

GRAND MASTER'S ANNUAL ADDRESS

10/3/2007

R.:W.: Deputy Grand Master, Distinguished Past Grand Masters, Members of the Grand Staff, Our Distinguished Guests and Brothers All.

Good Morning!

It is an honor and my very great pleasure to welcome each of you to the 202nd Annual Communication of the M.:W.: Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of Delaware.

Brother Grand Secretary would you please convey our sincere thanks to the Officers and Brothers of Endeavor Lodge # 17 for the lodge room set up and furniture we see here today. I also extend my personal thanks to Worshipful Brother Emory R. West and M.:W.: Brother William T Watkins, Jr. P. G. M. for their continued dedication to this cause.

I am particularly pleased to welcome our distinguished guests, both from within this Grand Jurisdiction as well as those from without. To each of you, I express sincere thanks from both Jan and I for the many acts of kindness and your gracious hospitality as we visited each of your jurisdictions. We are honored by your presence and thank you so very much for taking time from your busy schedules to be with us. If there is anything we can do to make your stay more enjoyable, please let us know.

It has been an absolute joy to have served this year as your Grand Master. The honor you bestowed by electing and installing me as the 154th Grand Master of Masons in Delaware will glow in my heart forever. The tremendous responsibility that accompanies that honor has been a great motivating force for our year and I trust that my performance in the duties appertaining to the office have met with your approval. I suppose only time will tell.

OFFICIAL VISITATIONS

Our Grand Lodge Code requires the Grand Master to visit each subordinate lodge in this Grand Jurisdiction. I am pleased to report that each lodge has been visited. The Grand Staff and I have been graciously received and on many occasions our ladies were invited to join us for dinner and to enjoy some entertainment while the lodges were meeting. To all of our lodges, I thank you for the courtesies extended and the hospitality, fellowship and Brotherhood we all shared. We are incredibly fortunate here in Delaware that because of these visitations, every Delaware Mason enjoys the opportunity to meet his Grand Master.

VISITATIONS – SISTER JURISDICTIONS

It was my great pleasure, with my wife Jan, to visit many of our sister jurisdictions. During the past year we were honored to be received in Ohio, Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey, South Carolina, Maine, New York, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont and Ontario. Right Worshipful Deputy Grand Master Emerson represented us at the Grand Lodge of West Virginia and the Grand Lodge of the District of Columbia. We were graciously received and the hospitality and courtesies extended were exceptional. In addition to the fraternal benefits extended at these visitations are the tremendous friendships developed that will last a lifetime.

SPECIAL VISITATIONS

George Washington Masonic Memorial with Jefferson Lodge # 15. Raised a candidate and celebrated Delaware month.

Dinner with Development Committees of Grand Lodge of Delaware and the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Delaware.

NUR Shrine Commodore's Ball – Kent Island. Maryland

Mt. Pickering Lodge # 446, Upper Uwchland, PA with R. W. Ronald A. Aungst, R. W. Grand Master of Masons in Pennsylvania.

York Rite Grand Sessions.

NUR Shrine Potentates Ball

St. John's Lodge # 2, Philadelphia, PA with R. W. Ronald A. Aungst, Grand Master of Masons in Pennsylvania and M. W. John Ryan Grand Master of Masons in New Jersey.

Britannia Lodge, New York, New York. Reception and Festive Board.

Imperial Sessions, A.A.O.N.M.S., Anaheim, CA

Piedmont – Stella Lodge # 50, Stanardsville, VA with M. W. Bernard Duggan. M. W. Grand Master of Masons in Virginia.

Supreme Council, A. A. S. R. – Joint session of N. M. J. and S. M. J., Washington, D. C.

Mid Atlantic Shrine Association, Virginia Beach, VA

CONFERENCE OF GRAND MASTERS AND GRAND SECRETARIES OF NORTH AMERICA

The Conference of Grand Master's and Grand Secretaries of North America was held in Portland, OR, February 16 to February 21, 2007. Jan and I were please to represent Delaware and I was equally please to serve on the Nominating Committee for the 2008 Conference to be held in Louisville, KY. The opportunity to discuss common goals and problems with one's peers is of great value and an enlightening experience provided by the Conference.

NORTHEAST CONFERENCE OF GRAND MASTERS, DEPUTY GRAND MASTERS AND GRAND SECRETARIES

This Conference was held July 20 – July 22, 2007 in Williamsburg, VA. Jan and I were accompanied by Deputy Grand Master Emerson and Grand Secretary Waecker and his lady Phyllis. Once again the opportunity to discuss common issues and related concerns proved to be of great value to your Grand Master. Topics included revised IRS reporting requirements, development opportunities and the overall format of the Conference in future years.

THEME

My Theme this year has been “Educate and Communicate”. We have endeavored throughout our travels and visitations to do just that. A true Masonic education is an ongoing process and should last a lifetime. The educational process is but one half of the equation. We must all take those valued pieces of our education and communicate them to our Brethren as well as to the world without, EDUCATE AND COMMUNICATE my Brothers.

