

Paul Edgar Philippe Martin

Canada's twenty-first prime minister

Quick Facts

Term(s) of Office:

- December 12, 2003–February 6, 2006

Born

- August 28, 1938, Windsor, Ontario

Education

- University of Toronto, B.A. Philosophy and History 1962
- University of Toronto, LL.B 1965

Personal Life

- Married 1965, Sheila Ann Cowan (b. 1943)
- Three sons

Occupations

- Former President, CEO and Director, The CSL Group Inc.
- Former Chairman and CEO, Canada Steamship Lines Inc.
- Former Corporate Director, C.B. Pak Inc.; Redpath Industries Ltd.; Fednav Ltd.; The Manufacturers Life Insurance Co.; Canadian Shipbuilding & Engineering Ltd.; Imasco Corp.
- Read law with Osler, Hoskin & Harcourt, Toronto
- Lawyer (called to the bar in Ontario in 1966)
- Former Vice-President, Power Corp. of Canada; Consolidated Bathurst Ltd.
- 1991 to 1993, associate finance critic and critic for the environment for the Liberal opposition in the House of Commons

Political Party

- Liberal
- 2003–2006, Party Leader

Constituency

- 1988–2008, LaSalle-Émard, Quebec

Other Ministries

- 1993–1996 Minister Responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development–Quebec
- 1993–2002 Minister of Finance

Political Record

- Co-authored the 1993 Liberal "Red Book"
- While Martin was serving as Minister of Finance, Canada recorded five consecutive budget surpluses
- 1999–2001 Inaugural Chair, Group of Twenty (G-20)
- 2005 Civil Marriage Act
- 2005 Security and Prosperity of North America Agreement

Biography

We stand together on the edge of historic possibility. At a moment that comes rarely in the life of a country. It is a time when destiny is ours to hold.—From Paul Martin’s Liberal leadership acceptance speech, November 14, 2003

Paul Edgar Philippe Martin was born August 28, 1938, to Paul and Eleanor (Nell) Martin in Windsor, Ontario. His father was a member of Parliament and Cabinet minister in the Liberal party.

Paul Martin, Jr. attended St. Michael’s College at the University of Toronto where he completed an undergraduate degree in philosophy and history in 1961. He then enrolled at University of Toronto Law School, graduating in 1965. Also in 1965, Martin married a long-time friend of the family, Sheila Ann Cowan.

Canadian businessman Maurice Strong convinced Martin to work for the Power Corporation of Canada where he had a distinguished career. In 1973, Martin became the CEO of Canada Steamship Lines and in 1981, he purchased the company.

In 1988 Martin became a member of Parliament for the Montréal riding of LaSalle-Émard. In 1990, he ran unsuccessfully against Jean Chrétien for the leadership of the Liberal party. Once the Liberals had swept to victory in 1993, Martin was made Minister of Finance. He took control of the budgets for every ministry and eliminated the Canadian deficit and reduced the national debt. He became known as a very successful minister of finance.

When Chrétien made the decision to leave as leader of the Liberal Party, Martin was ready. At the Liberal Leadership Convention in 2003, he won 93 percent of the vote. He was sworn in as prime minister on December 12, 2003.

In 2004, Auditor General Sheila Fraser issued a report revealing that nearly half of the funds designated by the Liberal Party for a program to raise awareness of federal contributions in Quebec were misused or misdirected. This quickly became known as the “Sponsorship Scandal.” In the election of June 28, 2004, the Liberals were reduced to a minority. Martin tried to distance himself from the scandal and established the Gomery Commission to conduct a public inquiry.

While prime minister, he was instrumental in steering numerous consultations to reach an agreement between the premiers, First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples to close the socio-economic gap between Aboriginal and non-aboriginal Canadians. It became known as the Kelowna Accord.

Late in 2005 the Liberals lost a vote of confidence, and in the election of January 23, 2006, they lost power to Stephen Harper and the Conservatives. Martin announced that he would step down as

Liberal leader. In December 2006, he was succeeded by Stéphane Dion. Martin continued to act as member of Parliament until October 2008.

International Relations

Under Martin, the Canadian Armed Forces assumed a stronger role in Afghanistan. Theirs was described as a "3-D" role: defence, diplomacy and development.

U.S. President George W. Bush and his wife visited Ottawa in the autumn of 2004, and the relationship with Prime Minister Martin seemed to be cordial, but Martin decided not to participate in the ballistic missile defence system.

Martin signed the Security and Prosperity of North America agreement in March 2005. This was intended to promote greater cooperation and information-sharing among Canada, the United States and Mexico.

Since his retirement from politics, Martin has worked closely with the African Development Bank Group on projects such as the protection of the Congo Basin forests.

Anecdote

Reaching beyond Canada's borders

Paul Martin is co-chair of an international panel that is recommending the African nations move toward a continent-wide economic union. He believes Africa has great economic potential if only it could break down trade barriers between nations and work through the African Development Bank. "By tying the economies of African countries together more closely will in turn contribute to greater political stability," said Martin.

Martin is also involved in the protection of the Congo Basin Forest, which is considered the world's 'second lung'. He also acted as co-chairperson of the Congo Basin Forest Fund's Board of Directors, along with 2004 Nobel Peace Prize winner, Wangari Maathai.

These are just two of the major ways he is involved in helping make Africa more prosperous and healthy.

When asked about his commitment to the African continent at the launch of the Congo Basin Forest Fund in London in June 2008, Paul Martin enthusiastically said: "It's simple. I like Africa, I like Africans. It's a relationship that dates many decades. It didn't start yesterday! I believe in the continent's incredible potential. Much is said about China, India, but these reservoirs of opportunities and development exist on the continent. I am pleased to make a contribution to the development of this huge and vast potential."

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