

NORTH CAROLINA

WINTER 2025

# THE MASON

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



## Installation of Officers 2025

We ARE Ready!

The Moore Brothers



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**LETTER FROM THE EDITOR**

It is my pleasure to list herein the recently installed 2025 Grand Officers of the Grand Lodge of North Carolina.

Grand Master - MW Robert "Bobby" W. Rideout

Deputy Grand Master - RW Steve M. Norris

Senior Grand Warden - RW Gilbert D. Bailey

Junior Grand Warden - RW Michael A. Register

Grand Treasurer - WM Lewis R. Ledford, PGM

Grand Secretary - RW Jonathan A. Underwood

Asst. Grand Secretary - WB Matthew C. Robbins

Senior Grand Deacon - WB Philip R. Johnson

Junior Grand Deacon - WB C. Alvin Billings, Jr.

Grand Marshall - WB J. David Cashion

Grand Steward - WB Julian C. Setzer

Grand Steward - WB Gary D. Handy

Grand Historian - WB Daniel Lee Short

Grand Orator - WB Craig J. Horton

Grand Chaplain - WB John T. Frazier

Grand Tyler - WB Christopher T. Canipe

Grand Lecturer - WB P. Christopher Lee

Judge Advocate - WB Matthew W. Cockman

I would like to personally congratulate each one of our duly elected and appointed officers. I know that their blue lodge brethren and extended masonic families are proud!

Together WE R.I.S.E.

**Don Butto, Editor**

ncmason@glnc.us

**ON THE COVER:**

MW Robert "Bobby" Rideout, Grand Master 2025

Photo: Genesis Photography

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**04 From the Grand Master: We ARE Ready!**

*Robert W. Rideout*

**06 What Does It Mean to Be a Freemason?**

*Jonathan Underwood*

**08 Grand Lodge Officer Installation**

*Mike Harding*

**10 Annual Communication: 2024 Oration**

*Al Terrell*

**12 Start 2025 with Purpose**

*George Marut*

**13 Unanimity in the American Revolution**

*Paul Vincent*

**14 The Moore Brothers**

*Robert Mullis*

**16 The Wingate Story**

*Jerry Gantt*

**17 A Culture of Excellence**

*Marty Wilson*

**18 Maintaining Masonic Harmony ( A Duty )**

*Steven Cambell*

**19 "Cur Non", General Lafayette's Visit**

*Nick Lamia*

**20 York Rite Returns to Alamance County**

*Josh Payne / Alvin Billings*

**21 North Carolina Shriners Leadership**

*Alvin Billings*

**22 RiteCare Golf Tournament**

*Kirby Matthews*

**23 152 Years of Making a Difference**

*Charlie Roberson*

**24 Poem - Just Be a Good Mason**

*Don Barrier*



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# We ARE Ready!

By Robert W. Rideout, Grand Master of Masons in North Carolina



I'm going to let you in on a secret; a little bit of "inside baseball." During my service to our Grand Line, I spent the overwhelming majority of the time in meetings, sitting quietly. If I earned a nickel for each minute spent in meetings

or committees over the past eight years, I likely would have earned enough to pay off the national debt. The gold trim on our Grand Line aprons might evoke an image of a thrilling, dynamic environment; however, the reality often involves meticulously dressed brothers diligently conducting the business of our fraternity. The greatest opportunity in these settings is often defined by the moments when one can contribute valuable insights.

Silent contemplation does not equate to wasted time. Much of my time was dedicated to thinking about how we could improve the operations of our Grand Line, Grand Lodge, districts, and lodges; how we could better engage and offer value to our brothers; and how we could showcase the remarkable qualities of Freemasonry to the world. It was during these quiet moments that I developed the philosophical foundations for ... Together WE R.I.S.E.

I passionately believe that while I govern and direct the Craft, I have a limited window to convincingly present a vision to you on how we can advance and grow. The success of any initiative relies entirely on whether you accept and embrace this vision. Freemasonry operates as a democracy; each day, your

actions represent your vote. Our successes hinge on the strength and support of our lodges and districts. My role is to outline the plans, provide the necessary tools, and then place my trust in you. I have based my entire program on the belief that Freemasons are extraordinary. I believe when guided effectively, with a foundation of trust and love, you can achieve anything.

In December, I traveled across our great state, conducting District Meetings, and gauging whether the tremendous response we witnessed over the past months is driven by enthusiasm or signified a fundamental shift in our mindset. My goal was to answer this pivotal question: Are we ready? Brothers, we ARE ready! Your excitement has already been translating into incredible work for our brothers and communities in need. You have shown why Freemasonry is not only relevant but a critical necessity in today's fractious world. Brothers, you ARE leaders, you ARE healers, you ARE the light, in your lodges and in your communities.

Brothers, I am incredibly excited about what we will accomplish in 2025. There is a palpable energy within the Craft that I have never before witnessed during my time in Freemasonry. Our brothers are eager to make a difference. They are brilliant, talented, and driven to support their communities, their lodges, and, most importantly, one another.

I am deeply honored to serve you this year.

Gentlemen, we are poised for a historic year!

-Bobby

**Together WE R.I.S.E.**

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## GRAND MASTER'S CHALLENGE COINS - WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA RELIEF

All 1,000 of the 2025 Grand Master's Challenge Coins, dedicated to supporting relief for our brothers, sisters, and community in Western North Carolina, have been delivered to our Fundraising Campaign Chair, WB Jason Caldwell. He is taking pre-orders and can be contacted by texting (760) 670-7381 or by email at [junior.caldwell@gmail.com](mailto:junior.caldwell@gmail.com).

1. Cost and Proceeds: I have privately funded the cost of the production run of the coins. This means 100% of the proceeds will go to our Committee on Charity to support the relief efforts in Western North Carolina.
2. Numbering and Production Run: This is a limited, one-time run of 1,000 coins. The coins will be individually numbered 1 through 1,000.
3. Price: There are two price options for purchasing:
  - a. \$25 per coin ( random number )
  - b. \$100 if you would like a specific number from the production run.

