

THE



OKLAHOMA

MASON

THE GRAND LODGE OF
ANCIENT FREE & ACCEPTED MASONS OF THE STATE
OF OKLAHOMA

March 2025



James Roderick
Grand Master

On Yonder Book that Oath WE took....

Brothers,

It seems at times that we forget the progressive oaths we took as we advanced. Either they were not heard, not taught, taken to heart, or laid aside except when convenient. In some cases, they are forgotten, especially by new Masons, because they do not commonly see them through other brothers, and they become simply words we said to get advanced.

Speaking for myself and your elected line, once we are elected and become a Trustee, we are brought into the knowledge of all activities and on-goings of

all the lodges in the state, and it becomes a bit overwhelming to see these tenets frequently laid aside. It only takes a few men doing this within the Lodge until it slowly spreads, issues occur, and decay is prevalent. In many cases, these issues and decay become severe.

I ask that each of us take some time to review and deeply consider our oaths—those promises we made to ourselves, our families, our community, and our country.

Those progressive oaths do not include the words "when convenient" and do not say "only in lodge assembled". Those oaths, the centuries-old tenets, were stated for daily living as our trestle board of life.

Regardless of our memberships in the many other worthy Masonic bodies, whether Scottish Rite, York Rite, Shrine, or many others, we are MASONS FIRST. We are so much a Mason, first and foremost, that it requires our be-



The Grand Lodge
of
OKLAHOMA

ing a Master Mason to belong to our worthy, independent bodies.

In public, each of us reflects the reputation of the fraternity as a whole and every Brother in it. When we forget those vows and act like a fool, especially if we are displaying the square and compass or those present know us to be Masons, it begs the question from the public of what we mean by "Making Good Men Better?" If THAT is BETTER, should they not want their husband, family member, or friend to remain just as they are?

This concern is not only a public issue but also a fundamental objective to be conveyed and displayed to new members. These men came into our fraternity hoping to find a positive sanctuary, an escape from the outside world's negativity. They came to experience a personal bond and connection of brotherhood, an atmosphere of meeting on the level, and to find a connection in this very isolating society.

But suppose they come into a lodge that is not Brotherly to all, and they find power struggles, personality conflicts, divisiveness, and discord. In that case, they see no peace, sanctuary, or Brotherhood. They only discover that they are paying dues to belong to an organization in an atmosphere where they can get for free in their daily lives. When asked, disharmony is often not the word used, but toxic is the word commonly used to describe those lodges.

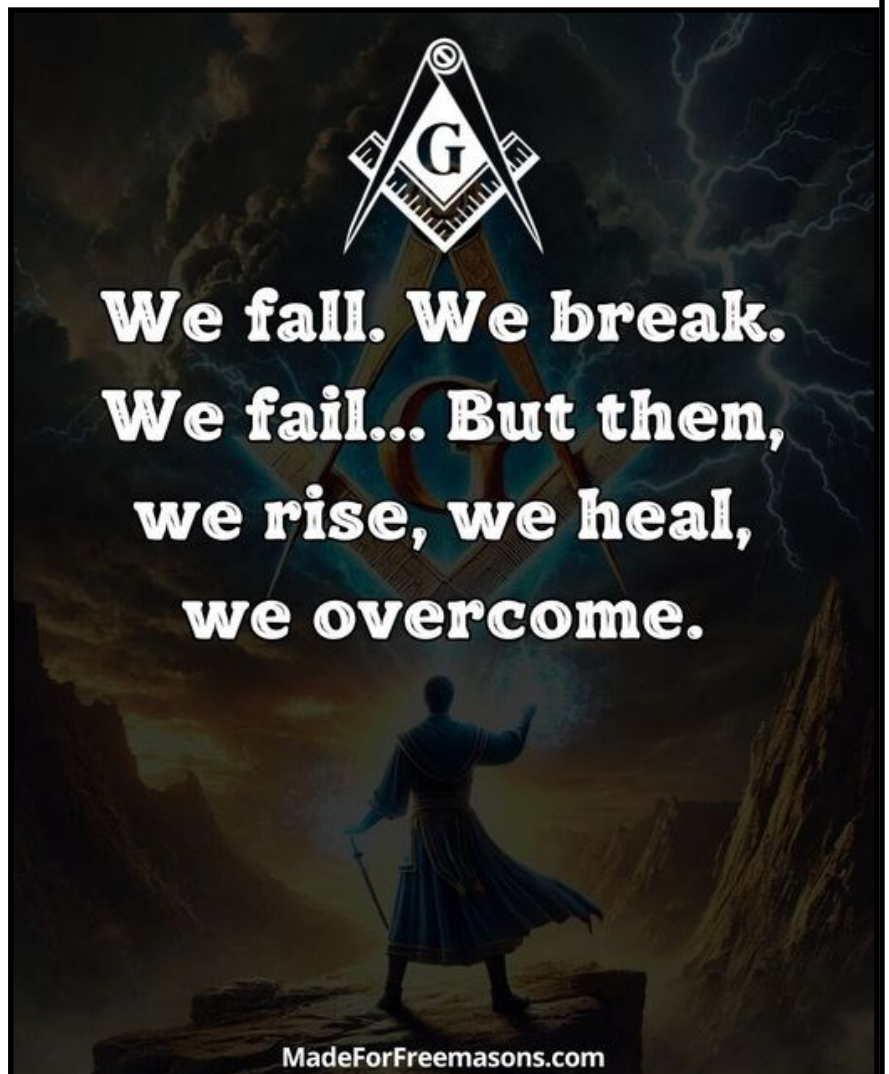
Many of our declining lodges are victims of their location and where they live and the lack of quality prospective members available to replace those who can no longer attend, have moved away, or have laid down their working tools.

