

Eric Lafferty Harvie

“I want you to go out and collect like a bunch of drunk sailors.”

Scrupulously frugal, Eric Harvie was never extravagant on a client's behalf, but by the end of his life he was wildly extravagant on behalf of the people of Alberta and Canada.

A consummate dealmaker who hated waste, Harvie bought land and property to save others from bankruptcy. Ultimately, he owned a ranch, a management company, and mineral rights to 487,967.99 acres of land. And when the Leduc oil strike in 1947 made him embarrassingly rich, he decided to give back to Canada what Canada had given to him. He threw himself into the business of philanthropy, revelling in the fun of collecting and sharing his good fortune.



Eric Harvie at Meridian #1 well, Ribstone area, Alberta
Glenbow Archives NA-700-1

In 1966, Harvie donated the entirety of the Glenbow Museum's holdings to the people of Alberta, along with substantial monies to support the collection. His modesty cloaked his beneficence; only one recital hall in Banff is named after him. Everything else that he endowed, from Confederation Centre of the Arts in Charlottetown, P.E.I., to the Devonian Gardens in Calgary, bears a shadow name.

The ghost of the “eclectic collector” still haunts the Glenbow Museum.

Collector and Philanthropist

“Eric Harvie was one of the greatest Canadians that Canada ever saw. He created immense wealth and gave it all back.” As a *Calgary Herald* reporter noted “During his global shopping sprees, he shipped to Alberta thousands of stuffed birds and mounted butterflies, crates of medieval armour, vast shelves of rare books, and a pair of bloomers once owned by Queen Victoria.” (Dempsey, 1991, p.19).

Born: April 2, 1892 – Died: January 11, 1975

Additional Resources

- **Alberta Champions Society**
<https://albertachampions.org/Champions/eric-lafferty-harvie-1892-1975/>
- **Alberta Business Hall of Fame, Southern Alberta**
<https://south.abhf.ca/laureates/inductees/eric-lafferty-harvie.html>

Our Collections

Glenbow Museum

<https://www.glenbow.org>

Glenbow Western Research Centre | Glenbow Library and Archives

<https://libguides.ucalgary.ca/glenbowlibraryandarchives>

Glenbow Library and Archives | Digital Collection

<https://digitalcollections.ucalgary.ca/asset-management/2R340826N9XM?WS=PackagePres&Flat=1>