Rotary

# 1916-2016

# A LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP

## THE HISTORY OF THE MUSKEGON ROTARY CLUB

# CELEBRATING DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES. DISCOVERING SHARED INTERESTS.

Rotary International
District No. 6290
Club No. 2809

Information for this history of the Muskegon Rotary Club has been written, edited and compiled by:

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Rotary

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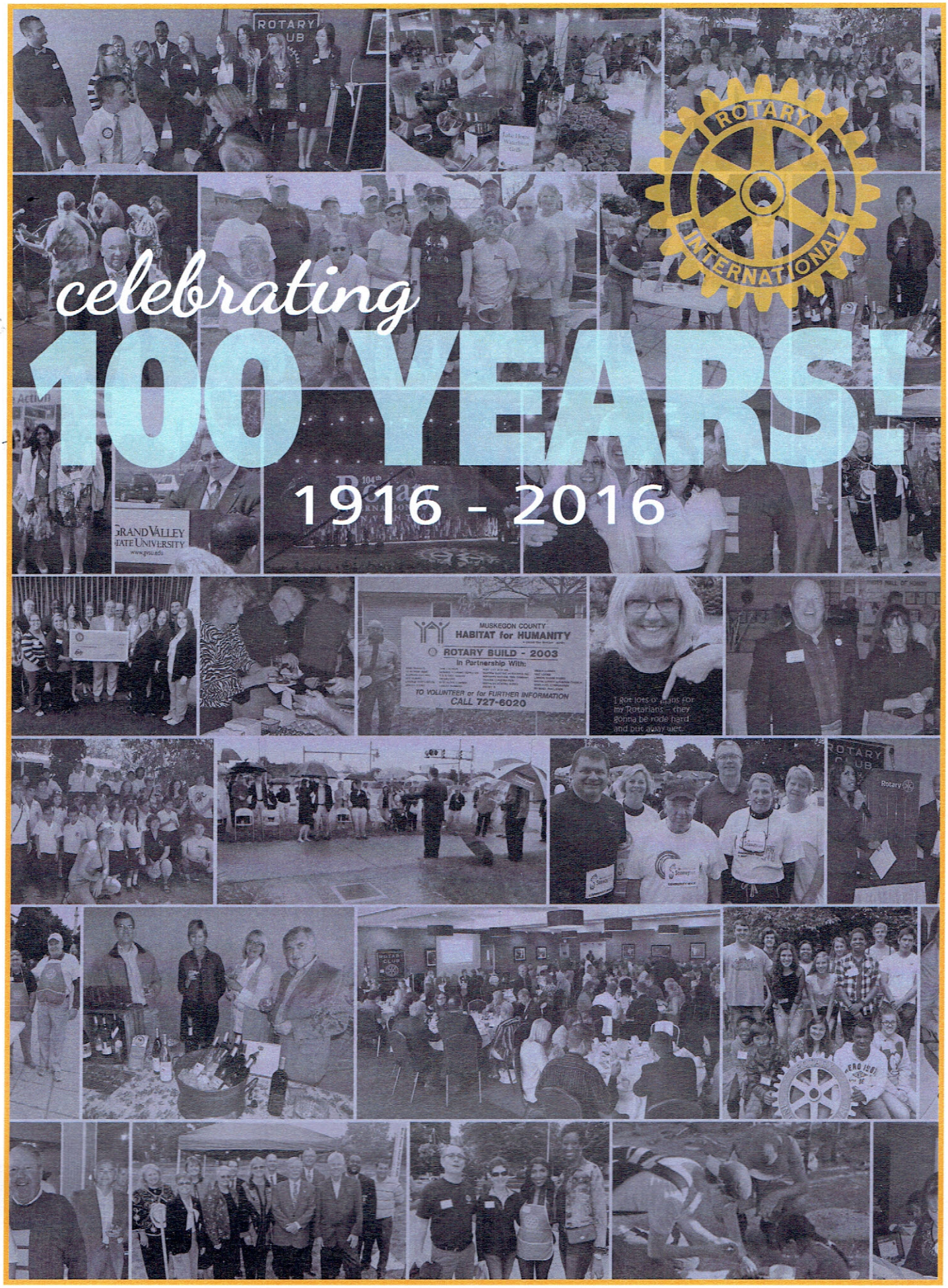



