

NORTH CAROLINA THE MASON

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Photos by Michael Harding

New Grand Line officers close out the installation service, but begin labors on a new year still beset with pandemic restrictions, including face masks.

Grand Lodge kicks off new year

Socially distanced installation service also live-streamed

*By Beth Grace
Mason Editor*

For a few moments, none of it mattered: the pandemic, the hand sanitizer, the scratchy masks, the disclosure forms, the social distancing.

What mattered was tradition, ritual, brotherhood.

Ralph David Wicker Jr. was installed Dec. 5 as the 168th Grand Master of Masons before a properly distanced crowd of about 80,

including Grand Line Officers, Past Grand Masters, and guests – and untold numbers who watched via a Facebook livestream.

Everyone who attended was screened. Temperatures were taken, tiny bottles of sanitizer labeled with the seal of the Grand Lodge of North Carolina A.F. & A.M. were distributed. Everyone wore masks, with brief exceptions to make speeches or call the name of the next officer to be installed. Health disclosure forms required for all lodge meetings were proffered and signed.

Newly installed GM Wicker said he was sad that circumstances forced

preparations to be made in just a few weeks before the event, rather than the traditional full year a deputy grand master has to get ready for the big day. He said he missed the larger crowd of 300 or more that normally celebrates an installation.

He had hoped to be installed in the chapel at the Masonic Home for Children at Oxford, but “like everything else, life happens,” he said. No one was even certain an installation could be held until three weeks out.

To meet government meeting restrictions, he chose the Amran Shrine Center in Raleigh instead. GM Wicker is a member of Amran Shrine and has served as their

Temple Attorney for more than 20 years. The Shrine Center was beautifully decorated with Christmas trees – some topped with Darth Vader and storm trooper stars, and a shorter tree with a Yoda head as its star – and tables topped with tiny trees for guests.

GM Wicker is a fan of Star Wars and has often been jokingly referred to as Darth Vader by some of the other Grand Lodge Officers.

He thanked his wife Susan for her vision, her work and artistry that created such a memorable space and occasion. His children and his parents were in the audience.

■ see INSTALLATION, page 2

INSTALLATION, from page 1

He wore a brand new, specially designed Grand Master's apron. The North Carolina-themed apron features a silhouette of the state, the southeastern NC-native Venus Flytrap, dogwoods, and a pinecone – a reference to the state tree, the Longleaf Pine. He worked on the design with Jonathan Underwood, assistant to the Grand Secretary.

As he stepped to the podium to deliver his address, he smiled and said, "It sets differently from this side."

The Grand Master stated that, like every other Mason who comes into the Fraternity, he was told that "even the purple of the Fraternity may rest upon your honored shoulders."

At the time, he did not understand what that meant. He went on to say that once he understood the meaning, as with the other Grand

Masters who have preceded him, he never envisioned himself becoming Grand Master.

He took a moment to thank outgoing Grand Master Shaun Bradshaw for leading the Craft through this pandemic year. MW Bradshaw got all of the hard tasks and "none of the benefits," GM Wicker said. "You have been rolling the ball uphill all year. I hope I can live up to what you have done."

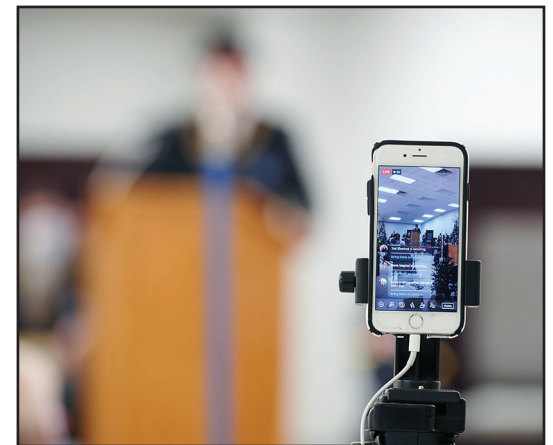
GM Wicker thanked those who helped make the day run well, including a host of Past Grand Masters, the leadership of the Amran, Sudan and Oasis Shrine, and many others.

He gaveled the meeting to an end with two gavels, both of which his wife Susan had fashioned by an Oxford cabinetmaker from pieces of a pecan tree that fell at MHCO some years ago. ❖



Installing Grand Officer Past Grand Master Gene Jernigan is escorted by new Grand Master R. David Wicker Jr.'s sons, Colby and Lance.

Photos by Michael Harding



LEFT: Grand Line Officers prepare for installation.

ABOVE: Due to attendance restrictions, the service was also livestreamed this year.

DEVOTIONAL CORNER

By Rev. Mark M. Vickers
Past Grand Chaplain

Here we go again! A start to a new year and the hope that Masonic work and interaction will regain its composure and slowly return to what it will be.

As I finished up last year as the Grand Chaplain, I figured out that my "go to" verse in the Holy Writings came from Isaiah 9:10, "The bricks have fallen down, but we will rebuild with smooth stones, the Sycamores have been cut down, but we will replace them with Cedars."

As I reflected upon 2020, the pandemic, the social injustice, the radical weather occurrences, and the like, I was filled with a notion of hope and anticipation that

something greater will come. The prophet Isaiah is recorded to have written these words in the midst of great despair in a time of, what was then, worldly destruction.

But in the midst of this destruction and calamity came the hope that new things would appear. They would not be the same old stones nor the same old trees, but new smooth stones, stronger than the ones that had been used. They would be new tall Cedars that would tower over the people and provide them shade and cover. I, too, find this hope as I reflect upon what 2021 will bring to us as Masons, or better yet, based on our obligations, what we will bring to the world.

It will be hard pressed to live through

another year like 2020, but as Masons we must be prepared and excited to bring Masonry into 2021.

We must show the world what it means to be "smooth" in ashlar style, we must show the world what it means to be towering, protective, and life giving in Cedar style. We have our work cut out for us as Masons.

But I, as I hope you are, hopeful that we can achieve just that! That we can show the world, through our daily lives, our community and charitable involvement, and through our personal devotions that we are smooth and tall. That we have something worth giving to a broken world. That we have something to share with men who seek "more light" in their lives and need

a place to turn. May we be that beacon of hope and that provider that we have taken on ourselves and share it with a world that so desperately needs light!