Example: I serve as your 172nd Grand Master and my home lodge is Wendell Masonic Lodge No. 565. So, if I wanted to purchase numbers

172 and 565, that would cost me \$200, since I would be purchasing two specific numbers. ( Providing they are still available )

4. Shipping. If you would like the coins shipped to your address, there is a \$5 shipping fee.
5. Launch: The intended launch date is December 1, 2024. We are actively taking pre-orders currently. If we are able to send the coins out earlier, we will.
6. Auctions: I intend on pulling numbers 1-25 and number 1000, so that these coins can be auctioned throughout the year at various special events. We will keep the final numbers (1-5) to be auctioned at our 238th Annual Communication.

As we said at our 237th Annual Communication, this is not “the Grand Lodge”; this is “our Grand Lodge.” This is not “my fundraiser”; this is “our fundraiser.” Let’s raise as much money as we possibly can for our brothers and sisters and communities suffering in Western North Carolina. We can do this! And brothers...

**Together WE R.I.S.E.**

# What Does It Mean to Be a Freemason?

By Jonathan A. Underwood, Grand Secretary



Recently, someone asked me what it means to be a Freemason and what benefits membership offers. At first, I thought it would be a simple question to answer. Instead, I found it profound and challenging.

My concise explanation was this: Freemasonry is a philosophical and fraternal organization that emerged during the Enlightenment, providing a haven for free inquiry and the exchange of ideas.

The response came swiftly: “That’s hard to sell. I can find that kind of environment for free.”

They weren’t wrong. Today’s world offers numerous spaces for open dialogue and diverse ideologies. However, Freemasonry requires two fundamental qualities that set it apart: belief in a higher power—deliberately undefined to avoid sectarian conflict—and a commitment to improving the world. Members are prohibited from engaging in political debates to maintain harmony, and instead, they are encouraged to reflect, grow, and serve humanity in ways aligned with their values.

***But how does one quantify or qualify such an experience?***

This conversation underscored a key truth: Freemasonry is not for everyone. It is a deeply personal, introspective, and transformative journey—not merely a collection of tangible benefits. Its abstract nature makes it difficult to explain, even among members. Yet it is precisely this abstraction that has allowed Freemasonry to endure across generations.

During the American Revolution, Freemasonry played a significant role in promoting democratic ideals. Many members contributed to shaping governance principles rooted in equality and liberty. However, in the early days of the Republic, these lofty ideals often clashed with the practical challenges of frontier life. The rise of evangelical religious movements, emphasizing literal interpretations of scripture, further distanced many from Freemasonry’s non-sectarian spiritual framework.

These tensions, combined with frustrations over the fraternity’s lack of immediate, tangible benefits, contributed to controversies like the Morgan Affair, which nearly brought Freemasonry to its knees in the United States.

By the 19th century, Freemasonry evolved into one of America’s earliest civic organizations. Lodges became hubs of community life, hosting schools, public spaces, and charitable initiatives. To counter accusations of irreligion, the fraternity adopted a more religious appearance. It established the office of

Chaplain and created auxiliary groups, such as the Knights Templar, to appeal to Christian members. Scottish Rite Freemasonry embraced a broader concept of Deity, offering initiates lessons in comparative religion and philosophy across cultures.

Despite these adaptations, the fraternity held firmly to its non-sectarian principles, requiring only that a man be of good character and hold a belief in a higher power.

The Civil War introduced significant divisions within Freemasonry, as loyalties were split between North and South. Nevertheless, in the war's aftermath, lodges on both sides became instrumental in fostering reconciliation and rebuilding communities, demonstrating the fraternity's enduring commitment to unity and understanding.

In the 20th century, Freemasonry faced competition from civic clubs like Rotary, Elks, and Moose, which offered social and civic opportunities that some members had mistakenly expected from Freemasonry. This shift challenged the fraternity to maintain its focus on philosophical inquiry and personal growth amid changing societal dynamics.

Today, Freemasonry is experiencing renewed interest from young men seeking a space to share ideas, learn from mentors, and navigate life's challenges. These men are drawn to the fraternity's philosophical foundations and its focus on self-improvement. While civic clubs continue to serve their roles, Freemasonry's unique emphasis on intellectual exploration and

personal growth remains unmatched.

To thrive, Freemasonry must balance its historical ideals with the needs of modern society. It must provide a framework that allows future generations to appreciate its origins while adapting to today's social landscape. The fraternity's ability to inspire introspection, encourage intellectual growth, and foster genuine community remains its greatest strength in an increasingly superficial world.

### ***The Meaning of Freemasonry***

Ultimately, Freemasonry is not for everyone. It is for those who seek to understand life's deeper meanings, trust in a higher power, respect diverse beliefs, and strive to improve the world. For me, if there is one defining statement about Freemasonry, it is this:

**Freemasonry is a philosophical and fraternal organization that challenges its members to grow, learn from one another, and serve humanity with purpose— one day at a time.**

How will you present your Masonry to your family, friends, neighbors, and strangers?

**Together WE R.I.S.E.**



# Grand Lodge Officer Installation

Photos by Grand Photographer Mike Harding/Genesis Photography







# Annual Communication: 2024 Oration

By Al Terrell, Grand Orator 2024



We all began our Masonic journeys in much the same way. Each one of us have our unforgettable parts. The first part for me was “The Investigation.”

Several men from the Lodge came to my house to meet me. It was an amicable conversation. They were all polite fellows

who asked interview type questions. We all seemed to be of like minds. We finished up and as they were leaving, I walked them to their vehicles. I had struck up a conversation with one fellow, who, as he was about to get into his truck, turned to me and said, “You’ve never experienced Brotherly Love like what is in Masonry.”

I remember thinking that was a little strange. I’m a veteran. I thought I knew what Brotherly Love was. I really had no true understanding.

Take a moment now, to think back, in how your journey began...

