

NORTH CAROLINA

FALL 2023

THE MASON

Official Publication of The Grand Lodge of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons of North Carolina



ANNUAL COMMUNICATION AND THE STRENGTH OF BROTHERHOOD

Lessons in Responsibility and
Honor from Scott Waddle

New Series Spotlights
Academic Lodges



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Errata: Many photographs in the last edition of the *North Carolina Mason* were taken and provided by Don Butto, though he was uncredited. We apologize for the omission and thank Mr. Butto for his superb services.

FALL 2023

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ON THE COVER: Grand Master Frazier at prayer before the opening of the Annual Communication. Photo courtesy of Mike Harding/Genesis Photography



Remember the First Tenet of Masonry

I was fortunate to grow up in a very loving household. My mom and dad offered their love unconditionally, not only to me but friends and family alike. My parents taught me that everyone is a child of God and worthy of respect.

Kevan D. Frazier, Grand Master

They never judged anyone by the color of their skin, their gender, their sexuality, their wealth, or their religion, only by the content of their character. Appalachian folks take seriously the commandment to love our neighbors.

My dad moved to a nursing home a few years ago because of debilitating back issues, but despite his pain, he immediately became the mayor of Pisgah Manor, greeting every new resident, making them feel welcome, making them feel a part of the community, and making them feel a sense of belonging. A sense of belonging is important to us as humans. The connections between us are what give our lives purpose and meaning. It is, in fact, a sense of belonging that makes being a Freemason meaningful to me. We often talk about our charity, our ritual, the esoteric, and leadership as essential elements of Masonry, and they absolutely are, but I would say to you that the most important part about being a Mason, the foundation upon which the rest is built, is our fraternalism, our sense of belonging.

The pandemic put a real spotlight on community and the challenges we have in the modern world building

a sense of belonging. A report came out just a few months ago saying 20 percent of all men in the United States report that they do NOT have a single close friend! Twenty percent! And as many said they only have one. This isn't just troubling, it's a crisis. Whether we are extroverts or introverts, people are social creatures. We need friendships and relationships to be emotionally healthy and physically healthy, and need to have meaningful and joyful lives. Having a sense of belonging, having a group of men with whom you are close, having brothers whom you trust and can depend upon, is the cure.

As we work to ensure that our fraternity not only survives but thrives, we know that the lodge experience is the place to start. If all you do at a stated communication is argue about the power bill, after a while, you're probably not going to come back. That's why excellent ritual and great Masonic education are keys, but what I've come to realize is that the core of any great lodge experience is building and promoting a sense of belonging. That's why I am going to come back next month, because I care about these guys, and they care about me. History, mysticism, esotericism, charity, and family tradition may bring you to Masonry, but it

is belonging that will keep you coming. Every service award I have given out this year, including two 75-year awards, has been to men who, even in their advanced years, are still involved in their lodge with a strong sense of belonging.

So practically, how do we do this? We could come up with a lot of elaborate events and programs, but let's just keep it simple. After all, if you've only got 8-14 showing up for a stated communication, you don't really have a lot of footmen to pull off a big event. As simple as it sounds, start with a meal. I don't mean the lodge meal, but just invite brothers to meet at the lodge for lunch next Tuesday and head down the street to the diner. Grab biscuits one Saturday morning at Bojangles and hang out at the lodge. A previous secretary of our lodge created what he called the Square and Compass. Every Friday he just put out some snacks and drinks in the secretary's office and brothers showed up for a cookie and brotherhood. They still do. In addition to breaking bread together, go bowling, go fishing. Set a time and location for a hike, a bike ride, a walk... and while we love our spouses, partners, and children, and want to have events that welcome them, we need also need time when it's just about brothers.

I love being in community with men who are young enough to be my son and old enough to be my dad, but we are brothers just the same. I love being in lodge with men of different religions, ethnicities, politics, socioeconomics, and races. Our commonality of being men who believe in a higher power and who believe in the fundamental equality of all human beings is what brings us together in ways that the outside world does not, but in ways that the outside world absolutely needs. Bringing diverse but like-minded men together is the hallmark of Freemasonry.

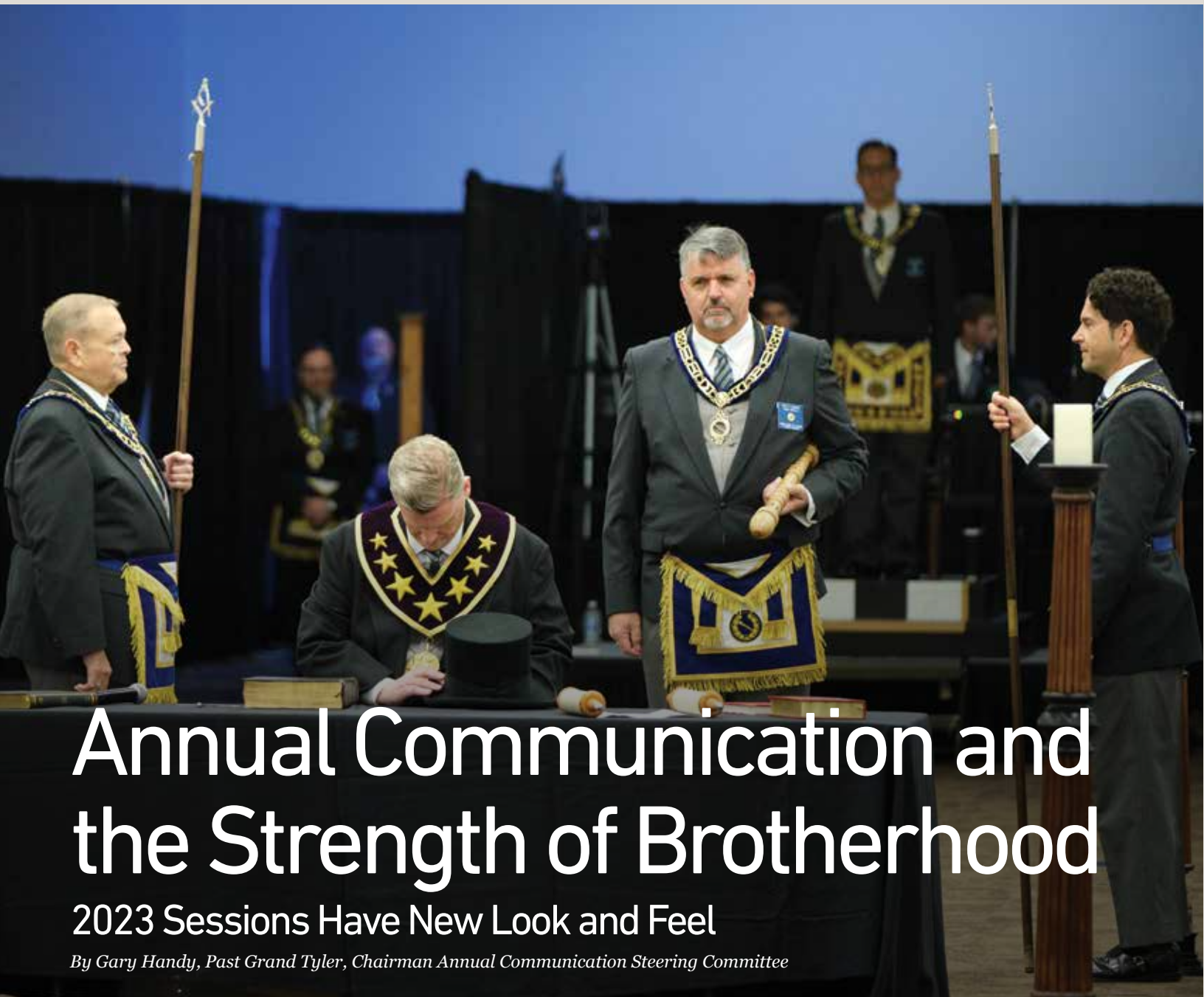
I was asked a few weeks ago by a young Master, if I was master of a lodge again what would I do, if I could do just one thing. Without hesitation I said I would start the meeting at six and then have dinner at 7:00, 7:30. The tradition in our lodge, probably like yours, is dinner before the meeting. I really like the lodges

I have visited where we they have dinner after the meeting. Frankly it kept the meeting on task, and then we could hang out and wax upon Masonry and life around the table as long as we wanted, and then head to the pub or backyard for a refreshing adult beverage. Let's be honest, it is often around the table and on the barstool that belonging is best cultivated. Frankly, the absence of this kind of socialization is what has made the past three years so hard. Covid made it difficult to be in community, and it hurt our fraternity and our society in ways we are only now beginning to realize and understand. But brotherly love will prevail.

