

2023

The Fall Bulletin

GLOBAL
RECOGNITION

WISCONSIN
2024



Joshua D. Kelley



SOVEREIGN
GRAND
COMMANDERS



Robert L. Reed



Robert Hucless

United Supreme Council 2023





The United Supreme Council

Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, Prince Hall Affiliation,
Northern Jurisdiction, U.S.A., Inc.

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United Supreme Council Book Store



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March 1, 2024

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SOVEREIGN GRAND COMMANDER'S PEN

**Honoring the Extraordinary Legacy of
Reverend Brother Jesse Jackson Sr.
upon his Retirement as President of the Rainbow PUSH Coalition**

It is with respect that we recognize and celebrate the career and profound impact of Reverend Brother Jesse Jackson, Sr. on the occasion of his retirement as the esteemed leader of the Rainbow PUSH Coalition. With unwavering dedication and an unyielding commitment to civil rights, Reverend Jackson has been a driving force in shaping a more just and equitable society for over five decades.

The Rainbow PUSH Coalition is a Chicago-based nonprofit organization formed as a merger of two nonprofit organizations founded by Reverend Jackson; Operation PUSH (People United to Save Humanity) and the National Rainbow Coalition. The Rainbow PUSH Coalition is an organization devoted to empowering African Americans and marginalized communities by addressing issues such as economic empowerment, educational opportunities, and social justice. Under his visionary leadership, The Rainbow PUSH Coalition grew into a force for positive change and touched the lives of people around the world.

Throughout his tenure as the leader of The Rainbow PUSH Coalition, Reverend Jackson spearheaded numerous transformative initiatives. He advocated fought for fair housing, access to quality education, and economic advancement for underserved communities. His unwavering commitment to voter and political engagement paved the increased representation of voices in the democratic process.



**Reverend Brother
Jesse Jackson Sr.
Harmony Lodge #88
Chicago, Illinois**





The United Supreme Council

Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, Prince Hall Affiliation,
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Reverend Jackson's influence transcended national borders. He became a global advocate for human rights and social justice, championing causes that addressed poverty, discrimination, and inequality on an international scale. His leadership in fostering dialogue and understanding across diverse communities has been instrumental in promoting peace and cooperation worldwide.

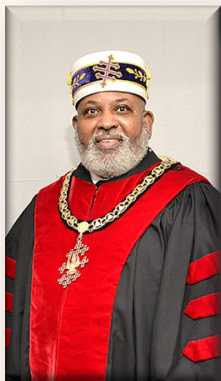
In 1987, Reverend Jackson was made a Master Mason by Grand Master Senter of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Illinois. As we recognize Reverend Jackson upon his well-deserved retirement, we celebrate a remarkable career and a life devoted to the betterment of humanity. We express our gratitude for his selfless service and unwavering commitment to justice, hope, and unity.

I, as Sovereign Grand Commander, and our organization will strive to continue the noble work of Reverend Jackson in pursuing a more equitable and compassionate world.

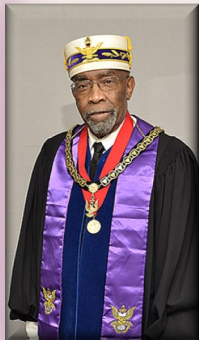
Yours in the Rite,

Dr. Melvin J. Bazemore

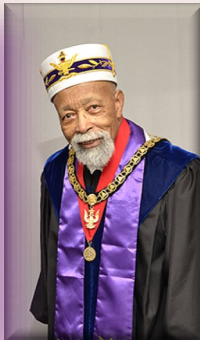
Dr. Melvin J. Bazemore, 33°
Sovereign Grand Commander



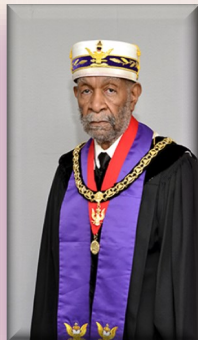
SOVEREIGN GRAND COMMANDER
Dr. Melvin J. Bazemore



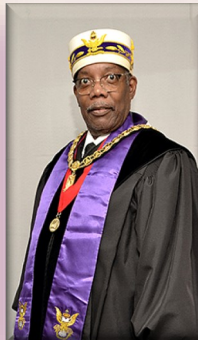
LIEUTENANT GRAND COMMANDER
Sidney D. Broadnax Jr.



GRAND MINISTER OF STATE
Grady Edge



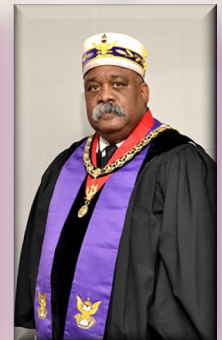
GRAND TREASURER
Roland K. Lee Sr.



SECRETARY GENERAL
Edward M. Brooks II



GRAND RECORDING SECRETARY
Daniel R. Poole



CATHEDRAL SECRETARY
Raynard W. Hughes

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THE POWER FOUR & GLOBAL



It is not a unique singularity that our United Supreme Council has engaged with and entertained agreements of recognition with other Supreme Councils across the world. This practice is a method to protect the brand of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite from imposter organizations who would attempt to claim legitimacy. The agreement between the Four Legitimate Supreme Councils in the United States of America, "The Power Four", serves as a solid foundation for the new recognition agreements offered to our Supreme Council to date. It is through this process that universal recognition between ALL legitimate Scottish Rite organizations is feasible.

There is a word that aligns with this. "If my people which are called by my name shall humble themselves and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then shall the land be healed." The result of unity is healing that is

being implemented by way of the balm of brotherhood which is provided in the recognition agreements themselves. They do, in fact, declare and define the narrow path and the straight gate that leads to universal recognition. The opposite is the path of wicked ways which should not be entertained. For those who abide by the path of righteousness are "1st Psalmists". They are akin to that tree that is connected to the rivers of water, whose leaf shall not wither, and whatsoever is done, shall be prosperous. The prosperity of our United Supreme Council, in this respect, is, therefore, not a surprise.

There is a scene in the movie "Kingdom of Heaven" where a Muslim says to Balian "your quality will be known by your enemies before ever you meet them." By the same token, the quality of an organization will also be known by friends based upon the integrity in action

SCOTTISH RITE RECOGNITION



 <p>SUPREME COUNCIL, 33°</p> <p><i>Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry</i> OF CANADA</p>
 <p>Universi Terrarum Orbis Architectonis Gloria Ab Ingentis</p> <p>Suprême Conseil National de France</p> <p>Ordo ab Chao - Deus meumque Jus</p> <p><i>The Sovereign Grand Commander</i></p>
 <p>UNIVERSI TERRARUM ORBIS ARCHITECTONIS</p> <p>SUPREME COUNCIL OF THE 33RD AND LAST DEGREE FOR GREECE ANCIENT AND ACCEPTED SCOTTISH RITE (est. 1872)</p> <p>EMMANOUIL GERAKIOS 33° SOVEREIGN GRAND COMMANDER</p>
<p><i>Universi Terrarum Orbis Architectonis Ad Gloriam Ingentis</i></p> <p>Supremo Consejo del Grado 33° del Rito Escocés Antiguo y Aceptado PARA LA REPUBLICA ARGENTINA</p> <p>NORBERTO J. ROSSINI, 33° Soberano Gran Comendador</p>  <p>Tte. Gral. Perón 1242 1° - C108AAZ C.A.B.A. - República Argentina Tel. (54) 11-4382-1980 soberanograncomendador@scg33argentina.org</p>
 <p>ANCIENT AND ACCEPTED SCOTTISH RITE OF ROMANIA</p> <p>SOVEREIGN GRAND COMMANDER Stelian Nistor, 33°</p>

and communication of thoughts and intentions. Our leadership has acted honorably in instances of trials by combatants and instances of fellowship among equals. While brotherhood may have opened doors, it is the standard of high integrity that prompts many to reach out their hands of brotherhood to extend the bonds of our United Supreme Council and vice versa. To show yourself a friend, one must first be friendly. It is through the bonds of friendship that brotherhood between Supreme Councils is expanding.

Since 2019, recognition agreements have either been signed or are in the process of review for Supreme Councils of Scottish Rite Masons dispersed across the globe. The countries of these Supreme Councils are not limited to but do include **Haiti, Canada, Argentina, Mexico, France, Romania, and Greece**. There are others on the way. They are

coming because the four legitimate Scottish Rite bodies of America, the “Power Four”, came into alignment with one another creating a bond that is resonating like the reverberations of a gigantic bell. By way of these international opportunities, the bonds of legitimate brotherhood shall have no bounds leaving no room for bogus organizations to grow.

This movement is clearly an indication that the Strategic Plan offered in 2019 is working. The missions outlined in the plan—Membership; Enhancements; Financial Stability; Marketing and Communications—have created that solid ground upon which the Northern Jurisdiction is building. The progress has not gone unnoticed but is being recognized by the world!!! So, let’s grow together and work to solidify the Scottish Rite universally. In doing so, the next generation will be better positioned to carry us to higher heights.