I am grateful to have been asked to continue my thoughts and musings as we continue in 2021 and I am grateful to be a Mason in North Carolina.

PRAYER: Grand Architect of the Universe, may we approach the newness of a new year with hope, anticipation, and excitement to share with the world, the smoothness, the tall and strong attributes, and the light that we bring. May 2021 be a year of hope and completion in all that we seek and all that we sow.

SO MOTE IT BE! AMEN.

PGM B.T. Phillips was a champion of the Children's Home

Past Grand Master Most Worshipful Bunn Tate "B.T." Phillips Jr., an expert marksman who won two Purple Hearts and served during the Battle of the Bulge, died Oct. 19 at age 96.

He was born Aug. 19, 1924, on a small farm near Siler City, the youngest of six born to Bunn Tate Phillips and Annie Maude Hudson.

The World War II (European Theatre) veteran entered the U.S.



Army at 18 and was discharged at 21 as a staff sergeant. He landed on Omaha Beach on July 4, 1944, and was quickly assigned to a rifle squad of the 28th infantry division as a replacement five days after the division was committed to battle. He was awarded the Combat Infantry Badge, was twice wounded in action and credited with participation in all five campaigns in the European theater. As a foot soldier he walked from Normandy to Germany and fought through France, Luxembourg, and into Germany, including fighting the Battle of the Bulge.

He was one of only four original

members of his company to return to his country after WWII ended. His commendations included a Combat Infantry Badge, Bronze Star, two Purple Hearts, and a Citation-Normandy Campaign (given by France).

When he returned to civilian life in Siler City, he met and married Virginia Dare Lindley, of Snow Camp in 1948. His career would span 41 years in finance/banking in North Carolina.

MW Phillips was a 68-year Mason, raised in 1952 at Rockingham #495. He served on numerous committees and was an honorary member of lodges all over

the state. He served as Grand Master of Masons in 1990, focusing his year on raising awareness and finances for the Masonic Home for Children at Oxford. He also was a member of the Scottish Rite and the Shrine, and was presented an honorary 33rd degree. He has a window of honor named for him at the George Washington Masonic National Memorial.

He is survived by his wife; and sons, Stephen Lindley, Michael Tate (wife: Phyllis) & Bunn Tate III, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

The family asks that memorials be made to the Masonic Home for Children at Oxford. 🌿

Former county manager Pervier led Grand Lodge in 2005

Past Grand Master Most Worshipful Graham W. Pervier, a celebrated servant of his community and his Craft and its charities, passed away Oct. 5.

A native of Virginia, he graduated with a BA from the University of Virginia and a Master's of Urban Design from the University of Virginia School of Architecture.

He began his career in state and local government with the Division of Community Planning area office



in Washington, NC, in 1969. He became administrator of the Governmental Relations Division in Raleigh in 1970. From 1970 to 1973, he was executive director of the Lumber River Area Council of Governments in Lumberton.

He served as county manager of Currituck County 1973-77 and Beaufort County 1977-80. In 1980, he moved to Winston-Salem as assistant county manager of Forsyth County and was appointed county manager in 1987. He was chairman of the Albemarle Area EMS Advisory Council in 1976 and 1977, and chaired the Region I EMS Advisory Council.

He also loved soccer. He was a youth soccer coach for eight years,

and a high school and intercollegiate referee for 15 years. He was also a US Soccer Federation Associate referee instructor. He is a member and past president of the Exchange Club of Winston-Salem, and served on the boards of the Chamber of Commerce and the Red Cross.

In Freemasonry, he was a member and past master of Forsyth #707, where he was raised in 1987. He was a member of the Scottish Rite Valley of Winston-Salem, the Winston-Salem York Rite Bodies, and a noble of Oasis Shrine. He is also a member of the AMD, York Rite College, and the Rosicrucians.

He was appointed to the Grand Lodge line in 1998 by then-GM

Tom Gregory. He served as Grand Master in 2005. Prior to his appointment, he had served as a member of the Grand Lodge Committee on Finance and as treasurer of the Board of Directors of the Masonic and Eastern Star Home.

He is survived by his wife Karen English Pervier; his daughter, Leigh Johannessen and husband Wayne; son, Geoffrey Pervier and wife, Heather; grandchildren, Alexis Johannessen, Karah Johannessen, Garrett Johannessen and Carson Pervier; sister, Joan Bollenbacher and husband, Robert; and, a host of much loved extended family. The family asks that memorials be sent to the Masonic Home for Children. 🌿

PGM Gregory led effort toward racial tolerance by Masonry

A vocal champion of racial recognition, tolerance and openness, Past Grand Master Most Worshipful Thomas Warren Gregory Sr. passed away Oct. 25.

Born April 8, 1946, in Iredell County, he was the son of James S. Gregory and Mary Warren Gregory. He graduated from Mitchell College and Pembroke State University.



He was employed as broker in charge of Lake Norman Realty's Statesville office.

He was an active member of Broad Street United Methodist Church and Gideons International.

In Freemasonry, he was also an active Freemason in Statesville #27, Grassy Knob #471, and Traphill #483. His Masonic career began in 1962 when he became a member of the Order of DeMolay in Statesville. He remained active with the DeMolay. He was raised as a Master Mason in 1975, and served as Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of

Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons of North Carolina in 1998. He also was a founding force of Wilkerson College.

His year was a charged one, beginning with his regret at his own installation that he did not speak out more forcefully when a parliamentary technicality prevented a vote on a Board of General Purposes resolution against racism.

He wrote about his regret in the NC Mason in 1998, and spoke of it again in his farewell address a year later.

In that address, he thanked those

who stood by him during a turbulent year.

"To my friends who are here today, thank you – I know it has not been easy to support me these 12 past months. The issues of the day have been emotional ones, and I know some of you have received harsh criticism as a result.

"To my foes who are here today, thank you – you've made me a better man, a better Mason. As I traveled across the state and spoke to the issues of racism and racial divisive-

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THE MISSION OF FREEMASONRY IN NORTH CAROLINA IS TO RAISE THE MORAL, SOCIAL, INTELLECTUAL, AND SPIRITUAL CONSCIENCE OF SOCIETY BY TEACHING THE ANCIENT AND ENDURING PHILOSOPHICAL TENETS OF BROTHERLY LOVE, RELIEF, AND TRUTH, WHICH ARE EXPRESSED OUTWARDLY THROUGH SERVICE TO GOD, FAMILY, COUNTRY, AND SELF UNDER THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD WITHIN THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Virtual Grand Lodge took teamwork, preparation

Golf great Tom Kite once said that the only thing that relieves pressure is preparation.

