

History of Lincoln Rotary Club #14

A Charter Club of Rotary International

Rotary International

Rotary is the oldest of the service organizations. The first Rotary club in the world was organized in Chicago, IL on February 23, 1905 by Paul P. Harris, a young lawyer, who gathered together in a spirit of friendship and understanding a group of men, each of whom was engaged in a different form of service to the public. That basis for membership — one person from each business and profession in the community — still exists in Rotary. At first, the members of the new club met in rotation at their various places of business, and this suggested the name “Rotary.” Rotary has been international since 1911.

Rotary is officially defined as an organization of business and professional people “united worldwide, who provide humanitarian service, encourage high ethical standards in all vocations and help build peace and goodwill in the world.” The Rotary motto is “Service Above Self.” There are now more than 31,000 Rotary Clubs with more than 1,220,000 members in 530 districts and 166 countries and geographical regions.

The general objectives of Rotary clubs in every country are the same — the development of fellowship and understanding among the business and professional leaders in the community, the promotion of community betterment endeavors and of high standards in business and professional practices, and the advancement of international understanding, goodwill, and peace. Rotary clubs everywhere have one basic ideal — the “Ideal of Service,” which is thoughtfulness of and helpfulness to others.

Lincoln Rotary Club #14

Organization Lincoln Rotary is Lincoln’s oldest service organization. It was the 14th Rotary Club founded and has published a weekly newsletter, *The Propeller*, since 1916. Lincoln Rotary came into being as a direct result of the efforts of the St. Louis Rotary Club. The St. Louis club president, who had business relations with F. C. “Dad” Phillips, came to Lincoln in late May, 1910 and received a promise from “Dad” Phillips that a Rotary Club would be organized in Lincoln.

On June 6, 1910 the selected group met in the Phillips Plumbing Shop and Lincoln Rotary Club #14 was born with F. C. Phillips as President. Charter members were:

Ray O. Castle, Castle, Roper & Matthews, undertakers,
1317-23 “N” St.

Harry Sidles, Manager, Nebraska Buick Auto Co., 144
No. 13th St.

Walt E. Shaffer, meats, 120 So. 11th St.

Thomas P. Harrison, contractor, 57 Brownell Block

Frank E. Gillen, Gillen & Boney, wholesale confections,
209-223 No. 8th St.

Francis W. Brown, Sr., Treasurer, F. W. Brown Lumber
Co., 700 “O” St.

Samuel W. Shean, optometrist, 1123 “O” St.

Wm. H. Prescott, Prescott Music Co., 1210 “O” St.

Frank B. Kimball, Kimball Bros., monuments, 1700 “O” St.

Warren J. Byer, grocer, 1401 “O” St.

Alvin H. Armstrong, President & Treasurer, Armstrong
Clothing Co., 1221 “O” St.

Frank C. Phillips, President & Treasurer, F. C. Phillips Co.,
plumbers, 1421 “P” Street

Burton A. George, George Bros., printers, 218 So. 13th St.

Club Extension Lincoln Rotary was responsible for establishing most other early Rotary clubs in Nebraska. Lincoln Rotary has sponsored eighteen (18) new Rotary clubs. They are: Downtown Omaha Club #37, Kearney, York, Beatrice, Fremont, Hastings, Norfolk, Aurora, Falls City, Alliance, Chadron, Scottsbluff, Crete, Ashland, Humboldt, Lincoln East (formerly Lincoln Northeast), Lincoln South, and Lincoln Sunrise (formerly Lincoln Havelock).

District Governors The club has furnished fourteen District Governors beginning with O. J. Fee in 1916-17 and followed by Charles Pugsley, Verne Hedge, Charles Cadwallader, W. A. Robbins, Kenneth White, 1966-67; Robert W. Palme, 1970-71; John Wolter, 1985-86; Dan Drain, 1988-89; Charles Thone, 1996-97; Arthur Knox, 1997-98; Merle Jansen, 2000-01, Jim Mastera 2006-07, and Sharon Wherry 2008-09. Charles Cadwallader also served on the Board of Directors of Rotary International and in 1947 was nominated by Lincoln Rotary as a candidate for International President.

