

NORTH CAROLINA

THE MASON

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



New Officers Appointed at Annual Installation

Montford Medal Recipients

A New Identity:
North Carolina Freemasons



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2022 was a wonderful year for WhiteStone and this year is shaping up to be even better. We're thankful for what's ahead – including our community expansion and the ability to invite more brothers and sisters to live here.

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In 2022, WhiteStone administered just under one million dollars of charitable care through the Fraternal Friendship program, thanks to the MESH LLC Foundation. Donations make a huge difference in the futures of our brothers and sisters. Help ease the burden of rent, utilities, medical expenses, home repairs, and additional costs with a donation to the Fraternal Friendship program today.

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

As I write this first letter in my new role for the *NC Mason* magazine, I am filled with a profound sense of honor and responsibility. Taking on the role of editor for this Grand Lodge publication, which serves as a vital link among Freemasons in North Carolina, is both a privilege and a significant undertaking.

As a Past Master, past DDGL, and current secretary of the Scottish Rite Valley of Raleigh, I've dedicated much of my Masonic journey to education and leadership within our Masonic fraternity. My role as a photographer for the Grand Lodge, Shriners, and both the Scottish and York Rites has provided me with a unique perspective, capturing moments that define our shared experiences, many of which have been featured in past issues of this magazine.

In my professional career, I've served as an IT project manager and spent the last 25 years running a web application development and graphic design company with my wife, Rita Daniels. These experiences have equipped me with a broad skill set that I hope to bring to this position. Yet, true success in this role will depend greatly on your support.

Your insights and contributions are crucial to ensure this magazine accurately represents our great fraternity. I encourage each of you to reach out to share your stories, wisdom, and vision for the future of Freemasonry in North Carolina. Together, we can ensure that the *NC Mason* magazine embodies the best of what we, as Freemasons, stand for.

Don Butto, Editor

nemason@glnc.us

ON THE COVER:

Don Kehler, Grand Master 2024

Photo: Mike Harding/Genesis Photography

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FROM THE GRAND MASTER



Focus on the Unity of Brotherhood

Donald E. Kehler, Grand Master

Freemasonry unites men from every country, sect, and opinion – a foundational principle of our Craft. Among Masons, contention should exist only in striving to outdo each other in workmanship and harmony. Our Fraternity imparts the wisdom of this simple yet powerful truth.

Throughout history, local and global events have shocked mankind's conscience and caused deep divisions. Recently, amidst unsettling national and international news, our nation has become more polarized and socially divided than it was a decade or two ago. Our perceived silence should not be mistaken for indifference to significant issues or tacit approval of societal and global aspects needing improvement. Freemasonry in North Carolina, adhering to a deep principle, meticulously avoids participation or official commentary on matters that polarize men into different political parties, sects, and opinions, in line with the ancient charges of the order.

Within Masonry, individual differences in interpreting causes, events, beliefs, and loyalties must be set aside, focusing instead on the unity of brotherhood. Each Mason represents an impression of Freemasonry; collectively, we shape society's view of the Masonic Fraternity.

Since the chartering of North Carolina's first Masonic Lodge in 1755, North Carolina Freemasons have exercised free thought and action in all matters, religious or civil, as individuals, not as spokespeople for the fraternity. No member, officer, or Masonic body has the authority to represent or act on behalf of Freemasonry, except in exclusively Masonic matters. Even the discussion of controversial topics like politics and religion is prohibited in Masonic meetings. When Masons present themselves as such, whether

individually or collectively, in person or online, they must remember that their actions and words reflect on all Masons and influence perceptions of the Craft among non-Masons.

Freemasonry neither has the facilities nor the desire to ascertain or proclaim its members' views on social, economic, political, religious, or other non-Masonic issues. Any attempt to align the Craft with such issues, regardless of intention, would bring disaster to Freemasonry. Innovating in this way would detract from our mission of bringing Masonry's light to a divided world and uniting men of every country, sect, and opinion under the Brotherhood of Man and the Fatherhood of one God. No political or social proclamations will surpass the impact of Masons practicing outside the lodge the lessons taught within it.

All North Carolina Masons, wherever they are in the world, are directed to take due notice of this and govern themselves accordingly.

When Masons present themselves as such, whether individually or collectively, in person or online, they must remember that their actions and words reflect on all Masons and influence perceptions of the Craft among non-Masons.

