

## This Day in History... February 23, 1905

### Rotary Club Founded

On February 23, 1905, the Rotary Club was founded in Chicago, Illinois. Since then, it has grown into an international service organization spreading goodwill and understanding around the world.

The Rotary Club was founded at the request of attorney Paul P. Harris. He invited two business acquaintances – coal merchant Silvester Schiele and tailor Hiram E. Shorey to meet him in the office of Gustave Loehr, a mining engineer and freemason.

The four men met in Loehr's office in Chicago's Unity Building on February 23, 1905, and established the Rotary Club. The name was selected because they initially rotated where they held their weekly meetings between each of the men's offices. However, in less than a year the Chicago club was the largest and it was decided that the meetings should be held in the same place every week.

In the coming years, new Rotary Clubs were organized in San Francisco, Oakland, Seattle, and Los Angeles. In 1910, the National Association of Rotary Clubs was formed. And later that year, the first Rotary Club in Canada was established in Winnipeg, marking the start of the club's international reach. Then in 1911, a Rotary Club was established in Dublin, Ireland, the first Rotary Club outside of North America. To reflect the organization's growth, it was called the International Association of Rotary Clubs starting in 1912. By the 1920s, there were Rotary Clubs in England, Cuba, the Philippines, and India. The name was changed once again in 1922 to Rotary International.

During World War II, several Rotary Clubs in Europe were disbanded, but they would be reorganized after the war. Rotary International worked closely with the United Nations from its founding in 1945 and continues today. In the 1980s, Rotary established its PolioPlus program to ensure all children around the world were immunized against polio. By 2011, they contributed over \$900 million to the cause, providing immunizations to 2.5 billion children around the world.

Today, Rotary International has over 1.2 million members in over 35,000 clubs in 200 countries. The stated purpose of the organization is to bring business and professional leaders together to set high ethical business standards, perform service to society, and improve peace and goodwill worldwide. Clubs typically meet weekly at breakfast, lunch, or dinners that blend social events with activity planning. The two main mottos of Rotary International are "Service above Self" and "One profits most who serves best."

Several notable people have been members of the Rotary, including Neil Armstrong, William Jennings Bryan, Richard E. Byrd, Winston Churchill, Gerald Ford, Warren G. Harding, Duke Kahanamoku, John F. Kennedy, Dr. Charles H. Mayo, James Whitcomb Riley, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, and Orville Wright.



*Stamp issued on the Rotary Club's 50th anniversary.*



*Congo stamp issued for Rotary's 75th anniversary.*

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