And make no mistake – there was no small amount of pressure on the brothers and others called upon to take Annual Communication virtual this year. It was a first in more ways than you can count.

And it went off without a hitch. Well, there was one hitch ... but the timing was so exceptional, it worked out just fine. The internet went out for a bit – but since it happened at lunchtime, it worked well with the schedule and didn't seriously extend the day's labor.

Preparation made all the difference, says WB Joey Transou, whose work helped make the technical side of the event work.

The planning began well in advance, after it became clear the coronavirus had rendered the usual gathering of 1,000 good men gathering in Winston-Salem impossible.

Grand Master Shaun Bradshaw made the tough call to take the meeting virtual.

"The Grand Master set out the goals he wanted to achieve, and he wanted to mirror the typical Annual Communication as much as possible. With that as our goal, we tried to make the mechanics work," says Transou.

Grand Secretary Walt Clapp, Assistant to the Grand Secretary Jonathan Underwood and new Grand Lodge Outreach Coordinator Matt Robbins worked with Brother Joey and the Grand Lodge Technical Committee and others to set up the process.

The goal was to make the entire event, including a first-ever electronic voting system, as seamless and transparent as possible. One of the major tasks was finding the right election software.

The team found the online voting system Election Buddy. Three software applications were evaluated and the leader – Election Buddy – was tested and passed with flying colors. With a little fine-tuning, the software was a perfect fit. Voting was secure and accurate.

One of the major successes of the virtual event was that the Grand Master could still

do what a Grand Master does at Annual Communication. Speeches could be made, awards given, honors bestowed. Another, says GM Bradshaw, was that the virtual meeting was every bit as well-run and properly conducted as the face-to-face communication.

"I've had nothing but positive feedback," GM Bradshaw said. "And it was set up in a way that we can replicate it – we don't ever want to replicate it – but we can use some lessons learned for future meetings." For example, the electronic voting system was a hit and helped move votes along faster and accurately.

It's also possible that the technology is in place now to allow brothers who are not delegates to watch proceedings from their districts – an option they have never

had before.

The visual side of the meeting was carried off with help of a professional company, AVEX Audio Visual of Kernersville, which brought in cameras and handled all set-up needs and took direction from our own behind-the-scenes producer, WB Cliff Pranke.

Finally, when all elements were in place, DDGMs and others gathered two weeks before Annual Communication for a dry run. The test went perfectly – with only minor problems that were easily fixed on the fly. Another dry run was held at the Masonic Center of Winston-Salem, where the Grand Line Officers would spend the day, along with 10 masters from District 26.

The masters gathered to meet a Code requirement that says 10 lodges, each represented by one or more of its principal officers or their respective proxies and a brother qualified to open and preside over the Grand Lodge, shall constitute a quorum to transact any business in the Grand Lodge either at an annual or an emergent communication.

The event was available on video in real time; only the opening and closing ceremonies were not shown, to protect the ritual.

The Masonic Center of Winston-Salem was the perfect location to hold the main event – it



By Beth Grace
Editor

■ see TEAMWORK, page 9

FROM THE GRAND MASTER



Whence came you?

By R. David Wicker Jr.
Grand Master

Over the past seven years, I have advanced through the line of Grand Lodge Officers. During that time, I have contemplated what I would say in my first article to *The North Carolina Mason*. I have asked myself, “What could I possibly have to say that would be of any interest to our Craft?”

I recall going to the Grand Lodge Annual Communication for the very first time in 2003, holding the proxy for our Junior Warden. I recall watching as the Grand Master and his officers presided over that Communication and I thought, “What great men we have leading our craft.”

In all honesty, that is not how I saw myself then, nor do I see myself that way today. To be frank, I have always been just a simple Blue Lodge Mason.

In the summer of 2013, I was preparing to give the Third Degree Lecture at the raising of WB Kevin Otis, administrator of the Masonic Home for Children at Oxford. After lunch, just before the degree work began, Deputy Grand Master Dalton Mayo and Past Grand Master Gene Jernigan walked up to me. DGM Mayo asked if he could have a brief word with me. The three of us stepped to the side and DGM Mayo said he would like for me to be his appointment as Junior Grand Steward.

My first reaction was to look around. I was certain that he had to be talking to someone else.

Since my appointment, it has been my privilege to visit lodges across this great state and to meet some of our brothers for the first time. On those occasions, I have often been asked who I was and how I came to be a Grand Lodge Officer.

Today there are 371 lodges and approximately 35,000 Masons in North Carolina. It is unlikely that I will have the opportunity to visit each lodge or to meet every brother. Therefore, I will take the direction of my good friend and much respected brother, Grand Master Shaun Bradshaw, to use this first article to share my story and answer the question that has often been asked of me: “Whence came you?”

I grew up in Greensboro. My parents worked hard to support me and my two sisters. My

father worked at a factory, my mother as the secretary of an elementary school. It was in a small house on Potomac Drive where our parents first instilled in their children the values and work ethics they have today.

Growing up, my sisters and I always attended public schools. I graduated from James B. Dudley High School in 1978, my sisters from Southeast Guilford High School. It was in high school at the age of 17 when I started dating Susan, now my wife of 38 years.

After high school, I graduated from University of North Carolina-Greensboro, married Susan and moved to Durham to attend law school at North Carolina Central University. After graduating from law school in 1985, Susan and I decided to remain in Durham. She was working in health care and I started my law practice.

Growing up, I knew nothing of Freemasonry. My father was not a Mason. None of his four brothers were Masons. To the best of my knowledge, none of the fathers of any of my friends were Masons. In fact, I have no independent recollection of having ever seen a Masonic lodge while I was growing up.

In the early years of my law practice, I had a couple of clients who spoke of having a child at some place called the Oxford Orphanage, but I didn't know anything about it.

Susan and I have an interest in old houses. In the late 1990s, we bought an old house on College Street in Oxford. Like all old houses, ours needed a lot of work before it was in suitable condition for us to move in.