Freemasonry: Philosophy of Benevolence

By Jonathan A. Underwood, Grand Secretary



In the enigmatic world of Freemasonry, a principle that resonates at its core is the ethos of “doing good unto all.” This guiding tenet, deeply embedded in the fraternity’s values and teachings, embodies the

Masonic commitment to benevolence, charity, and universal goodwill.

At the heart of these principles lies the commitment to “doing good unto all,” a mantra that transcends the confines of the lodge and extends to the broader community and the world.

This ethos is not confined to grand gestures or philanthropic initiatives alone; it is ingrained in the day-to-day actions and interactions of Freemasons, such as small acts of kindness, or just the compassionate ear offered in times of distress.

The roots of this ethos can be traced back to the earliest days of Freemasonry, where mutual assistance and support were key to the survival and growth of the fraternity – and our communities. This principle has evolved, adapting to the changing times while retaining its core essence of universal benevolence.

Today, Freemasonry’s commitment to doing good manifests in various forms – from charitable endeavors and community service to supporting educational initiatives and promoting ethical living. Masons are encouraged to not only practice this principle within their lodges but to carry it into their personal and professional lives. In practice, “doing good unto all” is evident in the charitable work undertaken by Masonic lodges across North Carolina and worldwide.

Freemasonry’s multifaceted association of appendant bodies is not unlike our modern world of various beliefs. The Blue Lodges, the Scottish Rite, the Shrine, the Eastern Star, the York Rite and a host of other organizations are at their core all Masonic entities. And, while our foundation of belief is the same – to do good unto all – our means of arriving at that same premise is a little different, but no less important. Our ability to work and function together is what enables us all, as brothers and sisters, to contribute millions in donations to various causes, ranging from disaster relief and medical research to education and community development.

But beyond these tangible contributions, the ethos of doing good permeates the very fabric of Masonic life. It is about fostering a culture of kindness, empathy, and understanding – values that are

Freemasonry, a fraternity steeped in history and rich in symbolism, has long been associated with its principles of brotherly love, relief, and truth.

increasingly vital in today’s fragmented world. It also presents an opportunity for Freemasonry to lead by example, showcasing the power of collective goodwill in creating positive societal change.

In a world grappling with myriad challenges, this principle offers a pathway to a more compassionate and altruistic society. As Freemasonry continues to adapt to the modern world, its commitment to doing good must remain unwavering – a testament to the fraternity’s enduring legacy of benevolence and universal goodwill. In the words of a Masonic adage, “Do good unto all,” because “every human being has a claim upon our kind offices.”



Annual Installation Ceremony

The Grand Lodge Officers' annual installation ceremony took place on December 2, 2023, in Duck, North Carolina, marking the easternmost location for such an event in history.

The occasion began on Friday at the historic Life Saving Station, where the Grand Lodge Officers and the Board of General Purposes convened to review the past year. The meeting was presided over by the Grand Master, MW Kevan D. Frazier, who subsequently handed over leadership to his successor, Deputy Grand Master, Donald E. Kehler. The Deputy Grand Master shared plans for the upcoming year before concluding the meeting. Grand Master Frazier exited the meeting with Past Grand Masters MW Larry B. Thompson, Jr., and MW Bryant D. Webster.

A celebratory banquet followed, honoring Masonic traditions. On the following day, the newly appointed Officers gathered for their formal installation, led by MW Jerry Tillett. The festivities continued with a seafood feast at the Dare County Shrine Club in Manteo, collaboratively hosted by

Manteo Lodge No. 521 and the Dare County Shrine Club. This significant event exemplified Masonic camaraderie and tradition in a unique coastal setting.



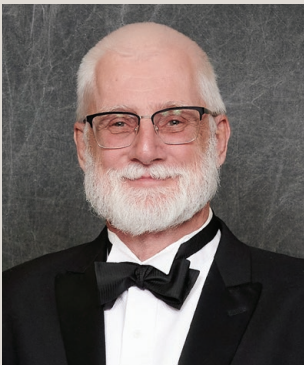
Grand Master Appointments: Profiles in Dedication



2024 GRAND TYLER

Brent Doughtie: A Foundation in Family and Service

Rooted in family values, Brent Doughtie stands as a testament to the teachings of his grandfather, Carroll Young, a Past Master of Davie Lodge No. 38, and his father (also a member of Davie Lodge), Sheriff Doug Doughtie. From construction to law enforcement, Brent's life has been a journey of learning and imparting skills. As a member of Davie Lodge No. 38 and Manteo Lodge No. 521, and an instructor in law enforcement tactics, he dedicates his days to serving and educating. Yet it's his time with his wife, Brittney, and their children, Reagan and Parker, that completes him.



