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2017 Rotary Person of the Year: Bob Hillis



Bob Hillis

The founder, president, and CEO of Direct Supply is a remarkably successful business leader. Bob Hillis is a pioneer in virtual distribution and an enthusiastic entrepreneur. And, he is the Rotary Club of Milwaukee's 2017 Person of the Year.

Direct Supply was founded in Milwaukee in 1985 and has grown to be the leading provider of equipment, eCommerce and service solutions for senior living. The company says it helps build, equip, and improve operations at senior living communities across the country. It is an employee-owned company with headquarters on Milwaukee's northwest side where more than one thousand people work.

Bob attributes some of his accomplishments to luck and hard work. But a significant portion of Direct Supply's success is a result of a strong commitment to the company's five principles. They are: treat employees as partners, provide outrageous customer service, commit to quality, excellence and integrity, and strive to lead the industry in return on investment.

In a laudatory article, business leader John Torinus noted Bob's appreciation of mentors. Direct Supply had a number of important advisers in its early stages, and the article quotes Bob as saying:

"You better have a lot of friends because you don't have all the answers yourself."

The Rotary Person of the Year award is a unique honor that focuses on the professional accomplishments of the award winner. Rather than celebrating civic or philanthropic achievements, this award recognizes the winner's work.

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Help Us Support Rotary International's Polio Eradication Efforts

Rotarians around the world are known for their perseverance – and there's no better example than our commitment to eradicate polio. Over the past three decades, more than 2.5 billion children have been immunized against this dread disease. The disease is endemic in only two countries, but unless we reach every child with the vaccine, no child anywhere is safe. While we are celebrating great progress, Rotary's fight to eradicate polio is not over.

Since 2007, members of our club have given nearly \$100,000 dollars to help eradicate polio. As we do every year, we ask you to support this vital Rotary initiative. In honor of the 100th anniversary of the Rotary Foundation, Zilber Ltd. will double the impact of your gift by very generously matching donations of RCM members up to a total of \$12,500. Then your gift—already doubled by Zilber Ltd.—will be matched 2 to 1 by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The power of Rotary!



A young girl received a polio vaccine from Rotary in the village of Grand-Bassam, Cote d'Ivoire.

Rotary and its global partners, with the support of individual Rotarians like you around the world, are determined to achieve Rotary's goal of delivering a polio-free world by 2018. You should have received a letter from Tom Gale, chair of the Rotary Foundation Committee and President Nancy Sennett asking for your support. Please respond generously. 🌐

Johnsons Park Won a MANDI 2017 Award

In 2007, the late John C. Walker connected Center for Resilient Cities to the Rotary Club of Milwaukee. Since then the two organizations have successfully partnered to revitalize public green spaces for the residents of Milwaukee's Lindsay Heights neighborhood, through the Johnsons Park Initiative. In 2012 we celebrated the completion of the restoration of the Brown Street Academy Schoolyard and in 2016 the completion of the renovation of Johnsons Park.

We were thrilled that Johnsons Park was honored with the "Brewers Community Foundation Public Space Award" at the 2017 Milwaukee Awards for Neighborhood Development Innovation (MANDI) dinner celebration. This award recognized Johnsons Park as a public space that helps build the community. We would like to thank all our Rotarians for making the restoration of Johnsons Park possible! 🌟



RCM Executive Director Mary McCormick and Past-President Joe Caruso pictured above at the 2017 MANDI awards.

Scholar Corner - Brandon Holmes

Brandon Holmes, an RCM Scholarship student attending UW-Oshkosh to study political science and history, has always been very interested in the United Nations. At UW-Oshkosh he has been active in the Model UN program. With the help of Rotary's A.D. Robertson Fund, Brandon has had the opportunity to get attend several UN focused programs in Washington D.C. and New York.

The United Nations Association of Greater Milwaukee honored Brandon at the annual Global Citizens Award Luncheon. With multiple Rotarians in the crowd to support Brandon, he received an award on which was inscribed:

"In acknowledgement of commitment and service in support of the vital work of the United Nations, and the cause of world peace. For your contribution to an award-winning Model UN team at UW Oshkosh, for your example as a Rotary Scholar, for your leadership and participation in UNA-USA, and for your efforts to build a world that respects equality and dignity of all people, we thank you."



RCM Scholar Brandon Holmes with his award at the Global Citizen Awards Luncheon.

