

## Rotary International

The first Rotary Club in the world was organized in Chicago, Illinois, on February 23, 1905, by Paul P. Harris, a young lawyer. In a spirit of friendship and understanding, he gathered a group of four men, each of whom was engaged in a different form of service to the public. That basis of membership -- *one individual for each business and profession in the community* -- still exists in Rotary.

At first, the members of the new club met in rotation at the various places of business of the members. Thus the name "Rotary" was adopted.

The objectives of that first Rotary club focused primarily on fellowship, and secondarily on the welfare of each other.

In 1907, however, when the new club led a campaign to install public "comfort stations" in Chicago's city hall -- its first service project -- the course of Rotary was firmly set.



By 1911, Rotarians were using the unofficial slogans, "*He Profits Most Who Serves Best*" and "*Service Above Self.*" They were eventually made official by convention action in 1950.

The second Rotary club was formed in 1908 in San Francisco. Across the Bay in Oakland, California, the third club was formed. Others followed in Seattle, Los Angeles and New York City. By 1910, there were 16 clubs dotted across the United States.

These clubs called the First Convention in August of that year, in Chicago, to organize "The National Association of Rotary Clubs."

With the admission of the Rotary Club of Winnipeg, Canada, in 1911, Rotary became an international organization. At the 1912 Convention, the name was changed to the International Association of Rotary Clubs; in 1922, the present name, Rotary International, was adopted.



A permanent headquarters for Rotary International was built in Evanston, Illinois, dedicated on May 16, 1954. This building, site of all official Rotary International business and headquarters for the Board of Directors and Rotary International President, is open for tours to all Rotarians.

*"Rotary is still in its beginning. Its record to date would seem to indicate that eventually there will be tens of thousands of Rotary clubs helping their members and their communities to a more sympathetic understanding of their fellow men. God speed the day."*

--Paul P. Harris. Founder of Rotary--1936

The extended Rotary "family" now includes both Rotaract and Interact organizations, which introduce younger members of the world population to the ideals of Rotary.

**Rotaract** is a worldwide, Rotary-sponsored organization for young adults (ages 18-29). Started in North Carolina in 1968, its purpose is to provide an opportunity to enhance the knowledge and skills that will assist young men and women in personal development, to address the physical and social needs of their communities, and to promote better relationships between all people worldwide through a framework of friendship and service.

Similarly, **Interact** membership is open to students at the secondary school, or pre-university level, or ages 14-18. This program began in 1962 in Florida.

### Rotary's Objectives

The general objectives of Rotary Clubs in every country are the same -- the development of fellowship and understanding among its members; the promotion of community endeavors; the maintenance of high standards in business and professional practices; and the advancement of international understanding, good will, and peace.

Rotary Clubs everywhere have one basic ideal -- "The Ideal of Service" -- which is thoughtfulness of and service to others.

On the occasion of Rotary's Golden Anniversary in 1955, the United States Postal Service issued a special commemorative stamp featuring the Rotary emblem superimposed on the globe, the hand of Liberty reaching out to light the world, and the Rotary motto, "Service Above Self."