# celebrating 100 YEARS!

## 1916 - 2016

# CONNECTING
## HAS AND ALWAYS WILL BE
# THE DRIVING FORCE
## BEHIND MUSKEGON ROTARY.

Gilbert C. Chaddock, charter member and president of the Muskegon Rotary Club in 1918, in the 25th Anniversary History of the Club, states that William H. McNiff was the father of Muskegon Rotary. McNiff, in his travels around the country as vice-president of the Shaw-Walker Company, attended several Rotary meetings in various towns as the guest of his clients and friends. He became impressed with the aims of Rotary and shared his interest in establishing a Rotary club in Muskegon with his friend Gilbert Chaddock.

GILBERT C. CHADDOCK
Vice President

Together they obtained literature from Rotary headquarters in Chicago and discussed their hopes for a Muskegon Rotary Club with several downtown merchants. At that time, Harry I. Sanford had moved to Muskegon from Grand Rapids where he had been a member of their newly-formed Rotary club. A couple of informational meetings were held led by Chaddock, McNiff and Sanford, and attended by Eugene Osgood and John Hutchins of Grand Rapids. Considerable interest was shown by a number of local men and it was determined to pursue a local Rotary club. A chief concern was the Rotary classification system which restricted membership by category to one principal member and one additional member in each employment classification. The fear was that Club membership might appear too selective or exclusive. The addition of a variety of classifications rendered that fear unwarranted.

The first formal meeting for the purpose of organizing the Muskegon Rotary Club was held at the downtown Occidental Hotel on March 6, 1916. Eugene Osgood and John Hutchins of Grand Rapids were present and eighteen Muskegon men became "charter members." They were: Paul R. Beardsley, Arthur E. Boswell, J. Fred Boyd, Gilbert C. Chaddock, Paul S. Christie, Carl P. Damm, G. Adolph Duttenhofer, Robert F. English, Orlon S. Hopperstead, Edward Krautheim, Hobart P. Lewis, William M. Lewis, William H. McNiff, Harry

**MARCH 1916**
First formal meeting held at Occidental Hotel in downtown Muskegon.

**MAY 1916**
Muskegon Rotary became 216th club to be chartered.

**1918**
Rotarians elected to newly reorganized city goverment.

I. Sanford, Albert J. Schultz, Clarence N. Sessions, Edward R. Swett and Dr. C. Herbert Tannehill. Interestingly, nearly all were downtown Muskegon business and professional men and only two represented local manufacturers.

Clarence Sessions was elected the first president; Gilbert Chaddock, vice-president; and Paul Christie, secretary. There was initially no treasurer. Soon after this organizing, however, Louis Conger succeeded Paul Christie as secretary and J. Fred Boyd was elected treasurer.

It was decided to apply for a Rotary International charter as soon as membership in the Club reached 25. Membership grew quickly and Muskegon Rotary became the 216th club to be chartered on May 1, 1916. It was the first service club to be formed in Muskegon.

At the time our Club was organized, Rotary International, as it is now known, was really in its infancy. Rotary was "international" only because of its presence in the British Isles and Canada. No one could have guessed that from that beginning, today's Rotary has 1.22 million members around the world and consists of 34,282 clubs in over 200 countries.

In 1916, the Club sponsored ice skating rinks at several schools as a first service project for community youngsters. Unfortunately, that winter was unseasonably warm and the ice rinks did not operate for long. They were, however, a first attempt to show the community the outreach of a "service club" and what could be accomplished by local leaders working together for the good of the community.

Soon after, Rotary's efforts turned to helping local crippled children which led to the establishment of a clinic at the First Congregational Church and a group of "Rotary Medics" who provided education to parents of crippled children and also transported children to and from the clinics. This basic beginning work with Rotary and Hackley Hospital led to the establishment of the Crippled Children's Society of Muskegon. By 1955, the Club and Hackley Hospital joined forces to establish a "brace shop" with a contribution of $13,000. By that time, caseloads had reached up to 700 per year.

World War I presented challenges for both the fledgling Club and for communities here and across the nation. Support of the war effort quickly turned to promotion of Liberty Loans, the Community War Chest and support of the Red Cross.

