

**McLean County Museum of History**  
**Toastmasters (Smedley) Collection**

**Collection Information**

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	1 box
COLLECTION DATES:	1950-1999
RESTRICTIONS:	
REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:	Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the McLean County Museum of History
ALTERNATIVE FORMATS:	None
OTHER FINDING AIDS:	None
LOCATION:	Archives
NOTES:	Donated by cousin Gene Smedley See also photo collection

**Brief History**

Born in Waverly IL in 1878, Ralph C. Smedley graduated Illinois Wesleyan University in 1903 and a year later became educational director of the Bloomington YMCA. There he began a public speaking club for high school students. Because their meeting simulated a formal banquet, the group was dubbed "Toastmasters Club."

Two years later Smedley moved to Freeport with the YMCA and that town soon had a Toastmasters Club of professional men. Eventually, his work took him to Santa Anna, CA, where he started a club in 1924. From there, it spread to other cities. By the time of his death in 1965, Toastmasters International had 80,000 members in over 3,600 clubs.

He was awarded an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from Illinois Wesleyan in 1950.

**Scope**

This collection includes selected Toastmasters publications, a speech given by his cousin Gene Smedley, newspaper articles, and other miscellaneous focused on Ralph Smedley and his creation of Toastmasters International.

## **Box and Folder Inventory**

### **Folder 1: Toastmaster Publications**

- 1.1 *The Toastmaster*, November 1965. Vol. 31 No. 11. 40 pp. This issue in memory of Ralph C. Smedley.
- 1.2 *The Toastmaster* September 1999. Vol 65, No. 9. Includes article on Smedley and origins of the Toastmasters organization.
- 1.3 *The Toastmaster*, October 1999. Vol 65, No. 10. Celebrates 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary.
- 1.4 Brochure: "Welcome to the . . . World Headquarters of Toastmaster International." 8 pp undated. Includes history of the organization.

### **Folder 2: Speech on Smedley**

- 2.1 Speech on Ralph C. Smedley delivered by Gene Smedley, circa 1972. 20pp TS.

### **Folder 3: Newspaper Articles**

- 3.1 Assorted newspaper articles, mostly from the Bloomington *Pantagraph*. 1950-1975.

### **Folder 4: Miscellaneous**

- 4.1 One page from *Forbes*, 1 March 1975. "Thoughts on the Business of Life" column includes brief quote from Smedley.
- 4.2 Email from Bob Palmer of Riverside Toastmasters to the McLean County Museum of History about an idea to commemorate the genesis of Toastmasters in Bloomington. Undated, 4 sheets.