Renowned People One of Lincoln Rotary’s best known members was William Jennings Bryan. He became an honorary member when he moved his residence to Florida.

General John J. Pershing was an honorary member and attended meetings in his honor on Dec. 30, 1919 and Dec. 21, 1929.

Eleven (11) chief executive officers of the University of Nebraska have been members or honorary members of Lincoln Rotary: Samuel Avery, C. S. Boucher, R. G. Gustafson, Clifford Hardin, Ronald Roskens, Martin Massengale, Graham Spanier, L. Dennis Smith, James C. Moeser, Harvey Perlman, and J. B. Milliken. All heads of Nebraska Wesleyan University since 1932 and all Presidents of Union College since 1957 have been members or honorary members of the club.

Nine (9) mayors of Lincoln have been members or honorary members: Dean Petersen, Alvin H. Armstrong, F. W. Brown, Verne Hedge, Frank Zehring, Bill Harris, Mike Johanns, Don Wesely, and Chris Beutler.

Over twenty club members have also served as chair of the Lincoln Chamber of Commerce. Seven (7) members or honorary members have served as Governor of the State of Nebraska: Samuel R. McKelvie, Frank Morrison, Charles Thone, Kay Orr, Ben Nelson, Mike Johanns, and Dave Heineman. Members Carl T. Curtis and J. James Exon served, and Ben Nelson and Mike Johanns are currently serving as U. S. Senators, Charles Thone and Tom Osborne have served, and Jeffrey Fortenberry is serving in the U. S. House of Representatives.

Most Senior Members Records indicate that current members with the longest continuous membership in Lincoln Rotary are Arthur Knox, July 10, 1962, and Larry DeFord and Don Miltner, both who joined the club on August 4, 1964.

Miscellaneous Lincoln Rotary has had two sons follow their fathers as club presidents: Sam Van Pelt 1969-70, whose father was Robert Van Pelt 1935-36; and Robert Magee 1972-73, whose father was Elmer Magee 1954-55.

Founder Paul Harris, plus five (5) other Rotary International Presidents, and one International President Elect have visited Club #14: 1938 – Paul Harris and former member Harvey Kendall visited and stayed in the home of Rotarian Dan De Putron; 1948 – RI President Angus S. Mitchell from Melbourne, Australia; 1954 – RI President Herbert J. Taylor from Chicago, IL; 1985, RI President-Elect Edward F. Cadman from Wenatchee, WA - 75th anniversary; 1990 – RI President Hugh Archer from Dearborn MI - 80th anniversary; 1995 – RI President Herbert Brown from Clearwater, FL – 85th anniversary and Seniors Park dedication; 2010 - RI President John Kenny from Scotland attended our 100th centennial celebration and Elliott School/Antelope Valley Playground dedication.

In 1945, Founder Paul Harris penned a congratulatory letter to Club #14 celebrating our 35th anniversary.

Club Service

Membership By 1973, membership reached 225 strong and continued to grow in the following years. In 1978, an innovative and successful internal program entitled “Blow your own Horn” developed new enthusiasm in Rotary membership. That same year, fiscal controls were enacted and criteria were established for hiring a new executive secretary. In 1982, new member orientation was improved, and daily wearing of the Rotary pin was encouraged. By 1985, membership had fallen to 164, but during that year it was increased to 204. In 1986, the club welcomed its first woman member when Governor Kay Orr became an honorary member. In 1990-91, 53 new members were introduced and membership retention at the end of the year was 97%. In the year 1991-92 membership reached 242 with new member recruitment being second highest in the district. Emphasis was placed on the club’s fiscal condition and a successful plan was adopted to reestablish a positive cash flow. In 1993-94, the goal was to introduce one new member at each meeting. This goal was very nearly accomplished resulting in 256 members at year end. In the 2000-2001 year membership reached 287 members and the club was recognized at the International Convention as one of the top 100 clubs in the 21st Century Challenge Award Ceremony. Current membership stands at 318.

Past Presidents Council The council, to be composed of all Past Presidents, was established in 1990 to provide counsel and advice to the current president.