Office of the Lieutenant Grand Commander

Sovereign Grand Inspector General Sidney D. Broadnax, Jr., 33°

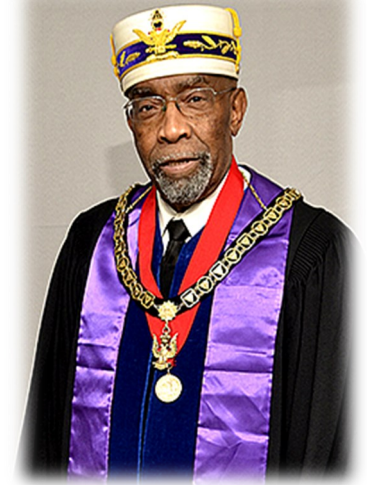
Membership Enhancement: Reclaiming, Retaining and Recruiting (Attracting)

Currently, our primary focus is **Reclamation**. The USC Reclamation Committee has been given the mission of developing and implementing an effective outreach and processing plan focused on former members who were dropped from the rolls. The Committee works in conjunction with designated representatives from each Orient to locate them and assist those who desire to be reinstated. Communication from our Sovereign Grand Commander **Dr. Melvin J. Bazemore** has laid out the plan. If you are not sure what it is, go to our Web Page ~ USCNPJPHA under "Membership Reclamation Program" for detailed information.

WE MUST "Reach Out" by communicating with our Consistory Members who are eligible. REMEMBER--- Many of those suspended may not be aware of our WEBSITE.

To the Consistories – I am suggesting that a Committee be established to help your Orient in "Reinstatement of Members". An Award recognizing the Frater responsible for the largest number of Reinstatement may be considered. Let Us Continue to Aspire for Greater Achievements ~ "Securing the Future by Enhancing the Scottish Rite Experience by being United in Service and Commitment through Action, Accountability and Sustainable Results".

So ... WE'RE A TEAM. Let's Go to Work!!!



Office of the Grand Minister of State

Sovereign Grand Inspector General Grady Edge, 33°

The upcoming 2024 Presidential Election is one of the most important election cycles in our history. There are several issues that require your attention because they may have a direct impact on our lives. Perform your civic duty. Exercise your right to vote. Also, work to encourage others to vote in alignment with our Social Justice and Civic Engagement Committee.

Some key focal points for the upcoming Presidential election include Social Security and Medicare; educational values; abortion rights; foreign policy; national immigration policies; gender related issues; and crime. No matter what party affiliation you have selected, take time to research and understand the issues and vote your conscience. Not doing so means that you simply accept what is given and the consequences could have a negative impact on your life and our communities.

Do you take time to understand how the nationally touted issues impact you locally? How many of your neighbors are impacted by the issues? Will the solutions being presented by the candidates solve the problems of today? Answers to these questions could impact your quality of life because they may impact people in you community.

In closing, I encourage everyone to fulfill a primary civic duty to vote. Encourage others to vote on the local and national levels. Lead by example and let's work together to get souls to the polls.

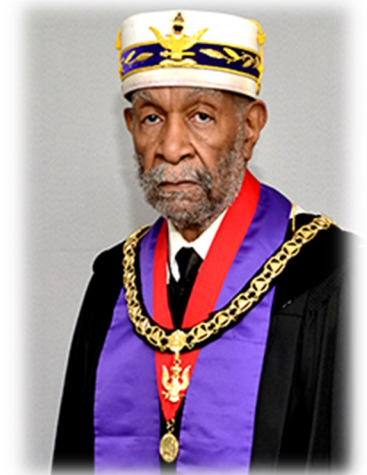


Office of the Treasurer General

Sovereign Grand Inspector General Roland K. Lee, 33°

The Financial Sustainability Mission of our United Supreme Council is diverse and is in full effect. In most organizations, dues and fundraisers are the primary drivers for revenue. The Walk of Fame effort has helped to generate revenue and beautify the premises of the Holy See. Donations to the Benevolent Foundation have helped us to engage in benevolent efforts across the country. These initiatives can also be leveraged to generate interest and donations from external parties who hold similar charitable values. Lifetime Membership, Planned Giving, endowments,

grants and other programs also provide opportunities for members to invest in our future. Our focus on these and other items are critical in our plans for the future. Thank you for doing your part to financially secure our organization. We look forward to your continued support.



Office of the Secretary General

Sovereign Grand Inspector General Edward M. Brooks II, 33°

First giving honor to the G.A.O.T.U. for his many blessings. It is my hope that all is well with all of you and your families. The Office of the Secretary General is planning to use electronic communications for more administrative activities for this organization. We will continue using the internet, email and other electronic means to save this organization thousands of dollars in printing costs.

In May 2023 the United Supreme Council had a very successful Annual Session. For the first time, we used electronic communications to prepare for the session. We saved the organization thousands of dollars by utilizing our website for communicating the activities and registration. There were a few hiccups that were experienced but we looked at it as lessons learned but, all in all it was very successful. We received very favorable feedback through our survey from the membership for all of the activities provide.

We are now making plans for the Mid-Year Deputy's Conference to be held in January in Massachusetts. At

this meeting we will continue to enhance the Scottish Rite experience for the membership of this organization. We will also be preparing for our Annual Session which will be held in Milwaukee, WI, May 24 – 28, 2024. If you are planning to attend the session, please make sure that you remember to bring and take your medications where needed. Please avail yourselves to the eateries and sites this city has to offer.

Under the leadership of Sovereign Grand Commander, Dr. Melvin J. Bazemore, 33°, we are working to make the United Supreme Council, the premier Scottish Rite organization under the Prince Hall Banner. Looking forward to seeing you all very soon, but in the meantime, be safe and may God bless.



Office of the Grand Recording Secretary

Sovereign Grand Inspector General Daniel R. Poole, 33°

Hello and Happy Holiday Season! This year has flown by. In 2019 we worked as a team to build a strategic plan and we have refined and focused our efforts to the vision not by any one person but by Teams of Teams working together for the benefit of our United Supreme Council. We are extremely pleased about several items that have come to fruition this year. The presentations given by the Order of the Golden Circle Working Group at the Annual Session was very well received and sparked excitement in all that attended, along with the OGC manuals. Thank you PSGLLR Gail Freeman for your work and the teams from each Orient along with each of the State Grand Loyal Lady Rulers and Assemblies. The Reclamation committee is up and running led by SGIG Garry Tyler and *Team of Teams* in each Orient. This process along with the fees waived by SGC Bazemore will help us reclaim members we lost for a myriad of reasons. The Making A Difference Report, led by GIG Tony Dye and GIG Gardner Torrence collects and

aggregates our present and past community service, scholarships, and charitable donations. This is building a portfolio to share locally and nationally to show how we Make a Difference.

I personally want to thank you for your support as we continue to modernize, streamline, and advance our United Supreme Council. I am often asked when I visit other jurisdictions and organizations what is our secret too progress, I always respond, our secret sauce is our members, who continue to make a difference wheresoever dispersed. As we continue to work to be the Premier Scottish Rite Organization in the world. On behalf of Tama'ra & I we wish each of you a very Happy 2023 Holiday Season!



Office of the Cathedral Secretary

Sovereign Grand Inspector General Raynard W. Hughes, 33°

The Paver Project for the United Supreme Council remains a key component of fundraising and beautification of the Cathedral, the Holy See of our organization. Many have left their fraternal legacies by purchasing pavers listing their names or in memory of loved ones who have passed. Consider participating in this project today by visiting www.uscnjpha.org and:

1. Select the “Resources” menu option
2. Click “Council Forms” from the dropdown list
3. Scroll down to “Special Projects” to Download the form for “Paver Project”

While leaving a legacy is a focus, taking care of your health is critical. Many have endured health challenges over the past few years. However, some issues can be detected with regular checkups and dealt with before they can become worse. I implore all readers to take some time and make an appointment with your physician today. It just may save your life.



Desk of the Editor of the Bulletin

Sovereign Grand Inspector General Daryl L. Andrews, 33°

One of the key goals of the United Supreme Council's Strategic Plan is financial stability. Its achievement is an ongoing process where several teams are working to generate income; market our efforts publicly and privately; and identify opportunities for savings without diminishing quality. As such, the Bulletin will shift to electronic delivery starting with the Spring 2024 edition to aid in achieving this goal. The financial savings from this shift cannot be ignored as our organization will save over \$20,000 per year. **FREE** technology allows us to publish future editions on the website without size restrictions and allow Sublime Princes, Loyal Ladies, and the public to download them **FREE** of charge or order copies for a small fee. This method will broaden our exposure to an unlimited audience. It is from this extra exposure that opportunities can be generated.

This edition showcases an abundance of activities. The Social Justice and Civic Engagement Committee is pushing very hard to ensure our involvement in social and civic affairs. The Reclamation Committee is working hard

to reclaim old members and implement retention strategies. The Veterans Affairs Committee continues to provide options for veterans which constitute a large percentage of the Scottish Rite. All committees are highly active.

Our Grand Prior continues to present more light and our Grand Historian continues to take the mystery out of our history. The Security Chief has introduced a new column that will help to keep us all safe while other submissions provide sustenance for reflection. Cradle to College mentorship is moving forward. These contributions combined with the words from our leadership are making a massive difference in the mobilization of our organization. So, read, review, support, and get activated. Let's work together for the long haul. In doing so, be a blessing to the next generation of Scottish Rite Masons.



Office of the Grand Prior—"Finding Open Spaces"

Sovereign Grand Inspector General Rev. Dr. Wilton E. Blake I, 33°

In his book "Margin", Dr. Richard Swenson writes, "We must have some room to breathe. We need freedom to think and permission to heal. Our relationships are being starved to death by velocity. Our children lay wounded on the ground, run over by our high-speed good intentions. Is God now pro-exhaustion? Doesn't He lead people beside the still waters anymore? Who plundered those wide-open spaces of the past, and how can we get them back? Swenson says we need some quiet, fertile "land" in life where we can rest in God and meet with Him.