After all, what's the first tenet of Masonry? Brotherly love. Without brotherly love there is neither relief nor truth. I grew up a working-class country boy from Appalachia, and there's a lot I don't know, but there is one thing I know for sure and one thing that I know for certain, which is that belonging in our fraternity and belonging in our communities, that belonging that comes from meeting on the level, that belonging that comes from loving our neighbors, is what will make our fraternity thrive and consequently our communities prosper.

Brothers, as we bring 2023 to a close, let's recommit ourselves to our fraternalism and to creating that sense of belonging that we all need. For all that we may do as Masons, we are at our foundation a fraternity of men, a band of brothers, who meet on the level and act by the plumb. Our bonds of friendship and brotherhood will not only serve ourselves, but each other, and our communities as well. The world needs Masonry more than ever before. So let us work together in harmony as we hue our ashlar toward perfection.

May God bless you and your families, may He bless our fraternity, and may He bless our neighbors.



Annual Communication and the Strength of Brotherhood

2023 Sessions Have New Look and Feel

By Gary Handy, Past Grand Tyler, Chairman Annual Communication Steering Committee

Photos courtesy of Mike Harding/Genesis Photography

Delegates, non-voting brethren and visitors at this year's Grand Lodge Annual Communication in Winston-Salem were happy to find themselves in the spacious Benton Convention Center with ample elbow room between the seats, great sight lines to the Grand Master's dais, and high-quality sound and video systems to capture the action.

As a member of the committee that has planned, set up and staffed the Annual Communication for the last 15 years, I want to share my perspectives on this year’s event, which was special in many ways.

Our meetings in the Benton Convention Center began on Thursday, September 28 with a “town hall” meeting led by our Grand Master and the Grand Lodge Officers – answering any and every question asked of them. It was an opportune time to learn about the Grand Lodge’s operation and better understand the trajectory of business and planning with our elected officers. Following that meeting, participants broke into classes and participated in a Masonic education symposium that featured lectures on lodge leadership and administration, North Carolina’s Masonic history, the power of ritual, the purpose of Masonic education, the history of initiatic rites, the impact of positive lodge leadership, the Middle Chamber experience, and an introduction and overview of the Grand Lodge’s new database and communication tool, Grand View.

The sessions were informative and very well received, and attendees appreciated the luncheon sponsored by the North Carolina Masonic Foundation. That evening the Grand Master’s social hour and banquet, open to all, capped a full day of fellowship and personal development.

On Friday morning our brethren went to work in the Convention Center’s cavernous Piedmont Hall. Some will recall we used the same space for the 2021 Annual Communication as we were coming out of Covid and needed a larger venue with more space between seats. While spacious that year, the new configuration that room surprised and delighted our attendees this year.



The room’s layout featured a large concourse down the center, a much a larger altar than usual with the Bible and a range of holy writings atop it, and impressive risers for the wardens’ stations that were quite eye-catching and allowed members across the room to see the wardens. Sound and video staff – deemed the Masonic Light and Magic Team – were able to view the entire space, ably monitoring audio levels, and following activities on the stage, at the altar, and at the floor microphones with multiple cameras. The technology worked better than ever this year and all components came together with maximum effect for those in attendance. Before the Grand Lodge opened and the grand procession began Friday morning, a thurifer carrying a pot of incense “set the space” with positive energy, a



This year marked the first time that voting delegates and non-voting delegates could pre-register for the Annual Communication.

standard practice in observant lodges, and that energy remained throughout the entire event on both days.

Following the close of business on Friday, brethren enjoyed a reception in the concourse that featured another Annual Communication first: “snack bacon.”

This year marked the first time that voting delegates and non-voting delegates could pre-register for the Annual Communication. Delegates

and the brethren charged with registering them quickly and efficiently felt some apprehension in advance of the launch of this new service, but the process worked wonderfully thanks to the guidance of the Grand Lodge office staff and the very capable volunteers of the Credentials Committee onsite. This registration process benefits us by providing a much clearer picture of how many are attending the event and protects voting integrity by issuing color-coded nametags with lanyards to indicate which office, committee, or position each voting brother holds that entitles him to a vote.

Lastly, the business of both days went very smoothly as our Grand Master presided so very skillfully over the proceedings. The order of business was carried out efficiently and caringly by all those involved both as officers of the Grand Lodge and committee and commission presenters.



During the discussion of the proposed per capita increase, two newer brothers gave a moving and thought-provoking plea to the brothers to pay it forward and invest in the future of the fraternity. The proposal passed by a huge majority.

In walking around the complex during Thursday's symposiums, Friday's session and reception, and the busy Saturday session, as I saw my brethren

chatting, laughing, and genuinely enjoying being with brothers and friends, I was reminded of why I wanted to be a Mason in the first place.

This year, and every year, our planning committee wants to hear your ideas for how we can improve the Annual Communication. *Please contact us through the Grand Lodge office at info@glnc.us*

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Donald E. Kehler Elected Grand Master for 2024

On September 30, the delegates at the Annual Communication elected Donald Edward Kehler to be the 171st Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of North Carolina. Kehler approached the altar and accepted the election.

“Brethren,” he said, “I’m humbled by your confidence and it will be my honor to serve you.” Kehler asked the delegates to walk with him in a reaffirmation of beliefs and good works. “Learn the ritual and have fun doing it. Call your brothers and take care of them. We’re not long for this world – love one another, enjoy each other’s company, and do some good along the way.”

Kehler’s and the other Grand Lodge Officers’ installation will take place on Saturday, December 2 in Duck, North Carolina.

“Learn the ritual and have fun doing it. Call your brothers and take care of them. We’re not long for this world – love one another, enjoy each other’s company, and do some good along the way.” – *Bro. Donald E. Kehler*



J. David Cashion Named Grand Junior Steward



On September 30, Grand Master-elect Don Kehler nominated J. David (Dave) Cashion of Highlands, North Carolina to be Junior Grand Steward of the Grand Lodge of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons of North Carolina. Cashion

was raised a Master Mason in Blue Ridge Lodge 435 in 1998 and served as Master in 2005. He is currently secretary of both Blue Ridge Lodge and Glenville Lodge 551.

Born and raised in Winston-Salem, Cashion graduated from R J Reynolds High School in 1973. That year he matriculated into Western Carolina University and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Industrial Arts Education in 1980.

Cashion started his educational career at High Point Central High School in December 1980, teaching Metals and Electricity. His coaching career started there with wrestling and soccer. In 1982 he moved to Highlands, where he taught at Highlands High School for 39 years. He taught woodworking, printing and drafting, and coached varsity baseball for 19 years, JV basketball for 4 years and varsity soccer for 6 years.

Cashion and his wife Sabrina have been married for 20 years. Their son, Justin, also became an educator, taking after his father's dedication to education and love of learning. Justin and his children, Elliott and Lincoln, live close enough for their grandfather to regularly spoil them. Dave and Sabrina are members of Highlands United Methodist Church, where he's regularly served as Trustee. He served 10 years on the Town of Highlands scholarship committee, and is actively involved in his church, community, and Masonry.

Among his numerous York Rite affiliations, Cashion is a Past Presiding Officer in the Waynesville Chapter 69 and Franklin Chapter 95 of Royal Arch Masons; Roanoke Council 1 and Doric Council 20 of Royal and Select Masters; and Waynesville Commandery 31 of Knights Templar. In 2012 he was elected Most Illustrious Grand Master of the Grand Council of Cryptic Masons of North Carolina. He is also a member of the York Rite Sovereign College, having served as Governor in 2008. He is a member and Past Worthy Patron of Highlands Chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star, a member of the Asheville Valley of the Scottish Rite, and Oasis Shrine in Charlotte.



Cmdr. Scott Waddle, USN (Ret.)

