

The History Of Kinettes

The founder of our Association is H.A. (Hal) Rogers, born in London, Ont., on Jan. 3, 1899. He had a distinguished military career with his regiment, the Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders, who suffered many dead and wounded. Hal was gassed at Paschendaele and later wounded by shrapnel near Armies.

Hal returned to Canada in 1919 along with thousands of his fellow soldiers. After re-entering the plumbing business, Hal applied for membership to the Rotary Club, but, as his father was a member, the club already had a plumbing salesperson representing that vocation. Therefore, Hal's application was rejected.

Hal decided to start his own service club. He invited 11 young men to the Namking Cafe in Hamilton, Ont., to start the first Kinsmen club. The first Kinsmen meeting was held on Feb. 20, 1920 and from there the Association grew. Hal served as president from 1920-1923.

Soon, one of his enthusiastic members moved to Montreal and formed a second club; later a member moved to Winnipeg and formed a club there; before long a member moved to Vancouver, and a fourth club was formed. Thus, in a short span of four years, Kinsmen clubs had a foothold from Montreal to the west coast.

By being dedicated to fellowship and service, the Association grew to more than 300 clubs and 10,000 members by 1956. In 1987, the age limit for active membership was raised from 40 to 45, and cystic fibrosis was adopted as a national service project. In 1999 the upper age limit was abolished at the National Convention in London, Ont.

In the 1930s, women's organizations started to spring up throughout the country. The names of the groups varied from the "Kinsmen Ladies Club" to "Kinsmen Wives" and "Kinsmenettes." Formed in 1932, the Kinsmen Ladies Club of Hamilton (ON) was the first to function as a properly organized club. The Hamilton club's first project was sewing for the Well Babies Clinic.

The next few years came to see the formation of more and more clubs. In 1939, Miriam Sheridam coined the name "Kinettes", and the Ottawa club has been given credit as being the original "Kinette club" in all of Canada.

Official recognition was given to the Kinettes in the national by-laws of the Association in 1942. At that point, Kinettes were duly certified as an auxiliary organization.

Kinettes began taking a more prominent place in the Association. Kinette clubs achieved full partner status within the Association at the 1988 National Convention in Calgary, AB.

In 1990, for the first time in Kin history, the Association's first national Kinette President, Catharine Newham of Portage la Prairie, Man., was elected at the National Convention in Thunder Bay, Ont. In 1995 the Kin Club of Quesnel (BC) chartered and officially became the first club in the Association to allow both Kinsmen and Kinettes as members. By 1999, 26 Kin clubs belonged to the Association.

Today, Kin Canada is a combination of Kinsmen, Kinette and Kin Clubs.