Membership Recognition/Finemeister The Press Posse was introduced in 1991 with members “in the news” being fined for their notoriety. Contributions are added to the Service Fund.

NEOS Club NEOS was established in 1992-93 to serve two main purposes. First, this new members’ club serves as a social bridge between non-membership and immersion into the mass of the larger club. The second goal is the transmission of Rotary information in multiple, small doses – rotating the curriculum every four months. Thus delivered, this information is more likely to be remembered and become a base for understanding what is unique about Rotary and Rotarians.

Rotary Plan of Service In July 1993, a Rotary Plan Booklet listing all committees, committee members, and committee goals for the year was published and distributed to each member. With this written plan, the committees functioned extremely well. In the 1995-96 year this Rotary Plan was combined with the Membership Roster book and a single “Membership Directory and Plan of Service” booklet was published.

Centennial Publication A history committee approved in 2002 began collecting photos for an album. This soon included writing our history with pictures. A very inclusive 100-year publication was presented at our Centennial Celebration on June 4, 2010. We are preserving for the future: minutes, Propellers, trophies, certificates and other Rotary collectables.

Community Service

Lincoln General Lincoln Rotary conceived the idea of Lincoln General Hospital and led a public campaign in 1920 that raised \$100,000 to match an equal amount of City of Lincoln funds. In 1975, the hospital’s 50th anniversary, the Lincoln Journal-Star reprinted an article headlined “Here’s How it all Began.” It included a photograph of nine Rotarians with four identified as “Cash Boy Tyler, Willing Walt, Full General Putney and Work Horse Allen.” (see photo on next page)

The Antelope Park Fountain In 1978, the fountain which had been given to the city years earlier by the club, was “rediscovered.” It’s refurbishing was a project completed over the next five (5) years.

Rotary Seniors Park In 1990, a conceptual plan for Rotary Seniors Park was formed and developed. In 1991, the design was finalized and fundraising began. By 1993, fundraising had reached the half-way point and the plan was finalized. On Sept. 24th, 1993 a groundbreaking ceremony was held. Fundraising continued, and in December an open house entitled Holiday Showcase was held with proceeds going to the park fund. Construction began in April, 1994 and was completed in 1995. The project cost almost \$80,000 and adequate funds were raised to pay for it. Fundraising was completed and in August of 1995 the park was dedicated with Rotary International President Herbert Brown participating in the dedication.

Scholarship Program In 1988, the club embarked upon a project known as “Auction for Scholarships.” The vision was the creation of an endowment fund that would allow the awarding of four \$1,000 (raised to \$1,500 in 1997) scholarships per year to graduates of Lincoln high schools to pursue careers of their choice. In 1989, the first club auction was held, raising about \$12,000 to fund scholarships. Annual fundraising auctions have been held since that time and the goal of \$100,000 was reached in the 1994-95 year. This will enable the club to give scholarship support for four years of college level schooling for each of four students.

History

Donald W. Miller Math Recognition Award In 1991, Lincoln Rotary endowed the Donald W. Miller Math Recognition Award to recognize outstanding math educators in the Lincoln area. This award was created in honor of a Lincoln Rotary member who has given sustained leadership in the field of mathematics and has been recognized as a Rotary leader.

Lincoln Rotary Club #14 Foundation Through fund raising efforts of our annual auction and the vision of our strategic planning group, the Lincoln Rotary Club #14 Foundation was formed in February, 1997. The Club and its Foundation set an ambitious goal that year to raise \$1,000,000.00 by 2010, the 100th anniversary of Club #14. It was announced in February of 2010 that the club had indeed reached its goal with \$1,200,000.00 in investments and assets, making it possible to fund the 100th anniversary project of the club by underwriting \$100,000.00 to help pay for the major centennial project on the west side of Elliott School near downtown Lincoln. The club is now in the process of building an even greater vision for the future of its foundation and the new initiatives it will make possible in the future.

Sunken Gardens Pavilion Rotary clubs in Lincoln joined forces in 2005 to support the building of a pavilion as part of the Sunken Gardens renovation. Rotary International was celebrating 100 years of service in 2005 and all Rotary clubs were encouraged to take on a project that would have a long lasting impact on our local communities. Lincoln Rotary Club 14 and Lincoln East participated in the Pavilion project.

