



a v.i.p. and me

(very interesting person)

By KATHLEEN A. HICKS

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"All service organizations to me are a little like churches, our growth has petered right out. So my principle has been that whatever we have been doing the last few years has not produced a growth which is acceptable by any standards. I am trying to get some new life into this by trying new ideas."

APR 24, 1974

ROBERT H. WATSON,

District Governor — Rotary International

ME: You are the 1973-'74 District Governor of District 707 serving 54 clubs with 3,000 members. Just what have you accomplished so far this year while fulfilling this enormous responsibility?

DISTRICT GOVERNOR WATSON: I'm not quite sure where to start, because I like to think we have accomplished quite a bit.

My first aspirations were to make the individual Rotarian more proud of Rotary, which was really a line of communication. I think we have accomplished this. I personally have been trying to change a little bit of their direction in that in our affluent community, too many service clubs now are wasting valuable time and effort.

The four Rotary clubs of Mississauga are getting together on the "Go Rotary" project — a Boys' Group Home.

This year, for the first time, we have tried something in our District that hasn't been tried anywhere else in the Rotary world; we have matched clubs, so that 27 clubs have a brother club and they are to make an attempt to get to know one another better, to understand the differences in Rotary between their club and their match club.

ME: On April 26 and 27, the Mississauga Rotary Club is hosting the District 707 Conference at the Sheraton Four Seasons Hotel in Toronto. Detail a little of this annual function for me and your club's participation.

GOV. WATSON: I am basically in charge of the planning of the District Conference with my own club being the host club.

There are four plenary sessions: the first one is Friday morning, the club service, which is the service that looks after the organization of the club. At the luncheon we are going to have the former president and chancellor of the

University of Cape Town, J.P. Duminy, and he is a member of the Order of St. George. Friday afternoon Reverend Richard Jones is the key speaker on vocational service.

On Saturday morning, the Rotary Club of Clarkson is responsible for the Early Bird Breakfast and they are serving a pancake breakfast from a chuck wagon.

Also on Saturday morning we are having a panel discussion of It's A Small World, with four Foundation students: two boys from Japan, a girl from England, and a boy from Sweden, and they will tell of their impressions of Canada and what they have got out of their year's involvement.

The second part of the morning session we have Dr. Rossener coming up from Ohio State and he did a project in Zululand. He is going to present the District project to the District and hopefully we will have a resolution that will adopt the project.

We have Margaret Birch, who is the new minister in Ontario. She used to be in charge of the youth program for Ontario. The Interact and Rotaract are going to put on a debate and it is "Can Cities Survive?"

ME: You joined the Rotary Club in what is now Mississauga in 1954, following your graduation from Osgoode Hall. Tell me about the classification requirement for Rotary.

GOV. WATSON: One of the things that makes Rotary a little unique and different from other organizations is the classification principle. This is where you are invited into Rotary to represent a particular vocation, business or profession.

The basic system is that there is one representative from each one of these. Technically, it is what you are spending 60 per cent of your time at; for example, I am a lawyer, so that in law you normally would have one lawyer. You can't have more than 10 per cent of your members in any one major classification.

The reason for this is that it gives you a cross section of the community, so you can understand the community better. The second principle is you are supposed to be in a senior executive position in that particular profession, vocation or business. So not only do you have the ability to search out what needs doing in a community but you have the protocol to go ahead and do something about it.

I don't think there is any other organization quite like that probably anywhere in the world. So is very unique.

ME: Having been president of this Mississauga Rotary Club for '65-'66, what was expected of you in this capacity?

GOV. WATSON: You have charge of the direction of the club like a chairman of the board. I guess, where you have a board of directors and each of the directors has a specific area of responsibility, club service, vocational service, international service and community service. Therefore, you and your directors decide in which direction the club is going to go in any one year.

ME: What does Rotary mean to you?

GOV. WATSON: I look at Rotary and I see what it can do in a community. I look at the end result and I say that Rotary could be one of the most significant forces for peace in the world today. Because first of all, we are in 150 countries of the world, which is more than the United Nations. I think we have got more representation in the countries in the geographic areas of the world than any nation on earth. We have instant friendship. We can go into any country in the world and call a Rotarian and we've got a friend.

Therefore, you have a line of communication, a line of communication that we can at least talk and hopefully do something for world peace. It is an organization that is non-denominational, there is no color bar, there is no religious bar, there is basically no hangups at all. It's an ideal.

F. WATSON
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