

The story of how Hal Rogers turned rejection into success

Shortly after the end of the First World War something happened to Harold Allin Rogers which today affects more than 18,000 people.

He was rejected for membership in the Rotary Club.

Not that Rotary had much choice in the matter; young Hal wanted to belong to a service club and chose the club his father belonged to.

Because they were in the same line of business, Rotary had to say "sorry".

It was a time for readjustment for a young man back in Hamilton after living with the companionship of other young men serving their country overseas, so instead of feeling sorry for himself, he got together with eleven other men over dinner at the Namking Cafe.

That night, the Kinsmen club was born. Today, there are more than 18,000 members in 600 clubs across Canada, not to mention Kinette, K-40 and K-Ette clubs.

JUNIOR CLERK

Hal Rogers was born in London, Ont., in 1899 and went to work as a junior clerk with the Home Bank of Thondale, Ont. But when his father, Charles Frederick Rogers took over management of a plumbing and heating supply business in Hamilton, Hal joined the staff and prepared himself for a sales career.

Two months later, with the First World War in its second year, Rogers enlisted and was added to the muster roll of the Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders. Overseas, he saw action with the 54th Kootenay Battalion.

Corporal Rogers was gassed at Pasch-

endale but continued active duty until wounded at Amiens Aug. 8, 1918. He was sent to England and returned home to Canada in January 1919.

He wasted no time in resuming his sales career but began to miss the company of men his own age. It was then his chance encounter with the Hamilton Rotary Club took place.

50 MEMBERS

"The first club project in Hamilton was welcoming young men to the city," Rogers recalls.

Club members made contact with newcomers in Hamilton industries, who were told about the club and welcomed to the city.

"A number of them joined the club but we put no pressure on them to do so. Our main concern was to make things easier for them in a strange city."

The official charter date is Feb. 20, 1920. In 1921, one of the new Kinsmen moved to Montreal and a club was formed there. That year, the first national convention — of sorts — was held when the two clubs met in Hamilton.

The same sort of process applied to Toronto and Vancouver — by 1924, there were four clubs.

Then Winnipeg in time for a national convention in that city in 1926 when Kinsmen voted to remain a national organization, adopt a constitution and bylaws and fix the age for active membership, at 40.

From then, the organization spread across the country.

"Like myself, the founders of these new clubs were seeking friendship and the

opportunity to take part in worthwhile community endeavours with other service-minded young men," Rogers says.

By 1927 there were 12 clubs. In 1928, four clubs in Saskatchewan called Eclectic Clubs, whose aims and objectives were similar to the Kinsmen, joined the association.

By the end of 1928, there were 24 clubs. In 1929, the clubs were formed into five districts under governors and district officers. By 1936, there were seven districts.

In 1934, at the national convention in Victoria, B.C., a full-time general secretary was approved. Past National President S. H. (Banty) Bantick was named to the post Jan. 1, 1935.

In 1939, the focus of the club's community work shifted dramatically. Three weeks after war was declared, hundreds of Kinsmen signed up and a war services committee was formed.

WAREFFORT

The first mobile dental clinic in the British army was built and financed by Kinsmen. Sixty-five tons of magazines were shipped to the merchant marine. Hostess houses were built for wives and families of troops at Shilo, Man. and Debert, N.S.

Throughout the war, Kinsmen war savings stamps were sold at a peak rate of \$25,000 per week.

A Milk-for-Britain fund raised close to \$3 million, resulting in 50 million quarts of milk being shipped to the children of Great Britain and \$106,000 was raised for food parcels for Britain.

Kinsmen had come of age, the hard way. From that time on, community and world service were in the forefront of Kinsmen activity.

A cancer scholarship fund was set up in 1949. Then, major donations were made to flood-ravaged areas: Winnipeg in 1950; Europe in 1952-53; Hurricane Hazel's path in Southern Ontario in 1954; Frejus in 1960; and Hamburg in 1962.

Kinsmen involvement in disaster relief continues to this day with major contributions in such areas as the Woodstock tornado and the Dover flood relief last year.

MEDICAL RESEARCH

In addition, the organization has become increasingly involved in medical research funds — mental retardation, cystic fibrosis and others.

By 1945, when Kinsmen helped found the World Council of Young Men's Service Clubs now represented in 30 countries, the association could boast 150 clubs across Canada. In the nine years which followed, the number of clubs had doubled to 300 in 1956 with 10,000 members.

By 1975, the 500th club was chartered with 16,000 members and in 1979, the 600 mark was passed with a membership of 17,348.

P. N. (Pete) Hanly became executive director in 1968.

On Feb. 20th, 1970 the 50th Anniversary of the club's founding, the Kinsmen National Institute on Mental Retardation was officially opened in Toronto. More than \$400,000 had been raised by members



HAL ROGERS
... Founder

across the country for the facility. Three days off the mark, on Feb. 23 of this year, the association planned to open a new national headquarters, a three-storey, 14,000 square foot building on the outskirts of Cambridge, Ont.

GOOD MANAGEMENT

Kinsmen try to run their organization with simplicity and good management as their goal.

While each club is run as an independent unit, with autonomy over financial and administrative matters, the association as a whole has authority over how the clubs may operate as outlined in the constitution and bylaws.

Each club belongs to a zone. There are currently as few as four and as many as 15 clubs in the 73 zones.

Each zone is governed by a district deputy governor elected in the spring of each year. He appoints an executive to help him carry out administrative and executive duties within the zone.

Zones make up districts, each governed by a district governor who is first elected a vice-governor at district conventions or special meetings.

There are eight districts determined by geographic areas.

The national president is elected at the national convention annually and is traditionally the national vice-president from the previous year. He appoints up to four directors and a national Kinette co-ordinator.

The national president, national directors, vice-president and immediate past president are members of the national executive committee.

Each district governor plus members of the national executive committee are members of the national council which meets three times a year.

SAME OBJECTIVES

Despite the complexity of the association today compared with 60 years ago, Hal Rogers says he feels the aims, objectives and the spirit of the organization haven't changed.

At the founding of the club "we, as young men, dreamed dreams and with our dreaming combined activity with fellowship in building the organization the vision of those years inspired."



Percy Dawson, whose name appears among the 11 credited with founding the Kinsmen Club, took part in a founder's night at the Hamilton club last year. The club can boast being the birthplace of the

Kinsmen movement. With the birthplace banner are Dawson and Joe Canastantine, last year's president of Club No. 1, which got its start at the Namking Cafe Feb. 20, 1920.

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