



Dear fellow Rotarians,

This month is a milestone in Rotary's history - our 100th anniversary. Few other organizations have reached this landmark achievement. We've survived a century of change, but Rotarians have always been up to the challenge. Despite two world wars, regional conflicts, uncertain economies and unpredictable politics, Rotarians have been united by the Rotary motto of Service Above Self. For nearly 100 years, these three words have been our guiding light.

Rotary started as the inspiration of one man, Paul P. Harris. On 23 February 1905, the young lawyer met with three business associates in a small office in downtown Chicago. The group chatted about the weather, their relatives back home, and about

starting a "booster club." This unassuming group of friends would eventually lay the groundwork for the world's first service organization.

Paul Harris is an example of how one person can change the course of history. His pioneering vision gave rise to the concept of volunteerism at a time when there was little concern for the "common man." The group of four eventually grew and expanded across borders to form an international organization dedicated to humanitarian service and peace. Rotary is historic in that it has transcended geographic, religious, racial, political, social and other barriers.

I feel privileged to serve as your president during the centennial year. As a Rotarian who grew up in a small rural community, I can relate to Paul Harris and his desire to make friends and help his neighbors. I chose the RI theme Celebrate Rotary so that each club could commemorate the centennial its own special way. Our anniversary is a golden opportunity to raise awareness and publicize the good works of Rotary.

Rotary club members are ordinary people who accomplish extraordinary things - sometimes through sheer force of will. Thanks to The Rotary Foundation of RI, Rotarians have provided more than \$1.4 billion for service projects in more than 166 countries. Rotary supports the world's largest privately funded international scholarship program and sponsors one of the world's most popular youth exchange programs. We have been leaders in the global fight against polio, saving millions of children from this crippling disease. It is our birthday gift to the children of the world.

Few organizations reach their 100th anniversary, illustrating the tremendous need for Rotary over the years. But our centennial is not just a time to reflect upon our past accomplishments. It is also a time to look to the future, to set new goals and face new challenges. We must continue to dedicate ourselves to world peace, promote high ethical standards and seek new opportunities for service.

One hundred years ago, Paul Harris took the first steps on our journey of service. As we enter our second century of service, we must continue to evolve and grow as an organization. I encourage Rotarians to raise the bar and reinvent the Rotary wheel. With more than 1.2 million members in 166 countries, we have incredible potential to change the world.

RI President James L. Bomar Jr. (1979-80) described Rotary's founding fathers as the "builders of eternity." Rotary is truly ageless in that its legacy lives on through millions of people who have benefited from our projects and programs. Let us Celebrate Rotary by creating a better world and a better future. The next 100 years holds even greater challenges - and greater promise.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Glenn E. Estess Sr." The signature is written in a cursive style.

Glenn E. Estess Sr.
President, Rotary International

