

## **MD-12 ORIENTATION**

### **August 2009**

The Lions of Tennessee were represented by the Memphis Downtown Lions Club (Chartered September 10, 1917), at the first Lions National Convention in October 1917.

That's why we say, Tennessee Lions were there at the beginning and have been active in lionism throughout its long and memorable history.

In the very beginning, the Lions District of which Tennessee was a part included a much larger area. The first District Governor 1918-1919 was F. C. Brinlanan from Shreveport, Louisiana. When Lions first received the designation of District 12, the district included the states of Tennessee and Kentucky.

Several Lions Clubs were chartered in the State of Tennessee from 1917 through 1933. They are all still active today.

<u><b>CLUB NAME</b></u>	<u><b>DATE CHARTERED</b></u>
MEMPHIS DOWNTOWN	OCTOBER 15, 1917
NASHVILLE DOWNTOWN	FEBRUARY 12, 1920
PARIS	MAY 11, 1921
COOKEVILLE EVENING	APRIL 6, 1922
SHELBYVILLE	MAY 9, 1922
COVINGTON	NOVEMBER 5, 1925
CHATTANOOGA DOWNTOWN	OCTOBER 11, 1927
CLEVELAND EVENING	SEPTEMBER 13, 1929
TIPTONVILLE	JUNE 23, 1931
LEBANON	JANUARY 10, 1933
COLUMBIA	APRIL 4, 1933
MURFREESBORO	JUNE 16, 1933
DICKSON	JULY 18, 1933
HUNTINGDON	JULY 31, 1933
BRUCETON	AUGUST 8, 1933

Since Memphis was the location of the first Lions Club in District 12, in 1934-35 when the number of Lions Clubs became large enough to subdivide the district along state boundaries, Tennessee kept the designation of District 12. Jack L. Minton from Nashville served as the District Governor for 2 terms (1934-36).

Tennessee was first subdivided in 1941-42 into East and West Districts. The first East Governor was High E. Delosier of Maryville, West William Holland Jr. from Jackson.

Tennessee was further subdivided into East-Middle-West in 1947-48. The first East District Governor was J. A. Scott from Knoxville; Middle was Bradley Craig from Lewisburg; West was I. P. Yancy from Somerville.

Tennessee was further subdivided into 4 Districts L-I-O-N in 1955-56. The first 12-L District Governor was William R. Kinton Jr. from Trenton; 12-I was James R. from Lewisburg; 12-O was Donald T. Hart from Chattanooga; 12-N was Robert A. Smith from Clinton.

Tennessee's final subdivision occurred in 1986-87 when a portion of District I and O were used to form S.

Today there are 5 sub-districts reading west to east, L-I-S-O-N which means (L-I-O-N-S), with \_\_\_\_\_ Clubs and \_\_\_\_\_ Lion members (Aug. 2009).

## **MD-12 ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE**

MD-12 has its own Constitution, By-Laws, and Policy Manual, and is governed by a Council of Governors.

The Council is made up of the 5 sitting District Governors plus one immediate Past District Governor chosen by the sitting District Governors.

The Council operates on a budget supported by dues of \$4.60 annually collected from each Tennessee Lion.

Various Lions from across the state are elected or appointed to State Committees to assist the Council in accomplishing its lionistic duties.

The Lions of Tennessee have formed 2 organizations to assist in their lionistic work:

1. Tennessee Lions Charities Inc. (TLC). A 501c3 not for profit organization to act as a solicitation agent and clearing house for all charitable projects by Tennessee Lions at the State level. TLC has its own Constitution and By-Laws and is governed by a Board of Lions elected from across the State.
2. Lions Clubs Volunteer Services, Inc. (LCVSI) A 501c4 organization governed by a Board of elected Lions. LCVSI was organized to fund and secure a state office building which would provide administrative and historical perspective for the Lions of Tennessee. The fully owned State Office Building is located at 505 Fesslers Lane, Nashville. This organization is currently dormant.

The Lions of Tennessee have been blessed with many outstanding Lion leaders that have served the Association at the International Level including:

### **Three International Presidents;**

1. Clifford D. Pierce, 12-W 1946-47, from Memphis, Tennessee.
2. Edward M. Lindsey, 12-I 1965-66, from Lawrenceburg, Tennessee,
3. Austin P. Jennings, 12- S 1988-89, from Woodbury, Tennessee,

While serving as International Presidents; Edward Lindsey was instrumental in the formation of the Lions Club International Foundation; Austin Jennings was instrumental in Lions worldwide adopting the Campaign SightFirst I program. Both were instrumental in 1995 in getting Tennessee Lions to raise 4 million dollars through Operation Kidsight.

