



# A Brief History of Circle K International

## How it all began

In 1936 the Kiwanis Club of Pullman, Washington, sponsored the Circle K House for young men in need of help at Washington State University. The Circle K House continued to be sponsored by the Pullman Kiwanis club after becoming affiliated as a Greek fraternity house.

Donald T. Forsythe, a Kiwanis International trustee, helped Circle K transform itself into a service-oriented organization in 1947. The first Circle K club was chartered that year at Carthage College in Carthage, Illinois. (The college moved to its present-day location of Kenosha, Wisconsin, in 1962.)

In 1954, a meeting of 35 Circle K clubs was held to elect officers and seek recognition by Kiwanis International. The next year, Kiwanis International officially recognized Circle K International as a sponsored youth affiliate.

Today, Circle K International is the largest collegiate service organization dedicated to giving students the opportunity for service, leadership and fellowship.

## Our timeline

### 1936

The Kiwanis Club of Pullman, Washington, sponsors the first "Circle K House" at Washington State University.

### 1947

The first Circle K club similar to our present-day organization is chartered at Carthage College in Carthage, Illinois.

### 1949

The University of Western Ontario becomes the second Circle K Club to charter.

### 1953

Kenneth B. Creasy from Ohio Wesleyan University is chosen as the first president of Circle K.

### 1955

Kiwanis International officially recognizes Circle K International as a sponsored youth affiliate.

### 1957

Texas-Oklahoma is recognized as the first CKI district.

### 1971

Circle K House of Delegates votes overwhelmingly to CKI constitution to allow women to join the organization.



**1973**

The Kiwanis International Board of Trustees approves the resolution for the acceptance of female members into Circle K. It is the first member of the Kiwanis family to accept female members.

**1975**

Gregory Faulkner of the New York District is elected Circle K International's first African American president.

**1977**

The College of the Bahama becomes the first club to be officially chartered outside of the United States and Canada.

**1984**

Susan E. McClernon of the College of St. Scholastica in Minnesota is elected the first female president of Circle K International.

**1987**

Convention delegates approve an amendment allowing the organization to use its initials — CKI — as an official name for the organization.

**1994**

CKI joins the Kiwanis family in its largest global campaign – raising money to help UNICEF fight iodine deficiency disorders, the leading preventable cause of intellectual disabilities.

**2017**

CKI partners with UNICEF on WASH, a program that provides education, awareness, and funding to supply clean drinking water and sanitation education to schools and children in underdeveloped regions.

**2019**

CKI updates its pledge to reflect gender neutrality: "I pledge to uphold the Object of Circle K International, to foster compassion and goodwill toward others through service and leadership, to develop my abilities and the abilities of all people and to dedicate myself to the realization of humanity's potential."