



Rotary in Hawaii

Like the coconut and other good things that came to Hawaii from the sea and thrived, Rotary came to Hawaii in 1915 by shipboard, the Lurline. It all started with a social acquaintance between V.O. Lawrence, a member of the number 3 Rotary Club of Oakland, California, and James L. Coke, later Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Territory of Hawaii. As they sailed together from San Francisco to Hawaii, they talked about Rotary and organizing a Rotary Club in Hawaii.

Upon arrival in Honolulu, Justice Coke invited a number of Local Professional and Businessmen to meet with Lawrence and himself at the old Commercial Club. After the objectives of Rotary had been explained by Lawrence, the group decided to organize the Rotary Club of Honolulu. The charter was dated July 1, 1915, just ten years after Paul Harris started the Rotary movement. The Honolulu Club received its charter with 28 Charter Members and the distinction of being the 170th club admitted into Rotary which then had a membership of 20,000 members.

In June, 1920, Charles C. Graves, President of the Rotary Club of Honolulu, made a trip to Hilo and invited about 20 businessmen to dinner. As a result, an application was made to Rotary International for a charter. The request was granted on December 1, 1920, as Rotary Club 795 and the second club in The Territory of Hawaii with a charter membership of 16.

The Secretary of the Rotary Club of Honolulu, John Caldwell, spent two years working for the formation of a third Rotary Club at Wahiawa-Waiialua. He was assisted by Steven Bowen of Wahiawa who became the first president of the club. The charter was presented on May 27, 1937 as Rotary Club 4168.

The Rotary Club of Kauai was admitted on August 23, 1937 as club number 4378. John Caldwell, Secretary of the Rotary Club of Honolulu, along with fellow club members, Wayne Stewart and Charles Loomis teamed in the organization of this club. Charter President was W.P. Alexander.

The Rotary Club of Honolulu assisted in the formation of the Rotary Club of Maui with David C. Rattery as its first president on November 4, 1937, as club number 4478. Assignment of charter numbers was discontinued in 1950-51, since there were over 7,000 clubs in Rotary.

Rotarians now believed the Territory of Hawaii was qualified for organization as a separate district. Up to that time we were part of California District 104. At its January 1938 Board Meeting, Rotary International approved the split of District 104 with all clubs in Hawaii united in new District 100 and California remaining in 104. Wayne Stewart, Past President of the Rotary Club of Honolulu was our first District Governor. Rotary in Hawaii became of age, with only 5 clubs and 231 members. In 1950, District 100 was redesignated 150 and again changed to District 500 in 1957. The most recent number change took place in 1991 when we were designated District 5000.

The sixth Rotary Club in the Territory of Hawaii—Waikiki—was organized through the efforts of a committee consisting of the following members of the Rotary Club of Honolulu: Chairman Wes Wilkie, Clifford Kimball, Leslie Hicks and Charlie Frazer. The charter was issued by Rotary International on June



at the Waialae Country Club. The first meeting was held at the Green Lantern Restaurant on Kalakaua (later known as the Wagon Wheel) with Frank Van Cleve as its first president.

The most significant event of Rotary in Hawaii was the hosting of the 60th International Rotary Convention in May 1969. It was a colossal undertaking, involving hundreds of members from all the clubs in the District. It was the second largest Rotary Convention held in the United States, attracting 66 countries and 14,684 attendees. Kiyoshi Togasaki of Japan was the President of Rotary International at the time.

Morley Theaker of the Honolulu Club developed and vigorously pushed the idea that Hawaii could really take on the convention. After securing the support of local Rotarians, Morley personally took the official invitation to Rotary International Headquarters where he met with Carl Miller, the President of Rotary International who was instrumental in persuading the Board to settle on Honolulu. Carl Miller later moved to Hawaii and became an active member of the Rotary Club of Honolulu and shared the fellowship of Rotary with many District 5000 Rotarians.

On July 1, 1995, the Rotary Club of Honolulu celebrated its 80th Anniversary and on December 1, 1995, the Rotary Club of Hilo its 75th Anniversary. One cannot attempt to tabulate the tremendous amount of humanitarian work and service projects these two outstanding clubs have performed these many years. The same can be said for the fine and similar activities of all our 37 clubs and over 2,100 Rotarians in District 5000.

The American Red Cross in 1990, honored Rotary Clubs of Hawaii for outstanding community and public service by presenting the District with its' Humanitarian Award. This was the first time that one international organization was honored by another international organization with a national award here in Hawaii.

For many years, District 500 led the Rotary world in Rotary Foundation giving—this was until Rotary International added French Polynesia (Tahiti) to our District. Our per capita dropped and Japan, Korea and California greatly increased their contributions. In 1979, Tahiti was removed from our district and remains an undistricted club as are Angola and Gibraltar.

One of the first to suggest the addition of the Keyway to the Rotary Wheel was Charles R. Frazier, a member of the Rotary Club of Honolulu. Without it the gear was an idler, incapable of transmitting power to and from the shaft. The Rotary International Board approved the suggestion in 1923—the wheel turned on, and has been rolling ever since.

We in District 5000 have a lot to be proud of. The Club leaders of yesteryear have left their legacy and challenge to every Rotarian and newly elected club leader each year to continue to make Rotary the meaningful and living entity that it is. *Welcome to Rotary!*

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