2024 GRAND STEWARD

David Cashion: Educator and Community Steward

David Cashion's 39-year tenure at Highlands High School is a legacy in itself. His life with his wife, Sabrina, and their son, Justin, is enriched by the joys of grandchildren, Elliott and Lincoln. A man of faith and service born in Winston-Salem, David has contributed significantly to his church and community. A Masonic journey that began in Blue Ridge Lodge No. 435 led him to serve as Master and Secretary, showcasing a commitment to the values he holds dear.



2024 GRAND HISTORIAN

Brandon Penley: From Transportation to Masonic Leadership

Brandon Penley's career in transportation, shaped by degrees from Western Carolina University and UNC Charlotte, highlights his dedication to his field. His role at Snider Fleet Solutions is paralleled by his commitment to St. Mark's Lutheran Church and his Masonic duties as Treasurer of Riverside Lodge No. 606 and Past Grand Commander of the Grand Commandery Knights Templar of North Carolina. Off-duty, Brandon finds solace in golf, fishing, reading, and family time.



2024 GRAND LECTURER

Dwight Crews: A Textile Industry Veteran and Masonic Leader

Dwight Crews' journey from South Boston, VA, to a distinguished career in textiles, reflects a life of dedication. Celebrating 36 years of marriage with Sheilah, Dwight's personal life is as fulfilling as his professional. His Masonic career, marked by leadership roles in Bula Lodge No. 409 and as a certified lecturer, showcases his commitment to Masonic principles and community.



2024 GRAND ORATOR

Al Terrell: A Life of Diverse Passions

Al Terrell's childhood in Black Mountain sparked a lifelong interest in media and electronics. His transition from the US Navy to a career in the motion picture and broadcast television industry in Los Angeles exemplifies his adaptability and skill. Now retired in Burke County with his wife, Julia, and their two Rottweilers, Al is an active member of three Lodges. His passions for bass fishing and local stock car racing reveal a man who fully embraces every moment.



2024 GRAND JUDGE ADVOCATE

Matt Cockman: A Legal Luminary and Community Advocate

An alumnus of Elon University School of Law, Matt Cockman's role as an Assistant District Attorney speaks to his dedication to justice. Recognized as a specialist in State Criminal Law, his legal acumen is noteworthy. A member of Bula Lodge No. 409 and Lux Libertas Lodge No. 772, and a leader in the 22nd Masonic District, Matt balances his professional life with interests in CrossFit, movies, history, and time with loved ones.



Embracing the Spirit of Charity: A Call to Action for Masons

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

In the enduring spirit of Brotherly Love that binds the Masonic fraternity, we stand united at a pivotal moment to uplift those in need within our communities. The North Carolina Masonic Foundation extends a heartfelt invitation to join in its mission of compassion and service.

Brotherly Love is not merely a concept within our lodges; it is the very foundation of our fraternity. It compels us, as Masons, to step beyond our lodge walls and extend our hands and hearts to all of humanity. Our duty as Freemasons transcends ceremonial pledges, calling us to live out the principles of our craft through tangible acts of kindness and support.

Contributing to the North Carolina Masonic Foundation is more than a donation; it's an homage to the venerable brothers who laid the groundwork for our tradition of benevolence

and philanthropy. Our collective efforts in supporting this cause perpetuate their legacy of compassion and service, making us a united force for good.

As Masons, we are tasked with being agents of positive change, instilling hope, and building a better future. The North Carolina Masonic Foundation offers us a platform to effect meaningful change, impacting lives profoundly and extensively.

Our contributions represent more than material aid; they symbolize our commitment to solidarity and the power of united action. Through the North Carolina Masonic Foundation, our individual contributions gain strength, creating a more significant impact than any of us could achieve alone.

Today, I call upon each Mason to embrace the spirit of giving. Every act of generosity, no matter its size, is a testament to the enduring principles of our

brotherhood when motivated by Brotherly Love.

Together, we possess the incredible ability to weave a tapestry of hope, love, and kindness across our state. As Masons, let's seize this opportunity to be catalysts for change, bearers of compassion, and messengers of hope.