CHARITY

In keeping with our theme for the year we have done our very best to “Educate and Communicate” the story of our charity – Highfield, The Masonic Home of Delaware. We must have done something right as the response from our Masonic Family has been overwhelming. I truly thank each and every Brother, each and every Lodge, each and every Hall Company, wife, widow and all who have been so generous this past year.

GRAND STAFF

My deepest gratitude goes out to my Grand Staff who have so admirably served this Grand Lodge this past year. You are the best, my Brothers, and I thank you for your dedication and devotion to our craft and to me personally

HIGHLIGHTS

The entire year has been the highlight of my life but every Grand Master has a couple of happenings that particularly stand out. On December 7, 2006, Delaware Day, it was our great honor to dedicate the cornerstone at the new Delaware Veteran's Home. What a great day and a great day for masonry to show the world who we are and what we are all about.

The sixth Annual Leadership Conference here in Dewey Beach was an outstanding opportunity to "Educate and Communicate". My congratulations and thanks to Past Grand Masters Davis and Mower, as well as their dedicated committee, for the great job that they do.

Brotherhood Night at NUR Shrine was again an opportunity for over 500 Brethren from New York to Virginia to share an evening of great food, great fellowship and to greet old friends and meet new ones. I am particularly indebted to my fellow Grand Masters for their gracious decision not to speak in order that the Brethren might have additional time to share in the fellowship of the evening.

My deepest thanks to Worshipful Brother D. Edward Wright, Grand Instructor of Work and his dedicated committee for their outstanding efforts in the presentation and completion of the Grand Master's Class. Thank you to all who participated and supported this effort.

Grand Lodge Day at the Masonic Home was not only a highlight for this Grand Master and his Staff but more importantly a highlight for our residents. Believe me my Brothers, your moral support of the Home and our residents is almost as important as any monetary gift you can give.

In August I traveled to Stanardsville, VA with eight other Delaware Masons and their ladies. The brethren were received in Piedmont Stella Lodge # 50 by my friends and Brothers R. W. Hunter Birckhead, Worshipful Master and M. W. Bernard Duggan, Grand Master of Masons in Virginia. The following day we were entertained at a family picnic hosted by the lodge. It was truly an outstanding weekend of friendship, fellowship and Brotherly love. This trip also represented the 32nd consecutive year that Delaware Masons have made this trip to share friendship and Masonry with our dear friends in Stanardsville.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you. Two little words that mean so much yet seem so insignificant to express the gratitude and warmth I feel for so many.

Brother Grand Secretary, thanks to you and your staff for all of your help, aid and assistance. More importantly, a million thanks for your patience.

Thank you to all of the members of our Masonic family. NUR Shrine, the Scottish and York Rite, Tall Cedars, DeMolay, Jobs Daughters and the Eastern Star. Your support and hospitality have been greatly appreciated and I wish each of you all of the very best.

Thank you to my Lodge. Oriental Lodge # 27. Your support, in so many ways, throughout my journeys has never wavered. I hope you are as proud of this year as I am.

Thank you to those who serve on the various Grand Lodge Committees. Your dedication and devotion is remarkable and keeps this Grand Lodge operating in an efficient manner.

Thank you to my very distinguished predecessors. The Past Grand Master's of Delaware. Each of you has been an inspiration to me and you have always been available for guidance, assistance and a helping hand when called upon.

Thank you to my terrific wife Jan. She has been my biggest supporter and my best critic. I have lost count of how many dresses and diamonds I owe – but her love, her patience and her perseverance have always been there for me. She is truly “The Wind beneath my Wings”.

RECOMMENDATION

My Brothers I have but one recommendation which has been forwarded to the Jurisprudence Committee for their final action. It is as follows: I recommend that, by acclamation, this Grand Lodge approve the following Standing Resolution:

RESOLVED: That each subordinate lodge in this Grand Jurisdiction be authorized, without regard to waiting periods, to confer all subsequent degrees on any Entered Apprentice or Fellowcraft member who has received written orders for military service outside of this Grand Jurisdiction.

CONCLUSION

My Brethren, for but a year, in Delaware, your Grand Master occupies the very highest station in our beloved craft – with all of its honors, responsibilities and duties. As the end of my stewardship nears, I thank you for your goodwill, your support, your loyalty and most important of all for your friendship. Of all of the memories, of all of the experiences, of all of the travels, it is the friendship of the Delaware Masons and the friendship of our distinguished guests that will last forever.

Brethren, Friday evening I will pass the gavel of authority to my worthy and well qualified successor. To him, I pledge my faithful support and my most sincere best wishes for a harmonious and successful year.

Finally, I have served this Grand Lodge to the best of my ability and I trust that my performance and deportment have met with your approval.

May the Grand Architect of the Universe Bless you all my Brethren.

May God Bless our great fraternity.

May God Bless America.

So Mote it Be.

Respectfully and fraternally submitted,

William R. Stevens, Jr.
Grand Master
2006 - 2007