



RI PRESIDENT-NOMINEE'S SPEECH TO THE 2016 ROTARY CONVENTION

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Twenty-seven years ago, in May of 1989, Rotarians gathered here in Seoul for the last Rotary convention before this one to be held in Korea. In one of life's funny little quirks, the president of Rotary at that time was a very fine Rotarian by the name of Royce Abbey – the third Rotarian from Australia to serve as president of Rotary International.

He stood on stage, as I am standing today, and spoke of the new era that Rotary was beginning with its work in PolioPlus, and of the incredible opportunity that Rotary gives us all, to have a real, and lasting, impact on the world. In this he echoed the words of the second RI president from Australia, Sir Clem Renouf, who famously said: "Rotary takes ordinary men and gives them extraordinary opportunities to do more with their lives than they had ever dreamed possible."

I certainly never dreamed, at that point, that the Rotarian nominated to serve as the fifth RI president from Australia would be yours truly, nor that the next time a Rotary Convention would be held in Seoul, I would be co-chairing it. If anyone had suggested either idea to me back then, I would have told them that they'd been drinking a bit too much *soju*.

But I suppose I should not be too surprised to realize, after all these years, that what Royce said to us back then was right – that Rotary does give, to ordinary men and women, the opportunity to do more with our lives than we ever dreamed possible.

And may I say how thrilled I am that the most recent RI president from Australia, Glen Kinross, is here with us today?

So it is with gratitude for your support, and pride in our organization, that I humbly accept the nomination to serve as your president in 2017-18.

Every Rotary year builds on the year before it, and serves as the foundation for the year to come. President Ravi and President-elect John have been of great help to me and tremendous examples to all of Rotary, in the emphasis they have placed on continuity in Rotary leadership. I am enormously grateful to both of them for their encouragement, and I look forward to supporting President-elect John fully in the year that lies ahead.

It has been an amazing Rotary journey for Juliet and me so far. I joined Rotary as a relatively young person in 1978, mostly for selfish reasons. My accounting practice was

new, and I thought it would be good for business to be associated with the movers and shakers of Sandringham. Juliet thought it would be good for both of us to start associating with more people who weren't accountants.

But it didn't take long for both of us to realize what we had stumbled upon, that Rotary was far more than a way to make friends and to help build a business (although it was both of those things).

Rotary is simply the best way I know of to make a difference, a real difference, in the lives of other people, and our communities both locally and internationally. In the words of our theme, it is the best way there is for ordinary people like ourselves to *Be a Gift to the World*.

My friends, in this, our 112th year, it is clear that the world needs Rotary more than ever before. I look forward with all of you to helping build an even stronger organization, on the solid foundations of *Rotary Serving Humanity*.