As we journey together in this charitable endeavor, let us reflect on our ancient rituals, reminding us of our distinction from the rest of the world. May our actions through the North Carolina Masonic Foundation serve as a living testament to our distinguished Masonic virtues, spreading our love and care far and wide.



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Montfort Medal Recipients 2023

*By Thomas A. Pope, Jr.
Stedman 730*

D



Dwight Crews



James Frost

“It’s the guys that’re out there in the trenches that I honor by giving these three that award.”



Neal Combs

150 YEARS OF GUIDING LIGHT: The Masonic Legacy at the Masonic Home for Children

By Kevin Otis, Administrator MHCO

In the quiet town of Oxford, North Carolina, a historic institution stands as a beacon of hope and opportunity for generations of children. The Oxford Orphan Asylum, now known as the Masonic Home for Children at Oxford (MHCO), has been a sanctuary for thousands of children since its inception in 1873. As we celebrate its 150th anniversary, we delve into the heartwarming history and the bright future of this cherished Masonic Home.

“Where’s the man who wants this boy?” These poignant words echoed through time as the first three children were delivered to the care of the Oxford Orphan Asylum on a chilly day in February 1873. John H. Mills, a compassionate Mason, welcomed the children as they disembarked from a horse-drawn wagon. Little did they know that this institution would become a nurturing haven for countless children seeking a chance at a better life.

Over the years, nearly 11,000 children have walked the same path as those first three, entering the original St. Johns Building to receive care, love, and support. Their stories, along with the dedication of staff, Masons, and Friends of the Home, have shaped the rich tapestry of MHCO.

This anniversary celebrated not only paid tribute to the past but also embraced the present and future of *YOUR* Children’s Home. The festivities were marked by special events such as the Scottish Rite Black Tie Dinner, the Order of the Eastern Star Ice Cream Social, the Alumni and Shrine Homecoming weekend, and the York Rite Christmas Observance.

Though rain dampened the main day of Homecoming, the spirit of gratitude and recognition shone brightly throughout these gatherings. The theme of the York Rite Christmas Observance was “*Christmas Light*,” symbolizing the guiding light that illuminates our lives. From the Star of Bethlehem to the Holy Bible to the Masons and countless others, it is God’s light that directs our actions and aids those in times of darkness.

For 150 years, MHCO has exemplified Masonic light, providing children with a pathway to a brighter future. The Masons and Friends of the Home serve as guiding lights, helping these children navigate the challenges of childhood toward the pride of adulthood. Many of these generous souls find their inspiration in their spiritual beliefs, compelled to share their spiritual light with those in need. In the Christmas season, the Home reminds

us that it exists solely to uplift the children, sustained by the grace of others. Alumnus Devante Hicks eloquently captures the essence of MHCO, stating, *“Being at the Home, you look at every kid as a chance. If you give them the tools and resources, you will be amazed at what they will achieve.”*

Brother Benjamin Franklin’s wise words resonate deeply: *“Masonic labor is purely a labor of love.”* The rewards of Masonic work are not measured in gold and silver but in the bonds of sympathy, kindness, and helpfulness that Masons extend to one another and to the community. These virtues shine brightly, especially during the Christmas season.

The joy of giving is a universal truth, and those who give to

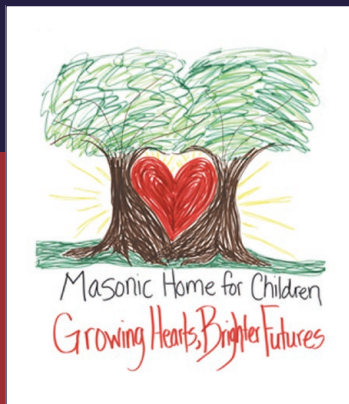
MHCO receive more than they could ever imagine. At the annual Christmas Party at MHCO, nearly 300 individuals gather to provide holiday cheer for the children. Groups adopt each cottage, and the smiles on the children’s faces and the gleam in their eyes eclipse all else, rivaled only by the tears of joy and gratitude from the donors. After 39 Christmases with children in residential care, it is clear: YOUR Children’s Home and its gracious donors know how to make the season truly special.

Around the Masonic altar, we have pledged to befriend and relieve every brother in need, and this promise is nowhere more evident than in the life-changing and life-saving work carried out at MHCO for 150 years. The miracle of the first Christmas endures through

the Home’s unwavering commitment to building upon its strong foundation.

