

Glenn E. Estess Sr.
RI president
Closing address

Ladies and gentlemen, family of Rotary,

Today marks a milestone for Mary and me: the end of my year as president of Rotary International. I feel tremendously privileged to have served as your president during Rotary's centennial year.

Like Paul Harris, I had a rural upbringing. And like him, I found Rotary was a great way to make new friends in new places. Through the many moves Mary and I made at the beginning of our marriage, Rotary helped us settle in and put down roots. Everywhere we went, my first stop was the local Rotary club. We were always warmly welcomed, and we immediately felt at home. Wherever there was Rotary, a real community awaited us. I have felt this warmth all through my year as president.

Rotary is truly an international organization, with a presence not just in a few countries but in 168 of them. Yes, that is 168; as you know, we have just welcomed both Tajikistan and Equatorial Guinea to the Rotary family. *[applause]* It's hard to believe how much Rotary has grown in such a relatively short time — from 1 country to 168, four members to 1.2 million. It's grown because of all of you here today and people like you, year after year, in every one of Rotary's clubs around the world. You are Rotary's present, and you are also Rotary's future.

What you do today in your clubs, through your projects and through the Foundation, continues to strengthen Rotary across the world, not only through your work and the help you give but through the example you set and the reputation you build for Rotary International as an organization of ethical, responsible, and volunteer-minded individuals. Because of you, people around the world know that Rotarians are people they can trust. Trust is something that cannot be bought or sold. Trust must be earned. With every generous act, with every ethical act, with every example of kindness and honesty that you show the world, you earn trust for all Rotarians. We build that trust, little by little, with everything we do. I hope that, over the last year, each of us has worked to earn the trust of those we have met.

Soon, I will pass the presidency of Rotary International to President-elect Carl-Wilhelm Stenhammar. Carl-Wilhelm will ably guide Rotary into its second century.

Rotary gives so much to so many. But as much as Rotary gives to the world, it gives back to every one of us. As we begin our next hundred years of fellowship, let us always remember the wonderful experiences we have had here, together in Chicago. Let us always remember the warmth we felt among so many members of the family of Rotary. And let us continue to *Celebrate Rotary* by always putting *Service Above Self*.

Thank you very much.