

About Melvin Jones

Lions Clubs International began as the dream of Chicago insurance executive, Melvin Jones.

He believed that local business clubs should expand their horizons from purely professional concerns to the betterment of their communities and the world at large.

Melvin Jones was born on January 13, 1879, in Fort Thomas, Arizona, the son of a United States Army captain who commanded a troop of scouts. Later, his father was transferred and the family moved east.



As a young man, Jones made his home in Chicago, Illinois, became associated with an insurance firm and in 1913, at the age of 34, he formed his own agency.

He soon joined the Business Circle, a businessmen's luncheon group, and was shortly elected secretary.

This group was one of many at that time devoted solely to promoting the financial interests of their membership. That group had very limited appeal.

Melvin Jones asked himself. "What if these men, who are successful because of their drive, intelligence and ambition, were to put their talents to work improving their communities?"

After contacting similar groups around the country, an organizational meeting was held on June 7, 1917, at the LaSalle Hotel in Chicago. The new group took the name of one of the groups invited, the "International Association of Lions Clubs".

Melvin Jones eventually abandoned his insurance agency to devote himself full time to Lions at International Headquarters in Chicago. It was under his dynamic leadership that Lions Clubs earned the reputation that continues to attract civic-minded members.

Melvin Jones was also recognized as a leader outside the association. One of his greatest honors was in 1945, when he represented Lions Clubs International as a consultant in San Francisco, California, at the organization of the United Nations.

Melvin Jones' personal code was "You can't get very far until you start doing something for somebody else". That became a guiding principle for public-spirited people the world over. He died June 1, 1961, at 82 years of age.

Today, 1.3 million Lions members throughout the world answer the needs that challenge the communities of the world. Lions tackle tough problems like blindness, drug abuse prevention and diabetes awareness.