**HISTORY OF ROTARY IN GHANA**

**ROTARY INTERNATIONAL DISTRICT 210 - 9104**

Rotary reached the African continent in the year 1921, sixteen years after Paul Harris had founded the first club in Chicago, USA on 23rd February 1905. An American locomotive engineer, a former Rotarian in his hometown of Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania, USA convinced his all-white business friends numbering forty-two to form the Rotary Club of Johannesburg in April 1921.

Within the next decade and a half, Rotary jumped over the Kalahari Desert, the Kilimanjaro Mountain, the Great African Lakes, and the Sahara to land on the Mediterranean shores of North Africa, reaching Cairo, Egypt on 2nd January 1929, through the effort of the Canadian Col. James W. Davidson; after that to Casablanca, Morocco; Algiers in Algeria; back south to Salisbury, Rhodesia (now Harare, Zimbabwe), and on to Nairobi, Kenya in the east, all in the same year 1930. Rotary’s journey continued to Tunisia in 1935, Sudan in 1938 and finally to Senegal in West Africa, in 1939. Dakar would remain the Rotary lone star in the region’s skies for seventeen (17) years after which period Rotary reached Cote d’Ivoire in 1956 and Cameroon and Chad in 1957, both French speaking countries.

The first English-speaking country in the region to receive Rotary was Ghana, the newly independent nation, through the initiative of an indigene, a peculiarly exciting history worth mentioning. In Ghana, Rotary was introduced through the singular effort of an African (Ghanaian) Accountant named Michael Daniel Quist, who worked with the American oil company TEXACO in Accra and had previously studied in the UK where he got to know about Rotary through regular invitation by British Rotarians. Ironically, though, membership of the Premier Club, the Rotary Club of Accra, was dominated (73%) by white expatriates who were leaders in the then well-known businesses and professions. A minority Ghanaian membership of seven was included in this group - three politicians, two members of Parliament from the ruling party and the third, the Economic Adviser to the Prime Minister, Kwame Nkrumah.

The extension of Rotary throughout the English–speaking West African countries would be achieved mainly through the initiative of the Rotary Club of Accra, under the leadership of Michael Daniel Quist. He spearheaded the Rotary Extension Campaign into Nigeria and organized Rotary Clubs of Kano, Lagos and Ibadan in Nigeria, and Freetown in Sierra Leone. Through his historical external family links in neighboring Togo he also introduced Rotary to that country.

In Rotary year 1968-1969 there existed in our West African region only twenty-one (21) clubs with small numbers of Rotarians in twelve countries, that is seven (7) clubs in Nigeria, four (4) clubs in Ghana, and one in each of the remaining countries. Therefore the region did not qualify to be designated as a Rotary District.

The West African Rotarians, eager to build a viable regional Rotary community, started holding annual conferences; the first was held in Accra on 21-23 March 1968, attended by eleven (11) clubs coming from Ghana, Dahomey now Benin, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone, namely: Accra, Bamako, Cotonou, Freetown, Ibadan, Kano, Kumasi, Lagos, Monrovia, Takoradi, Tema. Four subsequent annual conferences followed at different venues. The fifth retook place in Accra on 8-12 March 1972 with the participation of the Rotary Clubs of Freetown, Monrovia, Enugu, Ibadan, Ikeja, Kaduna, Accra, Accra-West, Kumasi, Sekondi-Takoradi, Tamale, Tema, and Lome, the new club from Togo making it the seventh member-country.

The fifth Annual West African Conference, attended by R. I. President Ernst G. Breitholtz, represented the turning point for district status and through a balloting of majority of clubs Francois Amorin was selected as the District Governor-Nominee for the Rotary year 1973-1974 and subsequently formally elected the first District Governor of District 210.

Per the By-Laws of Rotary International, the District Governor must organize two events, namely the District Assembly and the District Conference, during his year in office.

During the first five-year period of District 210, club extension was stagnant; only three new clubs were created: Nouakchott in Mauritania, Abidjan-Cocody in Cote d’Ivoire (1978) and Banjul in The Gambia (1979). A decision by the R.I. Board in Rotary year 1976-1977 changed the numerical designation of District 210 to District 910 of which Rotarian Sam Okudzeto became the first Governor. As new countries appeared on the West Africa Rotary map, Rotary extension gained momentum notably in Nigeria due to the oil boom. A single Governor could no longer discharge his duties effectively over such a vast geographical territory as D910. It became obvious that re-districting was the solution. R.I. ceded territory from D910 to form two new Districts – D911 and D915.

In the Rotary year 1991-1992, the R.I. Board added the number zero (0) to all existing districts worldwide, thus altering D910 to D9100. District 9100 constituted a larger part of the West African Sub-Region of Africa, south of the Sahara. It comprised fourteen countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d’Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo. Indeed, D9100 was at the time the largest geographic district in the Rotary world. There was the need for redistricting again of District 9100.

After a lengthy process, the Board of Directors of Rotary International, “agreed to reorganize the clubs in District 9100 into two new districts 9101 and 9102, effective 1 July 2013.

Ten years later, District 9102 will be redistricted into District 9103 (Benin, Niger & Togo) and District 9104 (Ghana) and from 1st July 2023.