

Abilene Founder Lions Club

Meetings:

- **When:** Every Thursday at Noon
-
- **Where:** Briarstone Manor 101 Eplens Ct.

Abilene Founder Lions Club History

On November 11, 1953, at 2:30 p.m., H. Don Rodgers, a freelance reporter and Notary Public in and for Taylor County, Texas; Joe E. Childers, Abilene attorney and Lions International Counselor; and Marlowe Fisher, Texas State Secretary of Lions International; met with Dr. Cyrus N. Ray in his office in the Mims Building in Abilene, Texas, and prepared an affidavit from documents, notes and other information in Dr. Ray's possession concerning the history of Abilene Lions Club, and also facts on the early history of the International Association of Lions Clubs.

Dr. Ray is credited with being the Organizing Secretary and motivating influence in the- creation of Abilene Lions Club. He moved to Abilene in 1911 and became established in his profession as an Osteopathic Physician. Back in 1916 he conceived the idea of a business men's luncheon club, and set about organizing it.

According to Dr. Ray, sixteen business men in Abilene agreed to join the luncheon Club. It was at first planned to organize a Rotary Club. Rotary International was contacted, and while a charter was not refused, a delay was advised as it was thought that Abilene was too small for a Rotary Club. At that time Rotary International limited its clubs to towns which had populations of more than 20,000.

1917

In January, 1917, E. A. Hicks, of Evansville, Indiana, who was then an International Organizer for the International Association of Lions Clubs, visited Dr. Cyrus N. Ray in Abilene and presented him with a letter from Dr. T. L. Ray, who was then officiating as the Charter President of the Fort Worth Lions Club.

In accordance with plans laid out by E. A. Hicks, a meeting was called by Dr. Cyrus N. Ray on February 15, 1917, in the Red Room of the Hotel Grace in Abilene. Dr. Ray presided during the meeting, which was attended by fifteen Abilene business men. The objective of the meeting was to effect the origination of the Abilene Lions Club. F. A. Matthes was elected Organizing President, and Dr. Cyrus N. Ray was elected Organizing Secretary. The fifteen men, who were the club's original Charter Members, in the order in which they signed, with their business classifications, were as follows:

F.A. Matthes	Abilene Gas & Electric
Cyrus N. Ray	Osteopathic Physician
R.P. Glenn	Physician & Surgeon
W.A. Halford	Publisher, Times
W.L. Beckham, Jr.	Hotel Grace
J.F. Handy	Dairy
J.M. Radford	Wholesale Grocery
W.J. Fulwiler	Fulwiler Electric Co.
Tom Sales	Burtom Liogo Lumber
C.G. Whitten	Attorney
L. Montgomery	Montgomery Drugs

W.T. Stewart	Dentist
Cross Payton	Retail Hardware
B.W. McCarty	Furniture
Truit Compere	Real Estate

Due to the fact that the International Association of Lions Club directed that a minimum of twenty-five members be included before charter could be issued, it was decided to secure ten additional members. A second meeting three days, later, on February 18, 1917, was scheduled, at which time the additional following Charter Members were included:

W.B. Hale	Retail Grocery
J.F. Morrison	S.W. Peanut Co.
George Finberg	Autos & Trucks
R.F. Duggan	Duggan- Brown Co.
H.G. Helm	Pierce- Fordice
C.W. Hearon	Minister
D.T. Laughter	Undertaker

J.D. Miracle	Draughon's College
J.E. Hamlet	Mission Theater
M.B. Hanks	Abilene Reporter

The club functioned for approximately sixty days with its temporary officers before it received its charter and elected its permanent officers. During that period dues were collected, meetings were held, and the following charter members were taken in (they were regarded as Charter Members due to the fact that the charter had not been presented):

C.M. Tandy	H.A. Tillett
John Price	J.B. Fagan
Otho Barber	R.C. Lewis
E.B. Bynum	S.H. Garrison
Guy Adkins	C.A. Boulte
A.L. Clemmons	O.H. Hale
Oscar Parker	

After its charter was received, the Abilene Lions Club elected its first permanent officers. F. A. Matthes was elected Charter President, J. D. Miracle was elected Charter Secretary.