Photo courtesy of Mike Harding/Genesis Photography

In addition to the various changes and boosts given to the Annual Communication this year, Grand Master Frazier asked retired USN Commander Scott Waddle to be the keynote speaker at the Grand Master's Banquet this year. Historically, the Grand Master's Banquet was intended to be a small event for the Grand Master and his officers to break bread together and reflect on the upcoming business of the Annual Communication. Over the past couple of decades, the banquet grew in size and scope until it seemed only fitting that the celebration of Masonic and personal achievements be opened up to the entire membership. With this in mind, Grand Master

Lessons in Responsibility and Honor

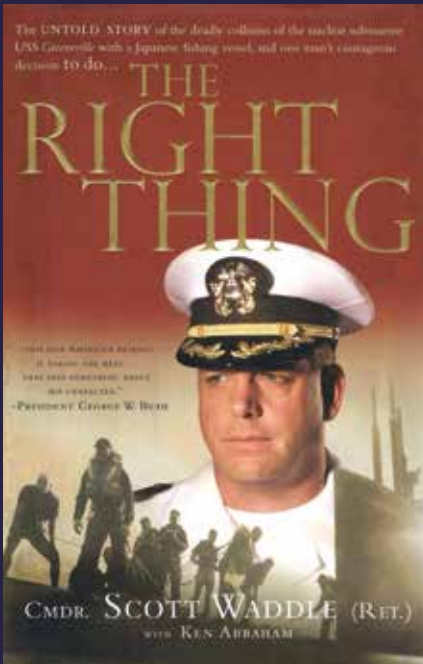
Keynote Speaker Scott Waddle Addresses Grand Master's Banquet

By Jonathan Underwood, Grand Secretary

Frazier determined the message of the banquet should be reflective of our fraternity's values and tenets.

Commander Waddle graduated at the top of his class from the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland in 1981. Following a successful career in the Navy, he was handpicked in 1988 to command the USS *Greenville*, a Los Angeles class fast-attack submarine. Waddle's life was changed forever in February 2001 when, after he ordered an emergency surface maneuver where the sub ascended to the surface quickly, the USS *Greenville* collided with the Japanese fishing vessel *Ehime Maru* of the coast of Oahu, Hawaii. The *Ehime*

The right thing for our brothers and sisters on this earth, for ourselves, and in the eyes of the Creator. It's a lesson we as Masons should know and understand – to live truthfully, honestly, and in honor of God.



Maru was a high school fisheries training ship. Nine people aboard the *Ehime Maru* were killed – four students, two teachers, and three crew members. The tragedy made international headlines. Several families were torn apart and Waddle and his crew were thrown into emotional chaos.

In the official investigations that followed, several components of the USS *Greenville's* equipment were cited as the culprit for

the sub's failure to recognize or register the position of the *Ehime Maru*. Despite the advice of attorneys and direction from the United States Navy to deny culpability, Waddle stepped up and took full responsibility for his actions and the disaster. That October, he was honorably discharged from the Navy and proceeded to make amends for the collision that claimed the lives of nine individuals.

During his presentation at the Grand Master's Banquet, Waddle stated the disaster was the lowest point of his life. He felt he disappointed his family, his crew, the United States Navy, and the nation. Yet, through it all, and with a reliance on God, he came to understand his trials and tribulations as a call to action.

"Failure is not final," he told the audience. If for no other reason, he was determined to live and honor the lives lost on that fateful day. More than ever, this hardship was the

foundation upon which to right wrongs and inspire others to live truthfully, honestly, and accept responsibility for one's actions. Waddle's story is remarkable and humbling. He chronicled this episode in his life in a book entitled *The Right Thing*. His words are as much documentation of the event as they are therapy for his soul, as well as a lesson for those willing to listen and heed – that despite any and all adversity, you have to do the right thing. The right thing for our brothers and sisters on this earth, for ourselves, and in the eyes of the Creator. It's a lesson we as Masons should know and understand – to live truthfully, honestly, and in honor of God.

For many years following his retirement from the Navy, Waddle and his family lived south of Raleigh in Cary. He now resides in Washington State.

Restoring Value to the Experience of Freemasonry

By Jonathan Underwood, Grand Secretary



Brethren,

I must admit I'm still riding a little high from our Annual Communication.

If you were there, you would have noticed several dramatic changes – from the layout of the Grand Lodge room, to the

credential station, to the inclusive Grand Master's Reception, to the open banquet. Yet, the first thought that enters my mind is "thank you." Each of you is a member of the Grand Lodge, and the success of our annual meeting would not have been possible without your participation and input. For the last several years your Grand Lodge and the many, many volunteers, more than 30, who make the Annual Communication possible – the office staff, the volunteers on the Credentials Committee, the volunteer Grand Tylers, the volunteer Masonic Light and Magic team (AV), the vendors, and volunteer Steering Committee – have been brainstorming on the best ways to make the Annual Communication a relevant and worthwhile event.

While societal and cultural shifts happen all the time, we know the one we are experiencing at this time often focuses on value and an experience. As a membership-based organization, we have to illustrate value for the services provided by your Grand Lodge. Many of these services, are, however, intangible and include everything from financial administration

to basic membership management. While critical to function, these operations do not create a unique experience from which many of our members derive value – and that's OK and understandable.

The experience of Freemasonry is truly the central focus and point of Freemasonry. This begins with the perceived aura of fraternity, then ritual, and then camaraderie with your brothers. The question is, what do you, as a member, expect this experience to be? Hopefully, you're noticing a transition.

We've been asking questions and receiving a great amount of input about what our members expected Freemasonry to be. The question for your Grand Lodge Office is whether your wishes are experiences we can facilitate and execute. In most cases, the answer is yes.

The aura of Freemasonry very much radiates from personal narrative, but also from literature and media. The Grand Lodge is striving, through a professional public relations firm, to recapture the narrative of Freemasonry in North Carolina. This includes everything from Google search refinement to new and up-to-date guides and materials for our members and the public. It's also about retooling our delivery to different audiences – such as the upgrades and improvements made to this magazine. Long considered a newspaper or newsletter of the fraternity, it's transformed into a lifestyle magazine that illustrates the message of Masonry. As we move forward, local and regional news will be funneled through online distribution lists as well as through our new database.

Ritual is lodge-based, and it's the responsibility of the local lodge officers and members to learn the ritual and all its esoteric facets in order to create the local, spiritual experience that is truly the core purpose of our lodges. The Grand Lodge cannot perform degrees, but we can provide the tools necessary to better educate our brethren on our rituals' meaning, the best method of delivery, and the means of transforming that experience into action that benefits our members and our communities.

The Annual Communication's true purpose is to reunite the men and Masons from all across North Carolina together to share ideas, to renew friendships, and to break bread together.

The camaraderie of our brotherhood is also a key component to the success of our fraternity. Like a regular lodge meeting, the Annual Communication is so much more than just a business meeting. While that's certainly a component of what it is, its true purpose is to reunite the men and Masons from all across North Carolina together to share ideas, to renew friendships, and to break bread together. To quote Grand Master Frazier, when I go to lodge, I want to see and feel some good ritual, learn a little something new, and take refreshment and partake in conversation with my friends and brothers. Nowhere

in that sentence was there a concern for the light bill or concern for the lawn to be mowed, or the taxes to be filed. As your Grand Lodge Office has said before, our job is alleviate the lodges of as much business as possible so you can perform the true work of Masonry: building friendships and improving the world. As we move into 2024, we will continue to streamline and centralize, where possible and practical, the business of our fraternity so our lodges' officers can actually lead and our members can actually enjoy the fraternalism we say we foster.

With your help, we will strive to sustain and enhance the aura, ritual, and camaraderie that are expected to be the hallmark of our Craft. Brethren, please know how much I appreciate the many kind words of encouragement our Grand Lodge staff and I received at the Annual Communication and in the weeks since. We take very seriously that you trust us to facilitate the often frustrating, boring, and mind-boggling business that is Grand Lodge. First and foremost, we want our operations to be open and transparent to each of you. We want to minimize your workload while restoring value to the experiences you seek and expect in Freemasonry. Do not ever hesitate to ask your Grand Lodge how or why we operate the way we do.

Elon College Lodge No. 549

Academic Lodges: A Series

By Matthew Robbins, Assistant Grand Secretary



Elon College Lodge laying the cornerstone for Whitley Auditorium on May 23, 1923. Courtesy Elon Archives.

Since the founding of the University of North Carolina by Grand Master Davie, Masonry has co-existed with education in several forms throughout the centuries. Partnerships included colleges, military schools, academies, and even grade schools.

Many Masonic lodges still meet in buildings that were also schools where the lodge was on the upper floor and the school on the lower. This series will explore the architectural history of the linkages between North Carolina Masonry and education within the framework of existing and extinct lodges.

