

The Jaycee Creed

We Believe

That faith in God gives meaning and purpose to human life;
That the brotherhood of man transcends the sovereignty of nations;
That economic justice can best be won by free men through free enterprise;
That government should be of laws rather than of men;
That earth's great treasure lies in human personality;
And that service to humanity is the best work of life.

History of the Jaycee Creed

C. William Brownfield wrote the Jaycee Creed. Bill Brownfield was born on March 7, 1919 in Alliance, Ohio. He was one of seven children who grew up in a home surrounded by much love and humor. Feeding and offering clothes to many a drifter demonstrated concern for humanity in the Brownfield household.

Bill exhibited early Jaycee tendencies at the age of ten when he formed a club called The Band of Mercy. The group was dedicated to showing kindness to animals. Brownfield was heavily involved with church and social issues throughout his youth. He was a lay preacher for several congregations but was never ordained as health issues with asthma and allergies prevented completion of the required college degree. Instead, Brownfield sought to build his career running a coal mining operation and he did so with mixed success for many years.

His coal business took him to Columbus, Ohio where Ernie Wilson invited him to join the Columbus Jaycees in 1943. Brownfield quickly became involved in the organization and embraced the activities of the Jaycees. During World War II, a moratorium on conventions was in place due to travel restrictions and fuel rationing. Meetings were restricted to official delegates required to conduct business. In 1945, however, the lid was off and the National Convention in Milwaukee was open to all. This was to be Bill Brownfield's first Jaycee convention.

While attending a Governmental Affairs forum, Brownfield inquired as to the Jaycees official position on the time honored free enterprise system. He was told that no formal policy or position existed. This planted the idea that it would be beneficial for an organization of the Jaycees stature to have an official policy of some sort. Brownfield traveled to Chicago and stopped by the National Business

Office located in the LaSalle Hotel to research the existence of a Jaycee Creed or Statement of Principles. None existed. Brownfield thought about the need for a Creed constantly.

It wasn't until July of 1946 that the Jaycee Creed was finally put to paper in a car parked just west of Junction City, Ohio. Brownfield consciously rejected the idea of mentioning God in the Creed as the Jaycees were not a sectarian organization but included men of all faiths.

The Jaycee Creed almost never went beyond the point of composition. Brownfield submitted his work to the local President for presentation to the Board of Directors for adoption. The President sat on the issue and did not plan to bring forth the proposal. After some arm-twisting and political wrangling the Creed was presented to the local board. After much analysis and debate, the motion to adopt the Jaycee Creed was narrowly passed.

With this success achieved, the next step was to go to the Ohio Executive Committee for statewide adoption. The Exec Committee again conducted lengthy debate and referred the proposal to the Board of Directors with a recommendation for approval. In September of 1946 the Ohio Jaycees enthusiastically approved the official adoption of the Creed as its official statement of beliefs. One week after this accomplishment, Brownfield and Ohio President Jim Riggs traveled to the Pennsylvania Board meeting in Lancaster and championed the adoption of the Creed. Pennsylvania became the second State Organization to officially adopt the Jaycee Creed.

Canadian National President Don MacKay was at the Pennsylvania meeting and he took the Creed home to Canada where it was adopted before the United States ever considered the issue. Consideration of the proposal was to have taken place at the 1947 National Convention in Long Beach, CA. Outgoing President Seldon Waldo opposed the adoption of the Creed and successfully blocked all avenues of debate on the issue. After the convention was officially adjourned, the newly elected Board of Directors met and President John Ben Shepard gave Brownfield the opportunity to address the issue. A motion was passed to refer the matter to the next Board Meeting in Tulsa, OK.

A familiar scenario of passionate debate took place at the meeting in Tulsa but the end result was the United States Jaycees officially adopted Brownfield's Creed as a statement of its philosophies and beliefs. Fortunately, the International Organization was not a difficult hurdle and at the World Congress in Rio de Janeiro, 1948, JCI also approved the adoption of the Creed. Motion to approve was made by the Philippines (home of JCI #1, Joaquin V Gonzalez).

One of the heavily debated issues on the approval of the Creed was the lack of a reference to God. Shortly after the Creed's adoption, Andy Mungenast began a lengthy series of communications with Brownfield on this subject. Many other

Jaycees echoed the concerns voiced by Mungenast. Brownfield finally agreed with the call for a mention of God and in March of 1950, he found the right words to properly express his thoughts for the organization. Approval of this addition proved to be much easier than the original Creed proposal. The US adopted the change at the Summer Board Meeting in Tulsa and JCI followed with approval at the World Congress in Montreal, Canada (home of JCI #2, Phil Pugsley).

The 65 words of the Jaycee creed were finally recognized worldwide as the statement that best conveys the standards to which our organization aspires. Jaycees everywhere know and use this Creed, reciting it in as many languages as there are countries that share these beliefs.

The evolution of the writing and adoption of the Jaycee Creed was fraught with strife, political intrigue and potential pitfalls. The last assault on the Creed came at the 18th World Congress in Tel Aviv, Israel. The British Jaycees proposed removal of the Creed from the Constitution, reducing it to a mere appendix that may be referred to if so desired. Chile proposed changing the wording of the third line to Economic Justice Can Best Be Won By Free Men Through Free Initiative. Both of these proposals were soundly defeated and the Jaycee Creed remains one of the most integral parts of our organization.

The words have served to inspire and strengthen individual members, families and communities throughout the Nation and the World. A deeper knowledge and understanding of the Jaycee Creed serves to strengthen the commitment and sincerity of young people who choose to participate in the Jaycee movement.

In our role as Senators and competition judges, we should strive to convey and demonstrate the importance of the meaning behind the words of Bill Brownfield's inspiration.