In 1918, Muskegon's Mayor James Smith declared that the

*1: Rotarians worked with the Seaway Run volunteers as part of the "One in 21" community health improvement effort for Muskegon County.*

*2: Rotarians and Baker College Rotaractors manned a critical water station, handing out cups of water to participants in the Seaway Run.*

*3: Times for fun and fellowship are always an important part of every Rotary activity.*

**1919**
Committee formed to aid the Children's Home.

**1921**
Purchased property to build Camp Emery.

**1947**
Muskegon Rotary Scholarship Fund Introduced.

**1949**
Rotary Youth Leadership Training Conference developed.

## OUR VOICE IS
# SMART, COMPASSIONATE, PERSEVERING, AND INSPIRING.

city's municipal government and its finances were in urgent need of change. Mayor Smith brought the city's condition to his fellow Rotary Club members and enlisted their help in drafting a revised city charter which led to a new city commission-manager form of government. Not surprisingly, five of the first seven city commissioners elected under this new structure were Rotarians. They were: Paul Beardsley, Archibald Haden, Henry Langeland, Dr. George LeFevre and William Wilson. Paul Beardsley was elected mayor under the newly-reorganized city government.

In 1919, Rotary formed a committee to aid the Children's Home Board in an advisory capacity and, soon, agreed to finance the maintenance and operation of the Children's Home for the amount in excess of its endowment income. It wasn't until the establishment of the Community Chest years later that Rotary was relieved of its financial obligation to the Home.

Muskegon Rotary's interest in the development and well-being of children continued with its decision to establish a summer camp for under-privileged children. In 1921, under the leadership of Frank C. Whitney, the Club raised $33,000 to purchase the property of the Blue Lake Club and fitted the buildings for the needs of a youth summer camp. The camp, Camp Emery, was situated on 80 acres, with 2,600 front feet on Big Blue Lake. Ultimately the camp had six cabins, a main lodge, bath house, craft shop, dining hall, a nurse and caretaker's cabins, three-stall garage, administration building and a dock.

Camp Emery had several tenants over the years: the YMCA, YWCA, Youth for Christ, Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp, and was leased by several church and school camps.

In the 1960s, Rotary sold 35 acres of Camp Emery to the YMCA for its Camp Pendalouan and, it was in the early 1990s that the remainder of Camp Emery was sold by Rotary for $350,000 to create Rotary's ongoing Endowment Fund which has since supported numerous community projects.

Another of the Club's outstanding accomplishments

**1950s**
Youth Exchange Program begins.

**1955**
Joined forces with Hackley Hospital to establish a "brace shop".

**1960s**
YMCA purchased 35 acres of Camp Emery

has been the development of the Rotary Life Leadership Training Conference. The Conference began in 1949 with 110 senior boys from Districts 629 and 636. The project was conceived by C.W. Bemer, past president of Muskegon Rotary and past Rotary district governor. This has been a hugely successful program which has been publicized nationally and copied by Rotary Clubs around the country.

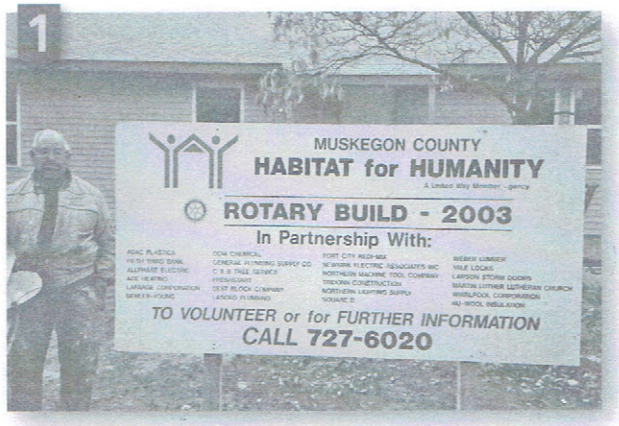
In 1947, at the urging of Robert Shinnock, Muskegon Rotary established its Scholarship Fund. Over the years, hundreds of local high school students have earned scholarships to Muskegon Community College and, later, to Baker College of Muskegon as well. The program continues to this day.

The Muskegon Rotary Club has also been at the forefront of the Youth Exchange Program. Rotary has sent hundreds of students to live and study abroad and, at the same time, welcomed an equal number of foreign students to spend an academic year in the U.S.