One such lodge was connected to Elon College in Alamance County, NC. Elon College Lodge No. 549 existed from 1907 to 1941. Where the college lodge met is still up for debate.



Dr. Walton Crump Wicker, PM.
Courtesy Elon Archives.

Dr. Walton Crump Wicker was the first master of the new lodge and was listed on its charter. He was professor of Mathematics for over 30 years at Elon. He also designed the seal of the university that was approved for use in 1911.

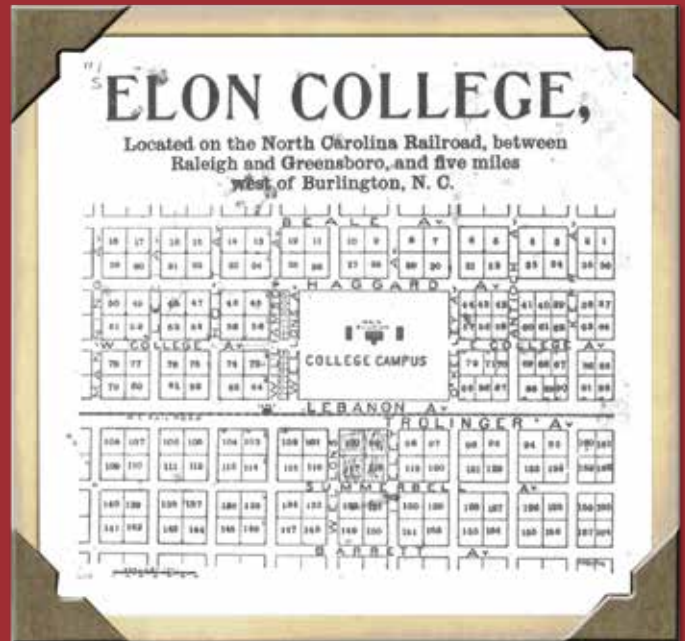
There are some distinct similarities between it and the seal of the Grand Lodge.



“We feel that the seal shows in a general way that for which Elon College stands, spiritual and intellectual development, progress in all the sciences and arts, strength of manhood

and womanhood, light for the benighted and ignorant, and all guided by the all seeing eye of the Omnipotent,” Dr. Wicker explains in *Elon College Weekly*, May 5, 1911.

On January 18, 1923, the College’s Main Building was left in ruins after a terrible fire. The cornerstone was removed and incorporated into a new building, Alamance Hall, on the same site. In 2000, the college mascot was changed to the “Rising Phoenix”



Plat of Elon College, Alamance Co. Register of Deeds.

to commemorate how the institution rose from the ashes of that fire to rebuild better than before.

This lodge was very involved in laying cornerstones for buildings on the campus. Known cornerstone layings by NC Masons include: Old Main (1889), Alamance Hall (1923), Alumni Memorial Gymnasium (1949), and the Whitley



Cornerstone of Old Main re-used in Alamance Hall. Matthew Robbins

Memorial Building (1923). After the fire, the college hired architect-mason Herbert Bernard Hunter (1890-1976) to design the new campus buildings in a stately style. He also designed the original buildings for High Point University (1920-24), and the Junior Order Orphans Home (1925-32) in Lexington, NC. Hunter was made a Mason in Phalanx Lodge No. 31 in 1914 and was affiliated with Numa F. Reid Lodge No. 344 in High Point when he moved his practice to High Point in 1924.

Elon's legacy is truly Masonic. Yet, despite all the amazing community work happening in the town, it is still not known where the lodge met. During the 1923 fire, the lodge allowed the college to hold some classes in its lodge room, so it must not have met

near that part of campus. If you know, and can provide a source, please reach out to mrobbins@glnc.us

The cornerstone of the first and main building was laid in 1889. Col. and Bro. Lafayette Leonidas Polk, a founder of NC State University and the Baptist Female University (now Meredith College), gave the cornerstone address.

Elon's legacy is truly Masonic. Yet, despite all the amazing community work happening in the town, it is still not known where the lodge met.

Pay It Forward

Support our fraternity's mission of service to education.

www.mfnc.org/how-to-give



FRATERNAL FRIENDSHIPS: The Gift that Lasts Forever

By George Marut, Chief Development Officer, North Carolina Masonic Foundation


As Masons, we gladly obligate ourselves to provide relief to brothers in need. Supporting our elder brothers has been a key charitable focus for Masons for centuries. To help us as a fraternity better meet this important obligation, the Grand Lodge and the North Carolina Masonic Foundation have created the **Fraternal Friendship Fund**. This fund provides Masons and Eastern Star sisters a helping hand, if needed, to ensure that their needs are met in their senior years. This could be helping with the costs of living in an assisted living community such as our own WhiteStone in Greensboro, or any such facility around the state. The fund can also provide resources to help our elder brother and sisters with the costs of aging in their own homes.

The Fraternal Friendship Fund is a program that consolidates previous giving programs, such as giving to WhiteStone or the MESH LLC, into one convenient fund that can easily support brothers and sisters as their needs require wherever they live in North Carolina. Imagine growing this fund to where all North Carolina Masons could rest assured that if they or their family every needed a helping hand in their senior years, they will be covered, and imagine us growing this fund to the point that in addition to helping Masons and Stars, community aging programs could apply for grants such that Masons offered a helping hand to ALL seniors throughout North Carolina.

As you consider your personal philanthropy, as well as planning your lodge's, please consider making the Fraternal Friendship Fund one of your priorities for giving in 2024 and beyond. One hundred percent of the funds raised go to provide assistance to elder brothers and sisters in need. If you have questions about the Fund, please reach out to Brother George Marut (gmarut@mfnc.org) at the North Carolina Masonic Foundation.

FREEWILL
Embark on a journey of securing your future and making a difference.

Charitable Gift Annuities: Create a Lasting Legacy



WHAT IS A GIFT ANNUITY AGREEMENT?
Different from a trust, a gift annuity agreement is a permanent contract between a single nonprofit firm and someone (or couple). The term of the contract determines the rate, timing and amount of payment the annuitant(s) receive. Contact the Foundation team to discuss your charitable gift annuity and the rate.

BENEFITS:

- Income stream for the rest of your life
- Immediate (partial) tax deduction, based on your life expectancy and the anticipated income stream
- Potential for a portion of the income stream to be tax-free
- Possibility of donating many types of assets: cash, securities plus personal property
- Reduced or eliminated capital gains tax liability for gifts of appreciated securities and personal property
- Supporting an organization you care about

POTENTIAL DRAWBACKS:

- Parting irrevocably with funds donated to create the annuity
- Subject to income tax on the income stream (payments from the annuity)
- Payments are fixed and won't be adjusted for inflation
- Payments may be lower than with a non-charitable annuity because the primary purpose is for nonprofit support
- Cannot be used to support multiple charities unless you set up multiple annuities

YOUR NEXT STEPS:

- George Marut and Chris Richardson would love to connect with you. Schedule a virtual meeting with them, or meet with them in person.

Protect What Matters
Ensure the safety and care of the people, pets, and communities you cherish.

Ease for Loved Ones
Offer your family clarity and reduce complications by detailing how your estate should be managed.

Legacy with NCMF
Leave a mark with North Carolina Masonic Foundation and support children and elderly across North Carolina.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 20 mins** is all it takes for you to complete you plan
- 5.6%** current rates (November 2023)
- Legacy** a Freemason's legacy is measured not by the wealth amassed, but by the good deeds done

Already included us in your will, or need to get started? Visit FreeWill.com/NCMF
Contact us:
gmarut@mfnc.org
crichardson@mfnc.org

A Mighty Oak: Jimmy Gard Honored

By Phil Johnson, Grand Marshal



Brothers Johnny Surles and Phil Johnson present Brother Gard his 50-Year Certificate

Jimmy Gard finds a certain peace when he's at his lathe. The whirl of the bits and the turn of the wood creates an aura of focus. As the chips fly off his ideas come to life – a realization of thought.

James Milford Gard – Jimmy to most of us – was born to Floyd and Mary Gard in Elizabeth City, North Carolina, just after New Year's on January 4, 1939. The son of a mariner, fisherman, and shipwright, Jimmy learned early on the value of using his hands. Hard work and attention to detail were the cradle of creation. It was a natural fit for him to enter the United States Coast Guard in 1962, though his occupational assignment was far from the age-old carpentry required for shipbuilding.