Does that resonate? Seeking open spaces is something Moses lived out well. Leading a nation of "stubborn and rebellious" people, he often withdrew to find rest and guidance in God's presence. And in his "tent of meeting"

the Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend. Jesus also often withdrew to lonely places and prayed. Both He and Moses realized the importance of spending time **ALONE** with the Father.

We too need to build margin into our lives, some wide and open spaces spent in rest and in God's presence. Spending time with Him will help us make better decisions. Creating healthier margins and boundaries in our life so we have the bandwidth available to love Him and others well. **LET'S SEEK GOD IN OPEN SPACES TODAY!!!**



Alpha Phi Alpha National President Crowned

Sovereign Grand Inspector General Daryl L. Andrews, 33°

Dr. Willis L. Lonzer, III, by profession, is an executive scientist with over 20 years of global pharmaceutical research and development and global medical affairs experience. A graduate and Charles Waples Scholar in Chemistry at Delaware State University, he holds the Doctor of Philosophy degree in biochemistry from The University of Akron, as a prestigious Patricia Roberts Harris Predoctoral Fellow. He was also a postdoctoral fellow in physiology and biophysics at Case Western Reserve University, School of Medicine.



The Immediate Past General President of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity and a member of the Xi Lambda Chapter (Chicago), he is a member of Eureka Lodge #64, Western Consistory #28 and was coronated as a member of the William R. Stark Class of 2023 in Denver, Colorado. He now serves as the National President of the National Panhellenic Council with plans to collaborate with all fraternal organizations that benefit society and humanity as a whole.



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Membership Reclamation Program

APPLY NOW!

Start Here

Visit the USC Website
at uscnjpha.org.

1

**REINSTATEMENT FEES
WAIVED UNTIL
APRIL 30, 2024**

Resources

Hover Cursor Over "Resources"
tab and scroll down to
"Reclamation."

2

Reclamation

Select "Reclamation" to go
to page and scroll down to
"Reclamation Form" button.

3

Reclamation Form

Select button to open and
complete online form.

4

Submit Form

Select "Send Message"
button to transmit form to
the Reclamation Committee.

5

**A MEMBER WILL
CONTACT YOU**

Scan QR Code to Visit
Reclamation Page on
USC Website



Point of Contact:
Committee Chair: SGIG Garry Tyler
Email: GTyler7879@aol.com

DEPUTIES FOR THE ORIENTS OF 2023—Northern Jurisdiction, Prince



ALASKA

SGIG Clifford Hastings, 33°

BAHAMAS

SGIG Everette Z. Mackey, 33°

CANADA

SGIG Frederick Ofusu, 33°

CARIBBEAN

SGIG Edward B. Darnell, 33°

COLORADO/WY/UT

SGIG Lionell Cummings, 33°

CONNECTICUT

SGIG Ronald A. Thomas, 33°



KANSAS

SGIG James S. Webb, 33°

MASSACHUSETTS

SGIG Daniel C. Brightwell Sr., 33°

MICHIGAN

SGIG Christopher Buck, 33°

MINNESOTA

SGIG John W. Hardeman III, 33°

NEBRASKA

SGIG Johnny L. Cummings, 33°

NEW JERSEY

SGIG Robert L. Oglesby Sr., 33°



THE GOLDEN LIGHT: Loyal Ladies

Sovereign Grand Inspector General Clifford Hastings, 33°

LOYAL LADY JACQUELINE M. PARKER, daughter (6), wife (1), mother (3), grandmother (8) is the sitting State Grand Loyal Lady Ruler for the Alaska State Grand Assembly. Dream More, Learn More, Do More, and Become More!!!

Dream More—What did I want to be when I grew up? In our lives we have had dreams of one time or another; however, I never dreamed big, just simple. Daughter, college wife, mother, grandmother and community service were my dreams. My dream now is retirement, more time to set my own schedule and becoming a great-grandmother. Dreams keep hope alive. **Dream more!**

Learn More—When I wanted to learn something new, I'd read a book and do research, spending a lot of time in the library. Nowadays they call it Google. They say, if you want to get something by you, put it in a book. When wanting to feel comfortable speaking in front of people I enrolled in Toastmasters. When I needed to improve my listening skills I became a crisis line listener. When I needed to have safe distance meeting due to COVID, I learned Zoom, Teams and, my least favorite, WebEx. Not because I am a Virgo. It's because I wanted to learn more. For now, I'm going to keep the year a secret to be answered at the end of this article. Raised in Fairbanks Alaska, sometime around statehood. Graduated Lathrop High School. Attended Grambling State University, University of Alaska, Fairbanks and Tanana Valley Community College. **Learn more!**

Do more—Volunteering was something I started when I was 14 years old in our hospital serving meals and cleaning trays, then at our fairground as a ticket taker. While in college, I did switchboard and advertisements for the college newspaper. I was a crisis line listener, usually working the weekend overnight shift and member of NAACP unit 1001 (Assistant Treasurer). Sometimes doing things for emotional gain is more fulfilling than financial. My career as an Administrative Asst. fulfilled my financial stability and a place in our body. **Do more!**

THE UNITED SUPREME COUNCIL

Hall Affiliation, U.S.A., Inc. —2024



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EUROPE

SGIG Enrique John, 33°



FAR EAST

SGIG Charles H. Bush, 33°



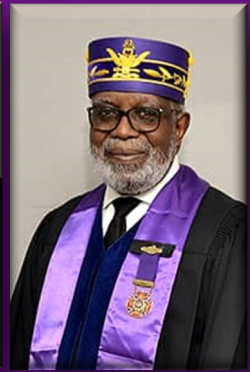
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INDIANA

SGIG Carl Drummer, 33°



IOWA

SGIG Osumana V. Cassell, 33°



NEW YORK

SGIG Hermon Simpson, 33°



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WISCONSIN

SGIG Marshall E. Tharpe, 33°

Jacqueline M. Parker (AK) and Virginia W. Brooks (PA)

Sovereign Grand Inspector General Daryl L. Andrews, 33°

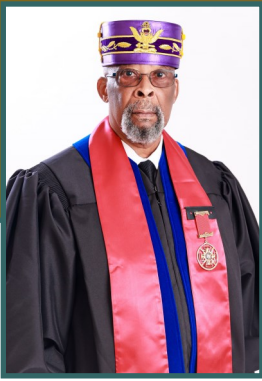
Become More—Member of Acacia Chapter #5, OES,(1994), Worthy Matron (2000)PGWM Alaska State Grand Chapter O.E.S Alaska and It's Jurisdiction,(2007-2010, 2020-2022) former member Al Jabbar Court #204. Northstar Assembly #79 (2007) and Alaska State Grand Assembly State Grand Loyal Lady Ruler (2017-present). It is an honor and a privilege to follow in my Past State Grand Loyal Lady Rulers path like E. Mary Jackson, Virginia A. Kilpatrick, Virgie M. King, Jerrie L. Coleman, and Michelle Williams. Without the shoulders of our previous great leaders in these organizations to follow, we wouldn't be the leaders we are today!

LOYAL LADY VIRGINIA W. BROOKS is an Administrative Professional holding a Bachelor of Arts in Urban Studies and a Masters of Public Administration. She is an administrative expert.

Loyal Lady Brooks hold membership in the American Management Association; Association of Executive and Administrative Assistants; National Association of Female Executives; and the Baruch College Alumni Association. A member of Bright Side Baptist Church, she is also a former Vice President and Secretary, Lancaster Branch NAACP; Lead Mentor, RISE Women of Color in Ministry National Mentoring program, Union Theological Seminary; and Chairperson, JP McCaskey High School Occupational Administrative Asst. Advisory Committee.

A Past Loyal Lady Ruler of Harrisburg Assembly #50, she was named Loyal Lady Ruler of the Year from 2017-2019 while serving as State Grand Loyal Lady Secretary (2018). She is also a Past Matron of Silvery Moon #56, OES; District Deputy Grand Matron (2018-20), Deborah Grand Chapter, OES; Dean, 5th District OES School of Instruction. She recently extended her talents to the United Supreme Council's Dove and Quill Project. She not only submitted reflections on the Order of the Golden Circle but also served as an associate editor on the project. Her significant contributions aided in the success of the endeavor.





RECLAIM & RETAIN

Reclamation Sub-Committee

Sovereign Grand Inspector General Garry Tyler, 33rd, Chairman

As you may be aware, our jurisdiction recently formed a Reclamation Sub-Committee and implemented structured reclamation procedures. The purpose of this article is to further disseminate information regarding our United Supreme Council Reclamation Program, expound upon the inherent relationship between retention and reclamation, and shed some light on the “actual” reasons many of our brethren opt to not pay dues and are subsequently dropped from the rolls for non-payment of dues. For this article, I focused on these questions:

1. *Within the Prince Hall Masonic family, is there sufficient focus on reclaiming brothers we lost?*
2. *Is leadership consciously focused on retaining those on the rolls and ensuring they are afforded the opportunity to contribute and “Make a Difference”?*
3. *Do we recognize the inherent connection between reclamation and retention?*

To be frank, I am not sure of the answer to these questions throughout the Prince Hall Family, but as it pertains to our United Supreme Council, the answer to each question is a resounding Yes!