One Saturday morning in late June, I was at the house doing some painting in preparation of our move. It was already hot and I had the windows open to let in a little breeze.

As I worked, I was interrupted by the noise of some kind of parade going up College Street. I watched in amazement as horses and motorcycles and little race cars proceeded past my house. I had never heard of St. John's Day and knew nothing about a parade.

I continued watching from the second-floor room where I had been painting. I was amazed as the parade continued for more than two hours. At the time, I had no idea where they were going or why.

It was entertaining but I had to get back to painting.

I never walked up the street to see where the parade ended. In the weeks that followed, I learned that the parade was a part of the St.

John's Day celebration at the Masonic Home for Children.

That, my brothers, was my introduction to Freemasonry.

Not long after, I mentioned the parade to Archie Smith, a friend and lawyer with whom I had practiced law. At the time, I did not know Archie was a Mason. It was Archie who told me about the work being done at the children's home. Over the next several months, Archie continued to talk with me about the home and about Masonry. It was through those discussions and out of my respect for Archie that I came to petition Oak Grove Lodge.

Over the years, I have been fortunate enough to get to know and observe many Grand Lodge Officers. Although their skill sets varied greatly, each of our paths to becoming Grand Master has been very similar.

That path is one of service. After being raised in 1999, when my lodge was open, I tried to be there. If there was degree work, I wanted to have an active speaking part. When my lodge had no one to deliver the lectures, I learned them. After learning the lectures, several brothers in my District encouraged me to become certified, which I did even before I was Master.

After becoming certified, WB Dicky Lyon recommended me to be the DDGL. While serving as DDGL, I was asked if I would be willing to serve on the Board of Custodians. While serving on the Board of Custodians, I was asked by Grand Master Ledford to fill an unexpired term of a brother who had been serving on the Board of Directors of WhiteStone.

After my term as DDGL, I was appointed DDGM. While I was DDGM and on the WhiteStone Board, I was asked to serve on the Committee for Masonic Jurisprudence. At some point along this line, I apparently came to PGM Mayo's attention.

My brothers, this is the one constant that I have seen in every Grand Lodge Officer, both past and present. They have been willing to freely give of their time, their talent and their energy; not for their own glory, not because they wanted an appointment to a Board or Committee, not because they wanted a title, but because they wanted to serve this Grand Jurisdiction.

Not one Grand Lodge Officer that I have

■ see WICKER, page 9



LION & PILLAR 2021



Begin your lodge's quest to qualify for the Lion and Pillar Lodge of Excellence Award for 2021! You can easily identify the new or changed requirements by looking for the **RED** type. This is the third year for the Platinum level distinction and remember, you must first successfully complete all five of the main categories in order to be eligible. Notice the boxes to the left of each item. Use them like a scorecard to check off what you've accomplished this year. **Application deadline is June 30, 2021.**

CATEGORY 1

EDUCATION

COMPLETE 3
OF 8 ITEMS 

- 1. Implement the Lodge System of Masonic Instruction as a subordinate lodge or as a district, with participating lodges receiving credit. DDGMs will certify lodge participation.
- 2. Host a speaker from the Grand Lodge Speakers Bureau, a member of the Grand Lodge Committee on Masonic Education, a faculty member from Wilkerson College, a faculty member from the Davie Academy or the Middle Chamber for a program at a stated communication.
- 3. Have a deacon graduate from Wilkerson College.*
- 4. Have a member complete a Davie Academy session.
- 5. Have a member complete a Middle Chamber session.*
- 6. Establish a Masonic Book Club for the lodge and have members regularly provide a review and/or personal reflection of a book on Masonic Ritual, Symbolism, or Philosophy.
- 7. As a regular part of the stated communication of the lodge, have a member read a portion of the ritual, invite the brethren in attendance to contemplate and discuss what it means, and encourage them to consider it at a deeper, more personal level.
- 8. Document that three lodge members viewed videos produced by the Grand Lodge Committee on Masonic Education, Wilkerson College, Davie Academy, or Middle Chamber. (May view and document two videos maximum for two credits in this category.)

* This item counts double if it is the lodge's first time participating in the program.

CATEGORY 2

PATRIOTISM

COMPLETE 5
OF 9 ITEMS 

- 1. Organize a lodge visit to veterans in a nursing home. Do not limit visits to Masonic veterans.
- 2. Visit veterans in a Veterans Administration hospital in Salisbury, Fayetteville, Durham or Asheville.
- 3. Contact and offer to assist the local Masonic Service Association of North America (MSANA) Hospital Visitation volunteer in a VA hospital.
- 4. Host a member of the National Sojourners for a program.
- 5. Host a non-Mason veteran for a program.
- 6. Hold a Masonic education program on the MSANA's Hospital Visitation and Disaster Relief initiatives.
- 7. Host a veterans meal for veterans and active military personnel at your lodge separate from a regular stated meeting. Include non-Masonic veterans, active military personnel and local high school youth/JROTC interested in military careers at this event.
- 8. Support a "Wreaths Across America" or similar veterans projects.
- 9. Document that three lodge members viewed videos produced by the Lion and Pillar Team on

- a. Our VA Hospital Visitation Program
- b. Masonic Service Association of North America
- c. National Sojourners
- d. George Washington Masonic National Memorial in Alexandria

(Must view and document all videos for two credits in this category. May view and document two videos for one credit.)

CATEGORY 3

PHILANTHROPY

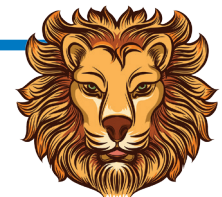
COMPLETE #1 AND 3
OF REMAINING 5 

- 1. Set a goal to contribute an average of \$5 per member to (each) MHCO, North Carolina Masonic Foundation, and MESH Foundation LLC (which benefits qualified Masonic and OES residents at WhiteStone) between July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021. Document contributions and send copies of checks with your application to expedite the approval process. (NOTE: Community charitable projects are covered under Category 5)
- 2. Host a North Carolina Masonic Foundation development officer for a program at a stated communication or attend the Davie Academy session on philanthropy.
- 3. Host an MHCO or WhiteStone development officer for a program
- 4. Hold a lodge meeting at Whitestone or MHCO under dispensation from the Grand Master, and schedule a tour of the home, meeting with the director or his

designee, and visit with residents.