He wound up an as an aviation electronics technician for a decade, connecting the wires and synapses between computer brains and navigational displays. His new skills were further honed upon his return to civilian life, retiring as the Avionic Workshop Leader at the Aviation Logistics Center in his hometown after 40 years of service. In between woodworking and electronics repair, Jimmy met the love of his life, Anne, and married in 1964.

Jimmy comes from Masonic stock, his father Floyd being a 49-year member of Eureka Lodge 317. Jimmy followed his father's lead and, after moving slightly south, was raised a Master Mason in Perquimans Lodge 106 in 1973. This year is Jimmy's 50th as a North Carolina Mason. Never one to let a good opportunity pass, he joined the Ancient and

What began as one gavel turned into a veritable cottage industry. Five years after first borrowing a lathe, Brother Jimmy has turned more than 60 gavels made from wood from all over the region and state.

Accepted Scottish Rite at the same time.

Years in Masonry fostered many new and sustaining friendships for Jimmy, across northeastern North Carolina and the rest of the state. As one would imagine, friendships led to questions and questions led to favors and favors led to occupations.

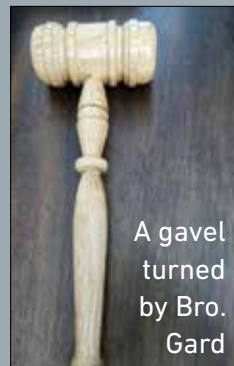
For years, Brother Edward Richardson, a woodworker in the First District, churned out wooden keepsakes. But, after nearly sixty years a Mason, he sold his lathe and woodworking tools to his Brother Ben Roberts, Sr. Aside from Ben's own creations, Ben's brother Norman Roberts borrowed the lathe for spin, crafting the now famous Grand Master's gavels that are annually presented to the Grand Master from the First District. Our hapless Jimmy one day inquired of the Roberts brothers if he could borrow the lathe to turn a replacement table leg. In 2018, the now-famous machine was dutifully passed on to Jimmy, who was asked (being that Brother Norman passed) if he could turn a gavel for the Grand Master. After a few hems and haws, Brother Jimmy acquiesced. Besides, he likes a challenge.

Yet, what began as one gavel turned into a veritable cottage industry. Five years into the lathe loan, Brother Jimmy has turned more than 60 gavels made from wood from all over the region and state – cypress trunks dredged from the Great Dismal Swamp Canal, mighty oaks that once graced the carriage drive of an old family farm, pines struck by lightning during hurricane season. The chunks and trunks and scraps all find their way to Jimmy. Besides the Grand Master's gavel, one of the most famous pieces was crafted from the felled limbs

of the century-old oaks circling the entry into the Masonic Home for Children at Oxford.

It was this project, in celebration of the Children's Home's 150 years of service, that led to a frenzied bidding war at the Home's Gala Celebration to obtain a handcrafted piece of art so central to the function of our Masonic lodges. It was shortly thereafter that Jimmy was approached again and asked, "What else could you make?" Several minds pondered the question and responded with "What about the Grand Marshal's Baton?"

In more medieval times, the baton (French



for "stick") was a symbol of authority, guiding troops into battle. Over time, "marshal" was adopted as a term to describe a Master of Ceremonies, one who commands the room to attention. Hence today, our Grand Marshal, with baton

in hand, usually clutched under the right arm, announces and escorts guests and dignitaries into formal meetings.

How fitting that a tree from the Home representing one of our nearest and dearest of duties – the protection of children – was used to create the object that commands our attention at Grand Lodge.

Now nearly 85, Brother Jimmy is still crafting and creating paths forward for our fraternity – from ships to planes, from gavels to batons. Thank you, Brother Jimmy, for your years of service and dedication. Indeed, mighty oaks from tiny acorns grow.



The “Rite” Heart

Gene Cobb Elected to Serve on Scottish Rite Supreme Council

By Tony Rathbone, Grand Tyler

“*Humbled.*” Humbled is the word Past Grand Master A. Gene Cobb, Jr. used to explain his election to the Supreme Council of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite in Washington, DC this past August.

Every two years – at a Biennial Session – the Supreme Council of the Scottish Rite convenes its Sovereign Grand Inspectors General to discuss and determine the business of Scottish Rite Masonry, much like a Grand Lodge’s Annual Communication. Being a national body, the Scottish Rite meets in the House of Temple in our national capital in a building constructed to emulate the one of the great wonders of the ancient world, the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus. (Why would the Scottish Rite build such a monument in the capital? Because Washington was built as a “new Rome,” and all its architecture is based on classical design.)

Illustrious Brother A. Gene Cobb, Jr., 33°, Sovereign Grand Inspector General (S.G.I.G), prefers to be known as Brother Gene. He is no stranger to our fraternity in the Tar Heel State.

Born in Halifax County, Brother Cobb started his Masonic journey at Blackmer Lodge 127 in Mount Gilead, North Carolina. As an itinerant Methodist Minister, Cobb moved around the state, wherever his parishioners, the Church, or (most importantly) God called him to be. His vocational treks led him into many venues and participation in many lodges. He’s a Past Master of both Blackmer Lodge 127 (1995) and Royal White Hart 2 at Halifax (1999). Cobb honed his leadership skills and diplomatic nature over years of service as an Eagle Scout, a church leader, and his lodges. His potential did not go unnoticed, and following a tenure as Grand Chaplain and Chairman of the Committee on Necrology, and other Masonic committees, he joined the Grand Line after the Annual Communication in 2008 and served as Grand

Master in 2017. During his work in the Blue Lodges, Brother Gene also found himself captivated by the history, ritual, and message in Scottish Rite Freemasonry.

Historically, the Scottish Rite is a set of French Masonic degrees established during the turbulent 18th Century. The animosity between Great Britain and France at that time prevented the British system of Masonry (the basis for most American Grand Lodges' form, function, and ritual) from being welcomed and utilized on the European continent. Ever resourceful, the French found the "Auld Alliance" with Scotland a fertile plain from which to grow and develop a parallel system of initiatic degrees and moral lessons. Being founded during the beginning of the Romantic Era, French Masonry's roots were alleged to be older than England's and, striving for legitimacy, termed their French Degree System the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite. By the turn of the 19th century, the French system was spread across France's colonies, much like English, Scottish, and Irish Masonry spread throughout the English speaking world. It was during Thomas Jefferson's presidential administration (Jefferson was a Francophile) that the French system of Masonic degrees became popular in the United States – entering through the port at Charleston in 1801, which was economically and socially very closely linked to many French colonial ports in the Caribbean. Following a century of refinement and reconfiguration by Albert Mackey and Albert Pike, the Scottish Rite became a historic system of degrees through which Masons could also gain perspective on moral truths and internal improvement.

It was this system of Masonry, appendant to Blue Lodge Masonry, that Brother Gene also found a calling. Its lessons were similar to Craft Masonry, but with a continental flair and dramatic

presentation. After many years as a volunteer and degree team leader, Brother Gene was elevated to be Personal Representative of then-Sovereign Grand Inspector General William Brunk in Greensboro, serving as such for eight years. Despite a quest for retirement, Brother Gene was quickly returned to the Masonic fold, being nominated to serve as North Carolina's Deputy to the Supreme Council and overseer of this jurisdiction's Scottish Rite Valleys. He quickly reviewed the Orient of North Carolina's operations and championed the embrace of technology and efficiency, as well as Scottish Rite Charities and a closer working relationship with the Grand Lodge. He also worked on the national stage to plan and prepare the National Leadership Conference, and several other regional events. In his new capacity, he holds one of only 33 votes on the Supreme Council and also serves as Grand Chaplain.

"It is, first and foremost, my sincerest hope to strengthen the foundation of Masonry in North Carolina through our Blue Lodges and the Grand Lodge," Brother Gene said. "The Scottish Rite is another mechanism for us, as Masons, to refine and improve ourselves and our communities." The Orient (jurisdiction) of North Carolina could not be prouder than its own native son, Illustrious A. Gene Cobb, Jr., 33°. As Brother Gene says at the end of every meeting, "Always work with the Right-Rite heart!"

**To learn more about
Scottish Rite Masonry,
scan this QR code.**



Giving Back: Humble Beginnings to Masonic Philanthropist

By Alvin Billings, Senior Grand Steward, and Don Butto

At its core, Freemasonry is a celebration of giving back. Through our degrees, we're taught the only treasures worthwhile in this life are friendship, an upright life, and love. Anything beyond that should be paid forward. For Chuck Olson, those lessons form the central thread through which his life's story is told.