Sadly, many Lodges fail because the Brothers simply do not attend anymore.

Even sadder is the reason why they do not attend.

Most of the answers relate to the hostile atmospheres I described above. No brotherhood. Statements of "Why bother? I can be treated that way anywhere and on any given day". "Why bother? I have no say in what goes on in that Lodge. Brothers Smith, Jones, and their favorites run the lodge," and "If I want to see disharmony, I can turn on the TV and watch the news". "All we do is pay the bills and complain. I haven't learned anything or seen any Masonic discussions on anything in years, and nobody there wants to have it".

Those reasons for failure usually



come to light well past the point of no return, and the Lodge had seen its demise years before when only 2 or 3 members were attending, and the others are long since gone.

You see, my Brothers, by ignoring the vows that cannot be honorably repudiated or laid aside, we are conducting the most effective negative campaign possible.

We can spend thousands of dollars on forward-facing ads to the public, trying to let them know the fantastic personal, family, and community benefits this fraternity offers, but only to have them ignored because of a few's poor actions and activities.

Is it too late for those who have forgotten their vows to redeem themselves?

No, Sir, not usually. We must remind them to lead by example and be a shining example daily of what those vows mean and the benefits of living by them.

I can assure you that I see it in many lodges around the state. Lodges big and small. Connections in those lodges warm your heart, renew your faith in mankind, and leave you wholly assured that Brotherhood, on the deepest level, exists in Oklahoma Masonry.

I cannot tell you how many times I have had a rough week, and the first thought in my mind is that I need/want to go to Lodge to see my Brothers, knowing that the experience will overcome that week's pressures in the world. I know that I will feel renewed.

These men and those who seek us out came to us with hope and the desire for education, personal growth, community service, and human compassion. They came to be around better men than they see daily.

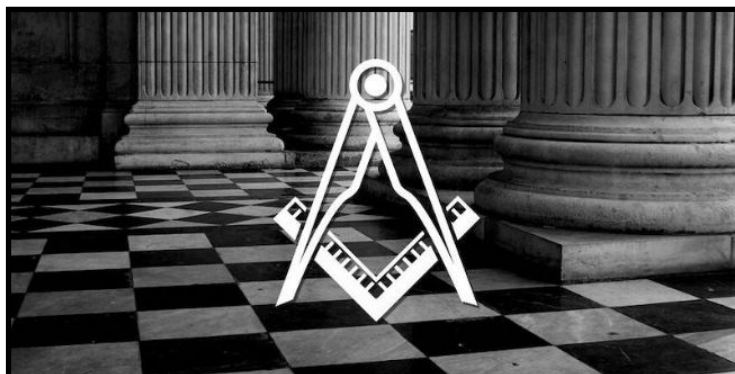
My question to you is - Will they find that in your Lodge?

Brothers, I implore you to remember "that oath we took" and the question and answer of "Will I break it?....NEVER."

I genuinely feel that when we take our vows to heart, live according to them, and treat others in like manner, we will not only find peace and harmony in our lives but also instill it in others. It has been proven successful for centuries. It WILL continue to be proven and perpetuate that success.

We WILL be here for centuries to come .. IF we keep our vows and project them for all to see.

WHEN THE ROOTS ARE DEEP, THERE IS NO REASON TO FEAR THE WIND.



Grand Communications



**Grand Lodge of Arkansas
—Little Rock**



**Grand Lodge of
Texas - Waco**

Our Finest Moment

We are in our finest moments. As we presently practice, Masonry in Oklahoma is in danger of obsolescence. As a fraternity, we have done immeasurable damage to our beloved institution. However, I am convinced we stand on the edge of a revolution. Masonry will thrive well into the future because it satisfies the most basic human needs by fulfilling our desire for friendship and community activity.

I hope to identify the actions and lack of action that harms us daily. Once identified, we can build a program to work our way through the most complicated process of Mason Building. I will also show you that the work has all been done. We must pick up the missing elements and start using the system.

In 2016, the Supreme Council of the Scottish Rite, Northern Masonic Jurisdiction (NMJ) commissioned a comprehensive, data-driven analysis of the state of Freemasonry and the Scottish Rite, the results of which are outlined in the seminal book by former Sovereign Grand Commander John Wm. McNaughton entitled *Reclaiming the Soul of Freemasonry*.