MHCO’s recurring and annual giving campaign continues, and they invite all to consider returning the Calendar Envelope with an annual donation. Lodges are encouraged to meet the GM Challenge by having five members commit to recurring giving. Most importantly, visit your Children’s Home and witness firsthand the profound impact that Masons and Friends of the Home have on the lives and futures of these children.

May your light continue to shine, and may the light of Christmas illuminate our lives always. So mote it be!



Support our kids!

Donate to the MHCO

www.mhc-oxford.org



North Carolina Shriners Leadership

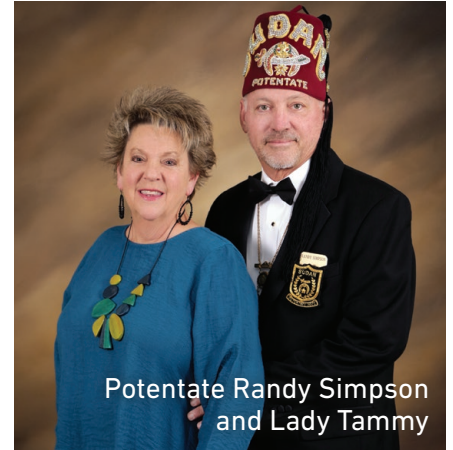
By C. Alvin Billings, Grand Marshal
(Past Potentate of Amran Shrine)



Potentate Shea Fadel
and Lady Sandra



Potentate Michael Gubernick
and Lady Lynette



Potentate Randy Simpson
and Lady Tammy

T

Love to the rescue!
It's always about the kids!



Shriners
Children's™



Photo credits: Potentate Shea Fadel and Lady Sandra: photo by Mike Harding/Genesis Photography; Potentate Michael Gubernick and Lady Lynette: photo by Don Butto; Potentate Randy Simpson and Lady Tammy: photo by 1000 Words Photography LLC

Helms Honored with 60-Year Award

On November 11, 2023, Walter Clyde Helms (affectionately known as “Dub”) was honored with the 60-year Diamond Jubilee award by the Monroe Masonic Lodge 244 in a ceremony at his home.

This recognition, given by the Grand Lodge of North Carolina, celebrates Helms’ 67-year commitment to Masonry, reflecting his leadership and significant contributions to the fraternity. The event, attended by fellow Masons and his family, included an interview with Past Grand Master Speed Hallman, who discussed Helms’ Masonic journey and the importance of the award.

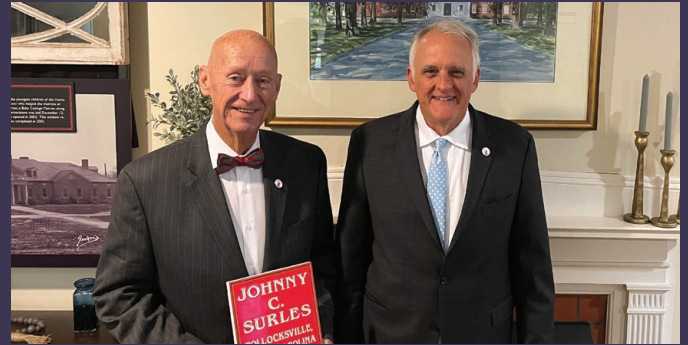
Helms shared memories of his time in the lodge, emphasizing the strong bonds formed and his family’s support, especially from his daughter. The ceremony highlighted Helms’ inspiring journey, underscoring the Masonic values of fraternity, service, and family, with attendees expressing deep respect and admiration for Helms.

The ceremony highlighted Brother Helms’ inspiring journey.



To see the latest news about the Scottish Rite in North Carolina, scan this QR code.

Johnny Surles Honored by MCHO



Brother Johnny Surles, an exemplary volunteer at our Children’s Home, has significantly contributed through various roles.

A thrice-appointed board director and current chair of both homecoming and campus security committees, Johnny is pivotal in organizing successful events. He skillfully managed the auction at the Home’s 150th anniversary dinner and diligently oversees homecoming activities, from arranging entertainment to post-event clean-up. His dedication to campus security, drawing on his experience as a trooper, ensures a safe environment for the children.

