



OPTI-TOPICS

Bulletin of the Optimist Club of Huntsville

OFFICERS 2009 - 2010

President.....Bob Martin
1st Vice President.....Jim Roe
2nd Vice President.....Jim Pepper
Secretary Treasurer.....Al Renz

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tom Casteel '10 Buddy Beck '11
Matt Hancock '10 Jim Berry '11
Patti Walker '11

VOL. 64, No. 18, February 18, 2010



About 20 to 25 attended today's business meeting at the Optimist Recreation Center. Chaplain Sidney offered our prayer and led us in the pledge of allegiance. The meal featured roast beef and potato salad, and it was really superb. Al Renz gave full credit to Marlene for the preparation. We voted to send her a letter of thanks. Since it

might be awkward for our secretary to do this maybe this recognition will suffice. Many Optimists helped Joe Pullen celebrate his 75th birthday at a surprise event last week, but today we joined in singing "Happy Birthday" to him, again, for his reaching this milestone.

Pres. Bob Martin announced that the judges had agreed on 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place prizes for our essay contest. The cash awards and medallions will be presented to these three on Saturday, March 13, at 1:00 pm, at the ORC. Light refreshments will be served. Come out and hear a reading of these essays and show our support to these youngsters. Handsome certificates are being designed by Al Renz and will be distributed to all participants. I'm personally proud of my grandson, Graham, who was encouraged to submit an essay by Jim Roe. Graham won 2nd place.

Matt Hancock reports having only one oratorical contest contestant. After some discussion it was decided that the speech would be given at our regular luncheon meeting on February 25, along with judges and timekeeper in place to give some semblance of contest conditions before advancing to Zone competition. Our regular speaker that day will be pharmacist Terry Wingo. Duane Plank says you don't want to miss what he has to say. Bring a guest if you can. Pres. Bob asked Connie to take the 10 tickets he won for the Huntsville Stars season opener, and organize an Optimist Night at Joe Davis for all members interested in going. I don't know when that game will be played. I'm sure Connie will keep us advised.

I read a tribute to Jim Cleary, our 19th club president, including some of the highlights of his notable year. Jim passed on this week.
(Carl's tribute was published in the Huntsville Times and is attached along with Jim's obituary.: Editor)

Al Renz stepped us through our monthly financial statement. Jim Berry has arranged for March speakers (more on their subjects next time).

CALENDAR

02/25	Thurs. 11:45	DHI	Terry Wingo, Pharmacist + Oratorical Contestant
03/02	Tues. 4:00pm	1 st Comm. Bank	Board Meeting
03/04	Thurs. 11:45	DHI	Dr. Mary Jane Caylor
03/11	Thues. 11:45	DHI	Dale Bowen
03/18	Thurs. 11:45	ORC	Business Meeting



Remember Jim Cleary

In the mid 1960s Jim presided over the Huntsville Optimist Club's greatest year. Our club's motto was "Friend of Youth," and Jim's way to maximize our service was to emphasize "growth."

Shortly into his term a new club, the Evening Optimist Club, was organized with more than 60 charter members while membership in our club was quickly increasing.

Jim helped convince James Record, Madison County Commission chairman, that the two clubs could operate both concession booths at the then new Madison County Coliseum.

Friday night wrestling popular in those days, and refreshments were a rewarding fundraiser our members looked forward to each week to support our various youth-oriented club projects.

A deal was agreed to whereby half of the profits would go to the county, earmarked for lighting ball fields. Concurrent with this Jim played a major role in starting The Huntsville News. All our club activities enjoyed exceptional coverage.

Jim was recognized that year as the most distinguished leader of the Optimist district. The momentum he put in place spurred us on to serving the youth of our community right up to the present.

I count it a privilege to have known and worked with James R. Cleary. A tenet of the Optimist Creed is to promise to think only of the best, to work only for the best and expect only the best. This describes Jim.

Carl E. Winkler

Huntsville, 35801

Published in The Huntsville Times on February 19, 2010

James Cleary

July 16, 1926 - Feb. 15, 2010

James R. Cleary, 83, a retired Huntsville attorney and civic leader died Monday.

He was born in Springville, to Bereman Leroy Cleary and Bertie Jones Cleary. He graduated from Birmingham-Southern College in 1948. While in college, he worked as a mid-day announcer for WSGN-AM from 1945-48.

After graduating from Northwestern Law School in 1951, Cleary moved to Huntsville to establish the Army legal office at Redstone Arsenal. He worked there until 1955 when he entered private practice. In addition to his legal practice, Cleary was active in the development of Huntsville's economy. He was one of the founding partners in 1959 of WAFG-TV, which stood for "Alabama's Fastest Growing City." That station later became WAAY. He was one of the founders of the *Huntsville News*, later sold to *The Huntsville Times*. Cleary was one of the founding directors of Security Federal Savings and Loan, which became Secor, and American National Bank, which became AmSouth. He served on the board of directors of both institutions for many years.

He was appointed to the Madison County Airport Authority in 1968 and served until 1986. He also served as chairman of the authority. He was the Madison County president of the Jaycees from 1955 to 1956 and state vice president of the Jaycees in 1957, when he was also named the "Young Man of the Year" for Huntsville.

Cleary was the president of the Optimist Club of Huntsville in 1966-67, and lieutenant governor of the Alabama-Mississippi District. He was a member of the Board of Trustees for Birmingham Southern College from 1969 until 1981.

Cleary was a member of First United Methodist Church for more than 50 years and served on the administrative board.

He is survived by his wife, Voncille, who he married in 1960. He is also survived by two daughters, Johanna Cleary of Gainesville, Fla., and Susan and husband Bill Sommers of Huntsville. He is also survived by his sister, Louise and husband Jack Amos of Huntsville and seven nephews and nieces.

Visitation will be at noon to 2 p.m. Wednesday at First United Methodist Church and funeral services will follow at 2 p.m. with Rev. Coy Hallmark and Dr. Glenn Conner officiating. Burial will be at Maple Hill Cemetery.

The family requests that in lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Birmingham-Southern College, Box 549003, 900 Arkadelphia Road, Birmingham, AL 35254, or the Building Fund at First United Methodist Church, 120 Greene St., Huntsville, AL 35801.

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