The results in *Reclaiming the Soul* and the new body of research outlined in the book *The Path Forward: 2016 to Present* show that Freemasonry and the Scottish Rite are in step with modern society. The institution's core values and identities remain timeless, and there is a renewed interest in Freemasonry among American men.

The current research reaffirms one of the key findings of the original study: if positioned correctly, with messaging that reflects the authentic spiritual core of the Craft, Freemasonry is an attractive and viable fraternal membership option for men today.

In 2020, the Scottish Rite, NMJ, created and launched the website BeAFreemason.org to grow Blue Lodge Masonry. The site was made possible through a partnership between the Scottish Rite, Northern Masonic Jurisdiction, Shriners International, and the Scottish Rite, Southern



Don Stanton

Deputy Grand Master

Jurisdiction. BeAFreemason.org showcases the "Not Just a Man. A Mason." campaign and tells the story of Freemasonry's historic Brotherhood forthrightly with its truth and honor at its center. The site has proven to be an extremely effective tool in helping men begin their journey into Freemasonry. More than 120,000 "leads" – men inquiring about joining the Craft – have been sent to Grand Lodges across the United States and Canada through the website's referral portal, which shows no sign of abating.

Men have responded to BeAFreemason.org and "Not Just a Man. A Mason." not because these efforts are slick or clever but because the messaging articulates Freemasonry's ideological core and strikes at the heart of modern man. The tremendous response proves that men want to join the organization – they just need help to find their way.

All of this sounds wonderful, but we need to understand the data. Millennials are the largest generation since 2022, with an estimated population of 72.24 million. Born between 1981 and 1996, Millennials surpassed Baby Boomers as the biggest group. Our focus is on Oklahoma, which has a 2022 population of 4.02 million, with two million men. We can extrapolate that 21.56% are Millennials or 431,399 men. We have a target market of 28- to 43-year-old men from the Millennial generation. We now know what our target is in terms of generation and age. Just 5% of this population would represent 21,570 men. That is exciting. We go after them just like the Boomers, right?

We need to understand that this generation of men is unique. The following are key characteristics we need to understand.

- They are confident with technology.

- They are cautious about their personal data.

- They are nostalgic.

- They are obsessed with podcasts.

- They love to travel.

- They are competitive in gaming and esports.

- They value meaningful motivation.

- They express openness to challenging hierarchical structures.

- They value trust and freedom.

- They are accustomed to work flexibility and will change jobs often.

- They are experiencing loneliness at a level never seen before.

This last one is significant. This generation has access to the world's information curated into a blank search box in the palm of their hand. The Apple and Google world is their domain.

They were the first generation to feel the impact of access to this information. It caused them to have different perspectives, expectations, and behaviors. They search for jobs, learn, socialize, travel, communicate, build businesses, network, entertain themselves, sell, buy, and work differently than before.

What do we do with this information? Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. Systems have been in place at several Grand Jurisdictions, and I like what I see from Ohio. The Ohio process recognized that the data from follow-up surveys in 2023 found that 83 percent of men who contacted Grand Lodges about joining were never responded to. The data results were consistent across the country. We do not have a membership problem. We have a follow-up problem. Men are reaching out and knocking at our doors. We are not answering. Ohio created new positions called Prospect Managers. These men accepted the responsibility of guiding a prospect through the Masonic experience to his first anniversary as a Mason. Much like a sales pipeline, the initial contact by a prospect was placed in a software package called a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) program. Ohio selected Hubstop.

The process begins with a first prospect contact. The prospect information is input, and the software immediately acknowledges the man's submission. We need to remember that this generation is amazingly comfortable with technology. The expectation is that within 24 hours, they will receive a response. Any response longer than 24 hours is a lost prospect. The software will send out follow-up information for the prospect weekly. In turn, he will gain information about his qualifications for joining Masonry. This process is intended to be an email, text, and, finally, a telephone call to build trust. The second characteristic we must acknowledge is his guard for personal information. This trust is



**In a time of
increasing darkness,
we must respond with
an increasing of light.**

Madeforfreemasons.com

gradually built until he desires to speak to a Prospect Manager.

Once this level of contact is established, the prospect can be directed to a Lodge. All along the way, each contact with this prospect is documented by the software. It will provide actual data on how many people have been contacted, how long it takes to respond, and how long it takes to move them through the process from mere interest to a decision to join. Then, when he joins, we need to track his progress toward becoming a Mason. Carefully crafted messages provide him with information about the Masonic learning experience.

Where does Oklahoma Masonry go from here? First, we must build our "Not Just A Man. A Mason." Campaign. We must create a public-facing website for prospective men to learn about Freemasonry and ask their questions. All the material needed is available free of charge.

Next, we need to focus on Millennials as the target market. We know these men's characteristics and wants. They are looking for genuine friendships. We can offer that plus community activity.

