



James D. McLaughlin

June 10, 1859 – December 1, 1925

James D. McLaughlin, former superintendent of the South Dakota School for the Deaf, passed away on December 1, 1925, at his home in Los Angeles, California. He was 66 years old.

Born on June 10, 1859, in Lochaber, Antigonish County, Nova Scotia, Canada, James McLaughlin later immigrated to the United States, where he built a life rooted in public service, family, and community. Over the years, he lived in several Midwestern states before eventually making his home in South Dakota.

Mr. McLaughlin came to South Dakota from Wisconsin and first settled in Codington County, where he served as county auditor. He later moved to Watertown and, in 1908, was appointed superintendent of the South Dakota School for the Deaf by the State Board of Charities and Corrections. He served in this role until 1910.

During his tenure at the School for the Deaf, Mr. McLaughlin oversaw the day-to-day operations of the campus during a period of stability. His administration focused on maintenance and necessary improvements rather than expansion, helping ensure the school continued to operate smoothly and effectively for its students and staff. After leaving his position at the school, Mr. McLaughlin moved with his family to Sioux Falls, where they lived for several years. Around 1920, the family relocated to California, settling in the Los Angeles area. He lived there quietly until his death in 1925.

James McLaughlin was married to Lida Marie Kent, whom he wed in 1894. Together they raised a family, including sons Robert John McLaughlin, Newton Lee McLaughlin, Ralph Emerson McLaughlin, and James Stewart McLaughlin. His family remained an important part of his life, even as they moved across states and regions.



During Supt. McLaughlin's tenure, he was standing at the near right end, folding arms and held his cap.



1909 SDAD Conference. Supt. McLaughlin seen standing on the stairs next to SDAD President Charles Loucks

He was laid to rest at Forest Lawn Memorial Park in Glendale, Los Angeles County, California. Word of his passing was shared with friends and acquaintances in South Dakota through correspondence from his son, reflecting the lasting connections he maintained with the state.

James D. McLaughlin is remembered for his service to South Dakota and for his role as the fifth superintendent of the South Dakota School for the Deaf. His life reflects the quiet dedication of many early public servants whose work helped shape the institutions that continue to serve the Deaf community today.