The purpose of Youth Exchange is to build international understanding among young people from many countries in the belief that seeing and experiencing diverse cultures is a most powerful way to world peace. Muskegon Rotary Club has participated virtually from the very beginning of the Youth Exchange program, hosting between one to three students per year for the last nearly 60 years. We have historically been one of the most active clubs in Michigan in our Youth Exchange participation.

The Rotary International Foundation offers the Paul Harris Fellowship as its highest award for distinguished service to the Club and/or community or for a $1,000 donation to the RI Foundation. Muskegon Rotary presented its first Paul Harris Fellowship to Allen G. Umbreit in 1979. Mr Umbreit was past district governor, and past president and past secretary of Muskegon Rotary Club, and head of Muskegon Community College.

Since 1979, over 160 Paul Harris Fellowships have been awarded through the Muskegon Club, and several new members are added annually. Muskegon Rotary currently meets every Thursday noon at the Muskegon Harbor Holiday Inn in winter months and at the Lake House, part of the Shoreline Inn, during the summer months. In 2016, a successful attempt was made to hold a second meeting on Thursday afternoons for members unable to attend the Club's luncheon meeting. Over



*1: Former Muskegon Mayor Norm Kruse stands along side the 2003 Habitat for Humanity sign where Rotarians built their first house.*

*2: Rotarians prepare to greet and check ID's for visitors to the Party in the Park at Hackley Park in downtown Muskegon.*

*3: Rotarians and Muskegon County officials gather for the ground breaking for Rotary Park. Rotary Park is an addition to the downtown Heritage Landing park.*

**1979**

Allen G. Umbreit receives the first Muskegon Rotary Paul Harris Fellowship.

**1987**

Pat Johnson and Sue Wierengo become first two female members.

**1990s**

Remaining Camp Emery property sold to create Rotary Endowment Fund.

**WE BUILD**
# LIFELONG RELATIONSHIPS.

**WE HONOR OUR**
# COMMITMENTS.

**WE CONNECT**
# DIVERSE
**PERSPECTIVES.**

the years, Rotary has met at the razed Occidental Hotel and former Masonic Temple before settling into its current meeting schedule.

No discussion of our Club history would be complete without a mention of the U.S. Supreme Court decision of May 4, 1987 which permitted women, for the first time, to seek membership in Rotary. Shortly thereafter, Muskegon Rotary welcomed its first two female members, Pat Johnson and Sue Wierengo. Since then, six women have served as Club president, and current membership is nearly equally divided between men and women.

In the 1990s, Muskegon Rotary Club raised money to renovate Hackley Park in downtown Muskegon. New paved paths were constructed, new street lights installed and the park was generally spruced up and modernized. In the meantime, Hackley Park has been the site of the weekly Parties in the Park each Friday evening throughout the summer. Because Muskegon Rotary was one of the founders and original sponsors, Rotary has been granted a party each year while other organizations wait for an opportunity on a list of eligible organizations. Historically, each Friday party raises several thousand dollars for the sponsoring organization.

Most recently, Muskegon Rotary Club has joined with Muskegon County to purchase and develop land to expand downtown Muskegon's Heritage Landing park. Rotary raised well in excess of $100,000 for its share of the purchase price of the land from the YMCA. It is now, in 2016, spending even more to construct restrooms, a fishing pier and play areas, all handicap accessible. This area will be known as Rotary Park.

The Grape Escape, Muskegon Rotary's largest and most successful annual fund raiser, is a community party which was championed by former club president Larry Wright in 2004. This annual party features wine and food produced by local restaurants and regional Michigan wineries. It has been a huge success. With typical sold out attendance each year, it has been moved to larger and larger venues. Currently, Grape Escape raises more than $30,000 in a single evening and Rotary has designated a non-profit partner each

**1990s**
Hackley Park renovated with funds raised by Muskegon Rotary members.

**2004**
First "Grape Escape" is held in downtown Muskegon, becoming Rotary's most successful fund raiser.

year and guaranteed them $10,000 of the proceeds.