We need a Digital Recruitment Expert because the front door to Masonry is online. Every inquiry starts with a prospective Mason searching for information on the Craft and culminates with a digital introduction. Most of these digital journeys are now conducted on smartphones. Creating and managing these lead-generation and customer relationship efforts require expertise and training. This role is critically important.

Follow-up is a top priority. It sounds simple, but we must not underestimate the simplicity of that change. We must wake up, work on what matters, and discard the activity that wastes time.

Iron Sharpens Iron



Cornerstones



Cherokee Elementary School

Gene Autry Catoosa
Lodge #185



March 6, 2025



Public Safety
Complex

Gene Autry Catoosa
Lodge #185



March 6, 2025



Collinsville Lodge #165
 Cornerstone Rededication
 March 17, 2025



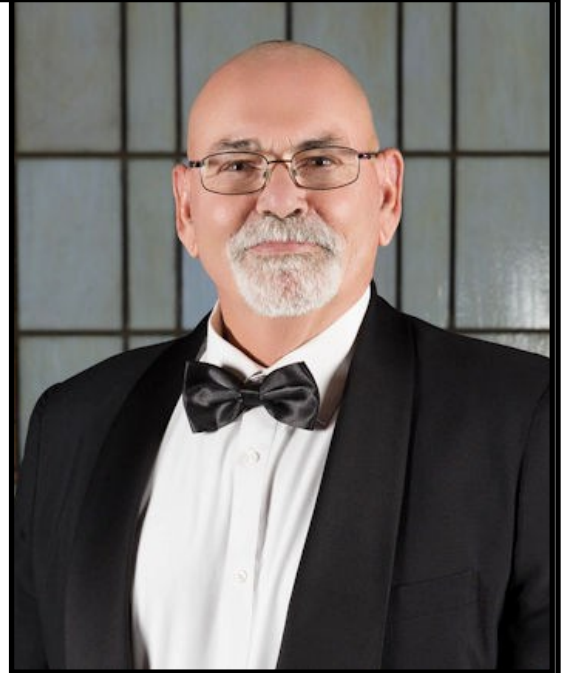
The Power of Positivity

You are a leader - everyone is, regardless of whether one inhabits a “leadership position” or not. We are all responsible for our thoughts and actions on a moment-to-moment basis. I would submit for consideration that our choices can be the single most significant factor in our success in life. What if we choose to be positive?

Positivity is a transformative force that has the power to shape our thoughts, actions, and overall well-being. Maintaining a positive mindset can profoundly affect navigating life in a world of challenges and uncertainties. Whether in personal relationships, career pursuits, or overcoming adversity, the power of positivity influences every aspect of our existence. By fostering optimism, resilience, and gratitude, positivity can enhance our mental and physical health, improve social connections, and lead to a more fulfilling life.

The impact of positivity on mental health is significant. A positive mindset helps reduce stress, anxiety, and depression, enabling individuals to cope with difficult situations more effectively. When people focus on the good rather than dwelling on the negative, they develop resilience—the ability to bounce back from setbacks. Research has shown that individuals with a positive outlook tend to have lower levels of cortisol, the stress hormone, which can reduce the risk of mental health disorders.

Beyond mental health, positivity also has tangible benefits for physical well-being. Optimistic individuals are likelier to engage in healthy behaviors such as regular exercise, balanced diets, and adequate sleep. Studies suggest a positive mindset can boost the immune system, lower blood pressure, and even increase lifespan. The mind and body are deeply interconnected, and by maintaining a hopeful attitude, people can promote overall health and longevity.



James Oates III

Senior Grand Warden

Positivity plays a crucial role in building and maintaining strong relationships. People are naturally drawn to those who radiate optimism and kindness. A positive attitude fosters better communication, reduces conflicts, and creates a supportive personal and professional relationship environment. When individuals approach interactions with compassion and gratitude, they strengthen their social bonds, leading to deeper and more meaningful connections.

In professional settings, positivity enhances teamwork, productivity, and overall job satisfaction. Employees with a positive mindset are more motivated, adaptable, and solution-oriented, contributing to a thriving workplace culture. Leaders who inspire optimism can uplift their teams, boost morale, and encourage collaboration. The power of positivity in relationships, whether at home or in the workplace, cannot be overstated.

Everyone has challenges, and life is full of obstacles, but positivity provides the strength to overcome them. Those who embrace a positive mindset view challenges as opportunities for growth rather than insurmountable problems. They are likelier to persist in the face of failure and remain hopeful even in difficult times. This resilience leads to personal and professional success, as those who believe in their abilities are likelier to achieve their goals.

Moreover, positivity influences the way individuals perceive failure. Rather than seeing setbacks as defeats, positive thinkers view them as learning experiences. This shift in perspective fosters continuous growth and improvement. Some of the most successful individuals in history, from inventors to entrepreneurs, have attributed their achievements to maintaining a positive outlook despite failures and hardships.

