



# The Harry A. Sisson Memorial Scholarship

**\$7,500 Scholarship Award**

*Presented to*

An Outstanding Senior attending a public or private high school  
in Dearborn, Michigan

Who, through leadership, ethical example and service to the community,  
best exemplifies the ideals and Object of Rotary





## Harry A. Sisson 1890-1961

The Dearborn Rotary Club, through the Dearborn Rotary Foundation, awards each year a \$7,500 scholarship to an outstanding Dearborn public or private high school graduating senior. This gift is made possible through an endowment provided by the Harry A. Sisson Foundation and is known as the Harry A. Sisson Memorial Annual Scholarship Award.

Harry Sisson (1890-1961) and his wife, Ariel (1890-1974), lived much of their adult lives in Dearborn. Although the couple was childless, they are widely remembered for their interest in and concern for young people. "Youth," Mr. Sisson was fond of pointing out, "is not a time of life; it is a state of mind."

Harry Sisson's material success came as a builder of residential and commercial property in the Dearborn area, but his personal philosophy in life was patterned after the principles of Rotary, and he lived by the Rotary motto, "Service Above Self." His contribution to the communities in which he lived and worked is worthy of emulation by young people today.

He was elected city clerk of Highland Park in 1917, and joined the Rotary Club in that city as a charter member soon thereafter, serving as its second president. Community involvement became a way of life early on for Mr. Sisson, as it does for most Rotarians. In 1925 he was elected president of the United Builders of Detroit. Soon he followed in the footsteps of Henry Ford, moving from Highland Park to Dearborn, where one of his early efforts was to help found the Dearborn Board of Realtors in 1926. He served as secretary, then president of the Board for a full decade, and during that same time was president of Dearborn Association of Insurance Agents and the Dearborn Rotary Club. In 1941 the Dearborn Chamber of Commerce granted Harry Sisson its Merit Award. He also was named Layman of the Year by the Dearborn YMCA.

A sudden heart attack, suffered while on a business trip in western Michigan, cut short the career of this outstanding civic leader. Not only did his contemporaries, many of whom are active in the Rotary Club today, mourn his passing; the entire city knew that it had lost a community champion and a friend. The late Mayor Orville Hubbard of Dearborn commented that Harry Sisson "was a very generous man who worked hard for success and gave much of the fruits of his labor back to the community - through various charitable projects and scholarships established in his trust fund."

Harry Sisson's dedication to philanthropy and to young people was his way of urging succeeding generations to strive for success, then to share it with those less fortunate. He knew that Dearborn, like other American communities, needed the moral and ethical guidance of dedicated citizen leadership.

What motivated the Marlette-born youngster to drive himself to become a successful real estate broker, insurance agent and home builder? Obviously, espousing the precepts of Rotary in two different communities had much to do with it. But, was there something more? Mr. Sisson lived in an epoch of intense social change and upheaval. During his too-short lifetime this country became involved in five major wars, from the Spanish-American to the early days of Viet Nam. Punctuate those happenings with the Great Depression of the '30s, then vote in and later repeal the 18th (Prohibition) Amendment to the Constitution, and you begin to sense the need to affix oneself to stability. Rotary did this for Harry, as did community service.

During his lifetime, the U.S. evolved from its last Indian war (the Battle of Wounded Knee, 1891) to the age of electricity, radio, the automobile, motion pictures, nuclear energy and the conquest of space. Television, submarines and zippers were invented after his birth. He lived during the administration of 13 presidents (Benjamin Harrison to John F. Kennedy) and six popes (Leo XIII to John XXIII).

Harry and Ariel Sisson not only coped with the changing world they lived in, they made the commitment to help those less fortunate than themselves. Thus was born the Sisson Foundation; its generous and charitable philosophy has made life easier for a host of deserving people, from students to senior citizens.

In establishing this endowment, the Rotary Club of Dearborn's Harry A. Sisson Memorial Annual College Scholarship Award, the foundation trustees felt that a better understanding of the man behind the money would be important to those who select the candidates, as well as to the exceptional high school graduate selected each year.

## **Student Selection Committee**

A committee of five members will be formed each year composed of:

- Four leading members of the Rotary Club of Dearborn
- The most recent recipient of the Harry A. Sisson Rotarian of the Year Award.

## **Award Criteria for Scholarship Recipient Selection**

1. The student selected by the Dearborn Rotary Club Selection Committee will best exemplify the “service to others” precepts of Rotary, as embodied in the Club’s:
  - Object of Rotary
  - Rotary Code of Conduct
  - Rotary Four-Way Test
2. The scholarship recipient shall be a high school senior attending a Dearborn, Michigan public or private high school, endorsed by the high school’s principal and the student’s advisor, for specific altruistic community service and leadership achievements that qualify him/her for the award.
3. The specific achievements cited shall reflect the student’s recognition that high ethical and moral standards are necessary for the fullest satisfaction in academic, personal and business life.
4. The scholarship recipient shall have demonstrated the following during his/her high school years:
  - Leadership among his/her high school peers. (Top 5% of the class).
  - Determination and ability to achieve academically. (Top 10% of the class).
  - Ability and desire to live a life of high ethical standards. (Top 10,% of the class).

## **The Object of Rotary**

The Object of Rotary is to encourage and foster the ideal of service as a basis of worthy enterprise and, in particular, to encourage and foster:

**FIRST.** The development of acquaintance as an opportunity for service;

**SECOND.** High ethical standards in business and professions; the recognition of the worthiness of all useful occupations; and the dignifying of each Rotarian’s occupation as an opportunity to serve society;

**THIRD.** The application of the ideal of service in each Rotarian’s personal, business, and community life;

**FOURTH.** The advancement of international understanding, goodwill, and peace through a world fellowship of business and professional persons united in the ideal of service.

## The Rotary Code of Conduct

### AS A ROTARIAN, I WILL

1. Exemplify the core value of integrity in all behaviors and activities
2. Use my vocational experience and talents to serve in Rotary
3. Conduct all of my personal, business, and professional affairs ethically, encouraging and fostering high ethical standards as an example to others
4. Be fair in all dealings with others and treat them with the respect due to them as fellow human beings
5. Promote recognition and respect for all occupations which are useful to society
6. Offer my vocational talents: to provide opportunities for young people, to work for the relief of the special needs of others, and to improve the quality of life in my community
7. Honor the trust that Rotary and fellow Rotarians provide and not do anything that will bring disfavor or reflect adversely on Rotary or fellow Rotarians
8. Not seek from a fellow Rotarian a privilege or advantage not normally accorded others in a business or professional relationship

### The Four-Way Test

**“Of the things we think, say or do:**

*Is it the TRUTH?*

*Is it FAIR to all concerned?*

*Will it build GOODWILL and BETTER FRIENDSHIPS?*

*Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned?”*