I received notice from the Lodge that I was “Elected.” There was some conferring and a date was set for my Enter Apprentice Degree. I was about to begin my Masonic Journey. Yet, it almost didn’t happen!

I arrived at the Lodge that evening at the requested time. There was a great hustle and bustle about. I was being introduced to a number of men all at once. Then, suddenly, it was quiet. I was alone in the dining room. I remember a fellow appeared, asking me some very pointed questions, who then led me into a different room, and then disappeared through another door.

Waiting quietly, I could hear indiscernible voices from within. Suddenly, the door opened and two good sized fellows and a shorter older gentleman stepped in. Things quickly picked up. In just a few

minutes, I was very uncomfortably dressed and beginning to question what I had gotten myself into when I overheard the bigger fellows talking about what was next.

I turned around, coldly staring at those two, the wheels spinning very fast in my brain. You’re going to do what with that rope? I quickly formed an escape plan; stiff arm the little guy, knock one of the big guys into the other, grab my belongings and I’m out the door! My body tensing up, I was ready to spring!

Suddenly, the little old fellow steps up and looks me straight in the eye. He said something about everything was all right, they’d all been through this, and nothing was going to happen to me. It wasn’t the words that settled my anxiety. It was the quiet way the words were delivered. As I looked into his eyes, I saw honesty and forthrightness, and then knew all was well.

Today, I regard that moment in time as my first experience of Masonic Brotherly Love.

Minutes later, as I stood in the darkness, the same quiet voice asks, “Are you all right?” I replied that I was. Then the old man took my right hand and moved it to where I felt something solid. I did my best to clear my mind, said a quiet prayer, reached up and proceeded as directed. My life then changed, forever.

I may be a fourth generation Mason, and may have been a DeMolay, and I may have “thought” I knew what Masonry was about. I didn’t.

From the beginning of your masonic journey as an Entered Apprentice continuing forward through the quarry, the Craft guides us to become a better men and Masons.

Consider, if you will, our speculative working tools. From my perspective, time management is paramount to a successful life. Such is the twenty four inch gauge. The common gavel? A mental tool to use when we step toward the outer bounds of our circumscribed circle to bring us back on point. We’ve been taught to be upright, level men acting

upon the square of virtue as we each travel the path on our own level of time.

We all were given these working tools in the quarry. What have you done with them? Did you commit to memory what was necessary and move on? Did your mind begin to consciously consider their use in your day to day life with the profane? Have you arrived to where these are no longer conscious thought and are now a part of your spiritual being?

I grew up in a small town east of Asheville, in Black Mountain. It was a sleepy tourist town supported by manufacturing and farming back then. After I became a Master Mason, I visited Black Mountain Lodge, No. 663. It is a most beautifully adorned Lodge room. Yet, I was drawn to the pictures on the wall. There were two of my old neighbors. The principals of my primary and grammar school were there. As were two very special and influential men from my younger years. Ernest Slagle took the time from running his gas station to teach me how to rebuild a two barrel carburetor for a flathead Ford when I was 12 years old. Ernie Reed repaired televisions and began teaching me electronics as a teenager. His mentoring launched me into a career in broadcast television electronics.

All these men in my young life were Masons. They were truly good men. They were patient and understanding, giving of their time. I also assure you they'd have put a knot on my head when I misbehaved. Yet, I was not given preferential treatment. These men treated all with equal, due respect in such a way that distinguished them from the rest of the community. They encouraged good, kind, and charitable acts. It is just the way they were. They conformed well to the principals of the Order.

Those men accepted and implemented their working tools into their daily lives. They not only made the working tools a part of their psyche, but a part of their spirituality.

Many years ago, a very senior and most knowledgeable Brother once said to me. "Knowledge is Light. Light is Knowledge. Never stop learning. No one can take knowledge from you." If you are not willing to learn, no one can help you. If you are

determined to learn, no one can stop you. Three words, five words, seven words will turn into three sentences, five sentences, seven sentences.

Our jurisdiction has some greatest educational opportunities available. There are a number of excellent seminars in Grandview found on the "Seminar" palate. We have the Davie Academy. Our Speaker's Bureau, found on the Grand Lodge web page under "Educational Resources" can provide outstanding Masonic Education at your Stated meetings. And we have Wilkerson College, absolutely, hands down the greatest overall Masonic learning opportunity. Brethren, use these resources and promote their use to those following along the path.

There is a balance that should be obtained while traveling our path. As important it is to continue to learn, that alone should not become the driving purpose. Share your knowledge with your brothers. Help them learn. Take time to slow down. Contemplate your learning, achieve deeper understanding, and share it with your Brethren.

Before returning my Master Mason's catechism, I studied with a number of brothers. One in particular, from a nearby lodge, had been recommended. His reputation had preceded him as being well learned and knowledgeable. He was very willing to work with me.

One afternoon, as we were finishing our session, I asked a question about the meaning of certain words. The look on the brother's face from my question was stunned. He looked me straight in the eye and said, "Al, theys only words, all you gotta do is remember the words." I was the one who was then stunned. This Brother is a good man at heart. He knows the degree work from beginning to end. Yet, sadly, he lacks in understanding of our philosophies.

Our words have meaning and intent. We must understanding our philosophies. And we must implement those philosophies into our daily lives and continually strive to be better men and Masons.

In closing, I have a poem brought to me by Worshipful Brother Don Barrier, inspired by the poem, "Be A Good Human." It's entitled "Just be a good Mason." ( See the back cover )

# Start 2025 with Purpose: Join the Phoenix Society

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

As we welcome a new year, we are reminded of the enduring values that guide us as Masons: charity, brotherhood, and the commitment to creating a brighter future for our communities. There is no better way to begin 2025 than by embracing these principles and joining the newly established North Carolina Masonic Foundation Phoenix Society.

