**Rotary In Hawai‘i - THE DISTRICT 5000 HISTORY
By Gary Siracusa, RGHF Member PDG**

Like over 90% of everything that comes to Hawaii, Rotary arrived in Hawaii aboard the ship Lurline in 1915, just 10 years after the beginning of Rotary in Chicago. One of the benefits of Rotary is fellowship and the Hawaii Rotary connection grew from the social acquaintance between V.O. Lawrence, a member of the No.3 Rotary Club of Oakland, CA and James L. Coke, later Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Territory of Hawaii. As they sailed together from San Francisco to Hawaii, they talked about Rotary and how to introduce Rotary to Hawaii.

Upon arrival in Honolulu, Justice Coke invited a number of local professional and business men to meet with Lawrence and himself at the old Commercial Club. After the objectives of Rotary had been explained by Lawrence, the group decided to organize the Rotary Club of Honolulu. The charter was dated July 1, 1915 and twenty-eight members had the distinction of membership in the 170th club admitted to Rotary which at that time had a total membership of approximately 20,000 members.

In June 1920, Charles C. Graves, President of the Rotary Club of Honolulu, made a trip to Hilo on the Big Island and invited about twenty business men to dinner. As a result, an application was made to Rotary for a charter. The request was granted on December 1, 1920 and with 16 members, the Rotary Club of Hilo became the second club in the Territory of Hawaii and 795th in Rotary.

The Secretary of the Rotary Club of Honolulu, John Caldwell, spent two years working on the formation of a third club again on Oahu in the Wahiawa-Waialua area. He was assisted by Steven Bowen of Wahiawa and on May 27, 1937 Club President Steven Bowen received the charter for club no.4168, the Rotary Club of Wahiawa-Waialua.

The Rotary Club of Kauai was admitted on August 23, 1937 as club no.4378 – John Caldwell along with fellow Rotary Club of Honolulu members Wayne Stewart and Charles Loomis teamed up on organizing this club and the charter President was W.P. Alexander.

The Rotary Club of Honolulu assisted with the formation of the Rotary Club of Maui with David C. Rattery as its first President, received their charter on November 4, 1937 as club no.4478. Later, in 1950-51, the assignment of charter club numbers was discontinued as the number of Rotary clubs swelled to over 7,000. Rotary was now repesented on all four major islands in Hawaii.

It was about this time that Rotarians in the Territory of Hawaii petitioned for organization as a district; up until now we were part of California District 104. At its January 1938 board meeting, Rotary International approved the split of District 104 and all the clubs in Hawaii united under the new designation as District 100. Wayne Stewart, past president of the Rotary Club of Honolulu became the first District Governor for D100; Rotary came of age in the Territory of Hawaii with only five clubs and 231 members. In 1950, District 100 was redesignated as D150 and again changed in 1950 to D500. The current designation as D5000 occurred in 1991.

The 6th club in the Territory of Hawaii – the Rotary Club of Waikiki - was organized once again through the efforts of a committee from the Rotary Club of Honolulu. Frank Cleve was the charter president and the club held its first  meeting at the Green Lantern Restaurant on Kalakaua Avenue (later known asthe Wagon Wheel Restaurant).

One of the most significant events for District 500 was hosting the 60th International Rotary Convention in May 1969. It was a colossal undertaking for the geographically spread District and involved hundreds of Rotarians from throughout the State. At that time, it was the 2nd largest Convention held in the United States and attracted 14,684 attendees from 66 countries. The President of Rotary International that year was Kiyoshi Togasaki of Japan.

Credit for the award to Hawaii of the 1969 convention should go to Morley Theaker of the Rotary Club of Honolulu; he was instrumental in the effort to bring the convention to Hawaii and after securing the support of local Rotarians, personally carried the formal invitation to Chicago where he met with R.I. President Carl Miller and convinced him of the ability of the Hawaii Rotarians to host the event. Carl later moved to Hawaii and became a very active member of the Rotary Club of Honolulu.

In 1990, the American Red Cross honored the Rotary Clubs of Hawaii for outstanding community and public service, presenting the District with its Humanitarian Award. This was the first time that one international organization was honored by another international organization with a national award here in Hawaii.

One of the first to suggest the addition of the keyway to the Rotary Wheel was Charles R. Frazier. The Rotary International Board of Directors approved the addition of the keyway in 1923. Without a keyway, a gear is just an idler spinning, incapable of transmitting power.

District 5000 has approximately 1,800 member Rotarians in 51 Clubs located on the four islands of Oahu, Maui, Kauai, and the Big Island. We are part of Zone 26 and participate in the Far West PETS (presidents-elect training seminar) with eight other districts from Zones 25 and 26.

In remembrance of PDG Clarence McIntosh, who provided the

 early history of Rotary in our District.