A Commitment to Service Our club helped establish the Lincoln Community Chest (United Way), the Better Business Bureau, YMCA Camp Strader, and the Girl Scout Camp Catron. The club led a fund drive for the paving of 17th Street from "R" Street to the State Fair Grounds and in 1958, provided leadership for Lincoln's centennial celebration. Lincoln Rotary annually supports Career Awareness Day, and the Salvation Army's holiday bell ringing campaign. In 1980, a relationship with Lincoln Children's Zoo was begun. Over the years, Club #14 has made many contributions for refurbishing and remodeling of the zoo and members participate in the annual Boo at the Zoo. Members meet at the Gathering Place three times monthly to serve the evening meal to those in need. Annually the Service Fund spends between \$5,000.00 and \$10,000.00 on worthy projects.

International Service

The Rotary Foundation Established in 1917, the Rotary Foundation is supported annually by Lincoln Rotary and its members. It is the world's largest international foundation. The Foundation gives undergraduate and graduate scholarships for studies in other countries and funds group study exchanges and projects for health and humanitarian purposes. The Rotary Foundation is funded by contributions from members and friends of Rotary. A description of the requirements and a list of members or friends of Rotary who have completed them and are designated as Paul Harris Fellows, Multiple Fellows, Major Donors, Benefactors and Paul Harris Sustaining Members appears elsewhere in this directory.

Group Study Exchange Since 1969, our club has been involved in the Rotary Foundation's Group Study Exchange and has helped send U. S. Representatives to and has hosted visitors from Australia, Brazil, Chile, England, India, Japan, The Philippines, South Africa, South Korea and Uruguay. Nine Club #14 members have served as Group Study Exchange Team Leaders. In 1981, emphasis was placed on Group Study Exchange as a means of gaining increased knowledge of the worldwide benefits of The Rotary Foundation and contributions to the Foundation by members increased dramatically.

Ambassadorial Scholarships The purpose of the Ambassadorial Scholarship Program is to further international understanding and friendly relations among people of different countries by providing an opportunity for scholars to study abroad for a period of one to three years. Our club has sponsored applicants in the district competition for this program throughout our history. In 1993 and in 1995, one of our applicants was selected as an ambassadorial scholar.

World Peace Scholarship International's newest scholarship program was established to study about world peace and conflict resolution. It's in partnership with seven schools throughout the world and the only program of its kind. Nathan Johnson was nominated by Club #14 and approved by District and International Committees. He chose to study at the International Christian University in Japan (2003 - 2005). On his return to Lincoln he joined Lincoln Rotary #14.

Polio Eradication Campaign In 1989 The Rotary Foundation established PolioPlus – a drive to raise funds for the global elimination of polio with Lincoln Rotary raising more than \$60,000; enough to inoculate 543,000 children. In 2002-03, when 99% of the disease had been eliminated, Rotary's Polio Eradication campaign encouraged clubs to eradicate the last vestiges of the disease and since then Club #14 raised over \$88,000. As of March 31, 2010, Rotary International has raised over \$700 million, including more than \$117 million of the \$200 million needed to match \$355 million in challenge grants received from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The world will benefit for many years to come from this campaign.

World Service Projects After two decades of international projects ranging from installation of a windmill in Haiti to sponsoring a vocational school for the handicapped in Jamaica, in 2004 a partnership evolved with the Rotary Club of San Pedro de Macoris in the Dominican Republic (DR). That year, \$20,000 in physical therapy equipment was sent to a clinic in San Pedro, and a group of Club 14 Rotarians traveled to the DR shortly afterward to acquaint themselves with the community and its needs. The San Pedro Rotary Club was subsequently designated as Club #14's Twin Club, and together the clubs succeeded in obtaining matching grants from the Rotary International Foundation in 2007, 2008 and 2009. These grants combined local, district and international funds for a total of nearly \$25,000 each, with the majority of funding focused on improving health care through a local health clinic. Club #14 has also funded smaller DR projects, including school backpacks, dental care and computer equipment for rural schools. In addition, for the past three years, the club has designated funds from our "Santa Cause" holiday fundraiser—around \$1,500 per year—to the District Zambia Project in southern Africa; and in 2009, \$2,000 was granted from the Club Service Fund to provide school fees and school supplies for children in western Namibia.