Born into modest beginnings, Olson spent his childhood living in a basement where daylight scarcely pierced the narrow slitted windows that dotted the walls. It was here, in the shadowy confines beneath a rooming house, where Olson learned the value of hard work and responsibility, tasked with keeping the furnace stoked and the premises clean. The work was often grueling and dirty. Yet, Olson possessed something many of the children we support do not have – a loving mother. Firm but caring, Olson's mother made sure "quit" was not a word found in his vocabulary, and diligence reaped reward. Diligence and perseverance pay off, and in time the Olson clan found their way out of the basement and into a home opposite the athletic fields of the University of Michigan.

This front row seat to competition and raw commitment to success made an impact on young Olson. The cheers of the fans at a football game echoed in his ears across the street. The crack of a baseball bat signified success. And the grunts of the wrestling team proved all the while that physical and mental strength win the day.

After years of watching the student athletes traverse the fields, Olson's journey took an exciting turn. At age 14 he landed a job cleaning the University of Michigan locker rooms, embedding him further into the world he admired from afar. His own participation in the years to come endeared him to those who would become his fellow athletes, and his agility and skill caught the eye of a scout from the Boston Red Sox. Yet, sometimes the Great Architect has other plans, and Olson declined the offer to remain with his family. Still, where one door closes another one opens, and his athleticism was the boon of his military career in the United States Air Force. Almost all of a sudden, he was a player, a coach, and game official. His knowledge of sports ushered him to the door

of the military newspaper, where he became Sports Editor. It was during his stint as an editor and in the service that he first made his trek to North Carolina – stationed on the coast during Hurricane Hazel in 1954.

Like a good coach, Chuck supported and guided his fellow soldiers and colleagues. His air of concern for people and belief in his product launched him into an entrepreneurial career in sales following his honorable career in service. His consideration for people – employees and customers – made Olson a commodity himself, and he participated in more than 20 business over his career. Of course, he was not in it alone. His wife, Liz, was his constant support and financial strategist.

Olson's business acumen shone when he clinched the title of top



salesperson at an Indianapolis firm, one of hundreds of firms in the United States competing for the award, earning himself a brand new car in 1958. Yet, it was his 1988 accolade as North Carolina's Small Businessperson of the Year that led him to the prestigious Rose Garden at the White House, where he was honored by President Ronald Reagan and Vice President George H.W. Bush for his service and industry. Though the national award eluded him (taken that year by Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream!), Olson was chosen to represent all 18 million United States Small Businesses. Heralded as an everyman's man, he was further honored to lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington Cemetery, and marked what he felt was the pinnacle of his business career.

Parallel to his business ventures was Olson's 68-year commitment to Freemasonry. Born with a learning disability, he had a challenging journey through the degrees of Masonry. But he never quit as his mother's own embedded strengths set the tone for his successes. He was initiated at Franklin Lodge 107 in Franklin, Indiana, and later affiliated with J.J. Crowder Lodge 743 in Raleigh, North Carolina. With dedication that extends beyond ritual and social gathering, Olson lives his

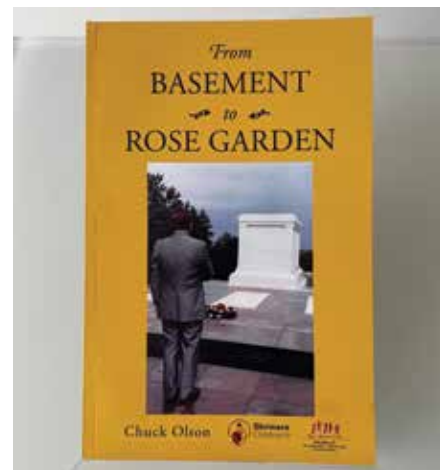
Freemasonry. He engaged deeply with the Scottish Rite, Valley of Raleigh, and Amran Shriners, and can mark over four decades of continuous service.

All these episodes are not unlike degrees – gradual steps toward understanding what is most important in life. Perched as he was on success, it was a fateful day in the autumn of 2022 that changed Olson's perspective and purpose. "Have you written any of these stories down?" he was asked. Upon reflection he knew the answer was no. But, just telling a story was not enough for Chuck. The story, while meaningful, needed to make a physical impact – a philanthropic impact on the causes we hold dear to Masonry.

At the venerable age of 93, Chuck Olson, a resident of Calabash, has unveiled a new facet of his intriguing life with the release of his memoir, *From Basement to Rose Garden*. Though he is known for his quiet demeanor, Olson's narrative (as abbreviated above) is anything but understated. His journey is a tapestry of dedication, resilience, and an unyielding spirit that propelled him from a basement home to rubbing shoulders with luminaries, titans of industry, business magnates, and even presidents in the Rose Garden of the White House. Despite the glamour and accomplishments, his memoir champions

resilience, the pursuit of excellence, and the unwavering support of loved ones. Chuck's can-do and will-do spirit is a true testament of his mother's strengths and the blessings from our Great Architect.

Olson's impact – his philanthropic impact – is his hope that his story is inspirational to others. In as much, he hopes the salesman in him is wrong, in that the autobiography's proceeds are slated to support the Masonic Home for Children at Oxford and Shriner's Children's Hospitals, where his own grandson and great-grandson received dramatic and life-changing care.



Chuck's book *From Basement to Rose Garden* can be purchased through Amazon and Covenant Books. Buy the book, help a child!



Past Grand Master Dalton W. Mayo

By R. David Wicker, Jr., Past Grand Master (2021)



Dalton W. Mayo (1943-2023), the esteemed Grand Master of 2014, passed away on March 22, 2023, at age 79. Born in Blounts Creek, North Carolina, Mayo was a dedicated educator and administrator in the North Carolina

Community College System, retiring from Sampson Community College. He was deeply involved in his local church, teaching Sunday School for many years.

Mayo's Masonic journey began in 1970, rapidly advancing to become a Class A Certified Lecturer. His over five-decade Masonic career included roles as Master & Secretary of Hiram Lodge 98, District Deputy Grand Master, and District Deputy Grand Lecturer. In 2005, he was appointed Junior Grand Steward of The Grand Lodge of North Carolina, and later, in 2013, he ascended to the position of Grand Master. Throughout his Masonic tenure, Mayo

Known for his wit and humor, Mayo was an honorary member of 21 lodges, frequently participating in Masonic rites and visiting lodges across the state.

contributed significantly, serving on various boards and committees. Recognized for his service, he was awarded the Joseph Montfort Medal in 2020.

Known for his wit and humor, Mayo was an honorary member of 21 lodges, frequently participating in Masonic rites and visiting lodges across the state. Mayo's legacy is marked by his commitment to the principles of Friendship, Morality, and Brotherly Love, always prioritizing service to others. His passing leaves a void in the fraternity, remembered not only for his leadership but also for his profound friendship.

Past Grand Master Gerry T. Smith

By Leonard Y. Safrit, Jr., Past Grand Master (2004)



Gerry T. Smith, a respected Masonic leader and community figure, passed away on January 17, 2023, at age 79. Born in Carteret County, he was deeply connected to the region's maritime heritage. Smith married his childhood

sweetheart, Becky Lawrence, and worked in the seafood industry before co-founding Ted and Todd's Marine Service. He was active in various civic roles, including serving on the Carteret Community College Board of Trustees, the Planning Commission, and numerous other groups, earning recognition like the Paul Harris Fellow Award.

Raised as a Master Mason in 1977, Smith's Masonic journey was distinguished. He and

his family were deeply involved in Masonry; he served as Master of Crissie Wright Lodge 741 and participated in both the York Rite and Scottish Rite. He was honored with the Joseph Montfort Medal in 1989 and elected Inspector General Honorary 33rd Degree in 1998. Smith's pinnacle achievement was serving as Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of North Carolina in 1997-1998.

He was known for his commitment to charity, goodwill, and addressing issues like racial integration within Masonry. He championed causes for the disadvantaged, especially children, and was involved with the Masonic Home for Children. Smith and his wife were known for their generosity, crafting cradles and quilts for families. Remembered for his kindness, humility, and dedication, Smith left a lasting impact through his Masonic and community contributions. His passing marked the end of over 45 years of service to Freemasonry and his community.