The Phoenix Society offers more than an opportunity to give; they are a powerful means to demonstrate your dedication to Freemasonry and establish a legacy that will support Masonic charities for years to come. Whether you are a new Master Mason, a loyal supporter, or ready to embark on planned giving, there's a place for you in this meaningful initiative.

## Why Join Now?

- **Legacy:** By joining the Phoenix Society, you secure your place in a tradition of generosity, upholding the highest ideals of our fraternity and ensuring Masonic charities are supported for generations to come.
- **Enduring Support:** Your contributions empower the Foundation to sustain its long-standing commitment to the Masonic Home for Children, WhiteStone/ Fraternal Friendship, and other Masonic initiatives, providing vital resources to those who depend on our care.
- **Recognition:** Members of the Phoenix Society receive acknowledgment for their dedication with recognition at all levels—a reflection of the profound difference they are making in the lives of others.

## The Strength of Your Gift

When you join the Phoenix Society, 100% of your donation goes directly to charity, ensuring every dollar contributes to the most important causes. For generations, the North Carolina Masonic Foundation has been a steadfast supporter of the Masonic Home for Children at Oxford, WhiteStone / Fraternal Friendship, and other Masonic charitable initiatives across our jurisdiction.

Your contribution helps sustain this legacy of care, providing critical support for children, elderly members, and Masonic families in need. By joining the Phoenix Society, you become part of a tradition of generosity that strengthens the bonds of brotherhood and ensures our values endure for years to come.

## Take Action to Start 2025 with Impact

This year, let your generosity define the future of Masonry. By joining the Phoenix Society, you'll reaffirm your commitment to our values while ensuring the continued success of Masonic charities across the state.

Email us at: [gmarut@mfnc.org](mailto:gmarut@mfnc.org) or [crichardson@mfnc.org](mailto:crichardson@mfnc.org) to set up a time to learn more about how you can become part of this transformative initiative.

Let's begin 2025 by building a legacy of service, generosity, and impact—together.





# Brothers of Unanimity Lodge in the American Revolution

By Paul Vincent, Unanimity Lodge No. 7

Portrait Courtesy of the Tennessee Portrait Project

As was characteristic for many of the Masons associated with the American cause for independence, military service in the Revolution was certainly prevalent among the Brotherhood at Unanimity Lodge. Brother Fredrick G. Speidel, in commemoration of the 1976 Bicentennial, chronicled the biographies of several North Carolina Masons who served in the American Revolution, including the following two members of that lodge in Edenton.

One of the lodge's senior officers, Colonel Edward Buncombe, fought with the American forces during the war as a brother of Unanimity. Born in the West Indies and later settling on his inherited family estate, "Buncombe Hall," in Tyrrell (present-day Washington) County, Buncombe initially served the Crown and the Royal Governor as a magistrate. In September 1775, two months prior to Unanimity's first meeting, he was appointed colonel of the Tyrrell County militia.

The following April, the Provincial Congress in Halifax appointed Col. Buncombe command of the 5th North Carolina Regiment. According to lodge secretary Edward Spires' 1930 "Colonial History," this regiment of "500 to 600 men, recruited for the most part from Tyrrell and contiguous counties... were quartered and drilled at 'Buncombe Hall', where [Col. Buncombe] equipped and fed them at his own expense..."

On May 15th, 1776, the lodge received letters of correspondence from Col. Buncombe and one of his company commanders, Captain Benjamin Stedman, "with [the] desire of being admitted into the ancient and honorable Society of Masonry." The next day, both officers were initiated into the

lodge on the first degree of Masonry; less than three weeks later, Col. Buncombe was raised to the sublime degree of a Master Mason.

As testament to his kindness, generosity, and hospitality, Brother Buncombe gifted a pair of silver candlesticks to the lodge during their June 2nd, 1777, communication, "for which the brethren returned him thanks." Unfortunately, this lodge meeting would be Edward Buncombe's last as he sustained severe injuries during the fighting at the Battle of Germantown that October and taken a prisoner of war by the British Army. With no effective way to return home, he died from his wounds in Philadelphia in May of 1778.

Serving as an ensign with the 2nd North Carolina Regiment, Joseph Worth was already a Master Mason when he joined Unanimity in 1775. Listed in the November 14th minutes as one of two visiting Brethren in attendance, Provincial Grand Master Joseph Montfort being the other, Brother Worth successfully applied for admission into the lodge that day.

Appointed to Captain Hardy Murfree's company in the 2nd NC Regiment, his commanding officer, also a Mason, gained admission as a member to Unanimity Lodge the following day. While promoted to lieutenant the following year, fate soon caught up with Joseph Worth as he suffered the unfortunate circumstances of falling ill during the war, perishing from his malady on April 6th, 1777. Moreover, his death occurred almost two-and-a-half months after the lodge moved to expel him for non-payment of dues, the only member to be permanently "excluded from the lodge" during this time.

# The Moore Brothers:

## A Combined Legacy of Over 155 Years of Masonic Service

By Robert Mullis PDDGM 29th Masonic District

In Monroe, North Carolina, three brothers; Galard C Moore, Jr., Douglas S. Moore Sr., and James C Moore, stand as living examples of Masonic principles in action. With a combined legacy of over 155 years of masonic service, they continue to embody the values of Freemasonry while actively serving their lodges, communities, and the greater Masonic bodies.

