

**Governor Designate for Rotary Year 2011-2012 Todd Dayton's
Remarks to the D6990 District Assembly Opening Plenary Session,
April 18, 2009, Miami, Florida**

Thank you very much and I thank you for your warm reception.

How do you have the time? This is the question I have heard a hundred times over the past four months since my selection as the governor nominee designate just before Christmas. My response is always the same; I will have to make time. I have no idea just like the rest of you where I will be or what I will be doing in 2011-2012. My plate is just as full as all of you in this room and yet every one of you made time to be here today, to serve in Rotary and to give back to your community.

Every governor that has preceded me including our current Governor Marcy have had their challenges on time, family and unforeseen events that they had no idea would be on their plates when they were selected. Every day hard working Rotarians like Manny Madruga, who serves as a District Attorney, Assistant Governor and a Shriner, find the time to serve because it is important to them. There are Rotarians that have been governors with much more taxing lives and schedules than I have and they made the time. The time to serve the district, to serve humanity, to fight polio, to fight hunger, save children and all the other needs of the world that Rotary takes on are all things we find time to do.

Why? Because it is important to us and Rotary is important to me and the district needs people to step up and say "I am in, what can I do?"

We are just seven months from selecting the governor that will follow me in 2012-2013. That person may be in this room, they may not even be thinking about it right now, but there will be a governor after me and another and another because people will step up and say "I am in! What can I do?"

The quest for people started 24 hours after my selection with the tri-governor selection of Past District Governor Jack Martin to serve as your Foundation Chair for 2009-2012. The hunt-for-Rotarians-to-serve-the-district process begins much earlier than ever before with our tri governor system. I personally am looking for approximately 15 people to step up and serve as Associate Assistant Governors and staff members to serve the district and be part of my team starting on July 1. This is but a fraction of the over 30 people that serve in district leadership capacities to make this district go! People like Sheila Morris, Colleen Banks, Carole Tolemeo, Terry Witcher, Paul Alcock, Elihu Phares, Karla Fonseca and Manny Madruga have already said, "Yes, I am in and what can I do?" I will not serve this district alone and it is Rotarians that will drive this district forward and I am humbled to leading that charge in 2011-2012.

In the past 12 years of my Rotary career I have seen Rotarians do incredible things with overwhelming challenges. The year I was president under Past District Governor Owen Freed we faced hurricanes all over the state. We had more cancelled events and fund raisers than any other time in district history. We responded to a Tsunami overseas, we responded to Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans and we survived traffic in South Florida with six million people without power after hurricane Wilma! We did all of this because there was a need and we do what we do, we choose to be Rotarians and say "I am in, what can I do?"

Rotary and the world is in a state of change, the political decisions in many nations, including in our country, will have on-going impact on Rotary's role in world peace and friendship. In the governor interview the question of Cuba is always somehow in the mix. Scenarios, what-ifs and "what do you do?" force you to contemplate. I know District Governor Elect Lee, District Governor Nominee Doug and I are all watching the news and saying "will it be me that gets the call 'Rotary is going to Cuba and the club will be part of District 6990. Get your team together and make it happen.'"? Regardless of our political views we will all say "I am in, what can I do?" We will say that because Rotary is hundreds of clubs world wide that are making a difference in the future. We cross lines that governments cannot cross and make miracles happen just because two Rotarians choose to reach across political lines and chaos and work together in the spirit of "Service above Self."

In 2001 my father was killed by lightning. I say that because we have no idea of the future and our impact during our time on earth is determined by the roles we take, the choices we make and the people we help. Rotary gives us that opportunity with a role to play and ability to help. During my nominee year I will be spending part of my time focusing on a new program called Latin Outreach. I will be working with District Membership Chairperson Chris Morrison along with other individuals like Rene Negron and Jose Garcia to increase the participation of the Latin community in our district. Somehow we are missing the mark and our district does not reflect the business community's ethnic background, particularly in Dade and large portions of central and west Broward. For Rotary to be successful and grow we must meet the needs of not only today's members and community but also tomorrow's.

I would be remiss as your current Annual Giving Chairperson to not mention our Rotary Foundation and the funds that are struggling. With the current economic conditions there is more need than ever before and this year's funds are far behind! Please go back to your clubs and remind them to support the Foundation immediately and help Rotary make a difference. The Rotary Foundation is the philanthropic financial arm that allows us to do good things around the world and it is what binds all the clubs together as Rotary International and our dollars make that possible.

At the risk of sounding cliché I am one Rotarian that is a member of a Rotary club – *The Little Club That Does* – Coral Springs-Parkland. For one year I will be honored and proud to say I am Governor of District 6990 and then fade into the dedicated PDG Rotarians that you never give the microphone. But when my term is over, hopefully I will

continue on just like soon to be PDG Marcy. I will find a new role and place to serve the district because it is important to me.

I am just like all of you and I have chosen to say Rotary is important to me, I will make the time, "I am in ... what can I do?"

My fellow Rotarians ... Carpe Diem and let's enjoy the ride!

Thank you.