The Abilene Reporter, datelined Thursday, March 8, 1917, chronicled the club's official luncheon as follows: "The weekly luncheon of the Abilene Lions Club was held in the dining room of the Hotel Grace. E. B. Bynum was toastmaster, and after bringing a smile by relating a witty story to those present, he introduced Dr. Ray whose subject was 'The Flower Garden Contest.' Dr. Ray stated that inasmuch as he was not a public orator he would read his address." The discussion was published in full, at the conclusion of which O. A. Hale spoke on means of securing better and permanent pavement at the Texas Pacific railroad crossing from Pine Street to South First Street. He urged that the club take action with proper authorities, which suggestion was acted upon by the club, and a committee was appointed to investigate.

The Abilene Lions Club has generated enthusiasm and action in scores of civic activities since the day the club was organized. Practically every leader in the town came from the ranks of the club.

It may have been a coincidence, but from the day the club was organized, conditions in Abilene began to improve. Miles of pavement were laid, modern street lighting was installed, millions of dollars were expended in building huge water reservoirs, big hotels were constructed, Camp Barkeley was based near the city during World War II, the air base was acquired with its tremendous payroll and thousands of personnel, the oil industry centered in the area with Abilene as its focal point, and the city's population in 1954 had climbed to more than 55,000, with predictions it would surpass 100,000 within five to six years.

Not all of the gigantic improvements in Abilene were caused by the Abilene Lions Club, but traced to their sources, especially during the years preceding World War II, practically every worthwhile improvement originated with members of the club, with the organization's endorsement and backing. The Abilene Lions Club since it was founded has recorded among its membership some of the most able men of West Texas. The caliber of its leaders is indicative of the club's success.

During 1952 the city of Abilene had grown to sufficient size to warrant the founding of a second Lions Club. There had been considerable discussion concerning the matter for some time. A committee was appointed which met in Mack Eplen's Restaurant during the first part of October, 1952, and formulated plans to organize the new club. A list of prospective charter members was selected, and the committee then set about organizing the second club.

On the evening of October 21, 1952, sixty-two prospective members for the new club met in the cafeteria of Alta Vista elementary school with Clyde Penrod, President of the Abilene Lions Club; other members from the Abilene Lions Club; and Marlowe Fisher, Texas State Secretary of Lions International.

Marlowe Fisher presided at the organizational meeting of the second club, which was named "Abilene Evening Lions Club." Hugh E. Cosby was elected Charter President of the new club, and Sterling Childers was elected Charter Secretary.

* * * * *

Many things have changed since Hugh Cosby wrote the preceding history of the Abilene Lions Club. The original Abilene Lions Club added "Downtown" to its name in order to avoid confusion when the second club was organized. The Evening club later changed its name to "Abilene Cactus Lions Club" and organized another Abilene Evening Lions Club.

The original Abilene Lions Club changed its name again in 1983 when it moved its meeting place from downtown to Briarstone Manor and became know as the Abilene Founder Lions Club, in recognition of its early history.

Following are the names of the Presidents and Secretaries who have served the Abilene Founder Lions Club since the club was organized:

YEAR	PRESIDENT	SECRETARY
1917	F.A. MATTHES (ORGANIZING)	CYRUS N. RAY (ORGANIZING)
1917	F.A. MATTHES (CHARTER)	J.D. MIRACLE (CHARTER)
1917-18	J.M. RADFORD	C.A. BOULTE
1918-19	O.A. HALE	C.A. BOULTE
1919-20	O.A. HALE	C.A. BOULTE
1920-21	O.A. HALE	JOE PERRY
1921-22	R.D. GREEN	CLYDE NEWBERRY

1922-23	R.D. GREEN	T.N. CARSWELL
1923-24	R.A. MADDOX	T.N. CARSWELL
1924-25	R.A. MADDOX	T.N. CARSWELL
1925-26	W.J. FULWILER	T.N. CARSWELL
1926-27	GEORGE L. MINTER	T.N. CARSWELL
1927-28	B. MILLER	T.N. CARSWELL
1928-29	T.N. CARSWELL	GUY W. McCARTY, SR.
1929-30	GUY W. McCARTY SR.	ARCH D. BATJER
1930-31	BERTTE LOW	ARCH D. BATJER
1932-32	C.W. CLARK	R.S. STEPHENS
1932-33	D.G. BARROW	ROLAND JONES
1933-34	T.E. HAYDEN	ROLAND JONES.
1934-35	R.N. RICHARDSON	CARL C. SELLERS

