

# Presidential Citation

What is Rotary? What does a Rotary club do? These questions are often asked of Rotarians by prospective members and other interested people, and they are difficult to answer effectively in a few short minutes.

Although our primary motto **Service Above Self** highlights our altruistic nature, it fails to answer the two questions. Therefore, I decided to search for a briefly stated theme that would fulfill two objectives: The first to explain the purpose of Rotary to non-Rotarians and the second to confirm and validate the importance of our principles to Rotarians.

In my search for the right words, I reviewed the four Avenues of Service and noted that Club Service and Vocational Service both help us to enjoy life and to be good citizens. Community Service and Vocational Service combine to make our local communities better places for us to live and work. And International Service permits us to partner with clubs in other countries and on different continents to make the world a better place to live with an improved opportunity for world understanding, goodwill, and peace.

It is important to remember that Rotary is a “spirit of service” as well as an organization of Rotary clubs, and we need to share our core values of service, fellowship, diversity, integrity, and leadership with other people and organizations. I considered many words and phrases to capture the essence of Rotary, and the words I finally selected to describe Rotary’s current mission and to highlight our achievements are what we do best:

## **Building Communities – Bridging Continents**

I hope you agree that these four words aptly reflect who we are, and what we do, as Rotarians. We are a unique and a premier organization — certainly one of the best in the world. We build the spirit and resources of our local communities in an important way, and we are the best in the world at linking people of goodwill around the globe and then gaining their cooperation and support to make the world a much better place to live and work. In the words of Ed Cadman, “Rotary is unity without uniformity.” We are indeed fortunate to be Rotarians!

I applied the same philosophy in developing the Presidential Citation for 2010-11. I consider each of the four Avenues of Service to be equally important, and we have created a new citation program in the form of a questionnaire to help clubs test their effectiveness in all four avenues. We also have produced a higher-level “Presidential Citation with Distinction” to challenge those clubs that routinely earn the annual presidential citations.

We hope the new questionnaire will be a helpful tool to both the clubs and the district governors as we seek to lengthen our stride and improve our levels of fellowship and service, as we move forward into the second century of service for Rotary International, which started with the first convention of Rotary clubs in 1910.