The power of positivity extends beyond mere optimism; it is a driving force that profoundly shapes our lives. By cultivating a positive mindset, individuals can improve their mental and physical health, strengthen relationships, and navigate challenges with resilience. Focusing on the good can make all the difference in a world that often presents difficulties. Positivity is not just a state of mind—it is a way of life that leads to greater happiness, success, and fulfillment.

Let us take care of ourselves, our Brothers, and our community.

Brotherhood



Prince Hall
Brethren bring
tidings and fel-
lowship to a
Clinton Lodge
#339 Stated
Meeting

Greetings from the Grand South

Let me start by saying what an honor and privilege it is to serve my brothers in the Craft. During these first few months working as a trustee, I find it extremely important to watch, listen to, and learn from other members and become more proficient at my position as we become a more cohesive team. I genuinely believe that all of your grand line officers have the best interests of the Craft at heart. Each of us brings different strengths and perspectives to the table while we strive to work together to address critical issues facing the future in Masonry and how we can work together to achieve it. By doing this, we can ensure that Masonry will remain a powerhouse in our state.



Michael Ray
Junior Grand Warden



My goal is to continue to strive for a continued increase in new membership and retention of current Masons while identifying other issues within the Craft. I look forward to visiting more lodges across the state this year. If I can assist you in any way, don't hesitate to contact me.

Let's Talk

Fifty Years of Service



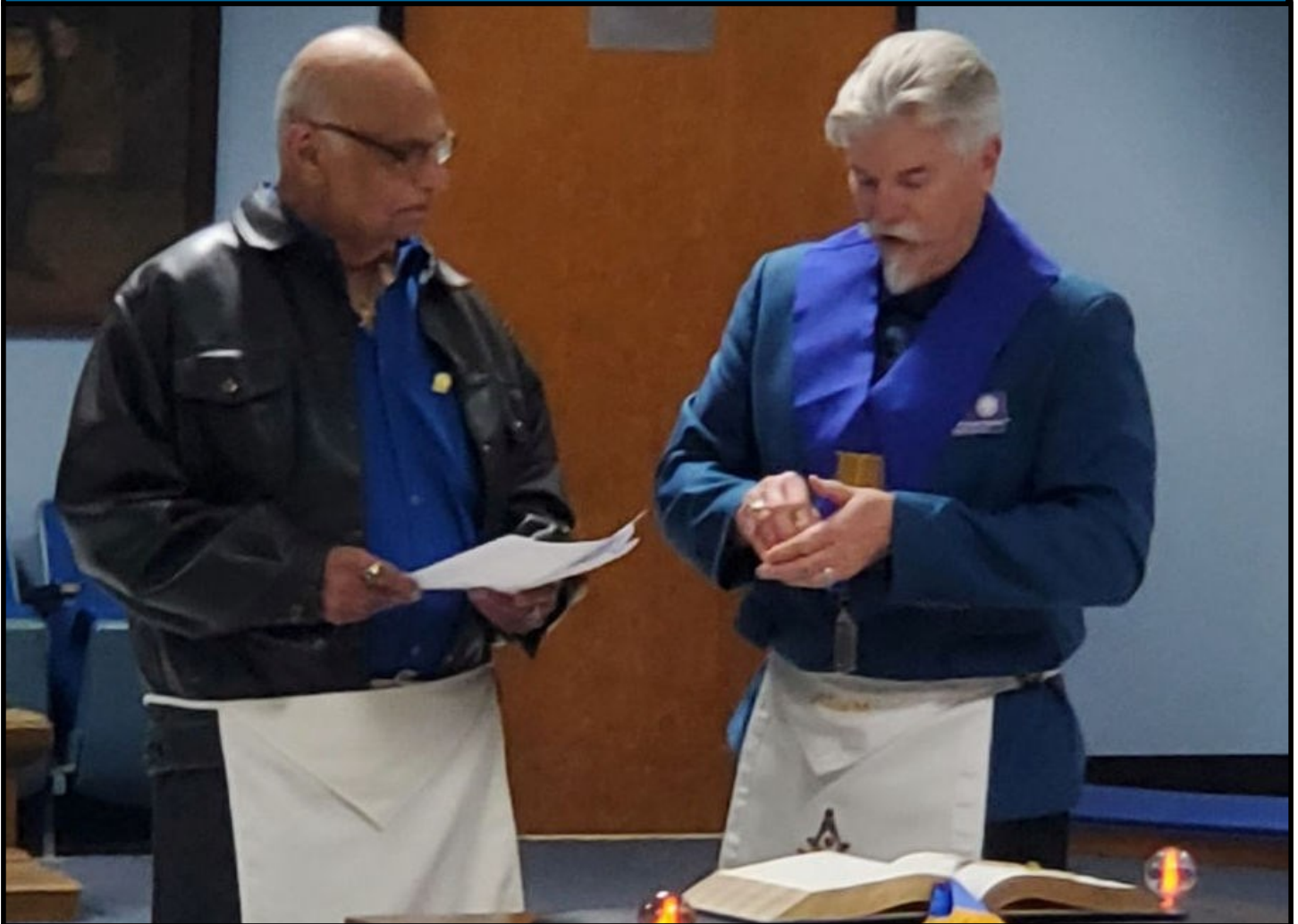
Brethren gathered to honor recovering
Most Worshipful E. Keith Liles
For Fifty Years of Service to the
Scottish Rite