As a part of the strategic goals of our United Supreme Council, Sovereign Grand Commander Bazemore has noted “Our guiding principles look to balance tradition and innovation to grow the Rite; working at all levels from Sublime Princes to Sovereign Grand Inspectors General, collaborating across Orients and Valleys to improve sharing and growth; leadership through stewardship and incorporating feedback throughout the Jurisdiction for improvement”. Those are the types of activities that promote cohesion, inclusiveness and retention!

Often senior leaders in the Prince Hall Family address the dilemma of losses as brothers being dropped from the rolls for not meeting the requisite financial obligations. The importance of undertaking efforts to reclaim them is duly noted. It is clearly a leadership concern. But from an organizational perspective, is there a focused, outreach effort? **There is in our USC!** Our committee and the representatives in the orients have already started.

Here is something to ponder that may help in forming a perspective – in the last 5 1/2 years slightly over 800 members have been dropped for non-payment of dues by Consistories. 23 were Grand Inspectors General, the remainder, Sublime Princes. Realistically, we know there are times when there may be financial difficulties and extra money may be scarce, and

payment of dues may not be a priority. But we should also be well aware that during the time span noted above it is not very probable that over 800 persons will not find themselves financially unable to pay dues. I submit that most of those members did not stop paying dues because of financial difficulty, but rather because it was clear that not paying dues would result in being dropped for non-payment of dues as a very clean way to “disconnect”. To be clear, what I am saying is that not paying dues because of financial difficulty is not the real reason for the “disconnect”, just the official one.

In over 12 years working as part of reclamation teams, a few of the more prevalent “actual” reasons related to me and team members regarding allowing oneself to be dropped for not paying dues have been:

- ⇒ *I am not learning anything, there is no formal/structured instruction.*
- ⇒ *Communication is either non-existent, lacking in substance, without strategic focus, or normally just happens when money is needed.*
- ⇒ *I cannot participate in activities because I am not a part of the “favored” group(s), alluding to cliques.*
- ⇒ *It’s always the same people selected for tasks/projects.*
- ⇒ *We don’t really do anything.*

I am not saying that the actual reasons are necessarily true in every case. That noted, perception is very often the actual reality and there is generally a basis for someone coming to a certain conclusion.

I would also point out that the leadership of an organization cannot address actual reasons unless they are aware what they are. Being aware allows leadership to work towards organizational mitigation. That is a part of sincere retention efforts. Our committee will work with potential reinstatement petitioners to determine “actual” reasons and advise our leadership from a collective perspective, not each individual reinstatement query or submission.

In many instances, at some point a disconnected brother will come to the conclusion that he is wasting his money, as he is not getting anything - Masonic interaction, knowledge, working as part of a team and valued as team member - and at some point, he will stop paying his dues. Problem solved. How should a Reclamation Program be structured? There are several components that I firmly believe should be a part of any effective reclamation program:

- ◆ *A defined process by which members that have been dropped for non-payment of dues can be identified, located and contacted. The administrative files of the organization are critical for this effort.*

FRATERS & LADIES IN THE NEWS

Social Justice & Civic Engagement Committee

Sovereign Grand Inspector General Carl L. Drummer, 33°

- ◆ *A committee or working group comprised of brothers designated to receive the information noted above, initiate contact and discussion regarding reinstatement, and actively assist.*
- ◆ *Depending upon the complexity of organizational processing, utilizing electronic document processing versus paper.*
- ◆ *A documented process which promotes uniformity of effort as it pertains to processing throughout the organization, fixing organizational responsibility for each aspect of the information and documentation movement - if you touch it, you own it and are obligated to ensure it moves to the next step in a timely manner. This precludes the loss of documentation, lack of action due to forgetfulness, etc.*
- ◆ *Ensure the process is trackable and the organization leadership is kept in the loop as desired /required.*
- ◆ *Have a reliable method of documenting and reporting efforts and results, measuring the effectiveness of efforts allows for optimal oversight and program adjustment as needed.*

Our program is a structured one that encompasses all of that noted above. We must be cognizant of what is needed to retain them after they come back, and/or take retention into consideration as we structure programs, activities, etc. The common thread running through all aspects of this issue is communication and determination. Effective communication on the front end will preclude many brothers from getting to that point of being dropped for NPD. Dedication and perseverance are clearly just as important as we work to reclaim and retain. To be successful, it cannot be a halfhearted or sporadic effort, and has to be something we care about, want to do, and that is embedded in the way we do business!

In conclusion, retention and reclamation requires action by all of us. Retention should be built into all we do. Refer back to our Sovereign Grand Commanders stated goals above. Reclamation is an outreach activity. I often hear “they know where we are.” Reclamation is not a “wait for them” activity. We should reach out and let Fraters know we want them in the fold, that there is a lot of work to be done and we need their help! If you or someone you know is potentially seeking reinstatement, got to our USC website – click on “Resources and Reclamation” and follow the Instructions to submit an electronic query.

Contact us at ReclaimUSCNJPHA@gmail.com

SOCIAL JUSTICE & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

—In support of the United Supreme Council’s effort to tell the stories of our organization, the Social Justice and Civic Engagement committee will be collecting the stories of our members. Our organization and members have a rich legacy of community engagement and community service along with professional accomplishments.

Committee Chairman Illustrious Carl Drummer said “We want to harness the individual stories of our fraters and loyal ladies, to better present the skills and talents within our organization and to raise the names of the network of men and women performing good work. The aim is to continue to grow and continue to be a valuable organization within the Prince Hall Masonic family. Our United Supreme Council under the leadership of Sovereign Grand Commander Bazemore is an active organization worth joining, with men and women consistently making our communities better. Sharing this good news is the purpose of the ‘Fraters and Loyal Ladies in the News’ program and is part of the mission.”

This program is a compliment to the “Make A Difference Program”, which is capturing the collective activities of our Consistories and Assemblies. Our program will capture the individual and small group activities our members perform as a function of their daily lives. We will accept applications primarily submitted by Consistory Commanders in Chiefs and Assembly Loyal Lady Rulers. The application has 4 main parts. The submitters information, information about the member in the news, the web link to the news item, and the contact information for the news reporter from the media outlet. Once an application is validated and approved, we intend to distribute the story. The distribution of the news story link to our membership and friends, is still being defined. We currently anticipate sharing stories via our United Supreme Council website, via our social media channels, and via other tools that still need to be constructed.

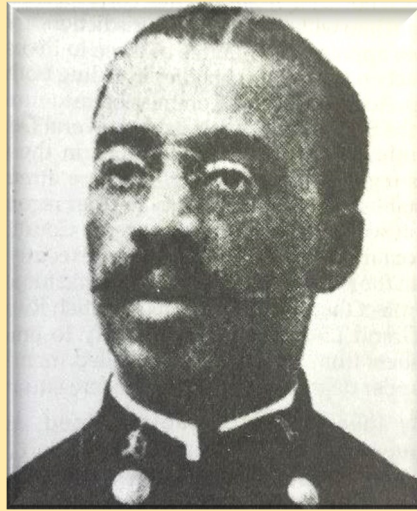
The Social Justice and Civic Engagement Committee recognizes that our membership includes, community leaders, influencers, elected officials, activists, and professional subject matter experts. We intend to elevate the stories of our members. You can assist this effort by making your Commanders-in-Chief or Loyal Lady Rulers aware of any news stories that reflect the good work of our Fraters and Loyal Ladies. Find the contact information for the person at the media outlet and follow through to be sure the information is sent to the Social Justice and Civic Engagement Committee. We will continue to grow our organization by continuing to improve the way we tell our story.

Sovereign Grand Commanders:

TERMS OF LEADERSHIP: **Robert L. Reed (1897-1899)**

The mid-1890s was a most turbulent time in the history of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry. The 1895 defeat of John G. Jones for the Office of Sovereign Grand Commander of the Southern Jurisdiction by Illustrious Thornton A. Jackson drove Jones to gather forces and start a bogus Supreme Council shortly thereafter. This move caused much ruckus. The rise of the Milton Fields Supreme Council further complicated matters making the environment within the diaspora of the Scottish Rite combative and highly competitive. The Northern Jurisdiction remained secure under the leadership of Sovereign Grand Commander George W. Roper until his untimely demise in 1897. As Roper handled the all affairs directly leading from the front, his successors were not as incorporated into every aspect. It was under the pressure of filling enormous shoes without the general support of the Supreme Council membership and the stress in dealing with the bogus environment in the Scottish Rite that Sovereign Grand Commander Robert Lafayette Reed was elevated to leadership.

Reed, who served as the charter Commander-In-Chief of New Haven Consistory #7 in 1892, matriculated through the ranks of the United Supreme Council and the Grand Lodge of Connecticut at the same time. In 1893, he was elected Lieutenant Grand Commander for the United Supreme Council while serving as an elected Grand Lodge line officer. In 1896, he was re-elected Lieutenant Grand Commander and, in 1897, he was not only elected Most Worshipful Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Connecticut but had also been elevated to the Office of Sovereign Grand Commander of the United Supreme Council. Heavy was the head that wore two crowns simultaneously.



Sovereign Grand Commander Reed found himself between a rock and a hard place. The Jones and Fields factions gained ground in membership in the Northeast which required his immediate attention while the reverberations of the efforts of both factions relative to bogus Blue House Masonry also had to be stopped. Reed elevated several Master Masons to the 32° to combat the movements of Jones and Fields which was not met with

agreement by the United Supreme Council Officers who felt that the appointed Deputies should have taken charge. Conversely, he felt that his Deputies had fallen short of their duties by allowing the encroachment. This forced him to take a stand as Sovereign Grand Commander. For further protection, he incorporated the United Supreme Council in 1898 to guard against the tireless efforts of the bogus organizations. He also convened a joint commission with the Southern Jurisdiction to investigate further incursions. Attempts by Fields were thwarted as a result.

