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John Alan Ramsdell, M.D.

1927-2021

80th President of The Rotary Club of White Plains

1995 – 1996

In 1961, some 60 years ago, John Fitzgerald Kennedy was President of the United States, the first human travelled in space, “Gunsmoke” was the most popular TV show, the average home cost \$12,500 and two young doctors joined our Club – Dr. John Alan Ramsdell and Dr. Ira Bernstein. Happily, Ira is still with us. Sadly, John has passed away.

John was sponsored for Rotary membership by Rotarian Dr. Morton Flaherty. John would have been President of our Club in 1977 had it not been that at the same time he was selected to be the President of the Westchester Medical Society and was not able to accept the Presidency of our Club until his retirement.

After serving our community in many and various capacities - his appointments included the White Plains Hospital Center and St. Agnes Hospital, consulting surgeon at New York Hospital, Westchester Division and the Burke Rehabilitation, Chief of Staff of The White Plains Hospital in 1974-1979; President of the Medical and Dental Staff of the White Plains Hospital, 1970-1972 and President of the Westchester Medical Society of Westchester County, 1977-1978, President American Cancer Society - Westchester Division; President United Fund of White Plains, 1964-1965; President Westchester Surgical Society, 1974-1976; President, Westchester County Board of Health, 1984-1989; Chief Medical Officer, Civil Defense, City of White Plains, 1962-1968; Chairman, Medical Advisory Board of Westchester Visiting Nurse Society, 1970-1983; Chairman, Medical Advisory Committee of American Red Cross, Westchester Division, 1965-1975 – he became President of our Club in 1995-1996.

John’s service went far beyond his dedicated professional involvement. John had an extensive and long relationship with the White Plains YMCA and the YMCA of Central and Northern Westchester. He served as Board Member and Chairman of the Boards of both organizations. He participated in many trips to the YMCA in Spanish Town, Jamaica, WI, and travelled with the YMCA to China and Hawaii. He was a delegate to the YMCA

of USA General Assembly- Boston and St. Louis World Council of YMCAs at Warwick University, Coventry, England 1994.

Several years ago in a conversation with John, I asked him, 'with such extensive professional and community involvement, why did he join White Plains Rotary ?' Firstly, he did so because he passionately believed in the on-going Rotary principles of promoting understanding and goodwill expressed in Rotary's purpose – to do good in our world. Secondly, he did so because he clearly saw the actions of the members of our Club fulfilling Rotary's purpose in the varied projects which we have undertaken. Thirdly, he did so because he enjoyed the fellowship and fun that our members have always demonstrated.

As he prepared for his Presidency in the Spring of 1995, his goals were clear: 1. maintain and / or expand the membership of our Club; 2. continue our college scholarships for graduates of White Plains High School, Stepinac High School and Good Counsel Academy; 3 support the building of The Dickstein Cancer Center at White Plains Hospital; 4. fund the building of shelters for outdoor facilities for schools in Spanish Town, Jamaica, West Indies; and 5. provide interesting and informative programs for our weekly meetings. Being a highly organized person, John focused on his goals and steadfastly led us, indeed, to achieve our objectives. Together with him, we maintained a strong level of membership, provided on-going college scholarships to the graduates of White Plains high schools, raised \$35,000.00 for the building of the Dickstein Cancer Center and contributed to the improvement of the schools of Spanish Town, Jamaica while enjoying our weekly gatherings in fellowship with fun.

So, is it any wonder that John enjoyed the respect and admiration of White Plains Rotarians ? Listen to what a few of his contemporaries are saying about him:1. Harry Bright: "a unique human being who had the capacity to bring people together in a jovial and serious manner." Recall the free-flowing, humorous banter between Harry and John at our weekly meetings.2. Brian Wallach: "a long productive life of an all-around good person." How many times did we see John escort Brian into our weekly meetings ? 3. Ira Bernstein: " I enjoyed sitting with him always amazed at his wry sense of humor from such a very nice person and fabulous surgeon." And wry – but always respectful – it was !

Having been the beneficiary of a very fine education – A.B. degree in Economics from Yale University; his medical degree from Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, and his Master of Science in Surgery from the University of Minnesota – John loyally served as a veteran staff sergeant of the United States Army, Finance Corp from 1945-1947.

Throughout his impressive career, his dear and wonderful wife Barbara stood lovingly, loyally and actively by his side in giving of themselves to our community and the greater world community. Along the way, they shared their love and sense of giving with their three children Pamela, J. Sadler and Peter and seven grandchildren.

Today, in appreciation and gratitude, we extend our sincere sympathy and condolences to Barbara, Pamela, J. Sadler, Peter and John's grand children for the gift of John's life in the certain hope that he is now in loving peace.

Thank you, John, for your inspiration, kindness and loyal friendship !

Andrew L. Morzello

Past District 7230 Governor, 1995-1996
Past President White Plains Rotary, 1986-1987
February 12, 2021