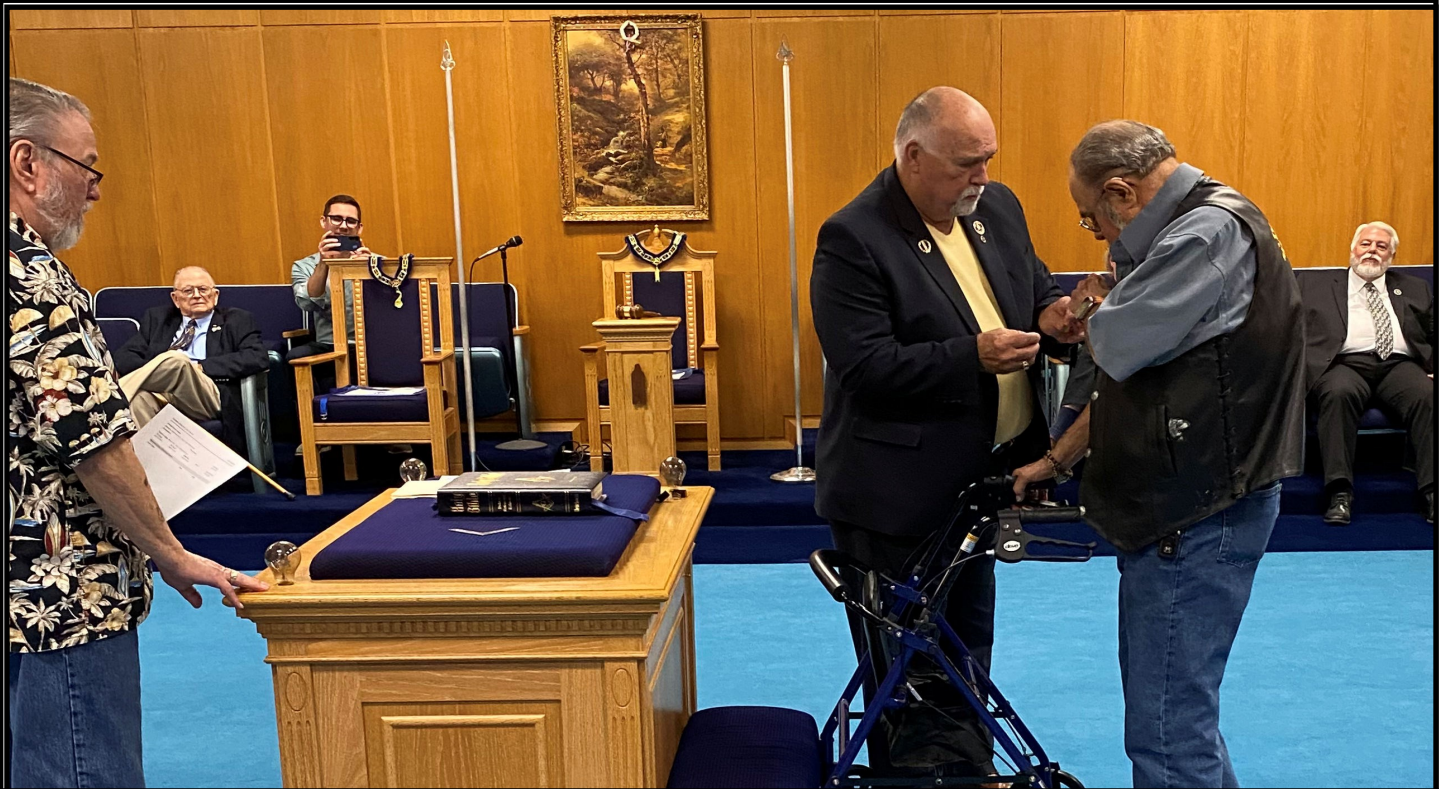
Chandler Lodge #58



Norman Lodge #38



Siloam Lodge #276



Our Doors are Closing!

Are we okay with this?

Year to date, we have raised 14 Master Masons and reinstated 12. However, we have also experienced 121 deaths, 46 suspensions for non-payment of dues, and nine withdrawals, resulting in a net loss of 149 Master Masons and this is only March. Additionally, three Lodges have closed. We currently have 198 Lodges with 14,384 individual Master Masons, not counting plural memberships. Unless we take action now, we expect to see even more losses in membership and Lodge doors closing forever.

A significant reason for Lodge closings is simply the lack of member participation. We have let ourselves become complacent and allow ourselves to lose sight of what Masonry is and why it is essential to American society today. We have found it easier to sit at home instead of getting out to a Lodge meeting a couple of times a month. Once we have missed a meeting or two, we find it hard to get back in the groove and return to Lodge.

