



RI PRESIDENT-NOMINEE'S ACCEPTANCE REMARKS

Holger Knaack
5 June 2019

Thank you for the warm reception.

As most of you know, if there had not been a health problem, it would have been Past Director Sushil Gupta standing before you today. It took great strength and courage for Sushil to step away from his dream. That same strength will aid him well in his battle back to good health. We all need to keep Sushil in our thoughts and prayers.

As for me, I can barely contain both the shock and the excitement of being your president-nominee. My wife, Susanne, shares that excitement and commitment to serving you.

Our lives have been instantly changed by that recent telephone call asking if I would serve as your president in 2020-21. The answer was, without hesitation, an emphatic "Yes!" Since that moment, we have not stopped running.

We have had our first orientation at world headquarters, meetings with President Barry and President-elect Mark, and many staff meetings. Many times, I have had to stop and pause to reflect on the reality of what is happening. I cannot express to you how happy and excited we are.

I might have had a late start; however, I promise you that, with Susanne's support, I will be ready to serve as your president.

I can also assure you that in the coming year I will work with Mark, and the president to follow me, as a team, to lead our organization to further success. Rotary expects our governors, governors-elect, and governors-nominee to work together as a team, and that is exactly how we will also lead.

President Barry and President-elect Mark have done amazing work this past year raising the profile of Rotaract, and I will be proud to continue this progress. When I work with Rotaract, I am always impressed with their ability to multitask, to devote themselves to challenging work, and to just get things done. I see no difference between a Rotarian and a Rotaractor. To me, we are all members of Rotary International, and we work together and use our own strengths and abilities to serve our organization.

This is the text of the remarks as they were prepared. The spoken remarks may have differed slightly.

Attending a Rotary convention always feels like coming home to me, but it is especially true this year. It was not long ago that I made a humble suggestion in a handwritten note that Hamburg would make a great site for a future Rotary Convention, and now we are here!

I want to thank the German Rotarians for their donations of money and time that made this convention possible, and for the hospitality they have shown Rotarians from around the world that has made it such a success.

I am humbled and honored to accept the nomination to serve as the first German president of this great organization in the 2020-21 Rotary year.

The honor is not mine. It belongs to my Rotary club, my district, my fellow German Rotarians, the amazing Rotaractors, and the Rotary staff that I have had the pleasure of serving with through the years. All of you made this possible, and I am grateful. I could spend the rest of the evening telling you stories about our Youth Exchange and Rotaract experiences, but now is not a time for such stories or the sharing of plans and ideas. However, I will share with you that I strongly believe that Rotary also has to be fun. We need fellowship and must emphasize our core values.

Again, I cannot begin to express my gratitude for this honor, and I feel a tremendous responsibility to make the most of it. Rotary has been one of the great joys of my life. I look forward to sharing that joy with all of you as your president-nominee.

Danke.