- 5. Assist a brother or his widow in getting financial assistance from the MESH LLC Outreach program (336-601-5593).
- 6. Either
 - (a) Contact the Masonic Home for Children and agree to sponsor a cottage for Christmas or a summer trip or
 - (b) Contact WhiteStone and agree to sponsor a resident receiving financial assistance for a minimum of one year.

The Masonic Home for Children and WhiteStone will provide the lodge with the information related to the financial obligations necessary to complete this item.



CATEGORY 4

MASONIC MEMBERSHIP

COMPLETE #1
AND FOUR OF
REMAINING
10 ITEMS



- 1. Contact no less than 50% of your lodge's list of inactive members, a minimum of once per year, either by phone (voice contact – voice messages do not count) or make a visit to their residence. [An inactive member for this purpose is any member who has not attended a meeting within a 12-month period.] Provide a list of names and dates when contacted.
- 2. Hold an appreciation dinner for lodge families and widows.
- 3. Identify and contact widows, by phone or visitation, at least two times prior to June 30, 2021. Provide any assistance they may need and record the nature and outcome of the outreach. **See calling tree sample or contact Lion and Pillar Team.**
- 4. Confirm valid email addresses, phone numbers, and occupation information in MORI for at least 75 percent of lodge members.
- 5. Adopt and use the Our Lodge Page function in MORI. Hold a Masonic education program to explain OLP to members.
- 6. Help plan and participate in a districtwide event such as a fundraiser for Masonic charities, a Masonic education event (not including a School of Instruction, Lecture Service or Grand Master district meeting), a districtwide degree, a districtwide funeral service, a districtwide fellowship dinner with Masonic education speaker, or a districtwide community service project.
- 7. Engage new brethren at the lodge or district level. Form an Under 5-degree team consisting of Masons with less than five years in the craft or require new members to deliver papers or Masonic education programs within three months of raising.
- 8. Plan an observance of the Feast of St. John the Baptist on or near June 23 as a lodge or a district, with a meal and Masonic speaker. Submit your event announcement, flyer or other advance event publicity to qualify.
- 9. Host a member of the Grand Lodge Masonic Renewal Committee for a program.
- 10. Implement an innovative use of technology in the lodge. For purposes of the Lion & Pillar award, "innovative" is defined as utilizing any form of technology that is not presently in use in the lodge. For example, if a lodge does not currently use a laptop and projector for presentations in the lodge, adding and using those items will constitute an "innovative" use of technology, since it will be new to the lodge.
- 11. Attempt to contact all "unfinished work" from the prior three years, determine why they haven't continued, and report findings as part of the final application materials for the Lion & Pillar award.

CATEGORY 5

AFFILIATED CONNECTIONS

COMPLETE
4 OF 13
ITEMS



- 1. Host an appreciation meal for local firefighters, police officers and/or rescue personnel/EMTs as a district or lodge.
- 2. Hold a lodge Open House and invite the community.
- 3. Contribute a minimum of \$5 per member to support a charitable cause in your local community.
- 4. Participate in a Habitat for Humanity Program in your community by providing labor to support one of their projects. Donations only do not count towards this item.
- 5. Partner with a local public school on literacy. Read to students, contribute to a school library or book drive, or establish a Bikes for Books-type reading reward program as a lodge or district. <https://www.masoniccharitablefoundation.org/programs/masonic-bikes-books/>
- 6. Grow the Masonic family by having at least one lodge member join the York Rite, Scottish Rite, Shrine, Order of the Eastern Star or Amaranth, or contribute to the formation of, or support for existing DeMolay or Rainbow Girls organizations in your lodge or district.
- 7. Utilize the MHCO Print Shop for printing requirements in your lodge or a District event coordinated by your lodge.
- 8. Sponsor a Blood drive in your community.
- 9. Sponsor a cooking team for the MHCO Homecoming Festival or the Pig Jig.
- 10. Sponsor a youth organization (Little League, Soccer, Volleyball, etc.) in your community. **This will count as two items in 2021.**
- 11. Attend a Masonic and/or Eastern Star function at Camp Gray Rock.
- 12. Support a School Project, "Stuff the Bus," "Backpack" program for summer food support to the needy or other similar programs.
- 13. **Be creative. Submit an idea to the Lion and Pillar Team for approval that will let the community know the lodge is present and active. If approved, this one could count as two credits.**

PLATINUM LEVEL

To earn the Platinum award, you must complete one of the four choices below after first qualifying for the standard Lion and Pillar requirements. The application deadline is June 30, 2021.

Starting July 1, 2020, and prior to June 30, 2021, a member or the installed senior deacon gives his first-ever Fellow Craft Degree lecture. This can be accomplished in his own lodge (preferable) or at another lodge within his district if his lodge experiences no such degree work during the qualifying period or by documentation with the District Deputy Grand Lecturer.

OR

Starting July 1, 2020, and prior to June 30, 2021, a member of your lodge conducts his first-ever Masonic graveside or memorial funeral service. This also can be accomplished in his own lodge or at another lodge within his district if his lodge experiences no such requests during the qualifying period or by documentation with the District Deputy Grand Lecturer.

OR

Starting July 1, 2020, and prior to June 30, 2021 confirm

5% of all current lodge members are signed up for a recurring monthly gift to MHCO (<https://my.simplegive.com/App/Giving/mhco>) or MESH LLC (<https://www.liveatwhitestone.org/donate/>). Note that recurring gifts DO count towards Category 3, Item 1.

OR

Starting July 1, 2020, and prior to June 30, 2021, participate, as a lodge, in a public ceremony that brings Freemasonry to the public view and attention. Examples include: public cornerstone layings, public building dedications, etc. Past events that would count toward this item include: 2015 rededication of NC Capitol Building, 2016 Vance Memorial rededication, 2017 rededication of Raleigh Presbyterian Church, Halifax Day, Thomasville Memorial Day celebration, **or Masonic Unity Events that are public and approved by the Lion and Pillar Team.**



To apply, submit the official application or write a letter of application listing the items your lodge chose to complete. Provide details about your lodge's performance on or plans for completing each selected item. Send your letter to Past Grand Master A. Gene Cobb, Jr. by regular mail or by email to gcobb@glnc.us. Recipients will be notified by Aug. 1 and will be recognized during Annual Communication in Winston-Salem.

