

# Rotary History

## Arch C. Klumph: The Father of The Rotary Foundation

For a man best known as the father of **The Rotary Foundation**, Arch C. Klumph was modest about his role in its creation.



Arch C. Klumph, circa 1916



September 1916 issue of The Rotarian

In 1928, he listed three accomplishments that gave him “more satisfaction than any other contributions to Rotary” — and launching the Foundation wasn’t among them. Instead, he emphasized his role in writing Rotary’s Constitution in 1915, which he asserted “gave Rotary International its first centralized power and made all the Objects and fundamentals of Rotary universal.” He also took pride in establishing attendance reports and in being the first to insist on founding a European branch office of Rotary International.

Klumph was born in the small town of Conneautville, Pennsylvania, USA, on 6 June 1869. When he was a child, his family moved to Cleveland, Ohio, where he would become a founding member of the Rotary Club of Cleveland in 1911. As club president in 1913, he advocated for the club to build a reserve that would ensure its means to do future good work. This idea would stay with him as he moved on to serve Rotary in other roles

Klumph on the cover of the September 1916 issue of The Rotarian. In his message, he reminds members that “Rotary is bigger than any one man, than any board of directors.”

Five years after he became a Rotarian, Klumph was elected to serve as Rotary’s president for 1916-17. Near the end of his term, at the 1917 Rotary Convention in Atlanta, Georgia, USA, he reminded Rotarians that “Rotary is at the present time entering a new era, demanding improved methods in administrative machinery, with which to carry out the splendid principles

which have been laid down heretofore." He defined six points of action, including the establishment of an endowment, which would later become The Rotary Foundation:

"Carrying on, as we are, a miscellaneous community service, it seems eminently proper that we should accept **endowments** for the purpose of doing good in the world, in charitable, educational or other avenues of community progress, or such funds could be well used for extension work."

Through Klumph's simple yet profound statement, the Rotary Endowment Fund was born. In 1928, the name formally changed to The Rotary Foundation, and a Board of Trustees was established, with Klumph serving as the first trustee chair from 1928 to 1935. Even after stepping down as chair, he remained dedicated to educating Rotary leaders and members about the importance of the Foundation and encouraging contributions.

Klumph died on 3 June 1951 at age 82, but his influence lives on through The Foundation.



Rotary President Arch Klumph and the 1916-17 Board of Directors. Top, left to right: F.W. Galbraith Jr., E. Leslie Pidgeon, Chesley R. Perry, Guy Gundaker. Bottom (left to right): Arch C. Klumph, Allen D. Albert.