

The National Beta Club History

celebrating



75 years

1934 . . . a year that saw many exciting events and changes throughout the world . . .

The Dionne sisters (the first quintuplets to survive birth) were born in Canada, The St. Louis Cardinals defeated the Detroit Lions for the World Series, Henrik Dam discovered Vitamin K, a first class stamp cost \$0.03 and The National Beta Club was formed in Spartanburg, S.C. The National Beta Club began as the dream of Dr. John W. Harris, a professor at Wofford College in Spartanburg, S.C. Dr. Harris conceived an organization that would recognize academic achievement among high school students. The organization would also help promote leadership and character, and get students involved in service work. Thus, at Landrum High School in Landrum, S.C., the first chapter of The National Beta Club was chartered with 15 members.

Formation of the club at Landrum was followed by the chartering of eight others in South Carolina before the end of 1934. By the end of the following year, there were 75 Beta Clubs in four states. Endorsements continued to flow, and the Beta Club continued to expand. Dr. Harris had hit upon an idea whose time had come and acceptance of The National Beta Club was little short of phenomenal.

Part of the success of The National Beta Club can be attributed to the fact that members were given a forum for their activities and a chance to actually come together as a group to practice leadership skills and display their academic achievements as well. One forum is *The Beta Journal*, which began as our student magazine in September 1934. As expansion progressed, state (and sometimes regional) conventions were held. At Beta Club conventions, students ran for office, performed skits, competed in academic competitions and, of course, socialized with students from other areas of the country. This tradition continues today with 36 conventions held throughout the United States.

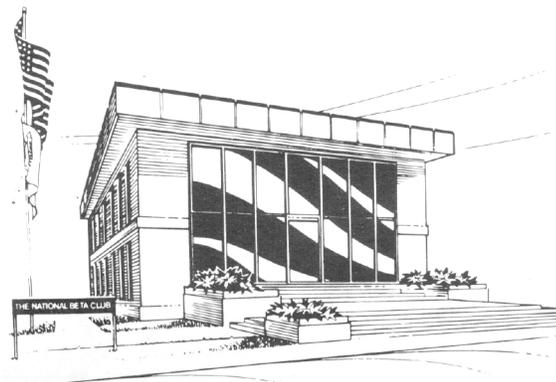
When World War II came in 1941, local Beta Clubs began to make a vital contribution to the allied victory. There were countless patriotic activities. At least one fighter aircraft flew with *Beta Club* on its fuselage. There was little lessening of growth during this crucial period. From this point onward, the history of The National Beta Club is mainly one of continued growth.

The Beta Reporter, a publication for sponsors, was started in 1950, and in 1957 The National Beta Club began compilation of a *College Facts Chart*.

Another year that saw many interesting happenings was 1961 . . . the U.S. broke diplomatic relations with Cuba, Patsy Cline released “I Fall to Pieces” and “Crazy,” Ty Cobb passed away, a first class stamp cost \$0.04, and The National Beta Club Senate authorized the institution of the Junior Division of The National Beta Club on July 22, 1961. This new organization was officially named the “National Junior Beta Club” and was established to function organizationally as a separate division of The National Beta Club program. It provided an incentive program of scholastic and character excellence for students in their formative years.

The membership of The National Junior Beta Club is composed of students from the fifth grade to ninth grade. The Board of Directors approved the addition of the fifth grade in the summer of 1988. On August 17, 1961, the first Junior Beta Club chapter was chartered at Millsap Junior High School in Millsap, TX.

Currently, The National Beta Club proudly exists in 44 states and seven territories/foreign countries. More than 75 years after Dr. Harris’s dream became a reality, we are still promoting his original ideals of *Character, Service, Achievement and Leadership*. We truly possess a proud past and look forward to a promising future.



The National Beta Club Headquarters — Spartanburg, S.C.