ROTARY CLUB OF GLENVIEW-SUNRISE BEGINNINGS

By Bill Attea – January 7, 2019

The Rotary Club of Glenview-Sunrise was chartered on Wednesday evening, November 2, 1988 at its Charter Night Celebration at the North Shoe Country Club. The Club’s Charter Night Program lists 40 Charter members, six of which are active members today – Jerry Agrest, Jill Brickman, Mary Long, Jack Neymark, Mary Pribyl, and Howard Silver. Several are intermittently active with Rotary-Sunrise either when visiting or for special occasions, including Bill Attea, Samantha Smith, Tom Smith and Eleanor Wilke.

The sponsorship of a Rotary Breakfast Club was a goal that the Rotary Club of Glenview (now known as the Rotary-Luncheon Club) established for 1987-88. Ken Cooke, President of the Club, asked Bill Attea (Past-President 1975-76) to assume the responsibility for following through on this goal because of his role in urging the Club to establish a Breakfast Club in Glenview. In late summer and the fall of 1987, after seeking input from the Club’s membership and others about potential members, Bill invited several groups of potential members to breakfast or lunch at Grandpa Rugen’s to ascertain the feasibility of starting a Breakfast Club. There was instantaneous interest in doing so and interested members began to hold their initial pre-charter breakfasts at Grandpa’s for several months. As the group became larger, I believe the group moved to the Park District Golf Club, which eventually became it’s “home-base” after being chartered.

While a Breakfast-Club was being contemplated, on May 4, 1987, the United States Supreme Court ruled that Rotary violated the United States Constitution because it discriminated on the basis of gender in accepting members. On May 28, 1987, the first new Rotary Club was chartered in Marin, CA with women as charter members. At about the same time, a woman became the first Rotary Club president in Duarte, CA. This provided the Rotary Club of Glenview the opportunity to actively recruit eligible women to be Charter Members of the emerging Sunrise Club. On Charter Night, 35% (14) of the 40 Charter Members were women, and may have set a record in this regard.

Rotary guidelines indicate that Rotary members who actively engage in the organization of new clubs should act as advisors and not become members of the new club. During the organization of the Sunrise Club, a number of the individuals that would become Charter Members petitioned the Rotary Club of Glenview to permit two of its members, Bill Attea and Don Fagerberg, to become Charter Members of the Sunrise Club. Upon approval, the Charter Club elected Bill Attea to be its first President and Judy Zopp to be its first Vice-President. In June of 1989, Bill Attea resigned from the Presidency, and Judy Zopp became the first woman President of a Rotary Club in Illinois, several weeks before a woman was made President of the Highland Park Rotary Club.

Postscript - In November 1988, Rotary International informally authorized local clubs in the United States to accept woman via a policy statement based on the Supreme Court decision of May 4, 1987. In 1989, at its first meeting since the Supreme Court decision, Rotary International’s Council on Legislation voted to eliminate the requirement in the Rotary International Constitution that membership be limited to men, thereby welcoming women to become members in clubs throughout the world.