

HISTORY OF GATHERING OF EAGLES

The Gathering of Eagles was originally held in Corpus Christi, Texas in 1986. The people hosting the conference decided not to continue the meetings after the third year. Searcy W., sober for 40 years at the time, brought the Gathering of Eagles to Dallas, Texas. From the beginning, it was a blend of A.A. Old Timers served with a heavy dose of A.A. history and archives. Searcy and his friends always had fun and expected the same from everyone else as the conference carried the serious message of recovery for the suffering alcoholic.

The background of the name, Gathering of Eagles, is clouded in rumor and is not entirely clear. Searcy loved the eagle because it was a survivor and stood for grace, strength, and independence. One of his favorite songs was "The Wind Beneath My Wings", and for him the wind was God, A.A., and the newcomer. In his later years, he once joked that the bald eagle and he had something in common: a lack of hair!

Newcomers at the conferences of the Gathering of Eagles came to bask in the friendly company and companionship of those who knew the A.A. co-founders and who had continuous sobriety approaching 50 years. The best of national A.A. circuit speakers and those knowledgeable with the history of A.A. were, and still are, invited to the conferences each year. It has become a nationally attended conference sprinkled with old timers approaching 60 years of sobriety. Jokingly (some say seriously), Searcy would never invite anyone to the conference with more sobriety than he.

Dr. Bob's son, Smitty, and Searcy were the best of friends. The two were often seen at the Eagles meetings with an entourage of fans following them in the hotel corridors. Smitty died in 2004 less than a year after Searcy's passing.

Searcy was the driving force that kept the Gathering of Eagles going for fourteen years when he passed away in 2003 at 93 years of age and 57 years of sobriety. He and his wife, Margaret W., a long time Al-anon member, were married for 69 years. She was always present at the conferences, standing quietly in the background. Searcy's last annual Eagles conference was in May of 2003.

The "Gathering" has continued under the guidance of a select planning committee familiar with its flavor, history and purpose. The conference is held every year during the Memorial Day weekend in Dallas, Texas.