A founding Ambassador of the Home, Johnny fosters strong ties with blue lodges and the Scottish Rite, where he serves as a 33° member and valley secretary. His quiet, behind-the-scenes generosity and natural rapport with the children are noteworthy. Recently named a Board Member Emeritus by chairman Speed Hallman – a rare honor – Johnny is deeply valued for his influence and dedication that are felt across the campus. His plaque in the Cobb Center’s board room symbolizes his enduring impact and the Home’s appreciation for his service.

A Special Evening of Brotherhood and Tradition: Currituck Lodge No. 463 Officer Installation

By Russell Scull, PM

In a memorable event steeped in Masonic tradition, Currituck Lodge No. 463 had the honor of welcoming the Most Worshipful Grand Master of North Carolina, Don Kehler, for the installation of their officers on December 22, 2023. This significant occasion was marked by a blend of ceremonial grandeur and warm fellowship, epitomizing the enduring spirit of the Masonic brotherhood.

A Communal Feast to Begin

The evening commenced with a delightful meal, setting the tone for the camaraderie and hospitality that Masonic events are renowned for. The meal, provided and partly served by the Master Elect,

WB Jared Weibley, offered a chance for the brethren to bond and share in anticipation of the formal proceedings. It was an opportunity for reflection, celebration, and looking forward to the lodge's future under its new leadership.

Capturing Memories

Prior to the installation, the Grand Master Don Kehler seized a moment of modernity amidst the age-old traditions, posing for a selfie with WB Russell Scull and WB Jim Jones. This light-hearted gesture served as a bridge between the timeless values of Freemasonry and the contemporary world, symbolizing the fraternity's ability to stay relevant and connected in an ever-changing society.





The Installation Ceremony

The installation ceremony was a showcase of Masonic ritual and dignity. Grand Master Don Kehler, serving as the Installing Master, was proficiently aided by D Marty Silverwood, DDGM of the First Masonic District, in the role of Installing Marshal. The ceremony was not only a formal transfer of responsibilities but also a reaffirmation

of the lodge's commitment to the principles and values of Freemasonry.

MWB Don's Fundraising Hat

Post-installation, Grand Master Kehler added a touch of fun to the proceedings with his fundraising hat, a playful yet meaningful part of the evening. It highlighted the fraternity's commitment to charity and community service, core tenets of the Masonic philosophy.

The New Officers

The newly installed officers of Currituck Lodge No. 463 were a picture of pride and responsibility. The lineup, captured in a commemorative photograph, included Dean Blazier as Junior Warden, Jared Weibley as Master, Todd Cartwright as Treasurer, Clark Bledsole as Junior Deacon, Stephen Evans as Senior Steward, William Gore as Tyler, and Bennie Woods as Secretary. Each officer, ready to embark on their respective roles, symbolized a new chapter in the lodge's journey.

In Conclusion

The officer installation at Currituck Lodge was more than just a routine event; it was a celebration of unity, tradition, and the enduring spirit of Masonic brotherhood. As the lodge looks forward to a year under its new leadership, the evening's events will remain a cherished memory, reflecting the fraternity's commitment to fellowship, service, and the timeless values of Freemasonry.

This significant occasion was marked by a blend of ceremonial grandeur and warm fellowship, epitomizing the enduring spirit of the Masonic brotherhood.

Celebrating 50 Years of Brotherhood: Truth Lodge No. 749 Golden Anniversary

By Robert Mullis, DDGM 29th Masonic District

Truth Lodge No. 479 marked a significant milestone in its storied history with the installation of its officers on December 16, 2023. This event was not just an annual tradition but a grand celebration of the lodge’s 50th anniversary, a momentous occasion that underscores half a century of brotherhood and service. Leading the lodge into this golden year is Doug S. Moore, a charter member, serving as Master.

A Lodge Born in a Time of Change

Chartered on April 24, 1974, Truth Lodge No. 749 was founded during a period of global upheaval and progress – the early 1970s. It was a time characterized by the Cold War’s complexities, the Vietnam War’s ongoing challenges, and technological triumphs like the final Apollo moon missions. This era’s profound events set the stage for the lodge’s founding members, who sought to create a Masonic haven of integrity and enlightenment.

The Genesis of Truth Lodge No. 749

The journey of Truth Lodge No. 749 began in November 1972, following a recommendation from the Grand Lodge of North Carolina. With Monroe Lodge 244 reaching a membership of 400, the necessity for a new lodge was clear. The first officers, led by Worshipful Master E. W. Treadaway, were elected, marking the inception of a journey defined by leadership and governance.