Since 2011, Muskegon Rotary has made a commitment to its New Generations and Youth Service committees by working with local schools and colleges to form Interact and Rotaract clubs. We now have two very successful Interact clubs at Mona Shores and North Muskegon High Schools, with another being formed at Orchard View High School. North Muskegon has a separate Interact club for middle school students to prepare them for high school service.

Both of our local colleges, Baker College and Muskegon Community College also host Rotaract clubs which have made significant contributions to our community. Muskegon Rotarians help by mentoring these clubs, attending many of their meetings, supporting their fund raising efforts and providing linkage with Muskegon Rotary and the community at large.

The Muskegon Rotary Club has a long history of involvement in international service. Rotary joined with the World Health Organization, with help from the Gates Foundation, to eradicate polio worldwide. This effort has been successful with only two remaining developing countries where polio is endemic, but difficult to provide vaccinations for, because of governmental resistance.

Our Club has also joined three other local clubs to provide funding and volunteers to a school and clinic in Jamaica. Working with these other Rotary Clubs, we have also provided funds and volunteers for water and sanitation projects in Honduras.

Waterborne illnesses are the leading cause of death of children in underdeveloped countries. To address this problem, Rotary has been supplying and installing bio-sand water filters in rural villages in Honduras for over eight years. We have also provided assistance for both Interact and Rotaract students to participate in these trips.

With membership currently over 220 in the spring of 2016, there is little doubt that the Club Gilbert Chaddock, William McNiff and a handful of visionaries and friends launched in 1916 has been anything less than a major success for the Greater Muskegon community.

**Here's to the next 100 years!**

*1: A record 14 Life Leadership conferees from six Muskegon area high schools attended the Life Leadership Conference in 2014.*

*2: Work installing water filters was punctuated with fun times during a recent trip to Honduras.*

*3: Baker College students were an essential part of the "clean water team" which brought water filters to small villages in Honduras.*

**2011**
Committed to work with local schools and colleges to form Interact and Rotaract Clubs.

**2014**
Broke ground on Rotary Park, an expansion of Muskegon's Heritage Landing.

**2016**
Muskegon Rotary celebrates it's 100th Birthday!

*From left, Bob Scolnik, Jack Briggs, Jim Fisher, Gary Nelund, John Snider, Nancy Crandall, Susan Crain, Jay Wallace Jr, Gary Ostrom, Nancy McCarthy, Brianna Scott, Bill Loxterman, Dick Morgenstern, Roger Andersen, Lee Holly, John Noling, and Don Crandall.*

