



The July 2007 RYLA Seminar in District 7150 was Chaired by Larry Richardson. The 2007-08 District Governor for District 7150 is Marlene B. Brown www.rotarydistrict7150.org

About RYLA: Each year, thousands of young people take part in the Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA) program worldwide. Young people ages 14-30 chosen for their leadership potential attend an all-expenses-paid seminar, camp, or workshop to discuss leadership skills and learn those skills through practice. Rotary clubs and districts select participants and facilitate the event's curriculum. RYLA aims to:

- **Demonstrate Rotary's respect and concern for youth;**
- **Provide an effective training experience for selected youth and potential leaders;**
- **Encourage leadership of youth by youth; and**
- **Recognize publicly young people who are rendering service to their communities.**

RYLA was officially adopted by Rotary International in 1971, and is one of the most significant and fastest-growing programs of Rotary service. RYLA programs often lead to the formation or strengthening of Rotaract and Interact clubs. RYLA participants often go on to become Youth Exchange students or Ambassadorial Scholars.

RYLA History - In 1959, the state government of Queensland, Australia, invited local Rotarians to help plan a festival celebrating Queensland's upcoming centenary. Learning that Queen Elizabeth II was sending her cousin Princess Alexandra, who was in her early 20s, to the celebration, Rotarians planned activities specifically for the princess' age group.

The gundoo, an aboriginal word meaning "festival" or "fun together," was a rousing success. More than 300 men and women between the ages of 17 and 23 attended. Encouraged by the event's popularity, Rotarians saw potential to create a similar annual youth program. Governor Brand of then-District 260 approved the project, and 2 May 1960, RYLA was born. Australian districts 258 and 260 shared in establishing a committee that developed the official framework of RYLA: to train youth (ages 14-30) in character, leadership, personal development, and good citizenship. These guidelines helped RYLA expand to all Rotary districts in Australia and led to RYLA's approval as an international program by the RI board at the 1971 RI Convention. By 1998, RYLA had become an established program in more than half of the 521 Rotary districts worldwide. Then-RI President James Lacy, emphasizing his concern for children, appointed an international RYLA committee, dedicated to improving and expanding this Rotary program to the entire world. Rotarians with different RYLA experience, invited to RI headquarters to exchange information and ideas, agreed RYLA could be improved through regional workshops.

After District 5520's first RYLA camp 20 years ago, a camper summed up his RYLA experience in one word, "Camelot." He wrote the RYLA chairman, "If you know the story of King Arthur, you may recall that as King Arthur was dying in a young man's arms, he turned to the youth and said, 'If you learn of anyone that has not heard of Camelot, tell them loudly and clearly that there really was that one wisp of glory called Camelot.'"

"Gundoo" or "Camelot?" RYLA is both and aren't we fortunate? Dedication, passion and love describe the heart of RYLA, a remarkable investment in Rotary's future. Every Rotarian should take the opportunity to enjoy this exciting program and life-changing experience. The Website www.rotaryryla.com, is maintained by RYLA-interested Rotarians *Written by Irving J. "Sonny" Brown, Rotary Foundation trustee, past chairman of RI RYLA Committee, and past RI vice-president.*

Thursday evening, June 21st, 2001: RYLA Chair Abe Gordon, P.R.I.P.V. kicked off the 1st ever RYLA convention in San Antonio, Texas, USA, with a bang! After arriving in a city where banners and billboards proudly displayed the RI Convention and what Rotary is all about, 120 young people from around the world arrived to begin a life-changing experience. Welcoming the participants at the opening session, Committee Chair Abe compared them to "the Champions" featured on Wheaties boxes. Bright and able young future Rotary leaders from around the world embraced the Champions theme and eagerly began the first ever RYLA International Camp. [*'07-'08 Governor Brown was privileged to be a part of that committee & the 2002 RYLA Committee at the 2002 Rotary International Convention in Barcelona, Spain.*]