Although Sovereign Grand Commander Reed's actions slowed the tide of defections, it was not done in a manner that was supported by the membership. Their will was expressed at the 1899 session of the United Supreme Council. The election for the Office of Sovereign Grand Commander revealed a new leader—Joshua David Kelley—a Past Grand Master of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Past Sovereign Grand Commander of King Frederick Supreme Council before consolidation into the Northern Jurisdiction, and member of DeMolay Consistory #1 of Philadelphia. He was a trusted member of the United Supreme Council with valuable leadership experience. As such, he inherited the burden of resolving bogus activities.

Sovereign Grand Commander Kelley took on the task like a matador controlling a bull by its

From Reed to Kelley to Hucless

Joshua D. Kelley (1899-1910) * Robert Hucless (1910-1911)

horns. He quickly pivoted establishing Consistories in areas where none existed and gathering others from the Jones and Fields factions. These tactics were very successful in stemming the tide and securing the North and the South.

By 1901, Sovereign Grand Commander Kelley organized a Consistory in Delaware and healed a Jones Consistory in New Jersey. In 1902, he gave a formal declaration that there were four legitimate Supreme Councils in the world in which black men practiced the Scottish Rite namely the Supreme Council of the Republic of Haiti, the Supreme Council of the Republic of Liberia and the Northern and Southern Jurisdictions. The Orient of Michigan was organized in 1904 with the establishment of Wolverine Consistory #13 (now #6) in Detroit with Sublime Prince James Francis Rickards as its first Commander-In-Chief. Intercourse with the Southern Jurisdiction relative to a letter from a Jones Consistory in Minnesota seeking to shift fealty was transferred to Kelley. In 1906, North Star Consistory #14 was chartered. By the hands of his Deputies, Consistories were established in Ohio and other states to combat bogus efforts. In 1908, he presided over a joint session with the Southern Jurisdiction proclaiming their status and lineage of legitimacy.

Sadly, on April 14, 1910, Sovereign Grand Commander Kelley passed away. Although his battles against bogus Masonry significantly weakened it, remnants of Jones and Fields remained active. It fell to Kelley's successor, Lieutenant Grand Commander Robert Henry Hucless to continue the offensives.

Sovereign Grand Commander Hucless was an accomplished



Mason and social leader. In 1883, he organized the Amaranth Social Club and Literary Society in New York. He also managed the New York Amaranth Baseball Club. When elevated to leadership of the United Supreme Council, he immediately went into battle against Jones and Fields. He was elected Sovereign Grand Commander in May of 1911 but folded his working tools in October 1911 marking a short term of leadership.

Sovereign Grand Commander Hucless had actually been an original member of the national Jones Shrine organization in 1895, serving as Imperial Grand Assistant Chief Rabban. He withdrew after the schism involving Jones in the South and, when elevated in the Northern Jurisdiction, worked to obliterate the Jones' and Fields' juggernauts. With the support of Sumner A. Furniss of Indiana, he wrestled Constantine Consistory from Jones. He offered Fields a call to be healed which was not answered but the clarion call was heard by Consistories under his belt driving several to seek information.

Though his term of leadership was short-lived, his stance against bogus activity was strong and extended to his successor, Sovereign Grand Commander James F. Rickards. Occidental Consistory (Western #28) of Chicago, Illinois and others started inquires in 1912, as a result, and shifted fealty in 1913. As such, the mission to secure the Scottish Rite from illegitimate bodies was not an overnight decision. It carried through from Roper to Reed to Kelley to Hucless and beyond. It is by their labors, that the Prince Hall Scottish Rite became recognized worldwide diluting the strength of the bogus bodies who sought to challenge them.



EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT

Organizational Change Leaders

Sovereign Grand Inspector General Dwayne E. Thomas, 33°, Director



At the 47th Triennial Session, Dr. Melvin J. Bazemore delivered his allocution and charged all to strive to be transformational leaders! He directed us to infuse positive change across our Orients by being knowledgeable, energetic, enthusiastic, and passionate concerning the business end of our United Supreme Council (USC). To that end, he established the Education and Development Department to provide meaningful education to the membership which will serve as a springboard to the promotion of lifelong learning. Additionally, the department was charged with standardizing educational content to level-set our Consistories.

Over the last 18 months, the team has worked hard to bring the vision to fruition. We are driven by our mission to develop and promote educational content across Orients, aid in the development of our Fraters, and cultivate the leadership potential of our members. If the team is doing these things correctly, lives will be improved. This mission statement is something we deeply believe in as it gives our purpose and clearest sense of duty and commitment to our sacred fraternity. The vision is to enrich the lives of members through educational content and, as a byproduct, contribute to the overall sustainability and growth of our USC. The vision is to be recognized as a premier service department providing meaningful education and the promoting lifelong learning to enrich the lives of Fraters through education, contributing to the betterment of society.

The team prides itself on its core values of integrity, honor, respect, personal and intellectual growth, service, and excellence in every undertaking. Every educational module developed was built on the foundation of these core values. The team stays keenly focused on providing content to the membership, Sublime Princes, Grand Inspectors General, and Sovereign Grand Inspectors General. Moreover, the department is driven by the concept of continuous process improvement and is on the

leading edge of USC organizational change.

The department completed a significant task under the leadership of GIG Gary Smith and our Consistory Education Division. We completed a comprehensive supplemental training aid that covers the 4th through 32nd Degrees. Each degree has a plan of instruction and lecture. Each lecture is standardized with specific learning objectives including the duty and meaning of the degree, lessons to take from the degree, important symbology, investiture, historical and contemporary viewpoints, and various issues for discussion. The department's educational content is located on the USC webpage to ensure our members truly understand the importance of exalted Masonry.

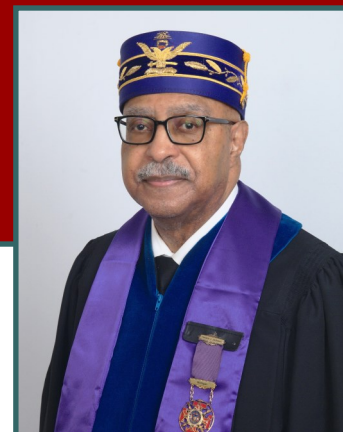
This upcoming year, the department will focus on providing educational podcasts which will allow us to push educational content to our members. Additionally, we will look to establish the USC's Educational Academy. This asynchronous academy learning platform will allow us to conduct a deeper study of the Ineffable, Historic, Philosophical, Traditional, and Chivalric degrees. Educational content will soon be posted on the U.S.C. website, under the drop-down menu, Education and Development. As the Director, I am thrilled beyond measure to serve with these professionals committed to developing educational content and transforming our USC. They are great leaders and educators.

To sustain and grow our USC, we must embrace the concept of transformational leadership and employ these concepts in every facet of our organization. The key to membership retention and the vitality of this sacred fraternity is through standardization and consistency. The more we educate, the better we recruit, the more we educate, the more we retain our members, the more we educate, the more we sustain our beloved United Supreme Council. It is truly my honor and privilege to serve our membership and our beloved United Supreme Council!

CRADLE TO COLLEGE

Saving Our Youth

*Sovereign Grand Inspector General Horace J. Jackson, 33°, Chairman
Sovereign Grand Inspector General Charles Burns Jr., Assistant Chairman*



With the start of the 2023/2024 School Year, we look forward to another successful and rewarding year of the “From Cradle to College” Mentoring Program. Again, we thank all those who were able to participate, and we know with your support and prayers we will continue to positively influence the youth we mentor. Thank you!

FINAL REPORTS FOR THE 2022-23 SCHOOL YEAR

ILLINOIS—DEPUTY SGIG MELVIN FRIERSON, 33°

Tyree Consistory #64 held a Cradle To College informational meeting August 5, 2023. The target demographic group for our program is boy's 5th to 10th grade. GIG Kevin Johnson, GIG Lovell Fennoy and SGIG Brett Frierson spoke with the attendees regarding the goals and objectives of the program which include educational achievement, conflict resolution, delayed gratification and more. We are currently planning to take approximately 7 young men out on a fun outing in September.

MICHIGAN—DEPUTY SGIG CHRISTOPHER BUCK, 33

*Valley of Detroit; Mentoring Coordinator –
GIG Karl E. D'Abreu, Sr., assisted by GIG Willie Butts*

As this year's school year came to an end, I saw so much money being spent on the wrong things. Students who were graduating only by the bare minimum standards (schools giving a barely passing grade just to move the student on) had parents spending hundreds, and thousands of dollars on proms for students who could care less about what the next step is. In contrast, I served/saw 38 students yesterday with a prevention workshop. ALL 38 were accepted to and will attend college in the Fall. GIG Tony Dennis, GIG Willie Butts, and I had this very conversation while in Denver. This is a huge problem that must be addressed but also illustrates the need for our program. We need mentoring all the way around. Below are some proposed activities:

- **Young Eagles Rally**—Detroit, Michigan. *The Detroit Tuskegee Airmen EAA Chapter 1351 holds Young Eagles Rallies on the second Sunday of the month from April to October to attract youth to aviation programs. The rallies run from 10AM to 2PM and give youth ages 8 to 17 a free airplane ride around the City of Detroit. The Young Eagles program flies about 80 youths each month.*
- **University of Michigan Private Stadium Tour**—*Mentees will experience the thrill of running onto the field of Michigan Stadium, having pictures taken on the 50-yard line, and catching passes in the end zone. We will have the keys to the Big House. Limited Access included in our tour will allow us to gain insight into the history of Michigan Stadium and its status as the largest collegiate stadium in the country. We will receive a presentation by Dr. Robert*

Soderstrom, author of “The Big House, Fielding H. Yost, and the Building of Michigan Stadium”; visit the Michigan locker room and try on equipment; and overlook Michigan Stadium while visiting the Jack Roth Stadium Club.

