

David Starr Jordan Encyclopedia Article

David Starr Jordan

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David Starr Jordan

1851-1931

American botanist and administrator. After attending Cornell University, Jordan secured a permanent position at Indiana University, where he quickly rose to president. Jordan instituted major reforms that substantially raised the quality of the institution's faculty and students. In 1892 he was chosen as the first president of Stanford University, a position that earned him a national reputation as a progressive reformer and administrator. Trained as a botanist, Jordan made his scientific reputation as an ichthyologist by studying and cataloging fish in the upper Midwest and the Pacific Coast. He was also a strong advocate for Darwinian evolution, and he argued for the significance of isolation as a factor in evolution as well as the importance of natural history in studying evolution.