Congratulations, Brandon! We are proud of you for working to fulfill Rotary's mission of promoting peace around the world. 🌟

Conversation with Beth Heller and Matt Hunter, Co-chairs of the Recruitment and Admission Committee

WAVES: Why did you join the recruitment and admission committee?

Beth: I joined the committee because I really enjoy the people on the committee – they are a lot of fun! I also joined because, as a strategist, I understand that the make-up of our members is critical to the success of our club. We are leaders making a difference, and we need to continually engage new and experienced leaders in order to stay relevant and healthy as a club.

WAVES: Do you have to be on the committee to propose someone for membership?

Matt: We're always looking to expand the number of people on this committee that meets the first Tuesday of every month at 1:15 pm. However, you don't need to join the committee to engage in the recruiting process. You can propose a member at any time!

WAVES: Who are good prospects for Rotary membership?

Beth: Invite people who are leaders in their industry, who you believe have influence either by their position, or perhaps by recognition or an award. We also are looking for people who care about and are involved in the community.

WAVES: Why should we invite someone to Rotary?

Matt: Being proposed felt good and we each have the power to share that good feeling with someone else. For a short time, we have an incentive to encourage prospects to take action and join. Between now and June 30th we will waive half of the admission fee, bringing it from \$500 to \$250!

WAVES: Any final comments?

Beth and Matt: We ask you to help us strengthen the club and meet our strategic goals by offering a great opportunity to friend or someone in your business network to join the Rotary Club of Milwaukee. Call or email either of us or the Rotary office with any questions. 🌀



Beth Heller and Matt Hunter at a recent social gathering.

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The purpose of this award is also to highlight the second objective of Rotary: to foster high ethical standards in business and professions, to recognize the worthiness of all useful occupations, and to dignify each Rotarian's occupation as an opportunity to serve society.

Through his profession, Bob has made the Milwaukee community a better place to live and work. As a virtual distributor and technology provider, Direct Supply could be located anywhere. Bob is making sure the company's future is in Milwaukee.

Without interruption he maintains an entrepreneurial approach within Direct Supply where new business units are periodically added. Within the last year, he joined the Governor and the Mayor in an announcement of even more growth ahead for Direct Supply's including a new 280-thousand square foot building on the company's Milwaukee campus.

Celebrate Bob Hillis with us at Rotary on Tuesday, May 23rd as we honor him as our 2017 Rotary Person of the Year. 🌀

2017 Scholarship Golf Classic

Want to have fun while making a difference? Join us at our 2017 Scholarship Golf Classic to help students who have the desire, but not necessarily the means attend college. This annual event will be held on Monday, June 19th at the Wisconsin Club Country Club. Early bird registration rates are \$1,100 for a foursome and \$275 for an individual golfer through May 5th. After May 5th rates increase to \$1,200 for a foursome and \$300 for an individual golfer.



Rotarians Theresa Reagan, Joanne MacInnes Grunau, Jean Casey and Lynda Kohler at our 2016 Scholarship Golf Classic.

If golf isn't your sport, you can join us for the open bar cocktail hour with silent auction, followed by dinner and a live auction for \$60 per person. We have many great items and experiences available to bid on or to win!



After a fun day of golfing, Rotarians gathered together for dinner.

For more information and to register, please visit our website or contact the Rotary office. 🌀

SPEAKER *schedule*

MAY 2nd - Wisconsin is fortunate to have two of America's top research universities that, together, drive the state's innovation and fuel the economy. While each has a unique mission, UWM and UW-Madison work closely on several initiatives and projects that address societal issues, solve problems and accelerate invention. Meet Rotarian and Chancellor **Mark Mone** of UW-Milwaukee and Chancellor **Rebecca Blank** of UW-Madison, and learn more about what they're working on, why it matters to all of us, and how they're advocating for a state reinvestment in higher education.

MAY 9th - **John Gurda**, one of our favorite speakers, will share his knowledge of the history of Jewish Milwaukee. He says that "rarely has such a small group had such a large impact on one American city." The Jews of Milwaukee constitute less than 2 percent of the metro area's population, but their influence extends far beyond mere numbers. Golda Meir grew up in Milwaukee. The iconic Settlement Cookbook originated in Milwaukee kitchens. The city's Jewish community produced

figures as diverse as entertainer Gene Wilder, baseball commissioner Bud Selig, and clothing designer Florence Eiseman, as well as business giants ranging from Masterlock to Manpower.

MAY 16th - Join us for our annual Armed Forces Day Celebration featuring Captain **Amy B. Cocanour** - U.S. Coast Guard Commanding Officer, Sector Lake Michigan.

