Richard Erskine Leakey Encyclopedia Article

Richard Erskine Leakey

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Richard Erskine Leakey

1944-

Kenyan paleoanthropologist whose research has contributed to the study of human evolution. Leakey studied the fossilized remains of extinct human-like creatures called hominids, some of which are thought to be the ancestors of modern humans. He discovered the earliest skull of *Australopithecus robustus,* as well as a complete skeleton of "Turkana Boy," thought to be nearly 1.6 million years old. Leakey is also credited with finding the 17 million-year-old jaw, teeth, and skull fragments of *Sivapithecus,* a possible ancestor of both apes and humans.