

KEY TO PORTRAIT



PORTRAIT DETAILS

1. On the top level of the left side of the bookshelf rest four small flags. They are the flags of Alberta (PM Harper's home province in adulthood), Ontario (PM Harper's home province in childhood), New Brunswick (the ancestral home of the Harper family), and the Kainai First Nation of Alberta (of which PM Harper is an honorary chief).
2. The top level of the right side of the bookshelf shows a photograph of Alert, Nunavut, the most northerly settlement in the world. PM Harper visited in 2006, as part of his northern agenda. Immediately below that are the colours of the Royal 22nd Regiment of Quebec City – the "Van Doos" – of which PM Harper is an honorary member.
3. The second level of the left side of the bookshelf contains a photograph of Quebec City (Calgary's sister-city) and a miniature Stanley Cup, which symbolized PM Harper's keen interest in hockey.
4. The third level of the left side of the bookshelf contains several books of importance in PM Harper's life. From the right, the French dictionary represents his success in becoming bilingual. Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* is the seminal book of the economics profession, PM Harper being an economist. James Buchanan's *Democracy in Deficit* is a critical work in public choice economics, the subfield in which PM Harper wrote his master's thesis. *The New Canada* is the first book by Preston Manning, the founder of the Reform Party and PM Harper's principal political mentor. The Bible reminds viewers that PM Harper is a Christian believer. The harp is a reference to both PM Harper's family name and his interest in music. Sitting above the other books is *Old Colours Never Die*, his father's book on the history of regimental flags in Canada.

5. The fourth level of both the left and right sides of the bookshelf shows a photo of a deer near the Elbow River, in the backyard of PM Harper's residence in Bragg Creek, Alberta. The volumes represent the trade agreements concluded by PM Harper's government – with the European Free Trade Association, Peru, Colombia, Jordan, Panama, Honduras, the European Union, South Korea, Ukraine, and the Trans-Pacific Partnership. In all, PM Harper's government increased the number of countries Canada had free trade agreements with from five to 51, accounting for roughly two-thirds of global GDP.
6. The mug on the desk displays the iconic cover of *With the Beatles*, the band's second album from 1963. PM Harper is an avid Beatles fan, and the mug was indeed on his desk during his time in office.
7. The black and white photo on PM Harper's desk shows his childhood family, including father Joe, mother Margaret, and brothers Grant and Robert, outside their family home at 332 Bessborough Drive in the Town of Leaside, which is now part of the City of Toronto.
8. The colour photo on PM Harper's desk shows his family at 24 Sussex Drive, including his wife Laureen, son Ben, and daughter Rachel.
9. The colours in PM Harper's tie represent his success in bringing together the elements of Canadian conservatism. The dark blue represents the Tory tradition of the Progressive Conservative Party; the green represents the western populist tradition of the Reform Party; and the sky blue represents the autonomiste tradition of conservative francophone and Quebec nationalists.
10. PM Harper is holding a volume representing the 2015 Budget, which confirmed the return of the federal government to balance after the extraordinary fiscal stimulus used from 2009–2011 to combat the effects of the global financial crisis.
11. Showing out the window is the skyline of Calgary. PM Harper represented the city in the House of Commons, specifically Calgary West (1993–1997), Calgary Southwest (2002–2015), and Calgary Heritage (2015–2016).
12. On PM Harper's lapel is the flag of Canada pin that he always wore while in office (and continues to wear). Like his father, PM Harper is a vexillologist and, after his time in office, he authored the book *The Flags of Canada*.
13. Among the items in this picture is a grand piano. PM Harper is a pianist, and some may recall that he performed with his own band on several occasions during his time in office.
14. On the small desk against the back wall are several items. A black and white photograph shows the Leaside train station that PM Harper and his brothers would often visit with his father. The coloured photograph shows the Harper family's home at 57 Princess Anne Crescent as it looked in the 1970s, with their old 1963 Ford Fairlane 500 out front. The cribbage board is shown as it is PM Harper's favourite card game, which he learned from his father. The card on top is a Red Joker, as PM Harper refined a variant of the game which uses all 54 cards. Also on the desk are purple violets, the flower of New Brunswick.
15. At the back of the room is Stanley, the grey tabby cat that the Harpers adopted at 24 Sussex in 2011. As of 2026, Stanley is still living, though somewhat heavier!
16. To PM Harper's right are wild roses, the flower of Alberta.
17. While much of the furniture shown in the office was what PM Harper actually used, the chair on which he is sitting is his chair from the House of Commons, as it is from that chamber that the prime minister derives his authority.
18. On top of all these items is a sketch of a trillium, the flower of Ontario (also reflected off the flower pot), signed and dated by the portrait's painter, Phil Richards, in 2023.
19. On the side table are three books authored by PM Harper – his master's thesis *The Political Business Cycle and Fiscal Policy in Canada*, the political book *Right Here Right Now: Politics and Leadership in the Age of Disruption*, published after his time in office, and *A Great Game: The Forgotten Leafs and the Rise of Professional Hockey*, which was completed while he was prime minister. On top of the hockey book is a pen with the logo of the Calgary Flames, PM Harper's NHL home team.