

INDUCTION: **MICHELE KUBOTA**

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“MAKING FRIENDS BY SERVING”

IN THE COMPANY OF FRIENDS

When Paul Harris started Rotary in 1905, he was a lonely Chicago lawyer. He contacted four businessmen he thought he might enjoy and started meeting in their offices, rotating through their five establishments over time.

Paul Harris learned something critical about humans. We are social creatures, essentially so. Friends are not mere conveniences. Life is not merely harder without friends; life grinds to a halt. Nor are friends a treat, like chocolate cake or eggnog. **Friends are the substance of human life.** Some would reserve that eminent place for family, but, truthfully, if adult family members behave badly, we marginalize them. We select new family—our friends. Family members grow in importance, if they are friends. If family members are not friends, they slip toward life’s periphery. A human life is a web of friendship, from which we gain our identities, in which we express our hopes, from which we derive strength.

Friendship is not always easy. Friendship creates caring, and caring requires action. We find ourselves embroiled in the difficulties of the life of others. That takes energy, but also gives life depth. We find ourselves in conflicts, great and small. These create anxiety, but also, as the disputes resolve, generate confidence and persistence. Friendship requires honesty, which risks the friendship, but without which no friendship deepens.

Ultimately, friends are second selves (as Aristotle says in his *Nicomachean Ethics*). When you look in the mirror, the self you see is your friends. This is a mystery of being. How can one be individual and collective simultaneously? No one knows. But it happens in each of our lives. We follow Paul Harris in his discovery, renewed in each of our lives daily. Rotary expresses our togetherness, and things we care about together.

Michele, in Rotary, we seek to serve in the company of friends. **Rotary is humanity seeking its best self. Together.**

Welcome to Rain City Rotary.

BRAD LANCASTER
Membership Chairperson