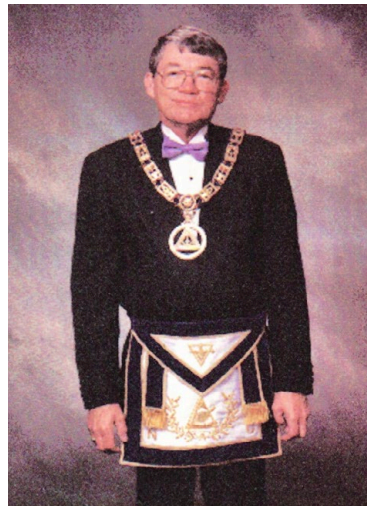
**Galard C. Moore, Jr.**, was born in 1940, was raised in Monroe Lodge No.244 on June



29, 1972, and has 52 years of service. Over the decades, Galard has held numerous significant roles, including serving twice as Master of Monroe Lodge, in 1979 and 1994, while he was also serving as Grand High Priest of the

Royal Arch Masons of North Carolina. He served as Grand Royal Arch Captain of the General Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons International from 2000 to 2003. Galard also served as Great Chief of the Grand Council of Knight Masons of the United States. He just recently retired as the Secretary of the Knight Masons of North Carolina, a position he held for 35 years. His work extends far beyond the lodge walls; Galard has contributed to both the physical and symbolic growth of Masonry in North Carolina. Together with his brother Douglas, he helped oversee the expansion of Monroe Lodge and the construction of the Charlotte York Rite Temple and served on the construction committee of both Masonic homes. Galard remains actively involved in volunteering, and improving the lodge facilities.

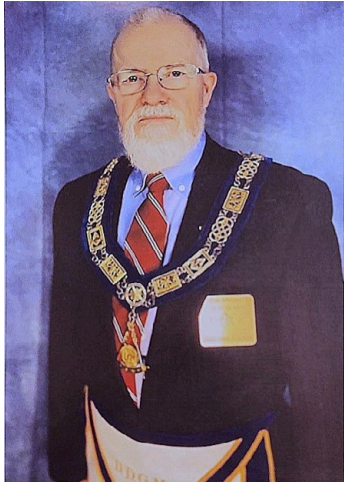
**Douglas S. Moore, Sr.**, born in 1941, was raised in Monroe Lodge No. 244 on January



27, 1972, and can boast greater than 52 years of service. Douglas's Masonic journey is deeply intertwined with the founding, history, and progress of Truth Lodge No. 749, where he proudly serving his second term as Master

during its 50th year - a milestone that marks both the lodge's history and Douglas's enduring commitment to the Craft and the institution. Doug is actively supportive of both lodges in Monroe where he also served as Master of Monroe No. 244. He has held numerous leadership positions, including Past District Deputy Grand Lecturer, Past District Deputy Grand Master of the 39th Masonic District of North Carolina, and Grand Tyler of the Grand Lodge of North Carolina. His work has been recognized by his peers through awards such as the Joseph Montfort Medal for Meritorious Service. In 2015, he served as Sovereign Grand Master of the Allied Masonic Degrees of the United States, and in 2024, he was presented with its prestigious Edward G. Fowler Award. Doug's leadership, both in Freemasonry and in his community, exemplifies the best of a servant's heart. Doug's support of the fraternity continues through the next generation, as his two sons have been members of Monroe Lodge No.244 for over 25 years.

**James C. Moore**, born in 1949, was raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason



on September 18, 1973, in Truth Lodge No.749 AF & AM. Over the last 51 years, James has demonstrated consistent leadership and dedication to the Craft. He has served as Master of both Truth Lodge in Monroe, NC, and Nelms Lodge No.322

in Smyrna, GA. His current role as Master of James E. Sledge Lodge No. 742 in Smyrna, GA, and his service as the District Deputy Grand Master for District #7C in Georgia further reflect his commitment to Freemasonry. As a 45 year member of Monroe York Rite, a 50-year member of Truth Lodge No.749, the Shrine, and the Carolina Consistory Scottish Rite Valley of Charlotte, Jim exemplifies the longevity and passion that Freemasonry fosters in its members.

Together, the Moore brothers represent more than a century and a half of very active Masonic service, each contributing uniquely and quietly to the Craft. Their combined 155 years of dedication is not only a testament to their individual perseverance but also an example of how one family can help Freemasonry shape lives and strengthen communities.

The Moore brothers continue to be pillars of Masonic leadership in North Carolina. Their work, whether through mentorship, lodge leadership, or community service, is an embodiment of the values and teachings of Freemasonry. As they continue their journeys, their example should serve as a reminder that Masonry is not just a set of teachings, a charitable endeavor, or ritualistic perfection, but a lifelong commitment to self-improvement and service to others.

Their contributions are particularly notable at a time when the fraternity is evolving and looking to inspire the next generation of Masons. The legacy that Galard, Doug, and Jim Moore have built is not merely a reflection of the past but a living, breathing example of Masonry's enduring relevance in the modern world.

Those who know Doug have often heard him recite this poem, which, to the author of this article, offers an inspiring perspective on life and the way we serve one another.

### **JUST A LITTLE MORE**

*I recall the kind old grocer  
When the sugar he would pour,  
How he'd tip the scale to balance,  
Then he'd add just a little bit more.  
My, how business prospered,  
Folks were always at his store,  
For he'd give an honest measure,  
Then he'd add just a little more.  
So it is with life, my Brothers,  
We would build a better score,  
If, when we've done what is expected,  
We would add just a little more.*

- Author Unknown

"You and I are the key to the success of Masonry. How we live, and how, through our daily lives, we teach the true meaning of Masonry. It is harder, but more effective, to walk the walk than to talk the talk. We cannot be satisfied with the status quo. It again comes back to you and me." - Doug Moore Sr.

As Masons we can appreciate that service to the fraternity is the highest form of Masonic honor. The Moore brothers have demonstrated this through the work they do every day—leading lodges, improving their communities, and upholding the traditions that make Freemasonry such a profound and transformative experience. Their efforts continue to exemplify the very best of what it means to be a Mason: dedicated to service, honorable as men, and ever striving to make the community a better place for others.

