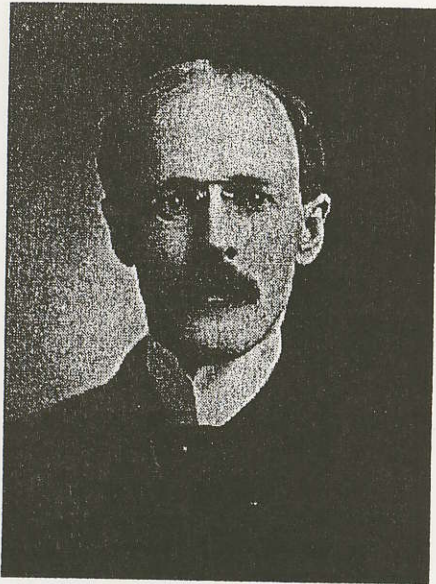# PAUL HARRIS
FOUNDER OF ROTARY INTERNATIONAL

Paul P. Harris (1868-1947), a lawyer, was the founder of Rotary, the world's first and most international service club. Rotary is an organization of business and professional leaders united worldwide who provide humanitarian service, promote high ethical standards in all vocations, and help build good will and peace in the world.

Born in Racine, Wisconsin, U.S.A. on 19 April 1868, Paul was the second of six children to George N. Harris and Cornelia Bryan Harris. At age 3 he moved to Wallingford, Vermont where he grew up in the care of his paternal grandparents. Married to Jean Thompson Harris (1881-1963), they had no children. He received an LL.B. from the University of Iowa and received an honorary LL.D. from the University of Vermont.

Paul Harris worked as a newspaper reporter, a business teacher, stock company actor, cowboy, and traveled extensively in the U.S.A. and Europe selling marble and granite. In 1896, he went to Chicago to practice law. One evening Paul went with a professional friend to his suburban home. After dinner, as they strolled through the neighborhood, Paul's friend introduced him to various tradesmen in their stores. This reminded Paul of his New England village and it occurred to him "Why not have a fellowship composed of businessmen from different occupations, without restrictions of politics or religion?"

On 23 February, 1905, Paul Harris formed the first club with three other businessmen: Silvester Schiele, a coal merchant; Gustavus Loehr, a mining engineer; and Hiram Shorey, a merchant tailor. Paul Harris named the new club "Rotary" because members met in rotation at their various places of business. Club membership grew rapidly. Many members were from small towns and in the Rotary club they found an opportunity for camaraderie. When Paul Harris became president of the club in its third year, he was convinced that the Rotary club could be developed into an important service movement and strove to extend Rotary to other cities.

The second Rotary club was founded in San Francisco in 1908. In August, 1910, when there were 16 clubs, the National Association of Rotary Clubs was organized. When clubs were formed in Canada and Great Britain, the name was changed to the International Association of Rotary Clubs in 1912, and was later shortened to Rotary International in 1922. Paul Harris was the first president of both the National Association and the International Association. As Rotary spanned the globe, branch offices were opened in Europe and Asia. In 1932 the Four Way Test was created.