While ritual is not the only aspect of Masonry, it sets us apart from the rest of the world. Ritual is the most critical and integral part of our fraternity. Men become complacent and stop attending Lodge meetings without good ritual work, coupled with Masonic education and community involvement. Considering this, alongside the fact that we are losing many good Masons every year to death and suspension for non-payment of dues, it is no wonder we are losing Lodges. We cannot change the inevitable call of the Grand Architect, but we can focus on retaining the members we have and raising more new Masons.

There is a direct correlation between ritual, membership participation, and recruitment. When we lose our ritual, membership participation declines. When member participation declines, recruitment stops, and Lodge doors close forever. Although we cannot directly ask a man to join our fraternity, we can and should always be looking for those good men in our communities who would make good Masons and guide them towards becoming a Mason.



Mike Dixon

Grand Secretary

Also, perhaps we need to remind ourselves, our members, and potential prospects of the many benefits Freemasonry has to offer today, many of which extend well beyond the individual to the broader community:

- One of the primary reasons we Masons should remain active in our Lodges is the sense of brotherhood and camaraderie the fraternity provides. Keeping our ritual alive in our Lodges fosters this sense of belonging. Masonry's network of support and friendship is invaluable, offering emotional and social stability in an increasingly fragmented world.
- Freemasonry emphasizes personal development. The teachings of Masonry and through its ritual and the opportunity to be an officer in our Lodges encourage us to continually strive for moral and intellectual growth, fostering a lifelong commitment to self-improvement. By staying active, Masons continue to benefit from these opportunities for personal enrichment and ethical guidance.
- Within our Lodges, members can take on various roles and responsibilities, helping them develop and refine their leadership skills. This experience benefits the fraternity and translates to personal and professional life, enhancing one's ability to lead and inspire others in various roles in our communities and Churches.
- Freemasonry's commitment to philanthropy and community service, directly and indirectly through the many other Masonic organizations, allows Masonry to make a positive impact in our communities. By remaining active, we Masons contribute to charitable efforts and community projects, fostering a sense of purpose and fulfillment for each of us. The Masonic Lodge is often the only organization in a community that can fill this role.



**It takes a big
man to believe
in something
bigger than himself.**



NOT JUST A MAN. A MASON.

As you can see, active participation in the Masonic fraternity provides ongoing opportunities for brotherhood, personal growth, leadership development, and community service, making it a valuable lifelong commitment.

We do not have to let our ritual die; our Grand Lecturer, Rite Worshipful Babb, and his dedicated Deputy Lecturers are here to help with your ritual work. They will help you put on a Lodge or District School of Instruction.

We must not forget our Brothers or write them off because we have not seen them in the Lodge for a while. Many of you will remember Most Worshipful Grigsby's emphasis was "Be My Brother's Keeper." Knock on the door of a Brother you have not seen at Lodge in a while. Check on each other and be there for your Brother when he needs you. As active Masons, it is up to us to encourage and support those who may be less active, urging them to keep their dues paid and participate in the fraternity, even if it is just by sharing their time with us at meetings and other Lodge activities.

Hopefully, by focusing on these aspects of Masonry, we can improve membership participation, retention, and recruitment, ensuring that our fraternity remains strong and vibrant for generations to come.

FREEMASON

Facebook.com/FraternalTies



What my friends think I do



What my mom thinks I do



What society thinks I do



What conspiracy nuts think I do



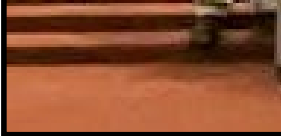
What I think I do



What I really do



Albert Pike
Lodge #162
Entered
Apprentice



Cushing Lodge
#111 Master
Mason @
Myrtle Lodge
#145



Norman Lodge
#38 Master
Mason

Words from the Craft

What is a Brother?

By W. Jerry Armstrong, Past Master Pilot Lodge # 367

Let me tell you all a story about 3 "kinda" wise men, all Past Masters, and all three were respected throughout their districts. They met at an Eastern Star Event and quickly realized they had many things in common.

The first and most important thing is that they could carry their wives' luggage to star events without significant injuries. If you have ever traveled with the Ladies from the Grand Chapter, they don't go anywhere without a minivan crammed full of everything they could need to lead their body successfully. This cargo includes three different outfits, ritual books, a constitution, and, of course, snacks for everyone. These poor guys quickly realized that they were their own support group and became best friends. Their work was well and faithfully done in the many bodies tied to our fraternity, but this time, it was forged through their love of cheerful (also known as forced or threatened) service to their Star Family.

The second was no matter what they were doing, they made it fun. Many of us have forgotten that Masonry is supposed to be fun. Even if your job is to scrub the skillet after a fundraiser or teach a young Entered Apprentice his lecture, our labors define us all. The fun comes in with our laughter, compassion, and heartbreak. Yes, that can be fun too! When it comes to charity work, one of them dressed in long red underwear to get the crowd excited about a charity auction, and the button on his back flap only came loose once or twice. He didn't even slow down. The bids came in, and they raised a ton of money for a great cause.