MAY 23rd - Join us to celebrate our 2017 Rotary Person of the Year recipient, **Bob Hillis** of Direct Supply. Read more about Bob on the first page of this newsletter.

MAY 31st - **Scott Detrow** is a Congressional reporter for National Public Radio (NPR). He also co-hosts the *NPR Politics Podcast*. Scott joined NPR in 2015 to cover the presidential election. He focused on the Republican side of the 2016 race, spending time on the campaign trail with Donald Trump, and also reported on the election's technology and data angles. Join us to learn more about his experiences and current work.

WELCOME *new members*



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Andrew Hardin is the Scout Executive/CEO for Three Harbors Council, Boy Scouts of America. The council serves the youth of Milwaukee, Racine and Kenosha Counties in Southeastern Wisconsin. Prior to moving to Milwaukee in January, Andrew worked for the Atlanta Area Council, BSA, for 18 years, serving as Deputy Scout Executive since 2013. Andrew was recognized as not-for-profit “CFO of the Year” in 2016 by the Atlanta Business Chronicle. Andrew is a graduate of Presbyterian College in Clinton, South Carolina. He is a past member of the Rotary Club of Buckhead and a Paul Harris Fellow.



Angela Romersi

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Angela Romersi began her career in public accounting at Scribner, Cohen and Company, S.C. in 2012 and currently serves as a supervisor. She also serves as a board member of the Friends of Milwaukee Public Library and a Weinberg College Student Advisory Board Representative at Northwestern University. Angela is a graduate of Northwestern University and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Board Approves New Members

At its recent meeting, the Board of Directors welcomed four new members and one returning member.

Jeff Garretson Findorff

Construction
Proposer: Bill Robison

Keith Lester Rockwell Automation

Manufacturing
*Proposers: Eric Isbister and John
Bernaden*

**Chris Markgraf
Mason Wells**
Investment Banking
Proposer: Dan Vliet

**Francis Vogel
EconomicsWisconsin**
Education
Proposer: Jim Hunter

Spotlight on the Good Works of the RCM Community Trust:

RCM's Partnership with Sam's Hope Foundation

The Rotary Club of Milwaukee has been giving books to kids in schools through the Reading is Fundamental program since the 1970's. This year we forged a new partnership with the Sam's Hope Foundation.



Every semester Rotarians pass out and sign books to students in our partner schools.

Many years ago a twelve year old boy named Sam Garner decided to donate books to elementary school students in response to his parents' challenge to him to create a project of value to the urban community. It was Sam's hope that the recipients of the books would come to appreciate the enjoyment of reading. Sam's hope as a twelve year old has grown to be "Sam's Hope Foundation" and when Sam moved away to college his mother, Barbara Garner, assumed responsibility for the continuation of his "Hope."

Sam's original initiative was supported by agencies and schools throughout the Milwaukee area and it eventually came to the attention of the Milwaukee Bucks organization. With the enthusiastic, fully committed involvement of the Milwaukee Bucks, Sam's Hope has annually presented events at Discovery World, Bradley Center, Milwaukee Art Museum and Scholastic Book Fairs with hundreds of thousands of students receiving new hard cover books courtesy of Scholastic Books Corporation.

Last year our Reading is Fundamental program grabbed the attention of Sam's Hope. Barbara Garner recognized both projects' mutual belief that possessing books to read at home

enhances students' academic success. In support of the shared literacy effort, Sam's Hope has donated more than 10,000 hard cover books to RCM's Reading is Fundamental Program. Additionally, the two programs agree that emphasizing reading only at home is way too limited. "Just Read Anywhere" is the collaborative mantra going forward!

Rotary received its first book donation from Sam's Hope in early 2017. In March, seven Rotarians gathered at Oliver Wendell Holmes School to sort through 10,000 books that were then sent to RCM's partner schools. Special thanks to those who helped sort the books and everyone who volunteers in our Reading is Fundamental Program!



Book sorting volunteers at Oliver Wendell Holmes School.

This year we have had dozens of volunteers distribute books at our nine partner schools - Allen-Field Elementary, Brown Street Academy, Bruce-Guadalupe Community School, Oliver Wendell Holmes School, four-campus of Milwaukee College Prep School and Vieau School. To learn more about Reading is Fundamental or to volunteer at a future book distribution, please contact the Rotary office. After each book distribution, you will receive a hand-made thank you cards from a student to thank you for visiting them at their school.🌟

