



ROTARY FOUNDATION CHAIR-ELECT ADDRESS

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Rotary Foundation Chair-elect
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Good morning, family of Rotary!

If Rotary is a beautiful car that you are proud to drive, The Rotary Foundation is the engine that makes it go to your chosen destination. The strengths of Rotary — especially our incredible 1.4 million members — make The Rotary Foundation powerful.

With Rotary and The Rotary Foundation working together, we are a remarkable organization — in the words of our President-elect Stephanie Urchick, a magical organization — that brings our hopes and dreams to life. We as Rotary members do good in the world through The Rotary Foundation.

None of this was known to Gay and me when we made the journey from Decatur, Alabama, to Kansas City, Missouri, in late May 1985 for our first Rotary International Convention. As the incoming president of my club, I had reached the age of 30 just two weeks before. Walking among Rotarians from around the world, including some who outwardly seemed so different than I but who held the same hopes and desires, I became enchanted with the magic of Rotary.

During the fifth plenary session of that convention, I was particularly inspired by the address of Dr. Albert Sabin, the creator of the oral polio vaccine, who talked about the need to vaccinate all the world's children — and the thunderous support for that goal expressed by Rotary members.

That moment, nearly 39 years ago, was at the dawn of PolioPlus. It was a significant milestone in Rotary's organization-defining commitment to the world's children. And I was there!

During my year as club president, we enthusiastically received a Group Study Exchange team from western Nigeria. In response to our warm welcome, I was selected to lead the team from our district to Nigeria the following year. Among the seven families who welcomed me into their homes, two families had children with polio. I came to realize that polio reaches its victims across borders, across economies, and across religions.

Since that exposure to the victims of polio, I have witnessed firsthand the incredible work of Rotary members and health workers ensuring that this terrible disease will soon be finished, forever.

Rotary has allowed me to have these amazing experiences that go well beyond just seeing the world — to experiencing the world. My wife, Gay, and I have met Rotary members from all walks of life, each actively participating in making the world better. As you expand your international experiences within Rotary, you too will have wonderful occasions to impact the world based upon your passions within Rotary.

If you had a magic wand and you could magically cause your district to address the challenges in your community or within the world, where would you point that wand?

Would you expand your district's contributions to eradicate polio?

Would you encourage your district to invest in peacebuilders in a world raging with unrest?

Would you lead a global grant to provide sustainable systems for clean water and sanitation where there are none?

Would you inspire your district to make sure that teachers have the skills and tools they need to promote learning either locally or abroad?

Would you aspire for your district to support those rebuilding their lives after a natural disaster?

As your district's leader, you will have the opportunity to wave a magic wand in a manner that is only available to district governors. You will expand your appreciation of The Rotary Foundation, which will fuel the engine for your Rotary dream car to reach your goals and chosen destination. And you will make an impact on your district not only for this coming year but also for years to come. You will leave a lasting impression on the future good deeds of your district.

So let's focus on our upcoming year together. The Trustees of The Rotary Foundation have set an ambitious fundraising goal of US\$500 million for 2024-2025! As a team, all of us will work together and achieve this goal. And, as a team, we will reach our Endowment goal of US\$2.025 billion by 2025, yet another very ambitious goal. By increasing our Endowment, we can ensure that Rotary can do good in the world well beyond our lifetimes.

To assist in reaching these goals, I encourage each district governor-elect to take five steps, which I am calling Mark's magical markers:

1. Lead by example by making a contribution to the Annual Fund no later than 31 August 2024 and to the Endowment Fund no later than 31 December 2024. Your personal commitment to The Rotary Foundation will set the stage for your district's commitment to the Foundation. And ask your leadership team to follow your example.

2. Increase by 10% the number of donors in your district enrolled in Rotary Direct, our recurring giving program. While this option is more popular in some countries, it is an easy way to make giving automatic.
3. Establish or continue a district PolioPlus Society with at least 50 members by the end of 2024-25. This district-run recognition helps us highlight giving to PolioPlus.
4. Raise awareness of the Paul Harris Society through which Rotary members generously commit to give US\$1,000 to the Annual Fund every year. Increase the number of Paul Harris Society members in your district by at least 10, and also increase the rate of fulfillment of these generous commitments.
5. Select a team to coordinate a legacy event in your district. This team will serve as the leadership of a million-dollar event to increase giving to the Endowment. Think about it! If you each raise US\$1 million for the Endowment, we will achieve our 2025 by 2025 goal, and together we will celebrate this historic moment at the convention in Calgary.

In asking you to lead by example, I am not asking you to do something that I have not done myself. As district governor, I placed a priority upon support of the Foundation. Every year, Gay and I each separately contribute to the Annual Fund through Rotary Direct. In addition, Gay and I have established a named endowed fund to support the environment.

But let us remember that all of this hard work, planning, and generosity is about fueling the engine. And that fuel plus that engine take us everywhere in the world to do good.

In fact, it is better than good.

It is about children receiving drops of vaccine across continents — and future generations of children who will be free from polio forever.

It is about communities ending malaria in Zambia, reducing the mortality rate of mothers and their infants in Nigeria, and eliminating cervical cancer in Egypt.

It is about helping communities destroyed by natural disasters to recover and rebuild.

It is about empowering our people of action so we can create lasting change around the globe.

As district governor, you, your partner, and those within your family of Rotary can wave your magic wand to achieve the dreams you and your district have for your community and the world.

And our Rotary Foundation can be the engine that powers your Rotary dream car. Together, we will connect the world, we will do good in the world, and we will share *The Magic of Rotary!*