OUR MASONIC CHARITIES AT WORK

Eddie retires: Era ends at MHCO print shop

By Beth Grace
Mason Editor

Little Charles grew up with 325 brothers and sisters, and he still loves every last one of them.

Charles Edward Dickerson Jr. was just a toddler when he, his little brother and their two sisters moved into the old Oxford Orphanage, an institution that would become the safe haven of his childhood, the foundation of his life's work and the perfect model for his adult life.

Eddie Dickerson will retire at year's end, capping a 50-plus year career in the printing industry and 18 years at the Masonic Home for Children's School of Graphic Arts – better known by his 34,000-plus brothers in NC Freemasonry as the "Print Shop."

It wasn't an easy – or expected – decision to retire. Eddie says that the loss of a good friend and fellow alumnus of MHCO and the time he has spent at home during the pandemic made him think about time – and the limited nature of it. Life is short and he wants to spend as much as he can with family and friends, not consumed by things that don't seem so pressing in light of the way the world is right now.

"Someone told me you shouldn't retire without a plan. Right now, I have no plan other than to decompress," he says. "I'm not somebody to sit on the couch for long, so I'll get

busy. But not for a while. I do plan to do some traveling with my wife Pamela, which we enjoy."

He alerted friends via Facebook in July and the good wishes have been coming in ever since. He was honored by the MHCO Board of Directors at its quarterly meeting in November. His last official day is Dec. 31.

Eddie remembers little of his life before arriving in Oxford, where he was cared for by loving adults and surrounded by hundreds of good kids just like him. He knows only that when he was almost 2, his life changed forever. His father, diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia, shot and killed his mother. His grandparents were unable to take all four children in, but with some guidance from the Freemasons in Surry County – who reached out to help, as small-town folks will when a neighbor's in

trouble -- found shelter and a family at the Oxford Orphanage.

Little Charles "quickly fell in love with Oxford. You tend to forget anything bad that happened before because you're just so busy at the

home, with new friends and things to do."

He recalls that he and his siblings learned the lessons of life at Oxford. "There were days of laughter and days of tears, days I wished I had a mother to hold me

and a father to scold me, but there was never a day I didn't wonder if this new life in Oxford would lead us in the right direction."

He was taught the trade of printing on campus by Allen Colenda, a man he considers to this day as his "father figure" during his growing years.

Upon graduating from the home, he attended NC State University. He went on to manage print opera-

tions at Fails Management Institute and Liggett & Myers Tobacco Co. He was also owner of Watermark Graphics in Apex. He joined the School 18 years ago and became manager in 2004.

Eddie was raised as a Master Mason at Cary #198 in 1984 and joined Oxford #122 in 2006.

"There was never a question that I would not be a Mason," he says. "I always knew that I would give back to the brothers who gave so much to me and my family.

"This is as much of a Masonic story as it is an Eddie story," he says. "Masons have always been here to keep this home open and afloat."

He will miss the people, but not the stress of the work.

He will miss spending his days in the place that became his home. But he will never be far away.

"You can take me out of Oxford but you can't take Oxford out of me," he says.

The MHCO family will miss Eddie.

"He will be greatly missed and we are thankful for his service and wish him the very best in his retirement. Even though I didn't physically grow up at the Home, because of people like Eddie, I can call it my home away from home," said PGM Dewey Preslar, chairman of the MHCO board. "God's peace to my dear friend and brother." ♦



See this year's requirements for the Lion and Pillar on Pages 6-7

L&P gets a team to assist, learn for future

A team has been appointed by Grand Master David Wicker to handle Lion and Pillar this year.

For the past few years Past Grand Master Gene Cobb has headed the effort to promote and implement the program that recognizes Masonic excellence. The new team has been put into place to help him process the award this year, and will take the program over beginning in 2022.

Most requirements of the program will remain the same this year as last, with the addition of a few items, including efforts to get the name of your lodge out in our communities.

This year, the two representatives of each region will train with PGM Cobb over the next few months, help process applications from their region and promote what Lion and Pillar does for lodges and for the state.

Here is the new team:

► **East:** Jason Caldwell (Semper Fidelis #680) and Marty Hunt (Ashlar #765).

► **Central:** Raul Herrera (Eagle #19) and Albert Hopping (William G. Hill #218)

► **West:** Chris Canipe (Cleveland #202) and Michael Wright (Statesville #27)



Masons from throughout the state were connected with the Grand Lodge officers via the Internet

TEAMWORK, from page 4

was built with events like this in mind, long before anyone ever heard of the coronavirus.

The sound system, internet services and other tech needs are covered.

Combine that with hard work, preparation and Masonic pride, Annual Communication was not only held, it was open to the brothers and run in the most transparent of ways.

To my knowledge, no other Masonic jurisdiction has matched the level of expertise and openness this annual communication brought. In fact, our Grand Lodge has fielded a number

of calls from around the country from jurisdictions asking how they did it, Brother Robbins said.

This was his first Annual Communication on staff at the Grand Lodge and he said how impressed he was by the feeling of it.

“It almost felt like a regular lodge meeting. It was more personal,” he said. “It’s difficult to feel personal with 1,000 guys in the room at Annual Communication. But in this case, the feeling of brotherly love could definitely be felt in the room.”

GREGORY, from page 3

ness, I saw myself in the eyes of men who are filled with hatred for their fellow man. I’ve got a long way to go, but over these last 12 months, this ashlar got a bit smoother.”

His work was recognized at a surprise honor years later.

In 2015, Grand Master Douglas Caudle and the Grand Lodge declared Aug. 15 “Thomas W. Gregory Day.” The declaration honored him “in recognition and honor of the sacrifices and dedication of that outstanding past grand master; a man of vision and toleration, who turned the other cheek and gave brotherly forgiveness in the face of stringent attack and misunderstanding; who blazed a new trail for our fraternity,

awakening it to the 21st century.”

He was surprised by a contingent of nearly all Grand Lodge officers and several past grand masters at the August 4 stated meeting of Statesville #27. More than 20 high-ranking Masons came in together about 20 minutes after the lodge opened.

He is survived by his wife of 49 years, Marilyn; daughter Kimberly Moore (Jeff) of Arden, NC; son, Thomas W. Gregory, Jr. of Statesville; and granddaughter, Kameron Leigh Moore of Arden.

