

Biography

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ROBERT G. STANTON

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Robert G. Stanton, former Director of the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, is a Senior Fellow at Texas A&M University in the Department of Recreation, Park, and Tourism Sciences. In 2007 and 2005, he was a Visiting Professor at Howard University in the Department of History (Public History Program). From 2001 through 2004, he served as a consultant for the Natural Resources Council of America and from 2110 through 2003, he served as the IUCN (World Conservation Union) ambassador for the Fifth World Parks Congress held in September, 2003, in Durban, South Africa. In 2002, Mr. Stanton was a Visiting Professor at Yale University in the School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. A native of Fort Worth, Texas, Mr. Stanton grew up in Mosier Valley, one of the oldest communities in Texas founded by African Americans shortly after the Civil War.

Mr. Stanton earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Huston-Tillotson University, Austin, Texas, and did graduate work at Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts. He has completed numerous professional development programs in conservation, administrative management, and executive leadership. He has been awarded four honorary doctorate degrees: Doctor of Letters, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas; Doctor of Science, Huston-Tillotson University, Austin, Texas; Doctor of Environmental Stewardship, Unity College, Unity, Maine; and Doctor of Public Policy, Southern University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

A lifelong conservationist and an experienced public administrator, Mr. Stanton was unanimously confirmed as the 15th Director of the National Park Service in 1997, and served as the Director until the end of the Clinton Administration. He was the first Director to undergo confirmation hearings before the United States Senate and the first African American to serve in the position since the National Park Service was established by Congressional legislation in August, 1916.

As Director of the National Park Service, Mr. Stanton had policy, planning and management responsibility for the National Park System's 384 natural, cultural, and recreational areas. The 83-million acre National Park System attracted 228 million visits each year. He also had responsibility for 20 trails in the National Trail System and oversaw the National Register of Historic Places, Youth in Conservation Corps programs, Historic Preservation Fund, Land and Water Conservation Fund, and the Service's Public Information Congressional, Legislative and International affairs. He was responsible for providing assistance to American Indian Tribal governments, State and local governments, colleges and universities, and communities with respect to conservation, recreation, and cultural resource partnership programs.

Mr. Stanton managed a workforce of 20,000 permanent, temporary and seasonal employees and an annual budget of \$2.3 billion. He was responsible for the National Park Service areas, programs and offices located in 49 states, Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico, American Samoa, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Mr. Stanton began his Federal career as a seasonal National Park Ranger at Grand Teton National Park, Wyoming, during the summers of 1962 and 1963. Following 2 years as the Director of Public Relations and Alumni Affairs at Huston-Tillotson University, Austin, Texas, he took a full-time position with the National Park Service in 1966 as a personnel management and public information specialist in the Washington, D.C. headquarters office. In 1969, he moved to National Capital Parks-Central as a management assistant, and in 1970, became Superintendent of National Capital Parks-East, Washington, D.C. and Maryland. A year later he was appointed Superintendent of Virgin Islands National Park, St.

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John U.S. Virgin Islands, and in 1974, he became Deputy Regional Director of the Southeast Region in

Atlanta, Georgia. In 1977, Mr. Stanton returned to Washington, D.C. headquarters as Assistant Director, Park Operations, and in 1978 was appointed Deputy Regional Director of the National Capital Region. In 1987, he returned to headquarters as Associate Director for Operations and in 1988, became Regional Director of the National Capital Region where for 8 years he was responsible for 40 natural, cultural and recreational areas located in Washington, D.C., Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia. These areas attracted more than 38 million visits annually.

His bipartisan and inclusive approach to problem solving and cooperative resource stewardship earned him tremendous respect and admiration, enabling him to build effective relations with the U.S. Congress, Federal, Tribal, State and local agencies, diverse organizations, leaders, and citizens. Under his leadership the National Park Service budget increased by 28 percent and major park preservation and visitor service programs were inaugurated including the Natural Resource Challenge, Public Land Youth Corps, Action Plan for Diversity in Workforce and Public Programs, co-sponsorship of the Save America's Treasures Program, visitor transportation systems, restructuring of park planning, design and construction program, Connecting People to Parks (Education and Interpretation) and the Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units Program. Also several major legislative initiatives were enacted throughout his tenure, including the authorization of nine new parks, six national heritage areas, study of 22 possible new areas, the National Park Omnibus Management Improvement Act of 1998, Reauthorization of the Historic Preservation Fund, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (which increased annual road and bridge funding to the National Park Service from \$80 million to \$160 million), and the Underground Railroad Network to Freedom.

He has been cited in several professional and technical publications and has served as a keynote speaker at university convocations and major national and international conferences. He has represented the National Park Service and the U.S. Department of the Interior on the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts Board of Trustees, Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts Board of Directors, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council, the Committee for the Preservation of the White House, and the National Park Foundation.

Over the span of his Federal career and subsequent assignment with ICUN, Mr. Stanton has visited the following countries on official business: Australia, Switzerland, Spain, Jordan, Canada, South Africa, Ghana, China, Saudi Arabia, Dominica and Trinidad-Tobago. He has participated in major international conferences, including the Fifth World Parks Congress, Durban, South Africa, 2003; World Protected Areas Leadership Forum in Australia, 2002, in Spain, 2001 and in Virginia 2000; World Commission on Protected Areas and World Conservation Congress, Amman, Jordan, 2000; First World Conference on Cultural Parks, Mesa Verde National Park, Colorado, 1984; and the Second World Congress on National Parks, Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming, 1972.

He is active in professional and civic affairs and currently serves on boards of the Freedom Forum, the Newseum, Accokeek Foundation, Appalachian Trail Conservancy, Environmental Law Institute, Grand Teton National Park Foundation, Natural Resources Council of America, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, Northern Virginia Regional Park Foundation, Institute for the Advancement of Multicultural and Minority Medicine, and the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration. He is the Chairman of the National Council of the National Parks Conservation Association and Chairman Emeritus (and co-founder) of the Trustees of the African American Experience Fund of the National Park Foundation. Past affiliations as board member include Guest Services, Inc., Student Conservation Association, Eastern National, National Audubon Society and Woods Hole Research Center.

Mr. Stanton has received numerous national awards for outstanding public service and leadership in conservation, historic preservation, youth programs, and diversity in employment and public programs. Recognition includes the U.S. Department of the Interior highest award, the Distinguished Service Award; the National Council of Negro Women highest award, the Distinguished Service Award; the Cornelius Pugsley Medal of the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration; the Student Conservation Association Founder's Award; and the International Committee Salute Award for National Service in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and "for working to Keep the Dream alive."