* Clarence N. Sessions ..... 1916
* Frank C. Whitney ..... 1917
* Gilbert C. Chaddock ..... 1918
* James L. Gillard ..... 1919
* Aksel M. Larsen ..... 1920
* Louis H. Conger ..... 1921
* Walter F. Tunks ..... 1922
* Frank E. McKee ..... 1923
* William M. Lewis ..... 1924-25
* Harold L. Wheeler ..... 1925-26
* John Vanderwerp ..... 1926-27
* Jesse O. Matteson ..... 1927-28
* Adam Pyle, Jr ..... 1928-29
* Louis T. Girdler ..... 1929-30
* Henry E. Langeland ..... 1930-31
* William R. Booker ..... 1931-32
* Samuel Stites ..... 1932-33
* Louis Lefevre ..... 1933-34
* Samuel N. Oliver ..... 1934-35
* Chester M. Wells ..... 1935-36
* Edward W. Bitzer ..... 1936-37
* Omar P. Stelle ..... 1937-38
* Leland E. Holly ..... 1938-39
* Otto A. Seyferth ..... 1939-40
* Edward W. Beach ..... 1940-41
* Walter B. Steele... ..... 1941-42
* Grant F. Ashbacker ..... 1942-43
* Wilbert A. Bennetts ..... 1943-44
* Roscoe C. Nichols ..... 1944-45
* Dean W. Flowers ..... 1945-46
* Albert A. Kehren ..... 1946-47
* Robert R. Shinnick ..... 1947-48
* Clarence W. Bemer ..... 1948-49
* Arnold G. Andersen ..... 1949-50
* Charles F. Latimer ..... 1950-51
* E.A. "Bill" Nichols ..... 1951-52
* Bart D. Buck ..... 1952-53
* Harold Thurston ..... 1953-54
* Fred Kampenga ..... 1954-55
* Allen G. Umbreit ..... 1955-56
* Lionell Booth ..... 1956-57
* George E. Ludwig ..... 1957-58
* Arch F. Jordan ..... 1958-59
* Lawrence A. Carl ..... 1959-60
* Victor A. Pyle ..... 1960-61
* Jacob C. Devries ..... 1961-62
* Gilbert W. Lundeen ..... 1962-63
* T. Austin Sanders ..... 1963-64
* H. Winston Hathaway ..... 1964-65
* Harold W. Waddell ..... 1965-66
* Leonel L. Loder ..... 1966-67
* Scott T. Holmes ..... 1967-68
Leland E. Holly II ..... 1968-69
* Joseph A. Taylor ..... 1969-70
* Douglas W. Hamm ..... 1970-71
* Wilbur B. Boyden ..... 1971-72
* H. Richard Morgenstern ..... 1972-73
Allan R. Baughman ..... 1973-74
* William L. Austin ..... 1974-75
Scott H. MacIntire ..... 1975-76
Roger A. Andersen ..... 1976-77
* Peter O. Jelby ..... 1977-78
* Albert J. Flogge ..... 1978-79
* George W. Hansen ..... 1979-80
* Norman F. Kruse ..... 1980-81
* Franklin B. Hovey ..... 1981-82
James W. Perry ..... 1982-83
John M. Briggs III ..... 1983-84
* Paul S. Christie, Jr. ..... 1984-85
Robert K. Kinning ..... 1985-86
David W. Hogan ..... 1986-87
* M. William Lang ..... 1987-88
Richard L. Steketee ..... 1988-89
John F. Tierney ..... 1989-90
I. John Snider II ..... 1990-91
Thomas R. Kampenga ..... 1991-92
Robert D. Hovey ..... 1992-93
Roger W. Spoelman ..... 1993-94
Steven R. Dangel ..... 1994-95
John C. Cress ..... 1995-96
William C. Marietti ..... 1996-97
Gary W. Ostrom ..... 1997-98
Thomas A. Powers ..... 1998-99
Sue Wierengo ..... 1999-2000
Nate McClure ..... 2000-01
Robert Scolnik ..... 2001-02
Nancy McCarthy ..... 2002-03
Mary O'Connor ..... 2003-04
Don Mathews ..... 2004-05
Bill Loxterman ..... 2005-06
* Larry Wright ..... 2006-07
Nancy Crandall ..... 2007-08
Gary Nelund ..... 2008-09
Ken Kraus ..... 2009-10
Jim Fisher ..... 2010-11
John Noling ..... 2011-12
Jay Wallace, Jr. ..... 2012-13
Donald Crandall, M.D. ..... 2013-14
Brianna Scott ..... 2014-15
Susan Crain ..... 2015-16

# PAST PRESIDENTS

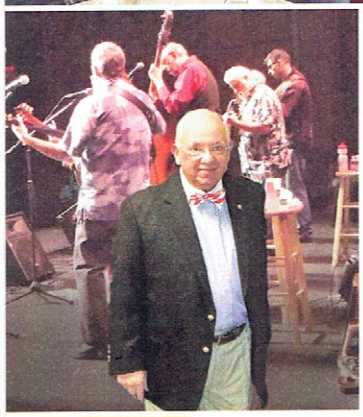
** Deceased*

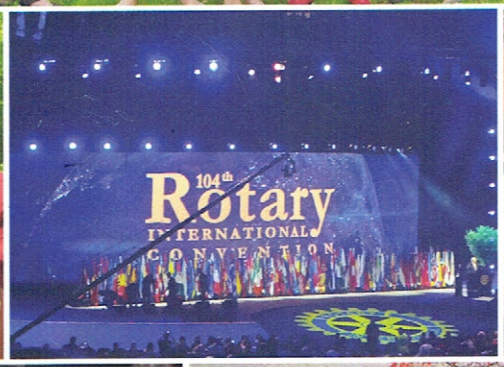
# "THE GREATEST OF ALL ACHIEVEMENTS... ARE THE RESULT OF THE COMBINED EFFORT OF HEART AND HEAD AND HAND WORKING IN PERFECT COORDINATION."

