

PRESS RELEASE

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As of August 2, 2016

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Photo credit: Derek Smith and Azaleta Ishmael-Newry

Historic Moment for Rotary: Sir Durward Knowles 98-Year Old Rotarian and Olympian Celebrates 40th Anniversary of Club's Formation

Nassau, Bahamas – At 98 years old, Sir Durward Knowles was not going to miss celebrating the anniversary of the Rotary Club he helped establish 40 years ago on July 19, 1976. When new clubs are established, Rotary International grants them their charter.

On Wednesday, July 20, 2016, Sir Durward was present at the Rotary Club of South East Nassau's weekly meeting, joining charter member and past president (PP) F. Denny Curry as well as Judy Reiach, the daughter of the club's charter president, the late Edwin Deal. Also recognized were the club's long serving Rotarians Ralph Barnett who joined in 1982 and PP and past assistant district governor, Roger Kely who joined 7 months after the club's charter.

They exchanged fond stories and in a short address to the club, Sir Durward said, "Good luck, and I wish you the best of everything. If I am still living," he joked, "I will be back to celebrate the Club's 50th anniversary with you."

During the tenure of Sir Durward's presidency of the Rotary Club of East Nassau in 1975, he along with Rotarians Edwin Deal, Harry Scates and Hopeton Ray, explored the formation of a fourth club in New Providence. It was the East Club that became the sponsor club of the Rotary Club of South East Nassau. Rotarian Edwin Deal moved from the East Club and became the founding father of South East, making it the seventh Rotary club in The Bahamas in 1976.

The founding officers of the RCSEN were: Edwin L.V. Deal as president; Ernst Brokmeier, vice-president, H.R. (Rusty) Scates, secretary, Donald McLeod, treasurer, and the directors were: Jerome Major, Alan Greenwood, Douglas England, Eric Carlsson and George Noble. The members first met at the Gleneagles Hotel then located on Shirley Street, every Wednesday at 12:30 pm with a membership that started at 27 and grew to 65 members nine years later; it has remained around the same average number since.

In its 40-year history the RCSEN has developed many projects supporting the local community and organizations, as well as other countries in their district. The Club has had many notable presidents and outstanding members and is known as an innovating club. It was the first club in New Providence (NP) to induct female Rotarians in 1995 and the first to have a female president in 2002 in NP. Over the years, South East has won many awards and has had Rotarians who have served on the Bahamas board and for District 7020. Recently, the RCSEN won a gold award from Rotary International and a platinum award from their District for their work in 2015-2016.

The club's Early Act group at Columbus Primary School also won the recent competition for "Best Song and Video" about "Bullying".

Other clubs that have emerged from the RCSEN include two Interact Clubs located at St Andrew's and Doris Johnson Schools, the Rotaract Club of South East Centennial, and the Rotary Club of Eleuthera.

During July 2016 to June 2017, the club has many events planned with their Charter Banquet scheduled for late September. For the past 20 plus years, the RCSEN has been meeting every Wednesday at the East Villa Restaurant and for those interested in joining, please visit the club's Facebook page, or contact membership director Godfrey Bethell at godfrey@summitbah.com.

Rotary is a humanitarian organization, rated as one of the top charities in the world. Rotary brings together a global network of volunteers who dedicate their time and talent to tackle the world's most pressing humanitarian challenges. Rotary connects 1.2 million members from more than 200 countries and geographical areas. Their work impacts lives at both the local and international levels, from helping families in need in their own communities to working toward a polio-free world. (www.rotary.org)



Photo 1: Ninety-eight year old Sir Durward Knowles (seated) who is a past president of the Rotary Club of East Nassau is considered the founder of the Rotary Club of South East Nassau. He celebrated the RSEN's 40th anniversary of July 19, 1976 with the club. Standing from left to right in the photo are: Judy Reich, daughter of charter president of the RCSEN, the late Edwin Deal, PP/PADG Roger Kelty, President Lillian Russell and charter member and PP F. Denny Curry. Photo by Azaleta Ishmael-Newry



Forty years later, Judy Reich, daughter of Edwin Deal, the charter president of the Rotary Club of South East Nassau, read her father's speech at the club's 40-year celebration held on July 20, 2016. Photo by Azaleta Ishmael-Newry

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