- **Detroit Piston VIP DRAFT Party**—June 2023
- **STEM Program**—*Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Michigan and Wolverine Consistory #6*
- **Statewide Mentoring Career Fair**—Detroit (TBD)

NEW JERSEY—DEPUTY SGIG ROBERT L. OGLESBY, 33° *GIG Terence Berry, Coordinator*

The New Jersey Council of Deliberation Mentoring Program is fully supported by our Council of Deliberation. We meet on the second or third Saturdays of each month, September through June. We provide a platform for young men ages 15 to 18 to discuss the next phase of their futures after High School, guiding them in the direction of just being positive, whether they attend four-year institutions, County College, Vocation Education, and or the Armed Forces. During our meetings we discuss different topics such as bullying, finding yourselves (getting involved in group activities, sports, Chess Club, etc.) We prepare them for PSAT's, SAT's, etc. We have one young man that will be applying for the Jackie Robinson Foundation Scholarship this Fall. Our Program will continue to strive for success for these young men who are our future!!!

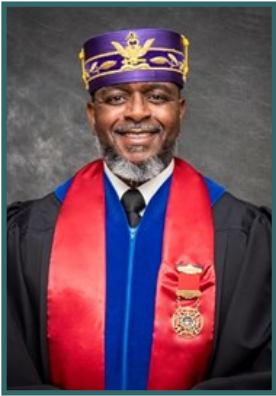
WASHINGTON—DEPUTY SGIG GREGORY WRAGGS, 33°

We have seen a decrease in the Graduation Success Percentage for young black males both in Foss and Pasco High Schools after COCID. GIG Donald Scott, Sr., was working diligently prior to his demise with Foss. On the east side of the Mountains, in Pasco, WA, Fraters are making the same type of impact. They work diligently to mentor young men and to mold them into becoming better citizens for the future. GIG Opris Vincent King continues to hold things down in Pasco mentoring and teaching golf. GIGs Opris V. King (50), Arthur Broady (30), Donald Bell (20), and Donald Scott (20) expended over 120 hours of mentorship which is directly affecting the dropout graduation and College entry rates in Washington State.



VETERANS AFFAIRS LEGISLATION

ENACTED IN 2022 AND 2023



The United Supreme Council Veterans Resource Committee stands ready to assist Veterans, Servicemembers, and their families. Under the leadership of SGIG Eugene Anderson, Jr., Chairman, and in partnership with Operation Job Ready Veterans, we have provided services to approximately 380 Veterans and family members over the past year. In doing so, we leveraged the professional expertise of committee members that work for the VA and Veteran Service Organizations. The committee assisted Veterans and families with navigating the VA system and applying for benefits for which they may be eligible.

In addition to providing services, the committee aims to educate and inform the membership on current and emerging issues, including legislation. For example, during our 142nd Annual Session, the committee delivered a presentation on the Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act, legislation enacted into law on August 10, 2022. This law primarily addresses healthcare and other benefits for Veterans that served in recognized locations in which they were exposed to burn-pit smoke, particulate matter, and radiation.

Since the enactment of the PACT Act, several pieces of Veteran specific legislation have become public law. This legislation covers a range of issues, including but not limited to cost-of-living allowance adjustments, clothing allowance, special adaptive automobile grants, portability of licenses and certificates, state residency, healthcare, and mental health services. Some of the new laws include:

PUBLIC LAW 118-6

Enacted: June 14, 2023

Title: Veterans' Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2023

Overview: This legislation will increase the dollar amounts in Disability Compensation, and Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) paid to recipients, effective December 1, 2023. The rate shall be increased by the same percentage as the

percentage by which Social Security benefits are increased. Additionally, it increases the dollar amount for the VA annual clothing allowance benefit. This benefit helps Veterans replace clothing damaged by a medicine or prosthetic device related to their service-related disabilities. The current dollar amount is \$968.52. Veterans are eligible for this benefit if they meet the following criteria:

- *The Veteran's prosthetic or orthopedic device or skin medicine damages their clothes, and*
- *They need this device or skin medicine because of an injury or illness related to their military service (called a service-connected condition)*

Veterans may apply for this benefit by completing VA Form 10-8678 and submitting it to the Prosthetic Service at their nearest VA Medical Center on or before August 1st of the benefit year.

PUBLIC LAW 117-333

Enacted: January 5, 2023

Title: Veterans Auto and Education Improvement Act of 2022

Overview: This legislation made permanent certain educational assistance benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs in the case of changes to courses of education because of emergencies and other purposes. Additionally, it incorporated provisions from other House Resolutions (H.R.). They are as follows:

- *H.R. 7074: Quality Education for Veterans Act of 2022*
- *H.R. 7746: Sgt. Wolf Kyle Weninger Veterans Education Fairness Act of 2022*
- *H.R. 7369: VENTURE Act*
- *H.R. 4702: Military Spouse Tax Act*

Education assistance is extended to cover individuals who, after September 11, 2001, completed at least 30 days of active-duty service and, after completion of service, are discharged or released because of Sole Survivorship Discharge, which means "the separation of a member from the armed forces, at the request of the member, pursuant to the Department of Defense policy permitting the early separation of a member who is the only surviving child in a family." Additional qualifying criteria are listed in 10 USC § 1174(i)(3).

This legislation also contained provisions for

service members as well as their spouses. Regarding residence for tax purposes, the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act was amended to include that “A spouse of a servicemember shall neither lose nor acquire a residence or domicile for purposes of taxation with respect to the person, personal property, or income of the spouse by reason of being absent or present in any tax jurisdiction of the United States solely to be with the servicemember in compliance with the servicemember’s military orders.”

Additionally, it addresses the portability of professional licenses. In any case, during which a service member or their spouse has a covered license and the service member or spouse relocate their residency due to military orders for military service to a location, not in the jurisdiction of the licensing authority that issued the license, the license shall be considered valid at a similar scope of practice and in the discipline of the jurisdiction of the new residence for the duration of the military orders. A covered license means a professional license or certificate, excluding a license to practice law. To be applicable, the spouse must:

- Provide a copy of the military order of the licensing authority of the new jurisdiction.
- Remain in good standing with the licensing authority that issued the covered license and every other licensing authority that has issued a license in a similar scope of practice.
- Submit to the authority of the licensing authority of the new jurisdiction.

Furthermore, this legislation contains a provision to consider non-articulating trailers solely designed to transport powered wheelchairs, powered scooters, or other similar mobility devices as adaptive equipment. It also includes provisions for additional automobile or other conveyance benefits.

PUBLIC LAW 117-303

Enacted: December 27, 2022

Title: Military Sexual Trauma (MST) Claims Coordination Act

Overview: This legislation intends to improve coordination between the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) and the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) concerning claims for compensation arising from military sexual trauma and for other purposes. Military sexual trauma (MST) refers to sexual assault or sexual harassment experienced during military service. It includes:

- Being pressured into sexual activities (such as threats of adverse treatment if you refuse to cooperate or promises of better treatment in exchange for sex).
- Sexual contact or activities without your consent, including when you were asleep or intoxicated.

- Being touched or grabbed in a sexual way that made you uncomfortable, including during hazing experiences.
- Comments about your body or sexual activities that you found threatening.

In a VA claim for compensation arising from MST experienced by a covered individual, the VBA, in coordination with the VHA, shall conduct outreach to the Veteran and provide information on the Veteran’s Crisis Line and how to make an appointment with a mental health provider. Additional resources relating to MST may also be provided.

PUBLIC LAW 117-209

Enacted: October 17, 2022

Title: Supporting Families of the Fallen Act

Overview: This legislation amended Title 38, United States Code, to increase automatic maximum coverage under the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance program and the Veterans' Group Life Insurance program and for other purposes. Specifically, it increases from \$400,000 to \$500,000, the maximum coverage amount for members (or former members) of a uniformed service under the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance program and the Veterans' Group Life Insurance program.

PUBLIC LAW 117-205

Enacted: October 17, 2022

Title: Solid Start Act of 2022

Overview: This legislation permanently authorizes and expands the Solid Start program, an outreach program for veterans in their first year of separation from the military. Transitioning from military to civilian life can be challenging for service members and their families. Many are unaware of the benefits and services available to them because of their military service. Examples include VA Healthcare, Employment Services, and Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E). The Solid Start Act requires the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to coordinate with the Department of Defense to:

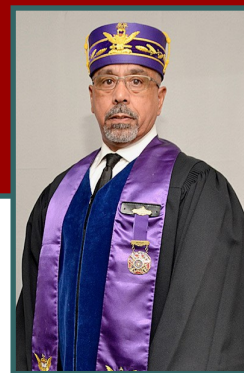
- Collect updated contact information during transition classes or separation counseling for members of the Armed Forces who are separating from service.
- Explain the existence and purpose of the program and call veterans three times within the first year of separation.
- Provide women veterans with information tailored to their health care and benefit needs.
- Provide information on access to state and local resources, such as Vet Centers.
- Gather and analyze data that assesses the effectiveness of the program.