Among other organizations, the family asked that memorials be sent to the Masonic Home for Children at Oxford.

WICKER, from page 5

ever known has sought out the position. In fact, every one of us has been surprised when we were asked. Every one of us is certain the Deputy Grand Master must have made a mistake, because we never considered ourselves worthy of the appointment.

That is certainly what went through my mind that day when then DGM Mayo asked me to accept the position of Grand Steward. Well ... that and how am I going to deliver the lecture now?

My brothers, that is my story. A parade on a hot Saturday morning in June started me on a path that led to becoming Grand Master of Masons in North Carolina.

As I write this article, I still ask myself if I am worthy and well qualified to hold this office. I don’t know if that is a question I can answer. I will leave that determination to others who are smarter and wiser than me.

The Past Grand Masters with whom I have had the privilege of serving have truly been great men. They have set the standard very high. I am humbled and honored that the Craft elected me to be Grand Master.

All I can do in the coming year is offer the Fraternity my best efforts. I ask each of you for your support, for your assistance and, when necessary, for you to whisper good counsel.

Having been entrusted by the Craft with this office, I will endeavor to merit the confidence that has been reposed in me.



WELCOME OUR NEW BROTHERS

Whitley, James Heywood	1	St John's	Sinclair, Anthony Dixon	431	Relief
Anderson, William Arthur	58	Concord	Baldwin, William Scotty	495	Rockingham
Beach, Corey Edward	58	Concord	Coen, Jason Goodman	495	Rockingham
Carlisle, Robert Dale	58	Concord	Moss, Ben Thomas	495	Rockingham
Crisp, Douglas Eugene	58	Concord	Steban Jr, Stanley J.	495	Rockingham
Whitley, Justin-Ray Scott	58	Concord	Cobb III, David Laurence	500	Raleigh
Defazio, Michael Alan	83	Lafayette	Farmer, Kenneth Edward	500	Raleigh
Simma, Kenneth Paul	83	Lafayette	Gulledge, Seth Thomas	500	Raleigh
Lord, Steven Dwight	85	Morning Star	Newman, Richard Gordon	509	Belhaven
Spencer, Steven Robert	115	Holly Springs	Smith, Jordan Bailey	532	Hamlet
Lane, William Christopher	125	Mill Creek	Dulaney, Deagan Hayes	618	Union
Harkins, Jesse Dwayne	145	Junaluskee	Andrews, Donald Trey	626	Cannon Memorial
Loy, Bryan Clyde	145	Junaluskee	Mancuso, Jesse Francis	626	Cannon Memorial
Horn, Joseph Damien	198	Cary	Holland, Michael Shane	686	Angier
Pickle, Dustin Michael	198	Cary	Scott, Tristan Drew	686	Angier
Green, Jefferson Robert	214	Thomasville	Donovan, Daniel James	737	Steele Creek
Shores Jr, James Harrison	214	Thomasville	Ledford, Michael Benton	737	Steele Creek
Haas, Thomas Bradly	262	Hibriten	Perry, James Braxton	737	Steele Creek
Pennell, Matthew Dustin	262	Hibriten	Heaton, Bradford Christopher	753	Federal Point
Peterson, Perry Anthony	289	Salem	Foshee, Zane Michael	759	James K. Polk
Barton, Michael Wayne	294	Atlantic	Locklear, Carl Ryan	763	Friendship
Quesinberry, Bradley Shane	322	Granite			
Kellett, Samuel L.R.	391	Lebanon			
Jackson, Leslie Robert	431	Relief			

NEWS OF THE CRAFT



Wright earns Montfort Medal for long service

GREENSBORO – Grand Master Shaun Bradshaw on Nov. 2 awarded the final Montfort Medal of his year to his Grand Lecturer, Worshipful Brother Christopher Lee Wright. Brother Wright, a member of Stokesdale #428, is a 23-year Mason, past District Deputy Grand Lecturer, past master and senior warden of his lodge and chaired the Masonic Ceremonies Committee.

He and the Grand Master were college roommates – and they share a strong Masonic connection.

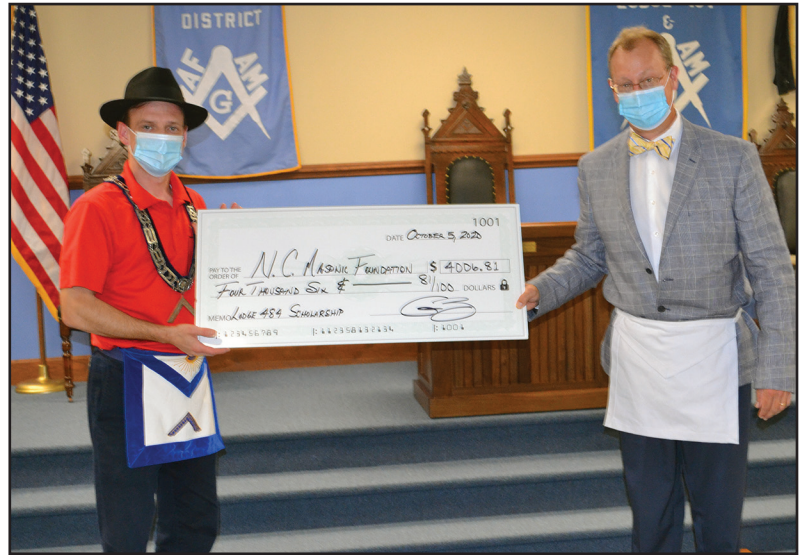
“The primary reason I awarded him the Montfort is that he exhibits what I believe to be the traits of a true Master Mason,” GM Bradshaw said. “Before I presented the medal, I had everyone in the room stand if they had been coached or received a lecture or a degree from Chris. Of about 60 brothers in the room, some 40 stood up. He truly makes himself available to the fraternity in many ways.”

He is also well known for keeping in touch with brothers and others he has met along the way. He will check in on people for years after they meet, just to make sure they’re doing fine and to see if they need anything.

