



Rotary 2001-2012

In 2002, Rotary purchased naming rights for the amphitheater that was to be part of Pier Wisconsin, now known as Discovery World. More than 200 Rotarians pledged \$175,000 toward the \$250,000 cost of this gift to the community in commemoration of Rotary International's Centennial celebration in 2005. The RCM Community Trust funded the balance. The Milwaukee Rotary Amphitheater opened in 2006 and two years later, the first LIVE @ the Lakefront concert was held.



Tim Birkenstock, President, 2006-07, and Terry McMahon at the ribbon-cutting for the Rotary Amphitheater in 2006

This period of RCM history was marked with generous donations from Rotary families, including a 2005 gift from the A.D. Robbie Robertson family supporting annual programs aimed at enhancing the understanding of the United Nations; a 2011 bequest from the estate of Phillip and Marietta Orth valued at \$300,000, which enabled the growth of the club's international service; the creation of the first endowed RCM Scholarship in 2012 by the son of past president Gordon Smith in honor of his parents.

In 2007, Rotarians learned that deceased member Andrew Bell had bequeathed RCM a share of a remainder trust. The first Andrew Bell grant was awarded in 2009 when RCM pledged \$100,000 for the restoration of the Brown Street Academy schoolyard.

Students at the completed BSA schoolyard



In 2007, RCM looked ahead to its centennial and extended an invitation to community organizations to compete for a \$400,000 gift from Rotary. A year later, the club selected the Milwaukee Rotary Centennial Arboretum project proposed by the Urban Ecology Center. In 2009, RCM members pledged more than \$400,000 in contributions in just a few short weeks. In 2010, Rotary International President Ray Klinginsmith spoke at the arboretum groundbreaking ceremony.

Of course, members enjoyed interesting programs:

- In 2002, new Archbishop Timothy Dolan discussed his plans for the Catholic Archdiocese.
- Congressman Barrett and Attorney General Doyle presented their credentials in the race for Governor.
- In 2003, soon-to-be-former Mayor John Norquist argued that public transportation improvements were critical to the city's future.
- Sen. Feingold expressed his concerns about war with Iraq and bipartisan reform opportunities.
- The CEO of Midwest Express Airlines discussed changes in the industry during the most trying economic times ever.
- In 2005, Michael Grebe, President and CEO of the Bradley Foundation, addressed Rotary on efforts to create a stronger brand image for southeastern Wisconsin while the climate for regional cooperation was better than ever.
- Rep. Sensenbrenner spoke in 2006 about his efforts to fix the broken immigration system, with insistence that anyone who entered the country illegally must leave.
- In 2008 Sheldon Lubar addressed Rotary on why there is no longer a need for County government.
- The former director of Amnesty International spoke about the importance of the Declaration of Human Rights, the first universally accepted version since the Code of Hammurabi 3,708 years ago.
- Author David Maraniss discussed the Broadway production based on his book *When Pride Still Mattered*.

Milwaukee and the World 2001-2012

The World Trade Center was bombed in 2001. It was also the year of anthrax threats, the declaration of war on Afghanistan, and passage of the Patriot Act. The iPod was introduced by Apple, and Wikipedia, the free online encyclopedia, was launched.

In 2003, the U.S. invaded Iraq. The use of cell phones while driving was outlawed in the U.K., and the space shuttle Columbia disintegrated during its re-entry over the state of Texas.

In 2004, the tsunami that struck countries throughout the Indian Ocean region took the lives of 187,000 people and left more than 40,000 missing.

More than 4 million people traveled to the Vatican for funeral services for Pope John Paul II in 2005. The identity of the infamous Deep Throat from the Watergate scandal was revealed to be former FBI Associate Director Mark Felt. The IRA ended the armed campaign it started in 1969, and Hurricane Katrina made landfall in the Gulf Coast with a death toll of 1,836 people.



Aftermath of the 2004 tsunami

In 2006, Twitter was launched, North Korea conducted its first nuclear test, and Saddam Hussein was hanged for crimes against humanity. Former Beatle Paul McCartney, who at age 16 wrote "When I'm Sixty-Four," turned 64.

Early in 2008, the price of petroleum reached \$100 a barrel. The Dow Jones average fell 777 points in a day, which was the largest drop in history. Bernard Madoff was arrested and charged with the largest financial fraud in history.

The year 2009 brought the inauguration of President Barack Obama. The death of Michael Jackson caused grief worldwide, and the former president of Peru (a UW-Milwaukee graduate) was sentenced to 25 years in prison for human rights atrocities.

In 2010, an earthquake in Haiti claimed the lives of 316,000, S&P Global Ratings downgraded Greece's credit to junk status, and Wikileaks released 250,000 American diplomatic cables.



Protestors march up Wall Street towards the New York Stock Exchange in Manhattan.

Photo by Louis Lanzano

The year 2011 witnessed the full consequences of government transition in the Arab Spring. Osama bin Laden was killed by U.S. forces, and the United Nations declared a famine in Somalia, the first such declaration in more than 30 years. Occupy Wall Street began in the U.S. and spread to 82 countries. The U.S. announced the end of the Iraq War.

In 2012, Queen Elizabeth celebrated her 60th anniversary, and President Obama was re-elected. In the worst electrical outage in history, 620 million people in India lost power. Encyclopedia Britannica ceased publication after 244 years.

Created by Bill Durkin, edited by Mary Bolich

Bill Durkin, President of Durkin & Associates, was a member of the Rotary Club of Milwaukee from 2000 through his passing in the spring of 2021. Bill, who was instrumental in the development of MKE Urban Stables, was actively engaged in the Club's Centennial Anniversary celebration in 2013. An avid student of history, Bill created this history of the Club set in the context of key events occurring in the City, the State and the World.

Mary Bolich, a Principal with Red Rabbit Creative, joined Rotary in 2019. Mary has an extensive background in creative writing, journalism and editing working for organizations such as Kohler, Kohl's and the U.S. Navy. She is the volunteer coordinator of the Rotary Club of Milwaukee's People of Action profile series.