

Suggested reading to prepare your own comments:

<http://www.onepagehistory.info> A very brief presentation of Rotary History

Visit each of these pages to familiarize yourself with what RGHF has done

<http://www.rghf.org>

<http://www.rotaryfirst100.org>

<http://www.rotaryhistoryfellowship.org>

<http://www.whatpaulharriswrote.org>

Visit this page to see how many others are involved directly in the editing

<http://www.historycommittee.org>

Read this page. It tells how RGHF got started

<http://www.rghf.org/orientation/project.htm>

Read this page to get some background on Rotary history

<http://www.rotaryfirst100.org/library/presentations/20020918.htm>

Rotary history speech to []

My name is [] and I'm a member of Rotary Global History Fellowship also known as RGHF. Since October of 2000 we have been preserving the history of Rotary.

RGHF Mission: As an effort to serve others, RGHF accumulates and preserves the complete history, values and philosophy of the Rotary movement, as well as encourages others to do the same at every level of the Rotary movement, and publishes those histories, values and philosophies on the internet, as well as other forms of media as expedient.

Our motto is "**Slowly, we seek to serve others, believing that history will encourage membership retention and increase contributions to *The Rotary Foundation.***"

To secure our future, we need each of you to join RGHF and share Rotary's history. I have only a couple of points in which to make my case for your membership.

But, first, here's something I hope you'll find interesting

[create a short poem, or parody using names of those in the audience, or just mention some names of people you know in the room and say something about them]

[Pause for reaction]

Now....

What if I read this for some other club, maybe Kiwanis, in some town near here?
Would it get a reaction?

[Pause....]

Probably not as good as here, amongst friends, and the reason is because we all knew something about these names, we were familiar with them. We have been in fellowship with some of them, or we know that they are here with us now.

[Here please insert a story from your own life where you resisted something (Grand Opera, Golf, or travel to an unfamiliar place) where your own attitude changed once you knew more about the person, place, or thing.]

Paraphrasing Paul Harris, the founder of Rotary International, "service is the doorway to friendship or fellowship." Service to others is what makes Rotary special and unique.

How do I know that?

Because I have read some of Rotary's history! I've taken the time to read a few examples of the excellent writing of Paul Harris and other Rotary leaders. Entire books are online at RGHF so that anyone can read them from their desk top.

Of course, you don't have to be a historian to understand and appreciate fellowship. But, Rotary is unique and an understanding of how we came to be is valuable.

I have two questions for all of you:

Do you want more people to join and remain in Rotary?

(pause) THEN TEACH THEM HISTORY.

Do you want more donations to The Rotary Foundation so that we and others can continue to do what we're doing here?

(pause) THEN TEACH THEM HISTORY.

People tend to enjoy the familiar, just like that poem I read, people tend to remain where they are most comfortable, where they are knowledgeable of the purpose, the meaning, the value of what they are involved in.

That “is” history.

It’s what a surgeon relies on when entering an operating room. It’s what any great athlete needs to compete. When you study the history of Rotary, even a little, you will develop a greater interest in Rotary, something special even beyond the friendships in your club. Something that should be passed down through the ages...

It’s something that Rotary Global History Fellowship has been doing since October of 2000.

[Tell just a bit about what you’ve found.]

There are features that are free. Some of you have likely heard of, or read “What Paul Harris Said,” or “Why I am a Rotarian.” There are others as well.

[In your own words describe the vast collection of history at rghf.org]

Here’s question? Who was the first president of Rotary? While you’re thinking about that, here’s another one: Who is the most important Rotarian today? And also, what is the most important audience in Rotary.

First, I’ll answer the last two questions. There’s no question that the most important Rotarian is you! Each of us makes up what we call Rotary. By the way, the name came from the early practice of rotating meetings from one member’s office to another and became known as the rotating meeting of Chicago before “Rotary” was chosen as the name.

The most important audience in Rotary is this group today, and any one or more Rotarians gathered in service above self. It was Frank Collins, a member from the new club of Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA, at the Portland, Oregon convention of Rotary, in 1911, suggested “Service not Self,” which became “Service above Self.” Collins was an early leader of Rotary. That same year, a Chicago Rotarian, Fred Sheldon, happened to be sitting in a Minneapolis barber’s chair, thinking about the large number of business failures that he knew about personally. Fred was a business teacher. It suddenly came to him that these businesses did not offer much “service” and the expression “He Profits most who Services Best,” was born. Today, we say “They” profit most who serves best. Sheldon’s advice was a way to make more money, but deeply committed to the ideals of this young group, he also suggested that the profit made could be used wisely in stewardship in one’s community. Both Collins and Sheldon are part of RGHF’s early leaders section. Just Google “early leaders” and you’ll find it near or at the top of about 10 million returns.

Each Rotarian is the most important Rotarian and each audience as well. This audience is crucial to Rotary’s future. None more was more important than the

day that the day that young forty year old Paul Harris called another Chicago member named Ches Perry. According to Harris, Perry, a young librarian, had been appointed to head of Harris' ideas of "round the world Rotary." Perry was also intended to end the continued interruptions regarding extension of clubs which took up valuable meeting time. In the early days, Rotarians, in many new clubs were keen on getting business.

In Paul Harris' own words you can read how Rotary nearly ended that Sunday before Harris, in a long phone conversation, won the respect and attention of Ches Perry, who went on to serve at Rotary Secretary for 32 years.

And what about Harris himself. His books tell the story of irresponsible parents, an abandoned child, and a loving grandfather. If you read just one of Harris' books you'll see Rotary in a whole new light.

So, who was the first Rotary president?

[ask for answers]

The correct answer is also found at our early leaders section. The first president of Rotary was the first president of the first club of Rotary, Chicago, known as ROTARY/One. His name was Silvester Schiele, a coal dealer and one of the first four founding members. Schiele, Harris' close friend and client, was chosen because the meeting that day was in his office and it was the polite thing to do.

Membership in RGHF is not for historians; it is for all of Rotary and is open to Rotarians, Rotaractors, and family members of Rotarians. By joining, you will be able to tell the Rotary history story at your club, just as I am doing here today. And, you'll have expert help.

Rotarians who know their history will more likely remain in Rotary and become more generous in their contributions to TRF.

It is nearly impossible to get the entire history of Rotary told and yet it may be the most important tool we have to preserve Rotary and expand our service to the world. Rotarians, Rotaractors, and Rotary family members who join with a five year membership in RGHF can have speeches written for them to deliver to other clubs or Rotary organizations. With a five year membership, you'll get the support you need to become a knowledgeable Rotary history speaker.

Today, Rotarians, Rotaractors, and Rotary family members continue to add to the tens of thousands of articles about Rotary at rghf.org. One of a hundred projects is to collect the histories of all 532 Rotary International districts. RGHF is preserving your history and that of all of Rotary.

Will you join us? This will require some effort, but if it increases Rotary membership retention and contributions to The Rotary Foundation, isn't that worth the time? Just visit joinrghf.org and join RGHF.

Thank you.