

## The origins of Paul Harris Fellow recognition

The Paul Harris Fellow recognition acknowledges individuals who contribute, or who have contributions made in their name, of \$1,000 to The Rotary Foundation. Rotary established the recognition in 1957 to encourage and show appreciation for substantial contributions to what was then the Foundation's only program, Rotary Foundation Fellowships for Advanced Study, the precursor to Ambassadorial Scholarships. The first Paul Harris Fellows included past RI Director Allison G. Brush, who served during the 1937-38 Rotary year, and longtime RI Treasurer Rufus F. Chapin, both for donations made in 1946. Mrs. Adan Vargas was the first woman to receive the recognition, for a gift made in 1953. Mrs. Harry L. Jones was the second, and one of only five people recognized for contributions actually made in that inaugural year. Early Paul Harris Fellows received a certificate of recognition. In 1969, the Foundation unveiled the first Paul Harris Fellow medallion at the Rotary Convention in Honolulu, Hawaii, USA. Japanese metal artist Fiju Tsuda created the piece under the direction of former Foundation Trustee Kyozo Yuasa. Today, Paul Harris Fellows receive a certificate and pin. They are also eligible to buy a Paul Harris Fellow medallion.



*A.Z. Baker, 1955-56 RI president at the 1969 Rotary Convention in Honolulu, Hawaii, USA.*



Rotarians have a tradition of supporting the Foundation by honoring others. Ida LeTulle Taylor became a Paul Harris Fellow in 1978 when her husband, Vann Taylor, who was serving as a district governor, made a donation in her name in honor of their 34th wedding anniversary. The gift also made her the 25,000th Paul Harris Fellow. At the International Assembly in 1979, incoming RI President James Bomar challenged each Rotary club to make one non-Rotarian a Paul Harris Fellow. The Rotary Club of Pikesville, Maryland, USA, responded by making a donation in the name of Mother Teresa in 1980. The entertainer Pearl Bailey also became a Paul Harris Fellow through a joint effort of the Rotary clubs in Cape Cod, Massachusetts. Many other notable figures have been named Paul Harris Fellows, including U.S. President Jimmy Carter, Russian President Boris Yeltsin, U.S. astronaut James Lovell, UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar, and polio vaccine developer Jonas Salk. The number of Paul Harris Fellows reached the 1 million mark in 2006.

**The Hampton Rotary Club is 100% Paul Harris Fellows.** That means, that in this current year our members have all been classified as Paul Harris Fellows.

\*Special Thanks to Trina Coleman for setting this goal and Bob Harper for organizing our efforts through Rotary International!



*Shekhar and Rashi Mehta at their home in Kolkata.*

**Lance Jones Jr.**  
Senior Family Service  
Specialist at City of Hampton



Mr. Jones is an experienced Senior Family Service Specialist with a demonstrated history of working in the government administration industry. He is skilled in Nonprofit Organizations, Politics, Charity Work, Board of Directors, and Public Relations. He is a strong community and social services professional with a bachelor's degree in Sociology from Norfolk State University.

## Meet Rotary's New President

Our new president, Shekhar Mehta, envisions Rotary's next chapter – and is ready to make it a reality! Shekhar Mehta, a member of the Rotary Club of Calcutta-Mahanagar, has been a Rotarian since 1985. He trained as an accountant and founded a real estate development company, Skyline Group, which he also chairs. But his professional title tells only a small part of the story of who he is. He is also a director of the India arm of Operation Eyesight Universal, a Canada-based nonprofit focused on preventing avoidable blindness. He helped establish more than 15 eye hospitals, in several Indian states, that together carry out nearly 50,000 surgeries each year. And he started Saving Little Hearts, a project that has facilitated more than 2,500 heart surgeries for children from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, and some African countries and that is now an India-wide program.

Although Shekhar is skilled in the business arts, he prefers to engage his other fluencies. He told me that, after so much studying and reading during his career, he now favors learning by talking to people. He added, "I hate accounting." It all follows his belief that we would do well to think from our hearts as much as our minds. Story by John Rezek



**"Forget the Dreamhouse, this doll needs to come with a Dreamlab."**

"Sarah Gilbert" – The COVID-19 vaccine developer who is now the subject of a Barbie doll.