In January 2009, the TLC Board created a Lindsey-Jennings award to honor the long and distinguished service of these two Past Presidents, as well as provide a source of funding for the current and future benevolent activities of the Lions of Tennessee at the multi-district level.

In addition to the 3 Presidents who first served as International Directors, Tennessee has had the following Lions serve as International Directors: J. L. McRee, Memphis 1917 (replaced 1918); James A. Sherrill, Chattanooga MD12-E (1948-1950); Chester P. Webb, Lawrenceburg MD12-M (1953-55); Herbert B. Diggs, Oak Ridge MD12-N (1972-74); John G. Justice, Nashville MD12-I (1982-84); Carl E. Bledsoe, Etowah MD12-O (1990-92); Billy C. Pearson, Murfreesboro MD12-S (1996-98); Wm. Allen Broughton, Nashville MD12-I (2002-04); and Wm. B Watkins Loudon MD12-N (2007-09).

## **MD-12 SERVICE**

Each year, the Lions of Tennessee raise nearly a half million dollars through their coordinated fund raising efforts known as 'White Cane Days'. These funds are used to support 5 Multiple District Projects:

### **1. Leader Dogs for the Blind**

- Rochester, Michigan.
- provides leader dogs and trains individuals in their.
- Lions funds support general operating expenses.

### **2. Lions World Services for the Blind (LWSB)**

- Little Rock, Arkansas.
- provides vocational training for visually impaired people.
- Lions funds support general operating expenses.

### **3. Recordings For the Blind and Dyslexic (RFB&D)**

- local unit, Oak Ridge, Tennessee.
- provides books of many types read on tape, CDs for people
- Lions funds support general operating expenses.

### **4. Tennessee School for the Blind (TSB)**

- Donelson, Tennessee.
- provides an elementary and high school education for blind people.
- Lions funds go through the Friends of TN School for the Blind and support five projects of TSB: the work program, Scouts-boys and girls, the Christmas program, low vision assistance and student enrichment.

## **5. Tennessee School for the Deaf (TSD)**

- Knoxville, Tennessee.
- provide a high school education for hearing impaired.
- Lions funds provide travel and recreational money for the needy students.

These funds are also used to support various sub-district projects outlined in the various District Orientations.

In 1995 the Lions of Tennessee launched a 4 million dollar fun raising campaign 'Operation Kidsight' to help establish and help endow a pediatric ophthalmology center at Vanderbilt Children's Hospital.

The goal of this effort was to insure no child needing prevention of sight loss eye care in the state of Tennessee would go unserved. The money was raised and the 'Lions Eye Center' opened in 1997. It currently treats thousands of patients each year.

The center's primary relation with Lions is to treat eye disorders in children which can not be successfully treated by their local eye doctors.

A part of the arrangement with Vanderbilt was that the Lions of Tennessee would initially screen 10,000 kids to provide research information on the incidence of eye problems in pre school children. After the screening photos were taken, they were examined by technicians and about 5% of the children screened needed to be referred to local eye care professionals for further examination.

The Lions of Tennessee recognized the potential for preventing blindness if this 'Kidsight' screening was expanded to check all Tennessee children between the ages of 6 – 60 months. A new, at the time, Polaroid type photo screening camera was used to take up close pictures of the children's' eyes.

Since its inception the Lions of Tennessee have screened over a quarter million children. In Tennessee 75-80 thousand children are born, and only about 30 thousand are being screened. Currently less than 50% of the Lions Clubs in Tennessee are active in this screening program. A new digital instrument is now being used for the screenings.

Lion leaders from around the world now come to Tennessee to learn the process and skills needed to set up an eye screening program for children in their lionistic areas. One more example of the leadership role the Lions of Tennessee have provided to the International body of lionism.

Tennessee Lions in every Club across the state should be willing to commit the financial and physical resources to screen annually 75-80 thousand children, the equivalent of every newborn child in Tennessee each year. This would have the potential of preventing blindness or sight complications in 3500 to 4000 children each year.