The lodge’s name, “Truth,” was a deliberate choice, symbolizing the virtues and values it strived to embody. Initially operating under dispensation, the lodge held numerous meetings throughout 1973, forging a strong foundation for its future. This period was crucial in nurturing the bonds of brotherhood and setting the stage for its official constitution and chartering in April 1974.

A Golden Anniversary Celebration

The 50th anniversary officer installation was a remarkable event, graced by Past Grand Masters from North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and Tennessee. It was a gathering of significance, with family, friends, and Masonic brethren from various states coming together to honor the lodge’s rich legacy and witness the ushering in of new leadership.

This anniversary was not just a look back at the past but also a testament to the growth and evolution of Masonic thought and practice since the 1970s. As Truth Lodge No. 749 embarks on its next half-century, it stands as a symbol of progress, embodying Freemasonry’s enduring values alongside the adaptability and resilience inherent in its brotherhood.

A Legacy That Inspires

In commemorating its golden anniversary, Truth Lodge No. 749 pays homage to the vision and dedication of its founding members. Their

foresight has left a lasting impact on the lodge and the broader Masonic community. As the lodge continues its journey, it remains a beacon of truth, brotherhood, and enlightenment, resonating with the timeless principles of Freemasonry. The story

of Truth Lodge No. 749 is a powerful narrative of unity, vision, and unwavering commitment, inspiring both current and future members to build upon this rich and enduring legacy.



A New Identity: North Carolina Freemasons

The Square and Compasses, quintessentially the most recognized symbols of Freemasonry, have long been a beacon of the fraternity's values and its pervasive influence in



society. These emblems, once prominently displayed on everything from architectural cornerstones to personal

adornments like rings and lapel pins, serve not only as markers of membership but also as profound representations of Freemasonry's guiding principles and its contributions to community welfare.

In response to the changing dynamics of public engagement and the need for a more contemporary representation of its values and activities, the Grand Lodge of North Carolina embarked on an ambitious initiative in 2023 to rejuvenate and define its public image. This strategic overhaul, in partnership with a specialized public relations firm, sought to re-envision Freemasonry's identity to resonate with the digital age while honoring its storied heritage.

Central to this rebranding effort was the decision to adopt a more succinct and memorable public-facing name, "North Carolina Freemasons," streamlining (not replacing) the traditional moniker "The Grand Lodge of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons of North Carolina." This move, aimed at enhancing brand recognition, reflects a broader

trend among Masonic institutions worldwide to present a more accessible and relatable facade to the public. Notably, Shriners International and other grand lodges, like the "Home of Freemasonry" in England and the "California Freemasons," have pioneered similar initiatives, underscoring a global push toward a modern simplification of Freemasonry's public identity.

The Grand Lodge's communication strategy has also evolved, distinguishing between content for Masonic members and the general public. A dedicated "Members Only" portal has been established, safeguarding the esoteric knowledge and discussions of Freemasonry for its initiates, while the broader public-facing channels are now geared towards demystifying Freemasonry's philanthropic endeavors and core values for non-members.

A key element of the rebranding is the redesign of the Square and Compasses emblem. Drawing inspiration from the historical charters issued by Provincial Grand Master Joseph Montfort in the 1770s (under the laws, rules and regulations of the "Moderns" Grand Lodge of England), and the lodges operating under the Constitutions of the "Antients," the new emblem pays homage to Freemasonry's rich legacy. This reimagined symbol, reflective of both tradition and modernism, is intended for a simplified, widespread recognition. It subtly incorporates elements of North Carolina's Moderns lodges—the compasses—and Antients lodges—the three try-squares (specific to the Royal Arch Degree)—that united a quarter century before



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England did to form our Grand Lodge in 1787.

This emblem, alongside the emblematic letter “G,” remains a profound marker of Masonic identity, encapsulating the dual nature of Freemasonry’s



teachings on the spiritual and physical realms. While the symbols undergo a visual transformation, their intrinsic meanings remain veiled, accessible

only to the initiated members of the fraternity. According to our Code, the square, compasses, and letter “G” is reserved for the use of individual Master Masons only.

Through these thoughtful and forward-looking changes, the North Carolina Freemasons are poised to navigate the future while preserving the essence of our ancient fraternity. This blend of tradition and innovation underscores the fraternity’s commitment to fostering brotherhood, community service, and the quest for knowledge, ensuring that Freemasonry remains a relevant and respected presence in contemporary society.

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