Vocational Service

Salute to Business In 1992-93, in conjunction with the other Rotary clubs of Lincoln, a vocational service day was established to recognize an outstanding business in the community. Honorees are listed elsewhere in this directory.

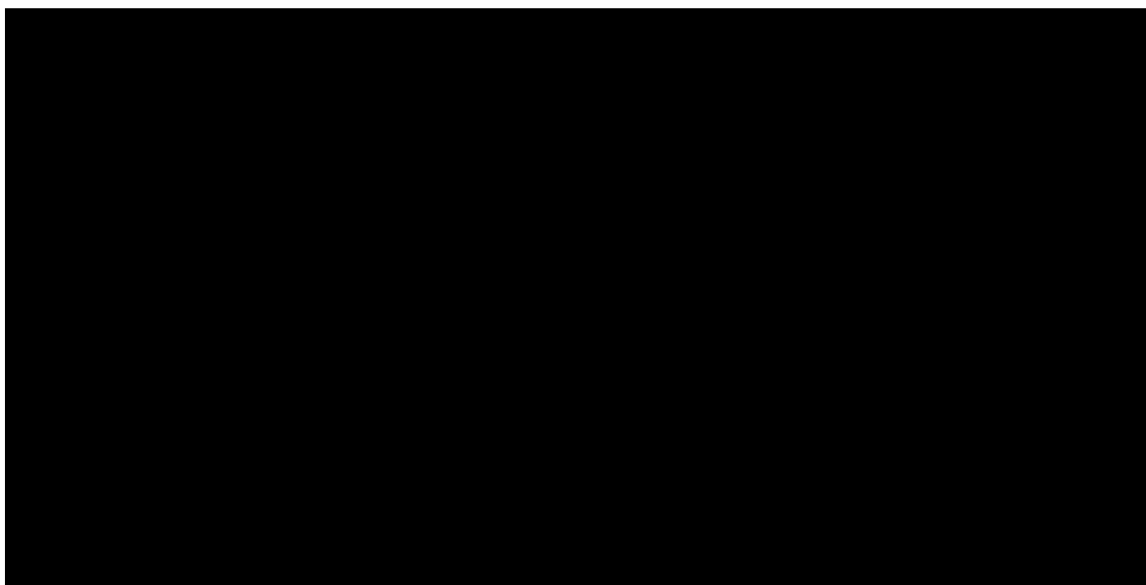
Business Networking Business Networking Days were established in 1998 and have continued annually to provide an opportunity for club members to become better acquainted with one another in smaller group settings, while learning more about Club #14 members' individual vocations.

Nebraskan of the Year In 1988, the club established a program to recognize annually a Nebraskan of the Year, based on honesty, integrity and concern for others; service in charitable and civic causes; and leadership and accomplishment in a field of employment. The recipients are listed elsewhere in this directory.

Rich Traditions

There is a rich tradition of District and Rotary International recognition of achievement in Lincoln Rotary. Club #14 has been recognized often for major and prestigious awards at District Conference including Outstanding Large Club on several occasions. Many club presidents have been honored by District 5650 as Outstanding Club President for their respective leadership years. Club #14 has also had several past presidents lead the club to prestigious Rotary International Presidential Citations for balanced club achievement in all four avenues of service in their respective terms. Dan Drain, Robert W. Palme, and David Livingston have received from The Rotary Foundation, Rotary's second highest award, the Citation for Meritorious Service. The Cadwallader Award, named after a Club #14 past president and presented to an outstanding Rotarian in the district has been awarded to several Club #14 Rotarians. A list of all honorees appears elsewhere in this directory.

During its 100 years, the club has made a difference. The City of Lincoln is a better place to live because of the men and women of Lincoln Rotary Club #14.



In 1920, Lincoln Rotary Club #14, led by the Membership Committee pictured above, raised \$100,000 to match city funds to build Lincoln General Hospital (now BryanLGH West).