1935-36	E.T. COMPERE	CARL C. SELLERS
1936-37	W.J. BEHRENS	CARL C. SELLERS
1937-38	CARL C. SELLERS	O.P. THRANE
1938-39	C.E. ADAMS	JOE WILLIAMSON
1939-40	C.E. ADAMS	JOE WILLIAMSON
1940-41	R.G. BOGER	JOE WILLIAMSON
1941-42	JOE CHILDERS	JOE WILLIAMSON
1942-43	E.A. UNGREN	JOE WILLIAMSON
1943-44	ROLAND JONES	JOE WILLIAMSON
1944-45	WILMER SIMS	JOE WILLIAMSON
1945-46	W.S. WAGLEY	JOE WILLIAMSON
1946-47	CARL SPRINGER	JOE WILLIAMSON
1947-48	W.B. McDANIEL	JOE WILLIAMSON
1948-	NEWELL	JOE

49	THOMPSON	WILLIAMSON
1949-50	FRED HUGHES	JOE WILLIAMSON
1950-51	MARVIN LEWIS	JOE WILLIAMSON
1951-52	OWEN THOMAS	JOE WILLIAMSON
1952-53	CLYDE PENROD	JOE WILLIAMSON
1953-54	J.H. McGOWEN	JOE WILLIAMSON
1954-55	FRED BOYD	JOE WILLIAMSON
1955-56	A.S. HAWES	JOE WILLIAMSON
1956-57	GORDON R. BENNETT	JOE WILLIAMSON
1957-58	WALTER S. POPE, JR.	JOE WILLIAMSON
1958-59	ROBERT J. TIFFANY, JR.	JOE WILLIAMSON
1959-60	GLENN RUTLEDGE	JOE WILLIAMSON
1960-61	P.E. SHOTWELL	JOE WILLIAMSON
1961-62	IVAN FLYNN	JOE WILLIAMSON

1962-63	ROBERT E. FIELDER	JOE WILLIAMSON
1963-64	JOHN H. ALVIS	JOE WILLIAMSON
1964-65	FRED HENRY	JOE WILLIAMSON
1965-66	WARREN HIGH	JOE WILLIAMSON
1966-67	A.E. WELLS	JOE WILLIAMSON
1967-68	IRA T. MAY	JOE WILLIAMSON
1968-69	BRYAN BRADBURY	JOE WILLIAMSON
1969-70	RODGER Q. GARRET	JOE WILLIAMSON
1970-71	ROBERT DEMPSEY	JOE WILLIAMSON
1971-72	CLEO W. TARTER	JOE WILLIAMSON
1972-73	CHARLES L. LANGFORD	JOE WILLIAMSON
1973-74	H.O. WYNNE	JOE WILLIAMSON
1974-75	W.M. PRESTON PARKER	JOE WILLIAMSON

1975-76	IRVIN D. HILLER	JOE WILLIAMSON
1976-77	CHARLES W. ELY	IRVIN D. HILER
1977-78	A.C. SHARP	IRVIN D. HILER
1978-79	CHRIS CLARK	IRVIN D. HILER
1979-80	JOE LASSITER	IRVIN D. HILER
1980-81	B.L. BLACKBURN	IRVIN D. HILER
1981-82	BORDEN B. MANLY, JR.	IRVIN D. HILER
1982-83	JAMES A. YOUNG	IRVIN D. HILER
1983-84	RAY R. LEWIS	IRVIN D. HILER
1984-85	JOE P. ALEXANDER	IRVIN D. HILER
1985-86	FREDERICK B. JONES	IRVIN D. HILER
1986-87	LARNED E. RUNNELS	IRVIN D. HILER
1987-88	LESLIE J. GENTRY, JR.	IRVIN D. HILER
1988-	JOE P.	IRVIN D.

89	KNUPPLE	HILER
1989-90	ROBERT A. HOWARD ED BUCKNER	IRVIN D. HILER
1990-91	ED BUCKNER	IRVIN D. HILER
1991-92	NORMAN L. OLSEN	IRVIN D. HILER
1992-93	GRADY A. DORSETT	IRVIN D. HILER
1993-94	J. HOWARD MEADOWS	IRVIN D. HILER
1994-95	JAMES O. TEEL, JR.	IRVIN D. HILER
1995-96	BILL SHIPMAN	IRVIN D. HILER
1996-97	REEDER HUDDLESTON	IRVIN D. HILER
1997-98	MARVIN NORWOOD, JR.	IRVIN D. HILER
1998-99	DONNY VOGLER	IRVIN D. HILER