

The Delegates to the General Service Conference

Bill W. shipped over 50,000 copies of a new fifteen-page pamphlet called *Your Third Legacy—Will You Accept It?*²³ to the registered groups of the Fellowship in the winter of 1950-1951, and the groups were requested to hold assemblies in their sections, newly designated as Areas. These Area Assemblies elected the Delegates to the 1951 General Service Conference.

Bill included the idea of Area designations in the pamphlet, and he also described the balloting methods for what has become known as the “Third Legacy procedure” for voting. Bill explained that each Delegate would be elected with a two-thirds majority vote. His keen insight provided the solution to balloting where a majority might take four to five votes to complete an election. The idea of drawing the name “from the hat,” after at least four closely contested ballots, would ensure that major friction would not result from any extended voting session to select one elected representative.

Each state and Province in the United States and Canada was to have at least one Delegate and Alternate Delegate per Area, and for higher populated states with larger numbers of groups, more than one Area was planned for Delegate representation.

Illinois was sectioned into three Delegate Areas in 1950 and the two-year term of service and rotation corresponded to each Area’s odd or even number. Illinois began its representation at the 1951 General Service Conference with two Panel 1 Delegates. Our first NIA Delegate began Panel 2 service in 1952. These Delegates were elected from the three Area designations: Area 21, the southern section of the state; Area 19, the Chicago

²³ One original pamphlet located in the District 22 Archives, with copies in the NIA Archives.

metropolitan area and its Rotating Committee; and Area 20, the northern section of Illinois, south and west of Chicago to the Mississippi River.

Bill later shared his emphasis on service in Alcoholics Anonymous, in the application of five Traditions and one Step. He considered their importance in the following order:

Tradition Five- Each group has but one primary purpose--- to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

Tradition Seven- Every AA group ought to be fully self-supporting.

Tradition Eight- Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional.

Tradition Nine- AA as such ought never be organized, but we may create boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

Tradition Two- Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

Step Twelve- We try to carry this message to alcoholics, and practice these principles in all our affairs.²⁴

In January of 1951, Bill began visiting as many of the election Assemblies as possible, with the timetable of the Conference's start as only four months away. At each city, he spoke to large audiences and was an observer for Delegates elections. His talks were on various topics but generally highlighted the guiding principles of AA service. Over two dozen States and Provinces warmly welcomed him. He arrived in Chicago for a special

²⁴ *AA Comes of Age*, 1957, page 138, reprinted with permission of AA World Services, Inc.

meeting of the Chicago Area held on a Tuesday night in early February.

The special meeting elected Chicago's first Delegate, Luke H. of Evanston. Four visitors from what was then called "Downstate Illinois AA" were attending, and the transcript of the meeting recorded time given for their introductions. On Monday, February 12, 1951 the Downstate Illinois AA Assembly met in Springfield and elected Ward M. of Springfield as its Delegate to Panel 1 of the General Service Conference. The four AAs traveled to Chicago the following night to attend its special meeting, to hear and speak with Bill, and they also observed the proceedings.

The February 13, 1951 special election Assembly was chaired by Earl T., Chicago AA founder, AA pioneer, and recently elected Trustee to the Alcoholic Foundation Board. Earl opened the proceedings with the "usual quiet time." Many AAs do not realize that the Chicago AA chapter began the practice of starting meetings with a quiet time rather than a spoken prayer of some kind. Many groups and meetings use this Chicago example across worldwide AA today. The moment of silence and reflection proved to settle the energies of members, focused the atmosphere toward the AA meeting, and allowed the individual to collect his or her thoughts. Early Chicago AAs found that the quiet time truly worked well in opening any AA gathering.

Toward our own history in Northern Illinois Area, George M. of Decatur (presently in Area 21) was elected as the Alternate Delegate for 1951. He was seated as a Panel 2 Delegate the following year, to represent our Northern Illinois Area at the 1952 Conference.

George M. was the first and last person introduced at the special Chicago meeting of February 13, each time with welcoming applause.²⁵

The Downstate Illinois AA Conferences, prior to 1973, met in combined Assemblies with the Northern and Southern Illinois Areas, and jointly elected each Area's Delegates. After 1973, only NIA Assemblies elected NIA Delegates.

Area 20 Delegates Elected by Downstate Illinois Conferences²⁶

1952-53	Panel 2	George M. Decatur (presently Area 21)
1954-55	Panel 4	John K. Dixon
1956-57	Panel 6	Richard W. Quincy (presently Area 21)
1958-59	Panel 8	John M. Lockport
1960-61	Panel 10	Lee H. Mt. Morris
1962-63	Panel 12	Carl S.

²⁵ *Minutes of Special Meeting of Chicago Area AAs*, Palmer House Hotel, Chicago, February 13, 1951. Fifteen-paged transcript. Source: Chicago Archives.

²⁶ *A Brief History of NIA* 1993, four pages. Source: NIA Archives.

Rock Island

Area 20 Delegates Elected by Downstate Illinois Conferences ²⁶

1964-65	Panel 14	Bruce W. ²⁷ Waukegan
1966-67	Panel 16	R.A. "Bud" W. Rock Island
1968-69	Panel 18	Joe F. Dixon
1970-71	Panel 20	Roland "Rollie" C. Rockford
1972-73	Panel 22	Lou D. Glen Ellyn

Elected by NIA Assemblies after 1973

1974-75	Panel 24	Hank S. Kenosha, Wisconsin
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²⁶ *A Brief History of NIA* 1993, four pages. Source: NIA Archives.

²⁷ Bruce W., Panel 14 Delegate, was elected East Central Region Trustee at the 24th General Service Conference. He served 1974-1977 on the General Service Board with AA World Services, Inc.

1976-77	Panel 26	Earl McN. Chicago
1978-79	Panel 28 ²⁸	Ruth P. Lisle
1980-81	Panel 30	LaVerne "Pete" P. Freeport
1982-83	Panel 32	John G. McHenry

Elected by NIA Assemblies after 1973 (continued)

1984-85	Panel 34	Jack O. ²⁹ Joliet
1986-87	Panel 36	Hank G. Princeton
1988-89	Panel 38	Dennis D. McHenry
1990-91	Panel 40	Phyllis W. Oneida
1992-93	Panel 42	Tom B. Waukegan
1994-95	Panel 44	Russ V. Toulon
1996-97	Panel 46	Tom G. Elgin
1998-99	Panel 48	Jerry P. Sycamore

²⁸ Jim H., NIA Alternate Delegate from Joliet, served the remaining three months of Ruth P.'s term when she moved to another state.

²⁹ Jack O. was elected East Central Region Trustee at the 1998 Conference and during his four years, served as AAWS Chair in 2000.

2000-02	Panel 50	Marcia S. Union
2002-03	Panel 52	Sonny M. Joliet
2003-04	Panel 54	Terry W. East Moline