



# Naming Committee

Honouring People and Places in Our City

THE CITY OF  
**Edmonton**

7th Floor, 10250 - 101 Street  
Edmonton AB T5J 3P4  
Phone: 780-496-6226 Fax: 780-496-6054

## Kenneth Alexander Blatchford

(1882 - 1933)

Mr. Kenneth Alexander Blatchford was a past Alderman and Mayor of Edmonton. His strong belief that air travel would one day be an important transportation method played a vital role in how Edmonton became the first municipally run airport in Canada.

Kenneth Blatchford was born in Minnedosa, Manitoba on March 5, 1882. He arrived in Edmonton in the 1890's and witnessed the Town of Edmonton grow into a City, then to the capital of the Province, and later, an industrial and commercial keystone of the Canadian Northwest. Kenneth Blatchford married Grace Lauder Walker in 1904 and the couple had two sons and a daughter together.

In his younger years, Mr. Blatchford excelled in athletics and was a popular wrestler at the Opera House on Jasper Avenue. He was also a self-taught artist, recognized for his work as a background painter for Charles Russell. Aside from these self-taught activities, Mr. Blatchford first made a living by selling American newspapers and periodicals. He later found work as a mill operator when his family purchased the old Fraser grist mill during the Klondike gold rush. After the rush, he left his job at the mill for a position at the Edmonton Power Plant. Before running for council, his last profession was as an insurance broker.

He became an alderman for the City of Edmonton in 1922 and served as such until 1923. Immediately after, he served as mayor for three years and notably stated, "It shows what the West has to offer to a lad, even when one has to start at the beginning with nothing else to rely upon but his own efforts..." In 1926, he was elected as a Member of Parliament for Edmonton East. From 1930 until 1932, Mr. Blatchford refrained from all public activity after being defeated in various elections.

One of Mr. Blatchford's greatest accomplishments while serving on council was persuading city council to purchase the Haggman Farm when he expressed his opinions on the importance of air travel. He later set aside \$400 in the 1926 City budget which allowed for trees to be cleared in the airfield. When the airport opened in 1927, it was clear that the field should be named after him, and therefore became known as Blatchford Field.



*"Airfield Opening".*

*B. Haddow, Prof. Robb, P. Dickens, K.A. Blatchford, S. Ferris.*



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Mr. Blatchford once said, “I venture to predict, if we could all return in thirty years, we should find a scene of progress beyond our most extreme imaginings.” This statement, along with his efforts to pursue air travel in Edmonton, proved that Mr. Blatchford was always interested in the welfare of the City. He ensured that Edmonton would continue to excel and grow.

He passed away at the age 51 in April of 1933, leaving behind his wife and three children.

*Written and Edited by: Danielle Ferchoff  
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## CITATION ON FILE

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“The Third Column Kenneth Blatchford.” 1960. City of Edmonton Archives.

“Kenneth Alexander Blatchford.” Awards Night by Katherine Jaster. September 10, 1992. City of Edmonton Archives.

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<http://www.epl.ca/edmonton-history/edmonton-elections/biographies-mayors-and-councillors?id=B>

“Airfield Opening.” Photograph EA-10-1247. Edmonton: N.A.P.O.T.A., January 25, 1927. City of Edmonton Archives. Accessed September 20, 2012.