



Sharon S. Spane

Honorary Member of the Rotary Club of Mesa West

Sharon first became acquainted with Rotary in 1963 in Advance, Missouri. She served as a waitress at the Rotary Meetings held at the local Evelyn's Restaurant. She continued serving their weekly meetings until she graduated from high school in 1966.

Her next involvement was nearly twenty-two years later. While employed at a community-based Behavioral Health Provider, Kenneth Young Centers, a local State Representative, Terry Parke, invited her to attend a meeting at the Schaumburg-Hoffman Estates Rotary Club in Hoffman Estates, Illinois, District 6440.

After attending a few meetings as Rep. Parke's guest, he submitted her membership application in September 23, 1988. She was inducted as a member October 1, 1988.

After a couple of years of being "only" a club member, Sharon got more involved and served in a variety of capacities:

- The 4-way PACT committee (see photo)
- Scholarship Committee
- Foundation Committee (their club had their own foundation)
- Served and helped organize grants for the club
- Hosted and organized activities as well as holiday parties for exchange students
- Hosted the summer club picnic at her home which nearly 100 Rotarians and family members attended
- Hosted and attended Fireside Chats.
- Active attendee at fellowship activities.

Following this active participation as Sharon began a more serious "journey on her Rotary Road." She was asked to serve as Director of Fellowship in 1991—an avenue of service unique to that club. In the following years, she served as director of Club Service in 1992, Community Service in 1993, Vocational Service in 1994, and International Service in 1995.

Sharon became a Paul Harris Fellow in 1993. She recognized the need to eradicate polio. Her older sister's best friend was in an iron lung during high school. Sharon, who was only three years old at the time, could visualize how she looked.

Sharon was the first woman in the Schaumburg Hoffman Estates Rotary Club to stay. She was a very active participant and helped organize the club's 25th Anniversary celebration in 1994. During these years, Sharon was not only active and engaged in her own club, she attended and participated in nearly every district 6440 activity as well as conferences, chairing their district conference in the 1993-94 Rotary Year. One of several recognitions received from her club was that of being named Rotarian of the Year.

The Past Presidents of the club unanimously voted for Sharon to be put in line to become Club President for 1999-2000. Following that decision, she served as Secretary in 1996, Treasurer in 1997 and President-Elect in 1998.

The Schaumburg-Hoffman Estates Rotary Club was in District 6440—the home of Rotary International. The club was privileged to have four Rotary International Presidents attend their meetings. Sharon had the privilege of meeting them and personally engaging with them.

Sharon did not get to serve as President of the Shamburg/Hoffman Estates Rotary Club. In 1998, she had to make the most difficult decision she ever made. Family, physical health, and the need to reside in a drier climate with warmer temperatures had become front and center. She needed to leave her current home, employment, close friendships, lifetime neighbors, church family and her many Rotary friends who were like family.

Sharon accepted a position with American Red Cross where she would be based in Arizona with a start date of September 23, 1998. When she told her board and past presidents about her planned move, the news was met with tears and disbelief.

At a big celebration dinner with nearly all club members and spouses in attendance. Surrounded by her board and all past presidents, Sharon made the announcement of her planned move to Arizona.

After moving to Arizona, Sharon had to travel three to four weeks of the month, Sharon found it difficult to attend weekly meetings in Chandler. As a member of the Sun Lakes club, Sharon visited clubs in all the cities and states she worked in, keeping up her perfect attendance. The clubs she attended most during that early period were Sun Lakes Rotary or the Chandler Noon Club.

It was suggested Chandler could use an alternative meeting for those who traveled. District Governor Mike Purcell supported in helping Sharon and a few other Rotarians charter non one, but two, clubs in Chandler—Ocotillo Rotary Club then Chandler North. During membership in both clubs, I served two times as President, three times as Secretary and just kept things organized and moving forward.

During those years, Sharon was very active in Rotary District 5510:

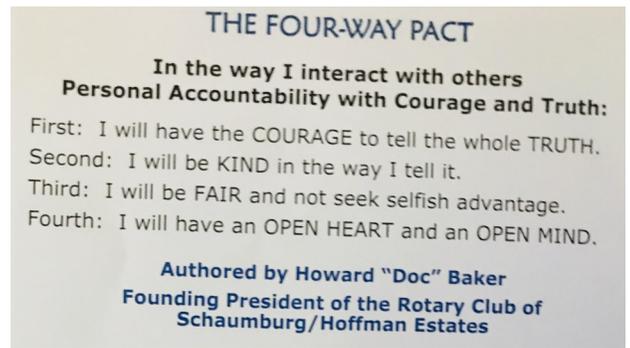
- Chaired a committee on Aging
- Chaired a Foundation banquet for DG Roger Wagner
- Chaired a District Conference

Sharon attended district conferences and meetings in the other two Arizona districts as well. She was named Rotarian of the Year while serving in Chandler North.

In her year as President in 2001-02, Sharon was recognized as one of thirty-four (out of 29,000) world-wide club presidents to be recognized for her accomplishments in Rotary with particular service to Chandler North Club. Rotary International President, Richard King made the announcement naming the thirty-four presidents at the Rotary International Convention in Copenhagen. Four members of Sharon's original club in Illinois were present to hear the announcement. They said, "That's our Sharon—way to go. We knew you would 'Soar with Eagles' where no one else would go!"

Sharon served as Assistant District Governor two times in District 5510.

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After moving to Arizona, Sharon had the opportunity to meet three more Rotary International Presidents. One of them was PRIP Luis Giay from Argentina who had served in 1996-97. He and Sharon remained friends and stayed in contact for several years.

While a member of the Sun Lakes Rotary club, Sharon met a fellow member of the club as well as her church who was affected by polio. Her commitment to The Rotary Foundation has continued over the years. In 2002, she became a member of the Bequest Society, Level 1 and a Benefactor. She is currently a Paul Harris Fellow plus 5.

In all Sharon's years as an active Rotarian, she achieved perfect attendance.

In 2019, Sharon was invited to be a featured speaker at her first club's 50-year anniversary celebration. They wanted her to share her experience as the first female member of the club who stayed. She had lots of funny stories to share with her first Rotary friends.



Sharon transferred her membership to Mesa West Rotary in 2014

Since being a member of Mesa West, life circumstances have prevented service at her prior levels

In June, 2020, Sharon was unanimously elected to be an Honorary Member

By the Directors of The Rotary Club of Mesa West