SECURITY CORNER

From the Desk of the Chief of Security

Sovereign Grand Inspector General Roy J. Mays, 33rd, Chief of Security



As we approach the holiday season, we need to have a renewed consciousness of our surroundings. By diligently being aware of our surroundings, we may be able to anticipate an event and minimize our exposure to becoming a crime victim. This article will provide some food for thought, tips on staying safe, and how to react if you become a victim.

SITUATIONAL AWARENESS: PERSONAL SAFETY TIPS

There is **no** technique, tip or weapon to **guarantee you will not be personally attacked** by someone looking to victimize you. Below are some common practices that **can** help prevent you from becoming a target:

1. Always be aware of your surroundings, using your senses of sight (360°) and sound will keep you on your toes and provide a warning of potential danger.
2. When walking, walk with confidence and sense of purpose.
3. Keep your hands free; you may need to fend off an attacker. Don't overburden yourself with bags or packages; this might impede your ability to run or protect yourself.
4. Carry any monies in a front pocket; do not have that bulging wallet in the rear. Keep some money and at least one credit card separate, so if confronted and ordered to give it up, you can do so without giving away all you have.
5. If approached by someone asking for directions or money, be careful; it might be a diversion. Always reply from a distance; have an escape plan. Never get too close.
6. If approached by someone looking suspicious, attempt to ignore while swiftly walking past or away from them; do not engage. Remember, distance is your friend and may avoid a confrontation.
7. If someone approaches you from a vehicle, walk in the opposite direction from which the vehicle is traveling, cross the street and walk or run to a point or place of safety.
8. If you can, walk in a group, if for some reason you can't, try to use a well-lit and well-travelled route. Try not to walk alone.
9. Never walk close to bushes or shrubs or areas where someone or something could be hiding.
10. If you think, feel or see someone following you or you feel uncomfortable start walking or running, making noise to bring attention to yourself. Proceed to the nearest place of business or safety.

Personal Awareness: Perpetrators aren't out to victimize you. It is nothing personal; they're looking for a **target of opportunity**. Your goal is **NOT** to be that target. Present yourself as someone who cannot be easily victimized. Learn and practice these tips:

1. **Attitude:** Keep your head up and stride purposefully while walking. Be aware of your surroundings. Don't wear headphones or earbuds that impair your ability to hear. Don't become preoccupied talking, texting or viewing your cellphone while walking. It may distract your attention and interfere with your ability to hear or see approaching danger.
2. **Self-Preservation:** Don't be forced into getting into a vehicle with a perpetrator. Fight for your life. Your actions could ultimately save your life.

3. **Getting Attention:** Scream! Your voice is your primary weapon. The last thing a perpetrator wants is to bring attention their way. **Screaming anything may halt the attack** and in many cases can buy you a couple of seconds to consider an escape plan. Do not just yell, "Help" but yell, "Fire" which in most cases will get immediate attention. If there are other people nearby, run to them. You're attracting attention which may likely cause the attacker to leave you alone and leave the area.
4. **Distance:** Put yardage between you and the perpetrator may stop. Distance equals time. You are giving yourself time with every step you put between you, the perpetrator, and the incident or event. If possible, an all-out run is best. Start screaming while running and don't stop screaming or running until you are completely out of danger.
5. **Planning:** Plan what to do if you are accosted or attacked and how you will react. In an emergency, the mind is often frozen. The body will react with what you have practiced or trained without hesitation, if you have rehearsed your response.
6. **Practice:** Make sure to practice your response to a potential attack. That way, your reaction will be instinctive because of your practice. Be sure to make your practice as realistic as possible. Remember, you will react as you practiced.
7. **If you become a Victim:** If you become a victim, execute your plan. If you cannot because you don't feel it's safe to do so, comply with the perpetrator wishes. Your valuables can be replaced, but your life cannot.
8. **Carrying a cellphone:** Always carry a cellphone in case of an emergency. If you are accosted or attacked, do not attempt to make an emergency call during the incident. Put your reaction plan in motion and wait until you are safe to make that call. Most attacks take less than five minutes, so the perpetrator may be long gone before the police arrive.
9. **Always Remember:** If you feel or sense danger, don't be afraid to scream and run to safety. If you see something, say something.
10. **Active Aggression:** If you are involved in an active shooter or active aggressor situation, remember, save yourself first before you attempt to help others. **RUN-HIDE-FIGHT**. First, have a plan for where your safe place will be. Run, if it is safe to do so. Leave your belongings behind. If you can't run hide in an area out of the active shooter's view. Block entry to your hiding place and lock the doors. Silence your cellphone. As a last resort and only when your life is in imminent danger, attempt to fight to incapacitate the active shooter with whatever means necessary. **CALL 911 WHEN IT IS SAFE TO DO SO.**

CONSISTORIAL ORIGINS

Our History Should Not Be A Mystery #18

Sovereign Grand Inspector General Reginald B. Stewart, 33°, Grand Historian



IONIC CONSISTORY NO. 70

*Valley of Milwaukee—Orient of Wisconsin
Formed February 19, 1950*

There was Scottish Rite activity in the Orient of Wisconsin, and specifically the Valley of Milwaukee, as far back as 1890 in the days when jurisdictional lines were not as strictly adhered to. Most Puissant Sovereign Grand Commander Thornton A. Jackson 33°, United Supreme Council, Southern Jurisdiction appointed Richard Mason Hancock as Deputy for the Orient. In 1894, the meddlesome John G. Jones established Tadmore Consistory No. 10. It was in existence at least until 1898. In June 1907, the meddlesome Milton F. Fields appointed J.J. Miles as Deputy for the Orient. Miles was originally a member of the preceding John G. Jones Consistory. The Orient solidly came under Northern Jurisdiction control in the 1920s with the chartering of "Milwaukee Consistory No. 59." This predecessor Consistory existed for a relatively short time until it went defunct, and the charter returned. Emerging from the ashes thereof arose a new Consistory with a new name. The then Most Illustrious Commander-in-Chief and Deputy for the Orient of Illinois, S.G.I.G. Frank M. Summers 33°, traveled to Milwaukee with a contingent of officers and Advanced 45 men into the mysteries of the Scottish Rite which was the genesis of Ionic Consistory. Originally numbered 68 (which is now Alexander G. Clark Consistory No. 68 in the Valley of Waterloo, Orient of Iowa), its number was later changed to 70. This Consistory has enjoyed its fair share of favor from the United Supreme Council. Past Most Illustrious Commander-in-Chief and Deputy for the Orient S.G.I.G. Thelbert L. Alexander 33°, won Deputy for the Year honors in 1978. This Consistory was blessed to have two Gold Medal of Achievement winners in the persons of the late Illustrious Grand Minister of State (and past Most

Illustrious Commander-in-Chief and Deputy for the Orient) S.G.I.G. William R. Stark 33° (2014) and current Most Illustrious Commander-in-Chief and Deputy for the Orient S.G.I.G. Marshall E. Tharpe 33° (2016). This Consistory also has two members whose names are immortalized by Classes of Grand Inspectors General. The Alexander-Morley Class of 1992 partly honors the memory of the aforementioned Illustrious Alexander. The Class of 2023 was appropriately named the William R. Stark Class of 2023.

WABASH CONSISTORY NO. 77

*Valley of South Bend—Orient of Indiana
Chartered May 1964*

This Consistory, located in northern Indiana, began in earnest in March 1964 with the initiation of 107 men into the mysteries of the Scottish Rite. The Consistory was officially chartered 2 months later during the 83rd Annual Session held in the Valley of Indianapolis. The late Sovereign Grand Commander Algie S. Oldham Jr. 33° was a charter member. He served as the inaugural Illustrious Engineer and Architect. Illustrious Oldham was the shining star of this Consistory as he was awarded the Gold Medal of Achievement in 1999 and a Class of Grand Inspectors General was named in his honor—the Algie S. Oldham Class of 2011. The Fraters chose simplicity over statement making when choosing the name of this Consistory. At its inception the Consistory drew members from all over the northern part of the state extending into the Wabash Valley. "Wabash" is the English spelling of the French word "Ouabache." French traders named the river after an Indian word meaning roughly "white shining river." Wabash is also the name of the state river for Indiana and a defining element of its topography.