Freemasonry was always an important part in the life of the Smith family. Most Worshipful Gerry and his brother Phillip were second generation Masons.

Montfort Medal Recipients 2023

By Thomas A. Pope, Jr.

Photos courtesy of Mike Harding/Genesis Photography

The Code allows the Most Worshipful Grand Master of Masons of North Carolina to award up to three Joseph Montfort Medals, and outgoing MWGM Kevan Frazier has chosen the maximum to receive the highest honor a North Carolina Mason can receive.

His recipients for 2023 are: Dwight “Mack” Sigmon, who was installed as MWGM of North Carolina in 2018; Daniel L. “DT” Thompson, who was elected the state’s MWGM of Prince Hall Masons F&AM in 2018 and continues in that capacity; and

Steven A. Campbell, who has served as the Grand Lodge’s Grand Historian four times.

The Montfort has been awarded since 1940 and is given at the Grand Master’s discretion to a deserving Master Mason because of distinguished service or achievement. Joseph Montfort was Treasurer of the Province of North Carolina, Colonel of Colonial troops, a patriot, and ardent Freemason. Born in England in 1724, Montfort was a member of Royal White Hart Lodge No. 2 at Halifax. His exuberance for the fraternity led

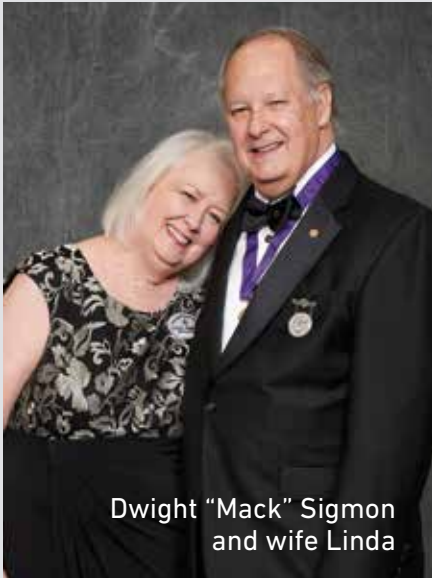
to his commission as Provincial Grand Master – Grand Master of Masons in North America – on January 14, 1771. He died in North Carolina on March 25, 1776, and is buried at Royal White Hart No. 2.

Sigmon, 72, was initiated, passed and raised in Catawba No. 248 in 1975, and it remains his home lodge in addition to four others in which he holds membership. He was appointed to the Grand Line in 2011, and was elected the 166th Grand Master of North Carolina AF&AM on Dec. 1, 2018.



Grand Master Kevan Frazier (left) and Daniel “DT” Thompson (right)

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Dwight "Mack" Sigmon and wife Linda

During his Masonic career, Sigmon served two terms as District Deputy Grand Lecturer – 23 years apart – and served on the Board of Custodians for nine years, seven as secretary. He is a member of numerous appendant bodies, including the Scottish Rite, York Rite, Order of the Eastern Star, Shrine, and National Sojourners.

"Mack is just the Mason's Mason," MWGM Frazier said of his choice of Sigmon. "Such a great story of nearly 50 years of Masonry."

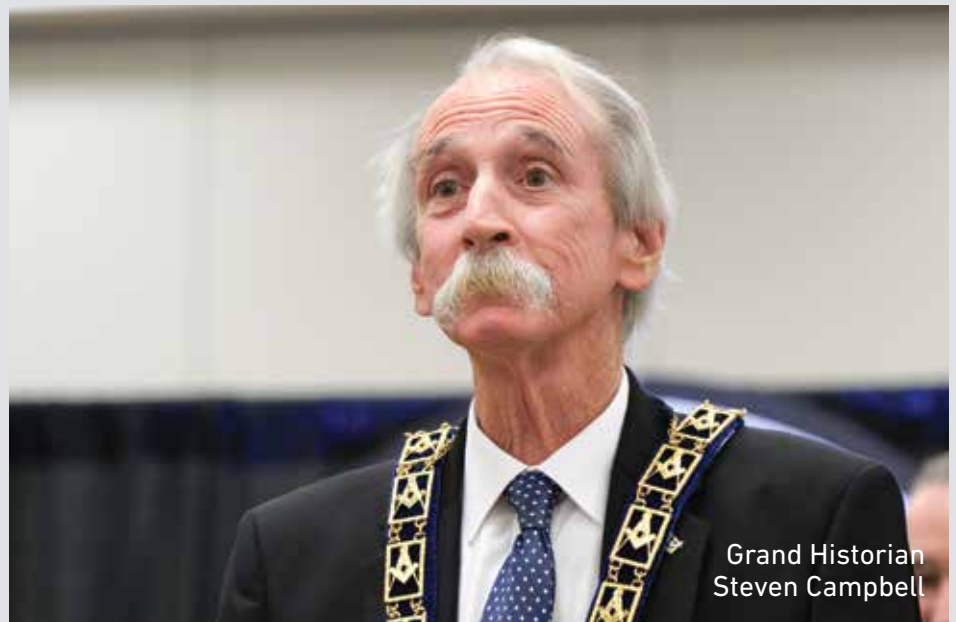
MWGM (PHA) Thompson has an equally illustrious resume.

He retired from the U.S. Army as a Lieutenant Colonel on Dec. 31, 2013. Among his numerous military duties he served as an intelligence officer, and he commanded at the company and battalion levels. Non-militarily, he was commissioned a Kentucky Colonel in 2015.

"I've just always been so impressed by what a fine man he is," Frazier said. "He's been in every appendant body, served in leadership in every appendant body, and has worked hard in the quarries for decades since he was a young man."

"DT led the ship through the [COVID-19] pandemic, and it's been really challenging. Prince Hall jurisdiction has faced the challenges our jurisdiction has, and in some ways part of that has been more acute – just the general scale of the jurisdiction is a bit smaller than ours and that's made that a bit tougher. He managed that with real aplomb and emerged on the other side."

Thompson is the first man in the co-jurisdiction between the GLONC and MWPHGLNC to receive the Montfort – and the



Grand Historian Steven Campbell

“It’s important to recognize our senior leaders, and equally as important to recognize the guys that day after day, year after year show up and do the work... take care of their families, take care of their brothers, and take care of their communities.”

first outside the GLONC to be awarded it since 1977.

Campbell, 73, calls Mount Gilead’s Blackmer No. 127 home. He also was elected for membership to Royal White Hart in 2021.

He has been a Mason for 19 years, and during that time he has served as the Grand Historian four times: 2016 by GM Bryant Webster; 2017 by GM Gene Cobb; 2022 by GM

Larry Thompson, and 2023 by GM Frazier.

“The thing that really caught my attention about Steven is that he is just one of these guys that shows up over and over again,” Frazier said. “Every story I’ve heard about him from his brothers from his lodge and his district is how he’s just always there – always taking care of the situation, always lending a hand, and never looking for accolades,

praise, or anything like that, he just does the work.

“It’s important to recognize our senior leaders, and equally as important to recognize the guys that day after day, year after year show up and do the work... take care of their families, take care of their brothers, and take care of their communities.”

Gregory Awards Announced at Annual Communication

By Douglas Caudle, Past Grand Master (2015)

The Thomas Warren Gregory Masonic Leadership Award is bestowed upon those members of the Craft who have demonstrated exceptional lodge leadership—servant leadership—to their brethren and our fraternity. This year’s recipients are Jacob R. Abernathy of Riverside Lodge, who for many, many years has served as DDGM and DDGL; Augustus “Gus” B. Sims of Mount Hermon Lodge, a certified lecturer and dedicated DDGM; and Robert “Bob” K. Braswell, a 53-year Mason and long-time DDGM and DDGL. Each of these men has had a

profound effect upon the men in their districts and the positive direction in which our Grand Lodge is headed. Thank you, brethren, for your service!



Augustus “Gus” B. Sims (left), Robert “Bob” K. Braswell (middle), Jacob R. Abernathy (right)



Fraternity Fosters Relationships with Fellow Grand Masters

On the week of Independence Day, the Shriners International 2023 Imperial Session met in Charlotte, North Carolina, drawing thousands of Shriners from around the world. Junior Grand Warden Steve Norris can be seen here participating in the Grand Masters Summit. Hosted by the Shriners International Education Foundation (SIEF), the Summit was an engaging two days of fellowship and personal and professional development. The event attracted an international crowd and a record number of participants, who in turn represent thousands of Masons in their jurisdictions.