# The Wingate Story

By Jerry Gantt, Board Member, MHCO



Growing up in Cherryville in a close-knit family, I often thought of children that were not as blessed with such a family. My heart went out to children who were living in an orphanage. My thoughts were not positive thoughts, but thoughts of the children being put to bed hungry, screamed at and not treated very well. All that changed while I was attending Wingate College after meeting several graduates of the Masonic Home for Children at Oxford, at that time known as Oxford Orphanage. While working alongside several of the Oxford graduates as library assistants, it became clear to me how proud and thankful they were to have had the “best home and family” anyone could have. I admired and appreciated how well mannered, polite and studious the Oxford students were. Getting to know them took me from having empathy for all orphans to realizing that there was a place that provided a warm loving family very much like I appreciated having. The profound positive impact of the

Oxford grads let me to decide that once I got out of school and had a job, I wanted to be a Mason to be a part of a group of men that was dedicated to helping children in need. I am most thankful for the influence of the Oxford grads that inspired me to be part of an amazing organization for the past fifty-three years. My life has been truly blessed because of the influence the Oxford Grads had on me.

Imperial Sir Jerry, served as Imperial Potentate of Shriners International in 2015-2016. He has served 19 years on the boards of Shriners International and Shriners Children’s and serving as Chairman of the Board of Trustees During his tenure as Chairman, Imperial Sir Gantt navigated the healthcare system through a period of significant industry change and a global pandemic. He remained steadfast in his commitment to ensuring children and families had access to Shriners Children’s exceptional care, regardless of their location or their ability to pay. Imperial Sir Jerry is a 53 year member of Cherryville No.505, began his Shrine career at Oasis Shriners and later served Arabia Shriners as Potentate in 2002. He is also a member of the York Rite, Grotto, and was invested with 33° honorary Sovereign Grand Inspector General in the Scottish Rite. Imperial Sir Jerry was also elected to the board of the Masonic Home for Children in Oxford.





# A Culture of Excellence

By Marty Wilson, Matthews Masonic Lodge No. 461

One hundred thirty years ago, the Matthews Masonic Lodge No. 461 was given their charter from the Grand Lodge of North Carolina. They made their home in the old post office building, but later relocated to the second floor of the Matthews General Store. In 1947, when the General Store moved out, the Lodge was able to buy the building.

Year after year the brothers found ways to improve and beautify the property. They added their cornerstone, gave the building a facelift, and brought the interior to life with historical memorabilia--safely framed and proudly displayed-- including original architectural drawings. This is all very impressive, but the true value of Matthews No. 461 comes to light when you see their degree team in action.

My experience with this lodge began with my own lodge, James K. Polk No. 759 in Pineville, NC. At a recent degree team practice, our coach P.M. Dale Bruck, told us about an upcoming third degree ceremony being held at the Matthews lodge. He said we could consider it one of our practice sessions if we all went to see their degree team in action. So twelve of us traveled to 184 S. Trade Street in Matthews to fellowship with our brothers and witness a third degree. We were warmly welcomed, fed a delicious meal and led to the Lodge Room upstairs.

The long flight of stairs (usually a deal-breaker for a stroke-survivor like me) was a non-issue. I climbed aboard the lift chair and found myself motoring up the stairs.

The room was spacious and comfortable. I was stunned to see such a beautiful room in this old building. Nice, comfortable chairs, great Masonic furniture and antiquities—very impressive indeed. After we were seated,

WB Dave Smith, Master of the Lodge, came by and presented each of us a beautiful ball point pen with the lodge name printed on it. Yet another touch of class.

The degree team was dressed in white tie and tails, the work was performed flawlessly with dignity and precision. The long lecture given to the new Master Mason was delivered by D.D.G.L. Brother Ed Steel along with WB Brian Turner who is a Past DDGM and Past DDGL.

In my travels before retiring, I have visited many lodges across the country, and I have seen quite a few degrees. Never have I been so impressed with a degree team as I was with the Matthews team.

My brothers, do yourselves a big favor. Plan to visit this wonderful old lodge in downtown Matthews to see a Masonic degree as it should be performed. You will not be disappointed.



# Maintaining Masonic Harmony ( A Duty )

By Steven Cambell, Blackmer Lodge No. 127

When you feel that the world has become too demanding, crisis-driven or gloomy, I beseech you not to despair and to find comfort in your family, beliefs, friends, and our Fraternity.

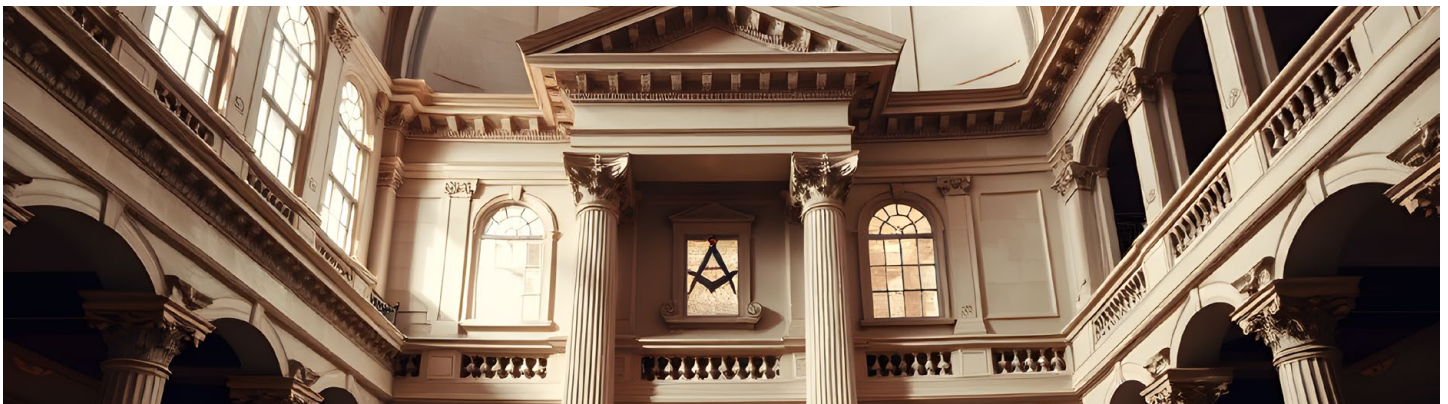
As students of history, we document and report events, eras, and individuals, creating a record of mankind. No experience we encounter is entirely new; every experience we encounter echoes those lived by others in the past. The foundational principles of Freemasonry—brotherly love, relief, and truth—serve as a template for how individuals should conduct themselves, regardless of their background. Each of us has taken an obligation to strive to be better men. The reputation of Freemasonry in North Carolina and across the nation remains largely positive. This is not to say that we are without our flaws or in any way perfect. Yet, by examining both past and present, we see the profound impact that many good men within our Fraternity have had on our communities, the state, the nation, and the world. And though our membership numbers have declined, those who stay and those who join us continue to exemplify and uphold our tenets with increasing strength and vigilance.