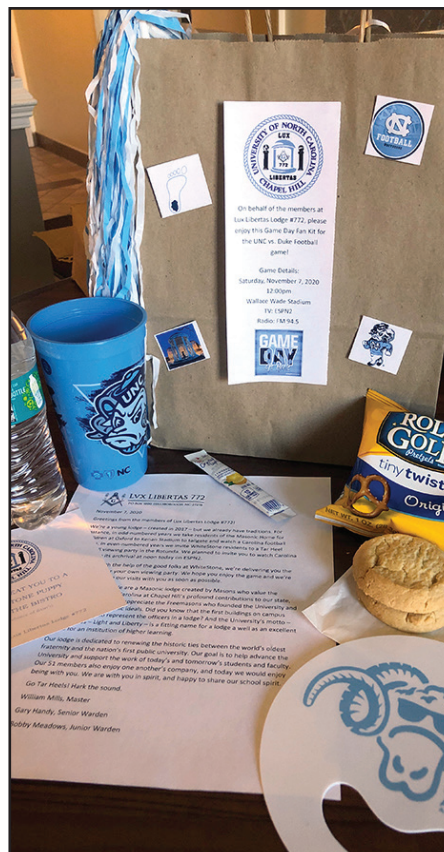
“I wouldn’t be surprised if he makes a call to someone every day,” said GM Bradshaw. “He does it because he genuinely cares about people.”

The Montfort is North Carolina Masonry’s highest honor. Joseph Montfort was treasurer of the Province of North Carolina, colonel of Colonial troops, and ardent Freemason. He was born in England in 1724 and died in 1776 in North Carolina. He was a member of Royal White Hart Lodge at Halifax. His exuberance for the fraternity led to his commission as Provincial Grand Master in 1771.

Each Grand Master may give three Montfort medals during his tenure.



▲ **SOUTHERN PINES** – Challenged by the impact of the pandemic, the brothers of Southern Pines #484 pressed on, committed to supporting students in their community. For the 17th year, the lodge raised funds for its academic scholarship benefiting four students a year as part of the R.C. Yoder Memorial Scholarship Fund golf tournament. Socially distanced and following strict guidelines and safety measures, the Lodge members and their supporters enjoyed a day on the course, to help deserving young adults from the region. The fund’s mission awards young people admitted to college, but absent of other scholarships available to most and for those sharing a special financial need and desire to further their education. Pictured is Southern Pines Master for 2020, Thomas Bolton III, left, and NC Masonic Foundation Eastern Region Director of Development Chris Richardson, receiving this year’s proceeds for the fund.



◀ **GREENSBORO** – Hark the sound . . . of gift bags opening. The brothers of Lux Libertas #772 sponsored 180 special game-watching party kits for residents of WhiteStone: A Masonic and Eastern Star Community as they gathered to watch UNC vs. Duke on TV. The bag contained some treats, a letter from the officers, a coupon for a hot dog from the Bistro at WhiteStone and other goodies. WB Gary Handy, PGM Speed Hallman and others expressed their thanks to Gina Prevost and Katie Beverly at WhiteStone for taking this idea and running with it. They added ideas and solicited some of the items. The University of North Carolina’s Athletic Department donated Kenan Stadium cups and pom-poms, and the UNC General Alumni Association donated fans.



▲ **LAURINBURG** – It's never too late to find more light. Two Laurinburg #305 brothers – raised many decades ago – have received their Certification of Proficiency, successfully passing their Master Mason Catechism of the Third Degree in Masonry. Jimmy Lynn was raised in 1965 and Ronnie Gibson was raised to Master Mason in 1977. Master Tom Rogers presented both with their certificates this fall and praised them for their example of strong brotherhood.



▲ **RALEIGH** – During a recent informal legislative meet-up at the Grand Lodge, Grand Master Shaun Bradshaw, right, shows Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Master D.T. Thompson a hand-carved folk art cane donated to the Grand Lodge. The cane, unearthed from beneath a building in the 1920s, features a carved frog, some lily pads, vines and leaves. (Photo by Jonathan Underwood)

► **GRAHAM** – Brother Junious “Alton” Myrick has seen it all in his 100 years on this earth. And his brothers at Thomas M. Holt #492 in November wanted to spend some time honoring his longevity in life – and in the Craft. His birthday fell on Aug. 14, but brothers couldn't gather with him until pandemic rules for gathering were eased. Brother Myrick is an Army veteran, serving in World War II from 1942-1946. He has been a Master Mason since 1958, raised at Industry #131 in Philadelphia, Pa. He joined Thomas M. Holt lodge in August 1986. He was awarded his 60-year pin and certificate in 2018 by Most Worshipful Past Grand Master Dan Rice, right, along with then-WM Jason Simons, center. Brother Myrick attended the lodge regularly up until the past few years.



Cannon aims at helping military personnel

▲► **KANNAPOLIS** – AA good deed became a very big deal when the brothers of Cannon Memorial #626 decided almost a year ago to start collecting non-perishable food and items for the military.

The lodge currently has two brothers deployed, so they were motivated when WVB Jason Resendes rallied the lodge to follow the example of other jurisdictions and send care packages overseas.

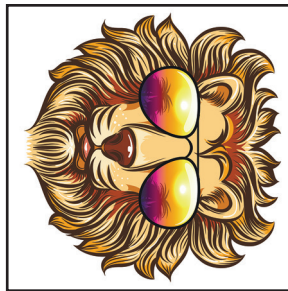
At meetings, the hat was passed, food items and toiletries were collected. Brothers James Litaker and Jay Wood pushed it to a new level by partnering with a local food distributor and collecting weekly disbursements of non-perishable foods and toiletries. Brothers in the Lodge supported his efforts, continually oneupping each other.

Brother Joe Meece, and his wife Valarie donated 2,600 sports bras of varying sizes. Brothers Todd Owen, Ken Dover and Randy Bowlin secured a donation of 4,400 helmet lamps. The stash grew so big, the lodge had to move it to a warehouse, while brothers negotiated with the military to collect what was now almost \$30,000 worth of donated



goods. The military ended up sending two trucks in July to gather the goodies. Items not eligible for shipping overseas were shared with the Veterans Administration Hospital in Salisbury, and with needy families in the community.





page 6

Does your lodge have
what it takes to ROAR!



page 8

End of an era at the
Print Shop



page 10

Third Monfort
Medal awarded by
Bradshaw

On the cover

Grand Master Ralph David
Wicker Jr. formally installed
during a Dec.5 service at the
Amran Shrine Center in Raleigh.
Photo by Michael Harding

The North Carolina Mason
The Grand Lodge of North Carolina, AF&AM
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