

In Recognition of Alcoholics Anonymous' 91st Celebration of Founder's Day – June 10, 2026

Each year, members of Alcoholics Anonymous around the world pause on June 10th to honor the day in 1935 when Bill W. and Dr. Bob first met in Akron, Ohio — a moment that quietly set in motion a spiritual movement that would carry hope to millions.

As we mark A.A.'s 91st Founder's Day in 2026, our District History Spotlight is proud to share two treasured pieces of A.A. history: the final public messages delivered by our co-founders, Dr. Bob Smith and Bill Wilson.

These messages — simple, direct, and deeply spiritual — continue to guide us. They remind us of the humility, service, and anonymity that form the bedrock of our Fellowship. They also offer a glimpse into the hearts of the men whose willingness to help one another became the spark that changed countless lives.

Dr. Bob's last message

From Dr. Bob's brief remarks on Sunday, July 3, 1950, at the First International A.A. Convention in Cleveland, Ohio.

My good friends in A.A. and of A.A.,

... I get a big thrill out of looking over a vast sea of faces like this with a feeling that possibly some small thing I did a number of years ago played an infinitely small part in making this meeting possible. I also get quite a thrill when I think that we all had the same problem. We all did the same things. We all get the same results in proportion to our zeal and enthusiasm and stick-to-itiveness. If you will pardon the injection of a personal note at this time, let me say that I have been in bed five of the last seven months and my strength hasn't returned as I would like, so my remarks of necessity will be very brief.



There are two or three things that flashed into my mind on which it would be fitting to lay a little emphasis. One is the simplicity of our program. Let's not louse it all up with Freudian complexes and things that are interesting to the scientific mind, but have very little to do with our actual A.A. work. Our Twelve Steps, when simmered down to the last, resolve themselves into the words "love" and "service." We understand what love is, and we understand what service is. So let's bear those two things in mind.

Let us also remember to guard that erring member the tongue, and if we must use it, let's use it with kindness and consideration and tolerance.

And one more thing: None of us would be here today if somebody hadn't taken time to explain things to us, to give us a little pat on the back, to take us to a meeting or two, to do numerous little kind and thoughtful acts in our behalf. So let us never get such a degree of smug complacency that we're not willing to extend, or attempt to extend, to our less fortunate brothers that help which has been so beneficial to us.

Thank you very much.

Handwritten signature of Dr. Bob.

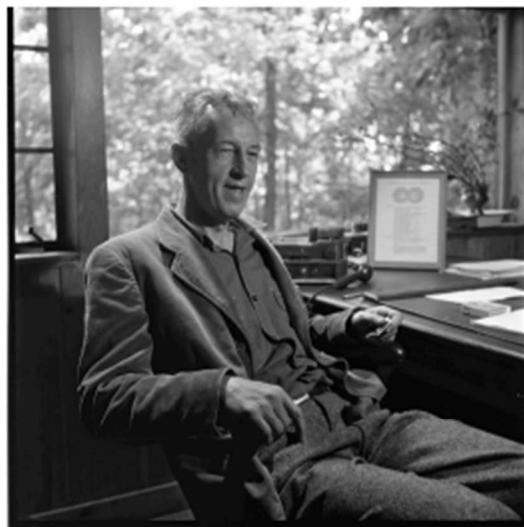
Bill W.'s last message

Presented at The New York Intergroup Association annual dinner, Oct 10, 1970 in honor of Bill's upcoming 36th anniversary, Dec. 11, 1970.

My dear friends,

Recently an A.A. member sent me an unusual greeting which I would like to extend to you. He told me it was an ancient Arabian salutation. Perhaps we have no Arabic groups, but it still seems a fitting expression of how I feel for each of you. It says, "I salute you and thank you for your life."

My thoughts are much occupied these days with gratitude to our Fellowship and for the myriad blessings bestowed upon us by God's Grace.



If I were asked which of these blessings I felt was most responsible for our growth as a fellowship and most vital to our continuity, I would say, the "Concept of Anonymity."

Anonymity has two attributes essential to our individual and collective survival; the spiritual and the practical.

On the spiritual level, anonymity demands the greatest discipline of which we are capable; on the practical level, anonymity has brought protection for the newcomer, respect and support of the world outside, and security from those of us who would use A.A. for sick and selfish purposes.

A.A. must and will continue to change with the passing years. We cannot, nor should we turn back the clock. However, I deeply believe that the principle of anonymity must remain our primary and enduring safeguard. As long as we accept our sobriety in our traditional spirit of anonymity we will continue to receive God's Grace.

And so -- once more, I salute you in that spirit and again I thank you for your lives.

May God bless us all now, and forever.

*Ever Yours
Bill*