Throughout our nation's 247-year history, we've navigated through uncertain and turbulent times; yet, reason has generally prevailed, affirming the United States' vibrant presence on the world stage. Today, we are

in an era marked by discontent. Civility, respect, kindness, and thoughtfulness have notably declined. In the age of social media, where greed, self-serving officials, and hateful rhetoric often divide us, the nation feels fragmented. Over the decades, open-mindedness, mediation, and compromise without sacrificing what's best for the people or what is right have served America well. As a nation, we share more in common, qualities, traits, customs, language, and beliefs that unite us than divide us; truly, "out of many, one". Freemasonry provides an even stronger bond.

The Masonic tradition of reason and logic has proven a time tested formula toward stability and progress. It is our duty to one another, to those we cherish, and to our nation to lead the way toward a positive future. What each of us does in life and within Freemasonry will be etched upon the annals of history – perhaps as a page, a chapter, or a footnote. Therefore, let us strive to fulfill our obligation as we continue to uphold all that is good in Freemasonry. Perhaps Brother Light Horse Harry Lee's son said it best: "...Duty, then, is the sublimest word in our language. Do your duty in all things; you cannot do more, you should never wish to do less."

May Providence grant you courage, forbearance, and wisdom...



# "Cur Non"

By Nick Lamia, Assistant Grand Historian



1825 La Fayette Engraving by Joseph Perkins

In March 2025, the city of Fayetteville, North Carolina, will celebrate the 200th anniversary of General Lafayette's visit, commemorating a thirteen-month, 24-state tour across the United States. This celebration highlights Fayetteville's pride in its Revolutionary

War heritage and honors General Lafayette, who fought alongside George Washington and other American patriots.

In March 1825, the last surviving Major General of the American Revolution, General Marquis de Lafayette, arrived in Fayetteville, North Carolina—a city named in his honor—accompanied by his son, George Washington de Lafayette, and his secretary, Auguste Levasseur. Upon crossing the Cape Fear River at the Clarendon Bridge, Lafayette was greeted by the Fayetteville Independent Light Infantry (FILI), commanded by Major Robert Strange, along with Captain Hawley's Eagle Artillery and Captain Birdsall's Light Artillery.

The FILI, established in 1793 under the Militia Act signed by President George Washington, continues today as the Official Historic Military Command of North Carolina.

During his visit, General Lafayette also attended a meeting at Phoenix Lodge No. 8 on Mason Street. There, Major Robert Strange, serving as Worshipful Master of the lodge, welcomed Lafayette "in the name of the fraternity." Lafayette, impressed by the moment, jokingly remarked about finding the chief of his bodyguard presiding over the "Sons of Light."

Major Robert Strange was a prominent figure in North Carolina. He served as a United States Senator, a member of the North Carolina House of Commons, a Superior Court judge, commander of the FILI, and lieutenant colonel of the Cumberland Militia Regiment. Additionally, he was a director of the Bank of Cape Fear, twelfth Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of North Carolina A.F. & A.M., Grand High Priest of the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of North Carolina, and, of course, Worshipful Master of Phoenix Lodge No. 8.

On Wednesday, March 5, 2025, at 4:30 pm, Phoenix Lodge No. 8, the Grand Lodge of North Carolina A.F. & A.M., and Lafayette Trail, Inc. will unveil a Lafayette Trail marker at Phoenix Lodge, located at 221 Mason Street, Fayetteville, NC 28301.



**MW Brother Robert Strange**

*Twelfth Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of North Carolina A.F. & A.M*



# York Rite Returns to Alamance County

By Josh Payne / Alvin Billings, Junior Grand Deacon

The York Rite of Freemasonry is one of the principle appendant bodies of Masonry, the other being the Scottish Rite. The York Rite is an integral part of the Masonic experience in the United States and one which every Mason should be encouraged to explore. There are thriving York Rite bodies throughout the state, yet there are many areas in our state without a York Rite presence. Alamance County was one of these areas. The closest York Rite bodies to Alamance County are Greensboro and Durham, however their meeting times conflicted with other Masonic meetings in Alamance County, namely the Burlington Shrine Club. The only thing to do was to start up a new York Rite body.

At the 2023 session of Grand Lodge the wheels were set in motion. Several Alamance County Masons discussed the topic with York Rite leadership, including the current Grand High Priest Hugh McLaurin. This led to the formation of a committee to start a Royal Arch Chapter in Alamance County. Research was done which revealed a Royal Arch Chapter, Burlington Chapter No. 84, existed nearly 100 years ago before closing. Fast forward to October 24, 2024 and the first Royal Arch meeting in nearly 100 years was held at Bula Lodge as Burlington Chapter U.D. was set to work. We are excited to bring further light to the brethren in Alamance County with the Royal Arch, and in the future perhaps more York Rite Masonry.



# North Carolina Shriners Leadership

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



Oasis installed Illustrious Sir Christopher Lee “Chris” Hall as Potentate on January 4, 2025. Illustrious Sir Chris is a Past Master, PDDGM of District #36, and a member of Blue Ridge No. 435. Operating on a seven-year progressive line, WB William Thomas “Tom” Bridges, Jr. of Hibriten No. 262 was appointed and installed as 2nd Ceremonial Master.



