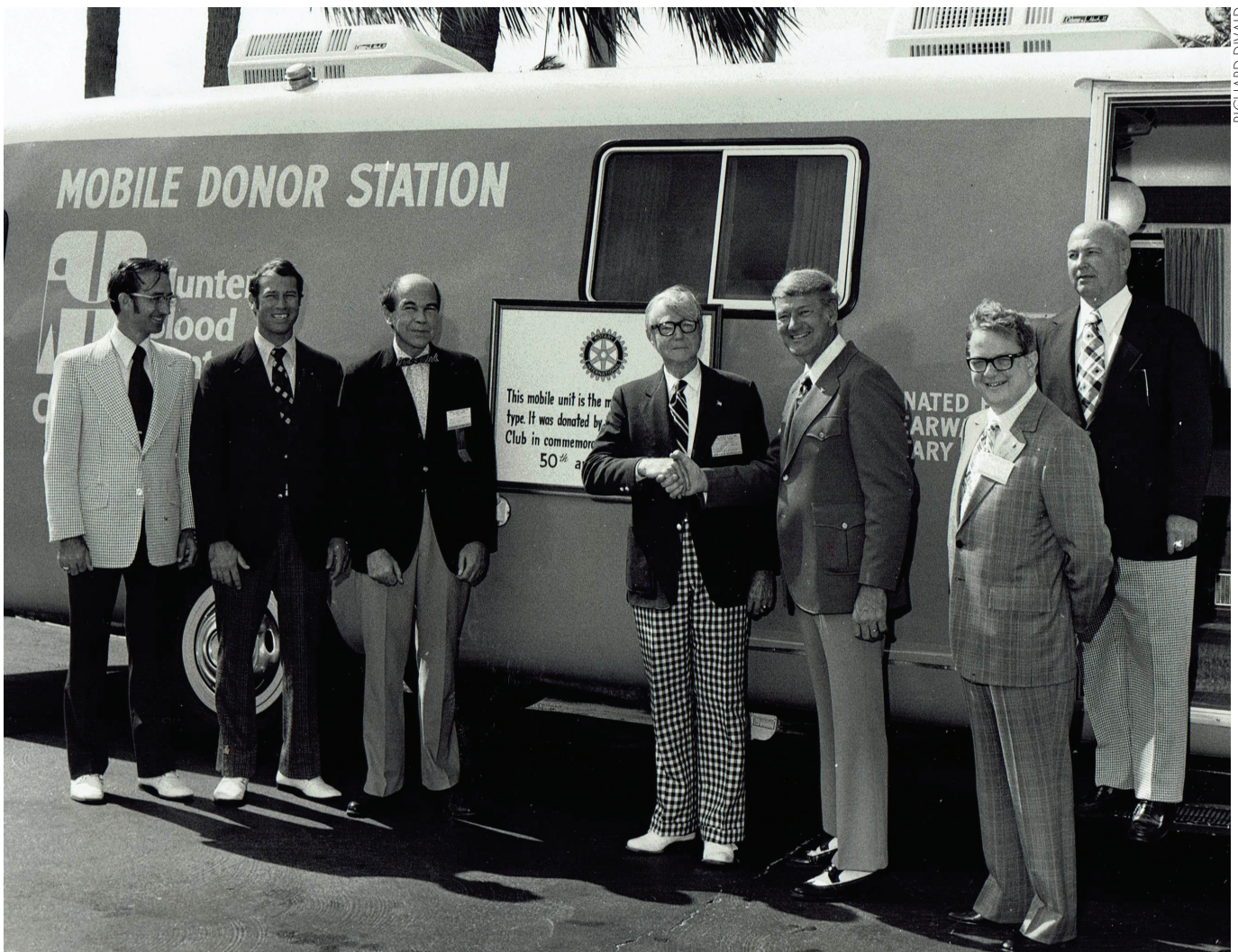


Clearwater Rotary Club Celebrates 100 Years of Service

By Stephanie Zaragoza & Juice Marketing



The Mobile Blood Mobile is a Rotary Club of Clearwater project that began in 1973.

The Rotary Club of Clearwater is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year. On January 2, 1925, Rotary International officially chartered the Rotary Club of Clearwater, marking its status as the 1,875th club in a growing worldwide network. It was founded by a dedicated group of ten visionary Clearwater businessmen and was initially led by their first president, Mr. Taver Bayly. The Rotary Club of St. Petersburg sponsored their charter. In a spirit of collaboration, the Rotary Club of Clearwater has sponsored clubs in neighboring towns such as Tarpon Springs, Dunedin, Largo, and Belleair, as well as fostering additional clubs within Clearwater itself.

The Rotary Club of Clearwater holds the distinguished honor of being the oldest service club in Clearwater and stands among the oldest in Pinellas County. Throughout the decades, its members have passionately engaged in a multitude of impactful service projects, starting with the landscaping of the “new” causeway connecting Clearwater to Clearwater Beach in the 1920s. Rotarians’ initiatives have left a lasting mark on the community, notably through their contribution of the first mobile blood unit to the Hunter Blood Center, a testament to a commitment to health and well-being. Moreover, they proudly became the pioneering service club to make a substantial donation to Ruth Eckerd Hall, supporting local culture and the arts.

In 1991, under the direction of Dr. Ralph Frick, the Rotary Club of Clearwater established a local charity endowment fund with the goal to be a strong and permanent annual contributor to the needs of our community. The fund is an IRS-certified 501 (c)(3) nonprofit charitable corporation governed by nine trustees/directors of the Rotary Club of Clearwater Charities Inc., which oversees the endowment trust.

Over the years, members of The Rotary Club of Clearwater have contributed annually to the endowment, which also grew due to the generosity of wills and bequeaths of Rotarians. After a successful Kingfish Tournament in April 2017, the club’s board of directors voted to contribute \$15,000 of the proceeds from that charity event to the endowment. That check pushed the balance of the principal to \$1,004,000. The Rotary Club of Clearwater created a committee of financial experts who developed a formula and investment strategy to distribute several hundred thousand dollars in earnings from the endowment over the years to local charities.

Their membership is a source of great pride, with many individuals being honored with the prestigious Bilgore Award and recognized as Mr. Clearwater by the former Greater Clearwater Chamber of Commerce. In its hundred-year history, the club has provided three Rotary district governors, underscoring their leadership within the Rotary community. Among distinguished members, Herbert Brown served with honor on the 14-member Rotary International Board of Directors and ascended to the role of International President of Rotary from 1995 to 1996. Additionally, the Clearwater club broke



Herb Brown was a Rotary Club of Clearwater past president who became a Rotary International president.

new ground by welcoming Dee Eckert as the first woman member in the district, a milestone that paved the way for greater inclusivity.

As they celebrate a century of service, the Rotary Club of Clearwater remains steadfast in its mission to serve others, promote integrity, and foster understanding, goodwill, and peace within our community and beyond. Their fellowship of dedicated business, professional, and community leaders continues to inspire change and uplift lives through their collective efforts. The

Rotary Club of Clearwater will celebrate its 100 years of service to our community with several events throughout the year. ♦

EDITOR’S NOTE: The Rotary Club of Clearwater meets on Wednesdays at 12 p.m. at the Belleair Country Club, 1 Country Club Lane in Belleair, and welcomes new potential members, who may express their interest by calling (727) 537-6570.