



# Annual Reunion of Rotary International Past Officers San Diego, 17-19 January 2009

San Diego Rotary International Assembly 18-25 January 2009

## THE REUNION WHEEL

Saturday, January 17, 2009

### Plenary Session I

#### *“What Rotary has meant to me”*



Following the welcome by PDG Rick Mendoza (Top Left) and D5340 Governor Pam Russell (Middle Left), PDG Marty Peters introduced Rotarian Alex Montoya (Bottom Left) and attendees were treated to his presentation on what Rotary has meant to him.



Alex was born a triple amputee in Colombia, South America in 1974. He learned from an early age that “whatever you set in your mind you can achieve.” Whenever we encounter a “tough” moment in our lives we need to stop, say that “this is what it is” and move forward. Rotarians have the support of one another to be able to overcome the challenges we meet. They have a way of looking at these challenges to find ways to overcome obstacles.



His experiences at RYLA in 1991 have helped Alex to “dream large.” Rotary has taught him to “dare to dream,” and to “give back.” He feels just as fired up as the student participants feel after a RYLA weekend.

“Swinging for the Fences” is Alex’s first book. He acknowledges that Rotary has impacted his ability to survive and to thrive. We Rotarians will be the ones leading the way to get through these tough times, he concluded.

## Plenary Session II

### *“Polio Plus Update”*



PRITRF Chair, Robert S. (Bob) Scott assumed TRF Chairmanship on July 17, 2007, and had previously assisted in the development of four goals for the year. He is a physician who was born in Scotland and moved to Canada in 1966.

Polio Plus is partners with WHO, CDC, Unicef and governments of the world all pushing ahead for the final triumph. Robert presented photos of the leaders of the four remaining nations in which polio is still endemic at work immunizing children. Key north Nigeria states have almost zero polio despite the outbreak in 2008 (80% of cases are in just 6 states). It is biologically ‘easier’ to eradicate polio in Nigeria than in India (average number of OPV doses = 4 vs. >8). In India this year – a historic milestone was reached: technical & tactical innovations beat the most entrenched polio reservoir in India in Uttar Pradesh where the last indigenous type 1 polio was in November of 2007. Scott states, “In Pakistan and Afghanistan, polio transmission continues especially in the highly populated Sindh province of Pakistan, among mobile groups, and in communities who live in insecure areas. To reach these ‘hard to reach’ populations, immunization posts have been set up at key migrant gathering areas and known border crossings between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Immunization campaigns are being synchronized in these areas to vaccinate children that are traveling within these groups.” Addressing ‘suboptimal OPV delivery’: there is heightened resolve in Afghanistan. Ambitious Afghan polio effort proceeds despite slayings (National Post of Canada, September 19, 2008). “I am making polio eradication WHO’s top operational priority. The remaining problems are not technical. They are operational. They can be solved, when we have the resolve,” stated Dr. Margaret Chan, WHO Director-General, last June 2008.

The World Health Assembly’s Polio Resolution of 24 May 2008 urged Nigeria to reduce the risk of international spread of poliovirus by quickly stopping the outbreak and urged India, Pakistan & Afghanistan to implement large-scale mop-ups. “We all have to play our full role to turn the dream of a polio-free Pakistan into reality,” said Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani, Prime Minister of Pakistan last August. Direct advocacy is requesting Head of State assistance on operational challenges.

Robert explained that “containing” rather than eradicating polio was not cost effective, and would still allow some children to be paralyzed from Type 1 virus. That is an unacceptable side effect of containment. The 2007 Council on Legislation voted overwhelmingly to eradicate rather than contain polio. Having only routine immunization alone would result in 200,000+ children paralyzed by polio each year. The world now has its best chance to eradicate polio. It has been documented that over a 20 year period, the cost of controlling and treating polio would be higher, in human suffering and dollars, than the cost of finishing eradication.

## *“Polio Plus Update” (continued)*

Over 200,000 children a year would be paralyzed, if we don't finish. Our efforts over the last 20 years would be wasted. We cannot let that happen. We cannot fail. We must End Polio Now! Scott ask us to support Rotary's US\$100 Million Challenge Grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

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### Plenary Session III

#### *“Understanding & Living the Internationality of Rotary”*



PRIP Frank Devlyn reflected on attending the funeral of PRIP Carlos Canseco, Father of the Rotary Polio Eradication Program. Devlyn said that hundreds of people from all walks of life had been touched by Canseco and they came to say a final goodbye.



Noting that Rotarian friends had been concerned about media reports of Mexico/USA's border violence occurring recently, Frank

stated that Mexican law does not allow firearms. Drug cartels have obtained automatic weapons and when the Mexican government began a crackdown on drug transportation, the cartels began increased violence against each other and against police in border cities and towns. Kidnapping and “protection money” demands have led to the formation of neighborhood watch groups who cooperate with the Mexican police and Special Forces. Tourists and foreign home owners have not been the target of these criminals. USA demand for illegal drugs and the availability of weapons remind us of the fact that we are all affected by international issues and our actions and laws have an impact on each other. Frank was excited that this POR offered Rotarians opportunities to learn from other senior leaders and districts and to keep growing in Rotary. Pointing to the continual evolution of Rotary, he noted that Paul Harris started the club to make friends and business contacts. Only later was “service” added, then other cities, other countries, ethics and the “4-Way Test,” The Rotary Foundation, UN Formation, Polio Eradication Effort and partnerships with other NGOs. Frank urged us to use RAGS to expand projects. This is why Rotary keeps growing strong and why donors find Rotary appealing. It is also why people donate their time to projects at the club, district and international levels. His fourth book adds to the sale of over 300,000 sold to help guide and educate Rotarians. He says, “There is so much we can do” to improve the lives of others.

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## RI President D.K. Lee Gives Keynote Speech

--see Issue of January 18 for complete report [Ed]

## Past RI President Carlos Canseco Dies

By Ryan Hyland

Rotary International News -- 16 January 2008



Carlos Canseco, who served as RI president in 1984-85, died 14 January in Monterrey, Mexico. He was 87.

A former physician specializing in allergy research, Canseco launched Polio-Plus, Rotary's ambitious program aimed at eradicating polio, during his term as RI president. Canseco joined the Rotary Club of Monterrey, Nuevo León, in 1950. In addition to RI president, he served as Rotary Foundation trustee chair and vice chair and RI vice president. Funeral services were held 15 January in Monterrey.

Condolences may be sent to the family at:

Pedro de Alvarado 101 Ote., Col., Mirasierra, 66240 San Pedro. Garza Garcia, Nuevo León, Mexico.

*[Editor's Note: Please goto the following RI website for the complete article by Ryan Hyland -- [http://www.rotary.org/en/MediaAndNews/News/Pages/090116\\_news\\_cansecoobit.aspx](http://www.rotary.org/en/MediaAndNews/News/Pages/090116_news_cansecoobit.aspx)]*

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*[Editor's Note: A complete Reunion Wheel will be published and transmitted electronically at the conclusion of the POR Monday, January 19, 2009. Please contact me directly at [rongoosite@cox.net](mailto:rongoosite@cox.net) or leave your contact information with the POR Registrar, Philippe Lamoise]*