One of the lessons I learned from all three of these men is that the more you give, the more you receive. Helping a brother with a lecture doesn't take much time, but what you get in return will last a lifetime. Your return on investment is watching that young brother turn in, grow in Masonry, and become a leader in your lodge. Pride may be a deadly sin, but this is something to be proud of. Carrying that luggage, learning a part of one of the degrees, and scrubbing a nasty fry pan are just a few examples of how we give. Think about all of those moments that those labors have come back to us. Handing a check to a family that just lost a home, kept their heat on during a rough Oklahoma winter, or maybe just gas money to get to chemo treatment. That feeling is the true secret of being a Brother.

Maybe if you're lucky, you'll have three mentors that touch your life like these men have touched mine. Perhaps you'll have three men invest in your life and whisper (yes, I'm not the

smartest, and sometimes they had to scream) good council in my ear. Maybe you'll find men in your lodge who will teach you that laughing and having fun during your labors is okay. This mentorship is the goal of every man and Mason, to find others who best can work and best agree. As I sit this evening during the January blizzard in southwest Oklahoma, where we got two whole inches of snow, sitting in front of a fireplace, thinking of these three men who so generously gave up so much of their lives to make others better, I am saddened as two have laid down their working tools for the last time. Where have all of the Masonic mentors gone? Maybe it's you, and you don't know it! In parting, be a Geoffrey, Gerald, or Bob because our mentors may be leaving us too soon, but out there is someone who is looking for a brother, and you are the one they found!

Showing the Way



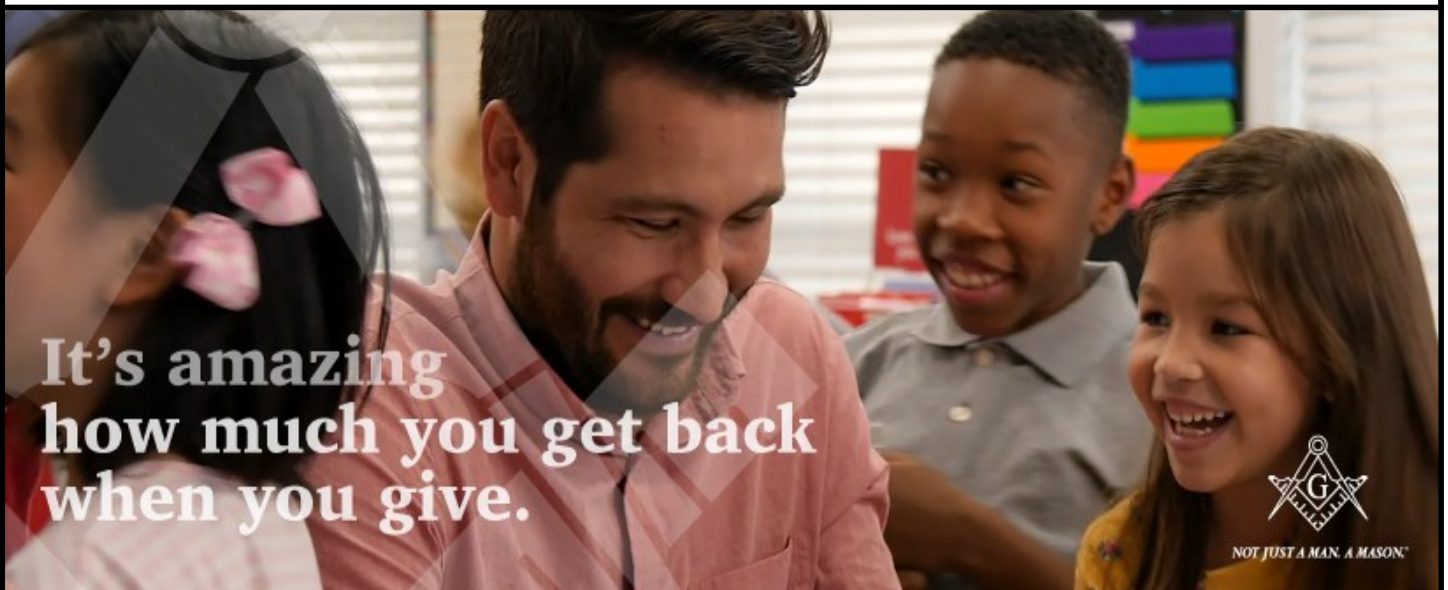
Myrtle Lodge
#145 raises
funds for a
injured single
mom

Norman Lodge #38
raises funds to sup-
port the Toby Keith
Foundation - OK Kids
Corral





The Grand Lodge *of* OKLAHOMA



**It's amazing
how much you get back
when you give.**



NOT JUST A MAN. A MASON.

The Oklahoma Mason is a publication of the Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of the State of Oklahoma.

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