



SECRETARIAT UPDATE

John Hewko

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Well, it's a great pleasure to be here in Atlanta, where Arch Klumph, pioneer of The Rotary Foundation, so clearly saw Rotary as a force for good in turbulent times.

With the world at war, late at night on a train trip from Cleveland to Chicago, he prepared his convention speech. And in that now famous speech in 1917, he threw out to his fellow Rotarians the following challenge: If Rotary is entering a new era, then we have to ask ourselves, do we have ambitions for Rotary's future, or shall we impede its progress?

Because even then he realized that Rotary would always need to adapt, to innovate, and to change with the times.

Now, that was Rotary 100 years ago. And today we must ask ourselves the same questions Arch Klumph did, here in Atlanta, a century ago: How will Rotary serve humanity, not only today, but over the coming decades?

Think about it. How will we continue to provide value to our members and to our communities? You know, these are important questions.

Now, our founders, Arch Klumph and before him Paul Harris, were extraordinary visionaries, way, way ahead of their time.

In fact, they created the original social network to connect people and build professional contacts well over a century before anyone heard of LinkedIn or Facebook. In fact, I suspect some of you are probably on Facebook right now.

Now, to Paul, this network was a space where leaders could find friendship, build trust, and do business. And to Arch, it meant mobilizing people to help at a time of crisis.

Their vision is now more important than ever, as we think about serving humanity in the years ahead. Because we face a world riddled with new conflicts and increasingly complex challenges, but also a world of extraordinary new opportunities.

Now, today we live in what some have called the Fourth Industrial Revolution, following the three previous revolutions of water and steam, electricity, and digital power.

This fourth revolution, characterized by a new fusion of technologies, has changed, and will continue to change, the way we live and work at an unprecedented rate and scale.

Technology is disrupting every industry in positive ways, sharing knowledge that previously was the domain of a few. The era of big data is driving great advances in medicine, science, and services, with the potential to improve the quality of life for billions.

However, in many regions of the world, these positive changes are simply not being felt. In fact, globally, economists are seeing growing inequality both between regions and within regions, leading to an increase in social tensions.

So can the Facebooks and the LinkedIns of the world — which we look at casually on our smartphones to distract us from the daily grind — can they alone deliver the transformative changes that the world demands?

Well, we know the answer to that question, because we know there is another solution: a network of people with a conscience and a cause. And that network is Rotary today, and just imagine what Rotary can and will become tomorrow. Because we are the network for people who don't want to be reduced to spectators and consumers.

With the Foundation as the engine of our compassion, we bring more ambitious projects to scale.

We give passion a purpose.

We create lifelong friendships by being part of a local club and Rotary's global community, something that all of us have experienced here in Atlanta this week.

We rebuild the trust and local accountability lost by civic disenchantment and social isolation.

We prevent conflicts before they happen. We stop epidemics before they spread. We give young girls an education before they are forced into degrading labor.

But we also recognize, as we live in the Fourth Industrial Revolution — this fusion of scientific advances — that technology is a powerful tool to connect us to a much larger audience and to make an even greater impact in our second century.

So at the Secretariat, we are fusing new technology with our unique human network, to advance your ability to create lasting change.

Just think of the Google virtual reality experience which many of you joined yesterday. Technology such as this has great potential — enormous potential — to turn more individualists into compassionate volunteers and donors.

And the same is true of our redesigned website — Rotary.org, the window to our organization — which tells Rotary's story in a clear and compelling way to potential members and donors.

Following the refresh of the public Rotary website, we are focusing on the My Rotary

section of the website, to give you a resource that is faster and easier to use. And next month, we are launching the rebuilt Rotary Club Central, designed to help clubs develop goals and a strategic plan. And currently, almost 21,000 Rotary clubs — that's 59 percent — are using it.

Now, let me share a few points on how the Secretariat is also helping to share the amazing stories of your success, enhancing your humanitarian work, and planning a strategy for our future.

In the communications arena, we are expanding our worldwide efforts to ensure that you get the credit you deserve for your transformative service.

In fact, this past year Rotary was featured in 800 articles in 20 countries, and that's a 60 percent increase over last year. And our social media presence grew to more than 1.7 million users overall.

The End Polio Now campaign won the Silver Anvil Award of the Public Relations Society of America for excellence in Global Communications, known as the "Oscars of PR."

And as part of our multiyear brand strengthening initiative, we introduced the People of Action campaign to highlight the impact we make in communities around the world.

And that tremendous impact is being recognized by our peers.

In 2016, the Foundation was recognized as the World's Outstanding Foundation by the Association of Fundraising Professionals.

And, for the ninth straight year, the Foundation received a four-star rating, the highest possible, from Charity Navigator, the largest and most prestigious independent evaluator of nonprofits in the United States.

Now, we receive these awards because of your incredible work, and so we are devoting resources to help you deliver even more sustainable and high-impact projects in the coming year.

Our new global grants model — scaling up from the grassroots level — supports projects that are bigger, bolder, and more sustainable.

As of April of this year, 868 global grant applications had been approved. That's an increase of 8 percent compared to a year ago.

And using feedback gathered during the largest grant model evaluation in Rotary history, we launched a new Grant Center and online grant application in December, which delivers a much, much better user experience.

Now, to keep on making the changes we need in order to best serve our members and our communities, we are currently developing a new long-term vision and strategic plan for our organization. We are talking to Rotary members at all levels, from new members

to members of the Board and Trustees, to Rotaractors and alumni, and to those who are not yet part of our organization.

And the survey results we have gathered tell us we need to adapt in order to thrive. They tell us that we need to be flexible to attract a new generation of leaders with a broad vision of service, who want opportunities that fit their schedules.

So to address this issue, last year's Council on Legislation has made it easier, for the clubs that want it, to be flexible with respect to meetings, attendance, and membership. The Council also made it easier for Rotaractors to become Rotarians while they are still in Rotaract.

And so, imagine, just imagine what we could do with this huge source of potential members if clubs choose to apply the new models that are now available.

But, you know, at the end of the day, the task of ensuring a groundbreaking second century is a responsibility for all of us. As Rotary evolves, we know that there is no substitute for our greatest asset: *you* — our members.

There is no replacement for the power of your compassion, because science alone would not have brought us to the cusp of changing mankind forever, as we close in on our 30-year goal of eradicating polio.

You know, we use smartphones to bring people to health camps, but no smartphone can convince a fearful parent that they should accept the polio vaccine for their child. No computer can build trust like a Rotary member who makes a commitment and keeps their word.

Because innovation without a cause will not serve those in need. And a clear cause without innovation will also fall short of Rotary's ideals and goals.

So you can shape Rotary's future by embracing thoughtful, meaningful change; by offering a new mission to new generations; by using new technologies to enhance the reach and impact of your humanitarian service.

And at the Secretariat, we will continue to do all that we can to support your great achievements, to grow your clubs and enhance your service.

We are sharing the stories of your success, and we will help to implement your ideas for Rotary's future.

Because together, we can be the human face and conscience of innovative service.

Together we can deliver the connections between people that Paul dreamed of and the service that Arch imagined in Rotary's bright future.

Together we can serve humanity and truly, truly make a difference.