The small group setting provided Grand Masters and Grand Lodge Officers the opportunity to share rich

conversations, discussing in-depth topics that were immediately relevant and applicable to advancing the health of ancient craft Masonry.

Hosting the Grand Masters Summit is one way the fraternity builds relationships within the Masonic community. With such wide turnout, “the implications for future engagement and collaboration are significant,” said Chief Membership Development Officer Bryan Harrison.

Facilitating the Grand Masters Summit were James D. Cole, PGM (Virginia 2001), Sovereign Grand Commander of the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry Southern Jurisdiction, USA, and Richard E. Lynn, PGM (Florida 1992), current Grand Secretary of Florida and the President of the Conference of Grand Secretaries in North America.

Photo credit: Image courtesy of Shriners Magazine

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The Rain Brings Life

Homecoming at the Masonic Home for Children

By Kevin Otis, Administrator, Masonic Home for Children at Oxford

The rain always comes with a promise of sun – in weather and in life. Homecoming at the Children’s Home this year reminded us of that. The forecast kept changing by the hour, and what looked like a misty day turned out to be a deluge. But, despite gray skies and soggy turf, spirits were high and celebrations continued, albeit tempered to the will of the Great Architect.

Yet, the rain was fortuitous; Friday was beautiful. As the BBQ teams set up and grilled their specialties for the crowd, the children and guests danced and sang to the bands’ beats. Bellies were full, laughter was great, feet tapped, and heads nodded. Though the rain may have dampened some events, it renewed life in others.

On Friday, the members of Lux Libertas Lodge planted a “Davie Poplar” on the lower campus. The original Davie Poplar can be found at the center of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill’s campus, very near the Old Well. Legend has it that when William Richardson Davie was traversing the grounds of the would-be university, he rested himself against a poplar sapling, giving the mighty tree its now distinctive lean. Seeds from the famous tree were collected by Jason and Suma Hallman, and carefully nurtured by Speed and Susan Hallman.

Time, talent, and a green thumb sustained the seeds into a hearty sapling, which was presented to the Children’s Home’s Vocational Counselor Gene Purvis, who maintained the young tree until planting. Davie’s Poplar was known to be present on the campus of the University when Grand Master Davie laid the cornerstone for Old East in 1793, establishing the state and nation’s first public University. Davie’s charge to the legislature to create the university came with a meaningful charge: “it is the indispensable duty of every Legislature to consult the happiness of a rising generation.” Serendipitously, two of Davie’s descendants were on hand to memorialize this new planting: Jeremy and Andy Hicklin, both members of Lux Libertas Lodge. Davie’s descendants, and in fact the members of the lodge that bears his university’s motto, agreed the location of the planting was profound and intentionally symbolic – to ensure “the happiness of a rising generation.”

Friday’s planting and Saturday’s rain are indeed symbolic of the good work and nutrients required to sustain Freemasonry’s mission to empower the next generation to do good. The Masons of North Carolina established the state’s first university and first children’s home. Now the Davie Poplar that

The location of the Davie Poplar’s planting on the lower campus was profound and intentionally symbolic – to ensure “the happiness of a rising generation.”



predates both shall provide shade and comfort over both storied and cherished institutions of support for the benefit of children and students.

The Homecoming for the Children's Home's 150th year was a success. With a weather eye open, the energy remained positive on campus as we kept monitoring the rain, wishing to share fun, fellowship, and music for one more day. Many thanks are due to all our Shrine and Community Parade partners who were at the ready right up until the last minute when the call was made to call off the parade and outdoor festivities. Of course, in this state BBQ is sacrosanct, and the contest to discover the best BBQ carried on. Congratulations are due to overall winner Keller Memorial Lodge of Rockwell, NC, who received the first "Calvin Rogers Best of the Best Award." The Peoples' Choice Award went to



These children – the children you support – are hopeful only to find simple change, and minute improvement in their station – if they themselves understand what improvement can be.

Relief Lodge of Benson, NC. Many thanks to all the BBQ teams for all they did to provide for our kids and our guests, in spite of the rainy conditions.

Several "Orphan's Friend Awards" were presented to our dedicated supporters and volunteers, including Lee Abernethy, Dave Alligood, Charlie Burton, Terry Gilliland, Larry Ledford, Gene Purvis, Rev. Pat Cox, Jeff and Susan Page, Tracy and Andy Newton, as well all three State Shrine Potentates Scott Lackey (Amran Temple, Raleigh), Lou Smith (Sudan Shrine, New Bern), and Doug Garland (Oasis Shrine, Charlotte). The Home was honored to receive donations from Oasis Shrine, the Children's Home's Alumni Association, Ronnie and Shirley Bailey, the "Three Ruffians," and Fellowship Lodge at Durham. The Homecoming Court was Crowned at the York Rite Chapel Service on Sunday. It cannot be restated enough that our outward signs of gratitude cannot compare to the thanks and love in our hearts for all those who love and celebrate our children and this happy place.

In truth, this Homecoming Weekend is representative of what one may find daily, weekly, and yearly at the Children's Home – highs and lows, sun and rain, excitement and disappointment. The rainy Saturday was filled with expectations and



last-minute changes. The children you help us care for are often fraught with similar circumstances as their lives are shifted and jostled by poverty, domestic disquiet, and a multitude of situations and challenges most of us cannot fathom. In each situation these children – the children you support – are hopeful only to find simple change, and minute improvement in their station – if they themselves understand what improvement can be. Yet, as those of us fortunate to know realize, the clouds will part, and a new “home” awaits them with open arms.

This is why you as Freemasons are so important to the future, the “rising generation” Davie charged us to provide for so they might experience safety, support, belonging, and love. To overcome these traumas is a step toward a life of success. The Davie Poplar symbolizes the impact we, as a fraternity have had, currently have, and will continue to have in North Carolina. Whether through the love and support available at the Masonic Home for Children at Oxford, our Shriners Hospitals across the country, our Rite Care Clinics, or our Knight Temple Eye Foundation, you make a difference. Days are

unpredictable and we must adjust. Life brings challenges and we must help each other. In each life a little rain must fall. You can dampen our shoes, but you will never dampen our spirits.

Thanks to all for making your 150th Anniversary Homecoming Celebration at the Masonic Home for Children at Oxford a great success!

Support our kids!

Donate to the MHC

www.mhc-oxford.org



World Masonic Conference

Jerusalem, Israel: May 2023

by Matthew Robbins, Assistant Grand Secretary

Freemasonry is truly an international association of friends and brothers. And lodges and Grand Lodges from around the world regularly meet in conferences and symposiums to discuss issues that are very often the same around the globe – relevance to society, membership growth, financial health, history, and how to create a positive impact for local communities, our states, and national cultures.

This year's World Conference of Masonic Grand Lodge was held in Jerusalem, Israel. The World Conference is open to all regular Masons, and each member jurisdiction has two representatives. North Carolina's representatives are the Grand Master and the Grand Secretary. Because the Conference is every 18 months and overlaps the one-year tenure of our Grand Master, the immediate Past Grand Master is often in attendance.

This year, Most Worshipful Kevan Frazier, Most Worshipful Larry Thompson, and Right Worshipful Jonathan Underwood represented North Carolina. Their trek started in Tel Aviv, the old Port of Joppa, and progressed into the country to Jerusalem. Besides attending the Conference and making friends from around the world – at least 75 other countries – they visited the Western Wall (the foundation of Solomon's Temple), the Noble Sanctuary (the site of Solomon and Herod's Temple, and later the headquarters of the Knights Templar), the Church of the Holy Sepulcher (where Christ was crucified and buried), and peeked into the "Mason's Hall" inside the archaeological excavations adjacent to the Western Wall.

The next World Conference will take place in November 2024 in Parana, Brazil. The next North American Conference (an annual conference) will take place in Seattle, Washington, in February 2024.





Brethren, it has been an honor to serve as the 170th Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of North Carolina.

From the quarries to the temple mount, the Freemasons of the Old North State are doing outstanding work. It has been a privilege to wield the working tools with you.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve our craft and thank you for the work you do every day to advance Freemasonry and to serve our communities. I wish you and yours the best as we close out 2023. May the blessing of Heaven rest upon us all.

May brotherly love prevail, and every moral and social virtue cement us.

**KEVAN D. FRAZIER,
GRAND MASTER**



*Every human being has a
claim upon our kind offices.
Do good unto all.*



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