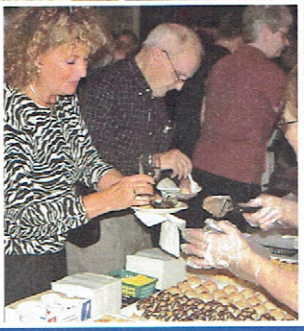
*- Paul P. Harris, Founder*

Timothy Achterhoff
Heidi Adams
Dave Alexander
Alan Alpert
Rick Amidon
Roger Andersen
William Ashley
* William Austin
Pamala Babbitt
George Bartlett
Sheryl Becker
Frank Bednarek
* George Bennett
* Joe Beyerle
Dave Bloomfield
* Ernest Bly
Michael Bozym
Janice Briggs
John M. Briggs III
Fred Brown
Claudia Bryant
* Bart Buck
Chris Burnaw
Michael Busler
* Max Busard
Dick Carlson
Robert Chapla
Louis Churchwell
* Bettye Clarke-Cannon
Jane Clingman-Scott
* Carroll Cole
* Margaret Ann Cole
Darlene Collet
Roy Cowdery
Susan Crain
Orville Crain
Donald Crandall
Nancy Crandall
* Wilson Cronewett
* Robert Cutler
Keith Curry
Steven Dangel
* John Day
* John Dehorn
Ed DeJong
Marios Demetriou
Lawrence Devoogd
Kevin Donovan
David K. Ellis
Marty Ferriby
Eugene Fethke
* Eugene Fisher
Jackie Fisher
Jim Fisher
Jeff Fortenbacher
Bruce Fox
Phil Friedrick
* Robert Garrison
W.B. Gilmer
Mary Anne Gorman
* Ronald Gossett
* John Halmond
* Robert Hammer
* George Hansen
Michael Hansen
Howard Hardesty
Judy Hayner
Ed Hendrickson
Carla Hill
Larry Hines
David Hogan
Mary Hogan
Robert Hovey
Robert Huisingh
Edgar Hunt
* Michael Irish
Bob Irwin
Annette Jack
Bob Jewell
Bill Johanson
Charles E. Johnson II
Judy Johnson
Les Johnson
* Patricia Johnson
Linda Juarez
Thomas Kampenga
Mort Kantor
Judy Kell
Robert Kersman
Ken Kraus
* Norman Kruse
* William Lang
Larry Larsen
Tim Lipan
* Ben Loeb
* Leonel Loder
Bill Loxterman
Tom Ludwig
* Gilbert Lundeen
Frank Marczak
William Marietti
Barbara Mathews
Elizabeth Mathews
Deveron Mathews
Donald Mathews
* Grace Mathews
Mark Mathews
Timothy Mathews
Nancy T. McCarthy
Chris McGuigan
Susan W. Meston
Kathy Moore
* H. Richard Morgenstern
Gordon Mudler
Gary Nelund
John Noling
Zachary Noling
Mary O'Connor
Steve Olsen
Garry Olson
Diana Osborn
Gary Ostrom
* Thomas Otley
James Perry
Jason Piasecki
Gary Post
Thomas Powers
Sherman Poppen
* Victor Pyle
David Ramos
Doris Rucks
James Schiltz
Joan Schmitt
Robert N. Scolnik
* Tom Shannon
I. John Snider II
Roger W. Spoelman
Ginny Sprague
Rem Sprague
Alan Steinman
* James Stevenson
* Fred E. Strong
John Swanson
Dan Thill
John Tierney
Judy Tierney
Cindy Timmerman
* Robert Tuttle
* Hugh Tyler
* Allen Umbreit
* Edwin Valentine
* John Vandervelde
John Van Wyck
Glenn Wagner
John Wahlberg
Jay Wallace, Jr.
Sue Wierengo
Rillastine Wilkins
* Edward V. Williams
Colonel Winnick
Doug Wood
John Workman
* Larry Wright
Mike Youngdahl
Chris Zhart
Linda Zolman
Adam Zuwerink

## PAUL HARRIS FELLOWS







# THE FOUR-WAY TEST

## Of the things we think, say, or do:

1. Is it the **TRUTH**?
2. Is it **FAIR** to all concerned?
3. Will it build **GOOD WILL** and better **FRIENDSHIPS**?
4. Will it be **BENEFICIAL** to all concerned?