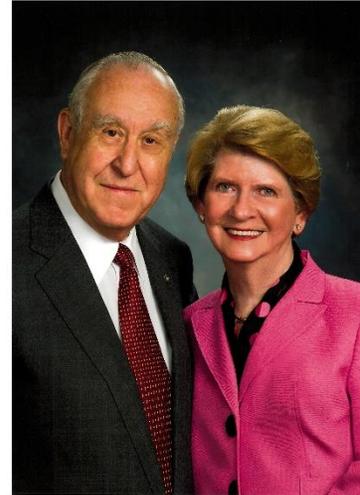


Rotary Leadership Speaks out on Pres. John F. Germ's visit: Take part

As the highly anticipated visit of the Rotary International President John F. Germ and his charming wife Judy to Uganda draws near, the country's leadership has spoken out calling for full participation of the entire Rotary fraternity. President Germ will be here to join celebrations for 60 years of Rotary service to humanity in Uganda and 100 years of The Rotary Foundation (TRF). He will be in the country from 25th- 28th February 2017, on the invitation of the Rotary International President Nominee, Rtn. Sam Owori.



“We invited him because we considered this a good land mark especially for us to get Rotary into the public view. He was very receptive, in fact he immediately agreed. It is a big honour because Rotary is in more than 200 countries. It helps to be at that level and inviting him from the same floor,” explains Rtn. Owori with a smile.

The District Governor, D9211, Jayesh Asher equally welcomed the news of the RI President's visit, describing it as a golden opportunity to build a higher momentum across Uganda and Tanzania. He tasked Rotarians to prioritize this visit and use it as a motivation to do bigger things for humanity.



The Country Chair, Xavier Sentamu says it will be exciting to have the two big Rotary leaders, Rtn. John Germ and Rtn. Sam Owori, in the country at the same time. “We are putting in place a rich programme and many activities starting with documenting the history of Rotary in the country. There are projects that the RI President will visit; the major one is the Rotary hospital built by the Rotary club of Kampala in Mukono- which he will commission and take part in the health camp. He will also visit the vocational centre in Buikwe spearheaded by the Rotary club of Kajjansi. He will then proceed to commission the blood bank spearheaded by PDG Emmanuel Katongole and the Rotary Club of Muyenga. He is to visit the cancer centre in Nsambya and hopefully take part in the World Understanding Charity Walk spearheaded by the Rotary Club of Kampala North,” explains a visibly overjoyed Rtn. Xavier.

Past District Governor (PDG) Emmanuel Katongole, who is the Aide-de-camp to the RI President for this visit, says it is a highly significant visit. “This visit is a recognition that a country is growing and as such two major areas; membership and projects should be given importance. It should be upon us as Rotarians in Uganda to put more emphasis to growth in these two areas. I thank the RI president for accepting to grace our celebrations and as his aide I would like to assure all Rotarians and the country at large that we are prepared for the visit and look forward to making it memorable,” he says.

“The Rotary blood bank is one of the major projects that TRF has funded. It attracted USD \$250,000 in funding to the facility. It basically shows us that as a country we should start looking at bigger projects that have long lasting impact to the community, diverting from a past of smaller projects which are eroded over time. Projects like the Rotary blood bank, cancer ward and similar sizeable ones with huge impact should be the focus going forward, adds PDG Katongole.



To cater for the numerous projects from other clubs, a Projects fair will be in place for clubs to exhibit their outstanding community service projects. President Germ will in addition hold a special fellowship with the youth (both Rotaractors and Interactors), during which they will share their projects, passions and ideas.

“Our expectation is full participation from the entire Rotary family. We are counting on 100% participation in each of the activities. We are hoping to have more than 1,000 participants, both Rotarians and Corporates, in a special TRF dinner. We are also appealing to Rotarians to remit their contributions to the foundation. Our appeal is for every Rotarian to contribute something to the foundation, remit these funds so that the regalia is ready for the RI President to personally hand it over to you,” emphasizes Rtn. Xavier.

Special appeal to clubs along Entebbe road

“I make a special appeal to Rotary clubs along Entebbe road. We expect a thunderous welcome to the RI President. Take charge of the different areas along this route, for instance the Kajjansi area, Lubowa, Nkumba, Entebbe, etc. We are calling upon all these clubs so that by the time the President gets to Kibuye- which RC Makindye West should be in charge of, he should feel that Rotary is booming in the country. The rest of us should receive him with vigour when he gets into Kampala,” appeals the Country Chair.

This visit, like several visits of past Rotary International Presidents to Uganda, is anticipated to be memorable. The lead club in all preparations is the Rotary club of Kampala- the oldest club in Uganda.

Why celebrate 60 years of Rotary in Uganda

Rotary started in Uganda on 20th May 1957 when the Rotary club of Kampala, sponsored by the Rotary club of Nairobi, was chartered. Not much in terms of growth happened between 1957- 63. In 1963 the Rotary club of Mbale, sponsored by the Rotary club of Kisumu was chartered, followed by the Rotary club of Jinja in 1964, and the Rotary club of Kampala west in 1970. Partly as a result of the political instability in the country at that time, Rotary growth stagnated at four clubs until 1984. “In 1983/84, I was President of the Rotary Club of Kampala. I was bothered by the fact that there were only four clubs in this country. The then District Governor challenged me to start other clubs. That year we started five clubs,” recalls Rtn. Sam Owori.

Since then, Rotary has continued to grow to the current 93 Rotary clubs with over 150 Rotaract and Interact clubs in Uganda. In the same measure, the project profile and service to humanity has grown exponentially and the milestones are worth celebrating. “For us to be talking 60 years now, there is a very long list of projects that have been undertaken by Rotary in this country and thousands of lives touched some of which are world records. Last month in Dubai I was educating the Indian Rotarians about the origin of the Gift of Life project which has become very big in India, Korea, Taiwan and South America.

This project, which deals with extending opportunities for open heart surgeries, started in Uganda,” adds Rtn. Owori.

About 100 years of The Rotary Foundation (TRF)

The Rotary Foundation was started in 1917 with a mere USD \$26.50. Since then TRF has funded projects all over the world, and today the foundation is a million dollar foundation. Uganda is among the best beneficiaries in the world. It is a big and well managed foundation and was recently voted the best charitable organization in terms of impact and management. “Personally I was very proud to have been a trustee for four years up to the end of last June. We need to demonstrate to the RI President that we are also making our contribution to the Foundation as PHF, Benefactors, Major donors, Paul Harris Society and so on, as opposed to only receiving. Uganda needs to live up to the reputation we have established as a fast growing Rotary country, and as a country using the foundation money properly. We need to ensure that we are all members in good standing, paying our dues and keeping our value propositions, explains Rtn. Owori. According to the Country Chair, a special dinner to celebrate the 100 years will be a key highlight of this commemoration. “This is something that no Rotarian or Rotaractor wants to miss. We are putting in place rich entertainment showcasing what we have achieved but also showcasing what the foundation has brought in terms of service and promoting peace around the world. So it is something that we look forward to,” he adds.

By Marion Alina