Illustrious Sir Kyle Stephen “Kyle” Carlson was installed as Potentate of Amran Shriner on January 18, 2025. Illustrious Sir Kyle is a member of Rodger No.525. Amran has a five-year elected leadership line. Jimmy Paul “J. Paul” Abrams, Jr. of Garner No. 701 was elected and installed as Oriental Guide.



Illustrious Sir Eugene Thomas “Tom” Ferrell III was installed as Potentate of Sudan Shriners on January 25, 2025. Illustrious Sir Tom is a member of Mt. Olive No. 208 where he served as Master in 1993. Sudan’s leadership line consists of 5 elected and 5 appointed positions. Clarence Lee “Lee” Cannady, a member of Coharie No. 379, was appointed and installed as Outer Guard.

**T**he Grand Master of Masons in North Carolina, Most Worshipful Robert W. Rideout, accompanied by his lady Courtney, attended each of the Shrine installations as well as other Grand Lodge Officers. Every member of the Grand Line is a Shriner. The common bond of all Masons and Shriners is the care and love for children in need. Change of leadership does not change the motivation or objectives we obligate ourselves to help children. Shriners Children’s provides specialty care for children with orthopedic conditions, burns, spinal cord injuries, and cleft lip and cleft palate, regardless of their ability to pay.

For more information about our mission or patient referrals please visit our website at <https://shrinershospitalsforchildren.org> or call 1-800-235-5055 Love to the rescue! It’s always about the kids!

**Love to the rescue!**

It’s always about the kids!



**Shriners  
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**Photo credits:** Oasis Potentate photo by Mike Harding/Genesis Photography;  
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# RiteCare Golf Tournament

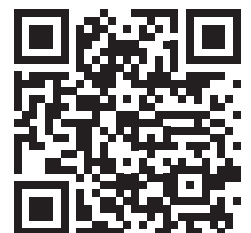
By Kirby Matthews

On a beautiful Saturday afternoon, Forty-four golfers gathered at the Emerald Golf Course in New Bern NC to raise money to support the Rite Care Programs. The Annual Scottish Rite Golf tourney teed off at 1:00 on October 5, 2024 With the help of the golfers and generous sponsors, over \$18000 was raised to help support Rite Care.



The Scottish Rite Golf Tourney is an annual event and will be held in New Bern again in 2025.

Watch for details in the upcoming months.





## Celebrating 152 years of making a difference

**D**onating to the Masonic Home is one of the most meaningful ways you can make a lasting impact on the lives of children who need it most. Every donation, no matter how small, contributes to creating a better future for children who often lack the basic care, support, and resources they deserve. These children come from difficult circumstances, whether due to poverty, neglect, or abandonment, and many have been deprived of the love and attention that every child should experience in their formative years. Your contribution can directly impact their daily lives—offering them a safe space where they can grow, learn, and develop into strong, confident individuals.

Your donation can help provide food, clothing, education, healthcare, and emotional support for these children, ensuring they have the chance to thrive. Here at the Masonic Home, we rely on the generosity of donors to keep our doors open. Those doors have been open, and kept open, since 1873. Since then, we have been able to serve over 11,000 children. All because of people like you.

Over the years, MHCO has adapted to meet the changing needs of the children it serves; providing education, emotional support, and opportunities for a better future. As MHCO celebrates this significant

anniversary, it stands as a testament to the tireless efforts of staff, volunteers, and donors who have supported its mission. This anniversary is not only a time to reflect on the rich history of our Home but also an opportunity to renew the commitment to its ongoing impact, ensuring that future generations of children will continue to find hope and love within its walls.

Beyond the immediate needs, your support helps lay the foundation for a brighter future. By contributing to our Home, you are investing in the potential of a child, giving them the tools they need to build a successful life. Many of these children go on to achieve great things, breaking the cycle of hardship and creating positive change in their communities. By supporting our children, you're not just providing for their needs today, but also offering them hope for tomorrow.

So, ask yourself: what can you do to make a difference in the life of a child? What legacy do you want to leave on the world? Your donation to The Masonic Home for Children can be the catalyst that changes their lives for the better—one child at a time. Positive changes and progress being made and will allow you to witness the direct impact of your generosity on the lives of the children we serve.



600 College St. Oxford, NC 27565  
(919) 693-5111 | [www.mhc-oxford.org](http://www.mhc-oxford.org)

NORTH CAROLINA

# THE MASON

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

The Grand Lodge of North Carolina, AF&AM  
2921 Glenwood Avenue  
Raleigh, NC 27608

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## **Just Be a Good Mason**

by WB Don Barrier

For those who are a seeker of Masonic light,  
I have a secret for you, Just be a good Mason.

When you finally sit through all the degrees in all the appendant bodies,  
when you have worn the jewels, and the blue and the purple,  
when you complete all the chairs, exemplified countless rituals, and have given every lecture and charge,  
when you have read the entire works of Pike, Claudy, Hall, Wilmshurst,  
Steinmetz, MacNulty, Davis, Hogan, and Dunning,  
the answer that is revealed is to come back to your lodge and do the work, right there, right then,  
and with who you have in front of you, and Just be a good Mason

Enlightenment is no destination;  
it is a state of mind as you travel along the path,  
Every seeker of light can become enlightened,  
the enlightened is just another man walking along the path with his faults and foibles to overcome,  
Falling and faltering from the path is part of being human,  
it's about getting back up, and trying again, and again,  
Mentor those who follow behind you along the path,  
so they will learn more that you will ever know,  
Forgive those who are further along the path that disappoint you,  
but first forgive yourself, and Just be a good Mason.

Yes, it is important to gain understanding of the philosophy, to be proficient in ritual and lecture,  
well versed in The Code and history of the Craft,  
but don't get lost in the lust for knowledge,  
don't yoke your growing enlightenment to your ego,  
don't let your path to further light become a trap, and Just be a good Mason.

Brotherly love is the most valuable gift you will ever give another man,  
You don't have to be perfect, or strong or brilliant, both power and glory are fleeting, but love is eternal,  
So you can relax, love your brother, and **Just be a good Mason.**