Happy 150th Birthday to Rotary Founder Paul Harris!

The picture to the left is a drawing of Paul Harris. The picture to the right shows the first four Rotarians, from left Gus Loehr, Silvester Schiele, Hiram Shorey and Paul Harris at 37 years old.

Fellow Rotarians and Friends,

Rotary has an incredible asset of talent, wisdom and know-how in one organization. Rotary is a great organization of leaders. With 1.2 million Rotarians worldwide in more than 215 countries and territories.

It all started with Rotary’s Founder Paul Harris, who today celebrates his 150th birthday. He was born on April 19, 1868.
Paul Harris is well-known in Rotary, but what most Rotarians may not know is that Paul Harris made his main contributions to Rotary as a young man. He was only 37 years old when Rotary was founded. He was only 44 when his two-year term as the first President of Rotary International ended in 1912.

After 1912, Paul Harris had no formal position in Rotary. He was the Founder of Rotary and continued to influence and inspire Rotary for the rest of his life, until he passed away in 1947.

It is my opinion that Paul Harris' vision has created the spirit in Rotary as we know it today. Here are some examples of Paul Harris' wisdom:

- A well-ordered mind is a possession more valuable than unlimited riches.
- It is just as easy to acquire the habit of speaking kindly as it is to acquire the habit of speaking unkindly.
- Perhaps dreaming is not so bad if one dreams good dreams and make them come true.
- Rotary brings out and develops the best there is in men.
- The Rotary of today is different from the Rotary of yesterday and the Rotary of tomorrow cannot, must not, be the same as the Rotary of today. Rotary will continue to evolve.

Rotary Global History Fellowship is the biggest fellowship in Rotary with approximately 1 million visits every year to their website at www.rghf.org.

Rotary Global History Fellowship has a lot of information about Paul Harris at the following links:

You can read about the life of Paul Harris at www.rotaryfirst100.org/presidents/1910harris/paulharris/index.htm. It is a very interesting life.

Paul Harris was a prolific writer all his life. You can read many things that Paul Harris wrote at www.whatpaulharriswrote.org.

There is more information about Paul Harris at www.rotaryfirst100.org/presidents/1910harris/ and www.rotaryfirst100.org/presidents/1910harris/paulharris/gateway/index.htm

There is also a recording of a speech by Paul Harris, which he made during the Rotary Convention in Boston in June 1933. You can listen to it at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sy8_OFEVOmI

When you listen to this speech, you will notice how optimistic Paul Harris' was, which is remarkable as his speech took place at a time when both Hitler and Stalin were in power and America went through its deepest depression in history. Despite this reality, Paul Harris held up a strong vision of tolerance, peace and friendship to be realized through Rotary.
I believe that being able to present a strong vision, which inspires others to make it a reality, is what great leadership is all about. Hitler, Stalin and the Great Depression are all gone, but Rotary is still going strong.

Here are some examples of visionary statements by Paul Harris:

- The spirit of tolerance which has made it possible for Rotary to form a worldwide fellowship of business and professional men will make all things possible.

- Rotary allows ordinary people to do extra ordinary things.

- War is always a ghastly blunder, even the winners loose.

At the Rotary Convention in Chicago in 2005, I met Retired Professor Robina Quale-Leach from Albion, Michigan. She knew Paul Harris when she was a girl in 1943. Paul Harris and his wife Jean used to rent a summer house next to her parents. Paul Harris tried many times to convince Robina’s father to join Rotary, without any success. “Little did he know that he convinced me instead,” said Robina. In 1990, when her local Rotary Club accepted women, Robina was able to join Rotary.

Even though Paul Harris looks stern in this picture, he was known to have a great sense of humor. He was also known to be a great peacemaker within Rotary.
Rotary is one of the Founders of the United Nations!

During 1943, Robina asked Paul Harris what he thought about the ongoing World War Two. Paul Harris responded to her that he looked forward to the end of the war, so that Rotary could be revived in Germany, Italy and Japan. Paul Harris also told her that he would like Rotarians around the world to make sure that such a war would never happen again.

Later in November 1943, Rotary sponsored a conference in London with ministers and observers from twenty-one governments. This group began laying plans for what became UNESCO.

The charter meeting of the United Nations was held in San Francisco, 1945. Rotarians helped to draft the United Nations Charter at the request by the U.S. State Department. Many of the delegates from around the world were Rotarians, representing their own countries.

Twelve prominent Rotarians helped to develop the UN Charter with resulting influence on the humane aspects of the UN Charter. The Secretary of State Edward R. Stettinius, Jr. wrote the following thank you note:

"The invitation to Rotary International to participate in the United Nations Conference as consultant to the United States delegation was not merely a gesture of good will and respect toward a great organization. It was a simple recognition of the practical part Rotary's members has played and will continue to play in the development of understanding among nations. The representatives of Rotary were needed at San Francisco and, as you well know, they made a considerable contribution to the Charter itself, and particularly to the framing of provisions for the Economic and Social Council."

Upon the founding of the United Nations, Rotary became one of the original Non-Governmental Organizations that were invited to participate. Rotary still maintains this position.

Rotarian Thomas McConnon has written about Rotary’s role in the founding of the United Nations. You can read about it at http://nyrotaryunitednations.blogspot.com/2008/05/test.html.

I believe that a strong positive vision is necessary to get great things accomplished. Paul Harris once wrote:

In the battle between the “cant’s” and the “cans” in Rotary, the “cants” have never won a single permanent victory to my knowledge. The broad visions, the nobler purposes have always won.
Happy 150th Birthday to Paul Harris! His spirit lives on! I believe that it will continue to influence Rotarians for many years to come!

Grassroots Peacemaking continues to spread like rings on the water! Our Grassroots Peacemaking Facebook Group has now grown to more than 4,650 members in more than 100 countries and territories.

Everybody wins with peace!
Everybody loses with war!

PDG Matts Ingemanson

Founding Member, Chair
Grassroots Peacemaking

District Governor 2013-2014
Director 2009-10 & 2011-15
Rotary International District 7230
New York & Bermuda

Founding Member
Centennial Chair
Chair 2004-2006
Rotary Global History Fellowship
www.rghf.org
THE IMPORTANCE OF GRASSROOTS PEACEMAKING AND
ROTARIANS’ CONTRIBUTION TO PEACE AROUND THE WORLD!

Bill Miller interviewed Matts Ingemanson, Chair and Founding Member of Rotary Grassroots Peacemaking and Rotary International Past District Governor about how promoting peace is a win-win situation.

You can watch the interview by clicking on the following link:

http://globalconnectionstelevision.com/gallery/matts-ingemanson

To understand the future of Rotary, it helps to understand the history of Rotary because Rotary evolves from its history. The best place to learn about Rotary history is by visiting the website of Rotary Global History Fellowship at www.rghfhome.org/. Many Rotary International Presidents and Directors are students of Rotary History and members of Rotary Global History Fellowship, the biggest fellowship in Rotary. Members can also post the histories of their own Rotary Clubs, Rotary Districts, Rotarian Action Groups and Rotarian Fellowships.

If each of us Rotarians contribute $100 per year to the Rotary Foundation. Rotary, with its approximately 1.2 million members around the world, will collect $120 million. One hundred dollars per year is only 27 cents per day. That is a very small price to pay in the spirit of Service Above Self. These 27 cents per day will help the Rotary Foundation make an even bigger difference in the world. You can read about the Rotary Foundation at www.rotary.org/foundation.

The power of the Internet puts the brains of millions of people together. It also puts 1.2 million Rotarians together. It does not matter where we are and when we are available. The Internet makes it possible for Rotarians around the world to participate together.

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