contributions to the school.

McLaughlin also endowed the Regimental Foundation of The

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Ontario Regiment and quietly paid the salaries of some of the regiment's soldiers during times of severely curtailed government funding.

The McLaughlin family was and is no stranger to being firsts in Canada.

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