

Historic Moments -- Rotary's 105th Anniversary

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The first four Rotarians: (left to right) Gustavus Loehr, Silvester Schiele, Hiram Shorey, and Paul Harris. Rotary Images

The Rotary name derived from the early practice of rotating meetings among members' offices. Rotarians continue to take pride in their history.

During the first Rotary club meeting on 23 February 1905 in Chicago, **Paul Harris**, **Gustavus Loehr**, **Hiram Shorey**, and **Silvester Schiele** met to talk about their personal experiences. **Harris** then unfolded his general plan for their club meetings. This was the simple beginning of the world's first service club, the Rotary Club of Chicago. It was created because of **Harris'** wish to capture in a professional club the same friendly spirit he had felt in the small towns of his youth.

In honor of that first club, Rotarians have preserved its original meeting place, Room 711 in Chicago's Unity Building, by re-creating the office as it existed in 1905. For several years, the **Paul Harris 711 Club** maintained the room as a shrine for visiting Rotarians. In 1989, when the building was scheduled to be demolished, the club carefully dismantled the office and salvaged the interior, including doors and radiators. In 1993, the RI Board of Directors set aside a permanent home for the restored Room 711 at RI World Headquarters in the Chicago suburb of Evanston.