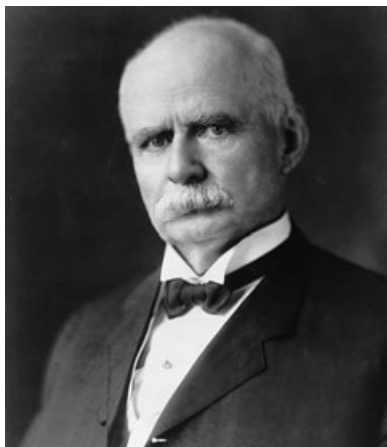


Adlai Ewing Stevenson

(1835-1914)

Patriarch of the politically distinguished Stevenson family of Illinois, Adlai Ewing Stevenson was a U.S. representative and the 23rd vice president. Born in Christian County, Kentucky, Stevenson relocated with his family to Bloomington, Illinois. He later studied law, opening his own office in 1859. For 10 years he practiced in the region, simultaneously serving as master of the circuit court and as district attorney. His effectiveness led to a nomination by the Democratic Party for presidential elector in 1864. In 1874 Stevenson was elected to Congress by the Democrats of his staunchly Republican district. Not immediately reelected, he returned to Congress from 1879 to 1881. Stevenson was later appointed by President Grover Cleveland as first assistant postmaster general.

In 1892 Stevenson was elected Cleveland's second-term vice president. In that capacity, he presided over the Senate, where his general affability made him universally popular. He ran for vice president in 1900 on William Jennings Bryan's unsuccessful presidential ticket and was an unsuccessful candidate for governor in 1908. Stevenson died in Chicago in 1914. His grandson and namesake later became governor of Illinois and Democratic candidate for president in 1952 and 1956; his great-grandson, Adlai Ewing Stevenson III, was a U.S. senator from Illinois.



Adlai E. Stevenson.

(Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division)

American sculptor Franklin Simmons was commissioned in 1893 to create a bust of Adlai Stevenson for the Senate's Vice Presidential Bust Collection, under the provisions of a Senate resolution of May 13, 1886. Simmons had been living in Rome for a quarter century when he received the commission; evidently, he worked from photographs in preparing the bust. There is no record of a life sitting.

Whereas Stevenson was much appreciated for his friendly manner, Simmons apparently also perceived forthrightness and dignity in the subject's features. To express these qualities, he concentrated on the massive head, presented with an absolute frontality that furthers the dauntless expression on Stevenson's face. Beetle-browed, the eyes in shadow, the mouth equally shaded by the mustache, Stevenson returns our gaze directly. The pupils of his eyes are drilled, and the small bits of marble that serve as the highlights of his eyes are precisely centered. His short side hair is incised lightly in the marble.

Cheerfully partisan in matters of political patronage, Stevenson presided over the Senate with courtesy and evenhandedness. The force and integrity of his personality are seconded by the simple, symmetrical, double-breasted coat and the small wing collar and tie. Stevenson's mostly bald head becomes another expression of this self-confident personality.

In May 1894 Simmons wrote to the architect of the Capitol that the bust was on its way to Washington. Simmons commented, "I shall be glad to hear your opinion of the work as I took great pains with it and was very fortunate in the quality of the marble." The bust was originally placed in a gallery-level niche in the Senate Chamber. In a 1910 reorganization of the Vice Presidential Bust Collection to reflect order of service, the Stevenson bust was relocated to the main Senate corridor.

While working on the Stevenson bust, Simmons was also engaged in sculpting a standing statue of President Ulysses S. Grant in military garb. Paid for by contributions from the Grand Army of the Republic, this statue was not immediately approved by the Joint Committee on the Library and a second effort was required. In 1900 Simmons's second statue was accepted and placed on display in the Rotunda of the Capitol.

Altogether Franklin Simmons is represented in the U.S. Capitol by seven works. The Senate has his busts of two other vice presidents: Charles W. Fairbanks (p. 112) and Hannibal Hamlin (p. 180).

Adlai E. Stevenson

Franklin Bachelder Simmons (1839-1913)

Marble, 1894

30 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 27 x 15 $\frac{7}{8}$ inches (78.1 x 68.6 x 40.3 cm)

Signed and dated (on back centered at bottom): FRANKLIN SIMMONS / 1894

Commissioned by the Joint Committee on the Library, 1893

Accepted by the Joint Committee on the Library, 1894

Cat. no. 22.00023