MEMORIAL ROLL FROM APRIL 2022 THROUGH MARCH 2023

APRIL 2022

Preston B. Pierce, #65
Timothy McKnight, #98
Crawford L. Williams, #1
Harold James, #1
SGIG Rudolph Culberson, #4
Charles C. Walrond, #17

MAY 2022

Ernie S. Simpson, #3
Edward W. Miles, #15
SGIG Charles E. Richardson, #15
Billy J. Evans, #15
Allen S. Portillo, #15
William H. Highsmith Sr., #1
Quincy Zemece, #4
Robert L. Williams, #3
Leroy E. Hatcher, #4

JUNE 2022

Ira C. White, #4
Franklin Jackson Sr., #33
Thomas C. Outland, #65
Daniel M. Dicks, #3
Rollin F. Kelley Jr., #21
Henry Corder Jr., #88
SGIG Charles B. Taylor, #28

JULY 2022

Wadell Brooks Sr., #91
SGIG William R. Revels, #2
Billy Richard, #113
Richard L. Smalls, #90
SGIG John Caldwell, #112
Robert R. Groce, #86
Charles Peterson, #29

AUGUST 2022

SGIG Frank Humphrey, #84
William R. Coleman, #65
Edward Stephens, #29
Valentin Camacho, #114
Charles A. Cooper Sr., #28
David W. Payne Jr., #54
Edward R. Tiller, #10
Charles W. Priest, #15

SEPTEMBER 2022

David L. Murphy, #29
Clarence I. Robinson, #19
Vance E. Thorpe Sr., #5
James E. Cotton Jr., #64
David Bonds, #28

OCTOBER 2022

Brian M. Starks Sr., #6

Harold R. Wilson, #15
Nesbitt A. Higgins, #73
James H. Black Sr., #28
Gary S. Banner Sr., #26
SGIG Charles J. Stewart, #28
Tony Walker, #62
Willie B. Nelson, #64
Calvin O. Butts, III, #3
SGIG WILLIAM R. STARK, #70
UNITED SUPREME COUNCIL
GRAND MINISTER OF STATE
George Sherer Jr., #26
Michael C. Cosby, #34

NOVEMBER 2022

Russel L. Dupree, #6
Howard Fleming Jr., #65
Melvin Jenkins, #75
SGIG Garrett L. Winn, #41
Charles H. Pryor, #3
Sammie L. Crowder, #28
Leroy Hamilton Jr., #17
Handy L. Matthews, #20
SGIG Warren Gipson Sr., #28

DECEMBER 2022

William H. Anderson, #26

Mujahid E. Abdul-Aziz, #14
Milton D. Abrams, #26
Sylvester Smith, Pikes Peak #81

JANUARY 2023

Edmond Pearson, #18
Milton Boddie, #45
James O. Barnes, #16
Henry Roney, #75
Joseph E. Green Jr., #75
Reginald A. Sheridan, #5

FEBRUARY 2023

Edward M. Taylor, #2
Frederick A. Doughty, #14
SGIG Homer O. Justice, #46

MARCH 2023

Donald O. Nelson, #96
Willie L. Salter, #25
Dotson H. Carter Jr., #1
Jerry W. Jones, III, #26
Donald R. Scott Sr., #106

SOUTHERN JURISDICTION

SGIG Cunningham E. Brice,
Dale #31



*United Supreme Council 2023
Denver, Colorado*



DENVER
THE MILE HIGH CITY



*United Supreme
Council 2023*

The Orient of Colorado under the direction of Sovereign Grand Inspector General Lionel Cummings, Illustrious Deputy and the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Colorado (above), were most gracious hosts for the 142nd Annual Communication of the United Supreme Council, Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, PHA, Northern Jurisdiction, USA, Inc.



Both Sovereign Grand Commanders sign the Interchange of Activities Agreement.



Lt. Grand Commander Broadnax called to first executive session to order to receive Sov. Grand Commander Dr. Melvin J. Bazemore .



After receiving dignitaries, SGC Bazemore introduced SGIG Gino Anderson, President of the Conference of Grand Masters and Sovereign Grand Commander Corey Hawkins of the United Supreme Council, Southern Jurisdiction PHA for comments to the Fraters present.



After the reclassification of several worthy Fraters to Sovereign Grand Inspectors General, the officers of the United Supreme Council provided Committee and Financial reports. As confirmed by the Audit team, all financial records of the USC are in solid shape and care.



2023 Gold Medal Award Recipients



The Gold Medal of Achievement Award was then bestowed on ten of eleven well-qualified recipients for 2023 at the executive session.



The 2023 Memorial Service was well attended properly memorializing Active, Emeriti, and Honorary members who transitioned to glory.



The service under the direction of the Grand Prior, SGIG Dr. Wilton Blake was highlighted by the stirring words of Sublime Prince Rev. Malcolm J. Byrd, Pastor of Mother AME Zion Church of Harlem, NY, who spoke on the need for action by people of faith in today's world.



Serenades by the United Supreme Council Joint Choir were melodious adding to the atmosphere of solemnity and the focus on purpose.



All including Sovereign Grand Commander Gaeton Mentor and the contingent from the Southern Jurisdiction left fulfilled.





The USC Annual Session opened in due form with the escort of the Sovereign Grand Commander to the seat of the Holy See in the East.



The first Golden Stole distribution



Dignitaries from recognized American jurisdictions were witnesses to the events of the USC 2023 Session including Sovereign Grand Commanders from Haiti, Northern Masonic Jurisdiction, MWPHGL of Colorado, Southern Jurisdiction PHA, and Southern Jurisdiction.



Under the direction of SGIG Robert Meekins, Dean, the William R. Stark Class of 2023 was escorted into the Chambers and crowned Grand Inspectors General of the United Supreme council. They saluted the Stark family with an embroidered imprint of the Class name.





The 2023 Annual Banquet was a packed house honoring charity and recognizing the stellar services provided across the Holy Empire.



Salutations and commendations were offered by the distinguished guests starting with the Most Worshipful Grand Master of the Jurisdiction of Colorado, the Deputy for the Orient of Colorado and the visiting Sovereign Grand Commanders in attendance.



In the spirit of charity, three charitable organizations received donations and the family of Ill. Stark was honored by the Class of 2023.



Additional Financial donations from Orients and USC Classes followed bolstering donations to the USC Benevolent Fund significantly.

LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP



TOAST WITH US IN 2024!!!

Life Membership has its privileges.....



A masterpiece photo of a beautiful couple.



Class of 2023 grants a \$30,000 donation.



The Orient of Michigan topped off the donations.

Orient of Europe

Sovereign Grand Inspector General

Enrique John, 33°, Deputy

Greetings from the Orient of Europe! Let me start by giving thanks to the GAOTU for his continued blessing and gift of life. In our first year out of COVID we have continued to restructure and build back our Consistories and Orient to where it was previously, before the pandemic hit. And we are on course! Since our Consistories are sanctioned on U.S. Military bases throughout Europe and the Middle East, we had to rely heavily on telecommunications to perform our Orient and Consistorial duties. Fortunately, we have been able to get back to our normal standard and obligation of performing Fraternal meetings in person, and it feels great to be back amongst fellow Fraters.

One of our focal points this year is building our membership numbers. We have a fast membership turnover rate because most of our members are in the Armed Forces. Sometimes as soon as they are Advanced, they are PCS'ing (relocating) to a new duty station. Thankfully we have a good percentage of civilian members also helping us to maintain a certain level of sustainability. The theme of the Orient of Europe is "Building Tomorrow... Today", and the mission of the Orient is "Expect nothing less than Success: Preparing for the Future of Scottish Rite Masonry Through Inclusion, Transparency, and Leadership." Even though this first full year out of COVID has been difficult at times, our Orient has been steadfast in their duties, and we are now succeeding! Our Consistories are back to performing Advancements (building membership), providing charity to those in need, and providing voluntary services within their respective communities.

I am proud to report that the orient has begun many changes over the past year. These changes will enhance the orient's capabilities in some ways like communication, dues, and up to date changes that happen in the orient's day to day activities. Our warm gratitude to 1st Lt. Commander GIG Onaje L. Grady, 33° did a great job on the website. Our webpage mirrors the United Supreme Council's web page. The web page www.europecod.org shows many different sections to view. Some of these sections covers Orient staff, forms for reports, and resources needed by the member. Members will be able to find their Consistory to contact if needed. This contact area will go to the Consistory's main email which is permanent on the webpage. Fraters and Loyal ladies who wish to reinstate also have that option to contact their Consistory or Assembly. The contact section is where the member can fill out their contact information which will keep them informed about upcoming events and correspondence from the Orient or the United Supreme Council. I would like to personally thank GIG Onaje Grady, GIG Antawn Dugan, GIG-Elect Calvin Coates, and GIG-Elect Hardy Johnson for their extra effort in ensuring we are

successful as an Orient, their dedication and devotion to our Rite is noted and greatly appreciated.

Two years ago, we lost GIG Carnell Smith who was a vital component of our Orient for three decades. He wrote an article posted in Ararat #115 Newsletter entitled, "What is a Non-profit Organization". As a tribute to him, I will add a portion of the amazing article he wrote. He was adamant about service before self, and you can obviously see that in the article he wrote titled "What is a Non-Profit Organization?"

Non-profit: *Not conducted or maintained for the purpose of making a profit. **Organization:** An association or society. A functional structure. A non-profit organization's first priority is NOT to make a profit in order to pay administrative fees or fatten the pockets of those who sit in high positions. Its first priority is to SERVE! To give unconditionally without expecting to receive in return; To provide brotherly love, relief, and truth to those seeking knowledge and in need of support— This should be the mission and number one priority of any true non-profit organization, especially ours!*

How should a "Non-profit organization" serve? *In any form necessary as long as it is positive in nature and provides assistance, relief, support, monetary aide, and any other unique services or capabilities it can provide that enhances the lives of its members, their families, and the community within its area of operation.*

Why serve...Why give...Why show goodness... towards mankind? Why should we SERVE each other? *Simply put, the whole point of humanity is to help humanity! We are not born with the capacity to take care of ourselves; therefore, it was meant for us to succour and support each other when the "necessity requires us to and our ability permits.*

Booker T. Alexander Consistory has been on the revamp since 2022. We are the community, helping in the commissary with Herman E. Bradley #74 and Unity Lodge #92 staging carts and cleaning up around the store. Because of the drawdown in personnel, we offered to help for 2-3 hours, twice a week. Although BTA is short staffed, we still helped when we could and made a difference. We still have a great relationship with Grafenwöhr Elementary where we gave six annual donations minus the pandemic. GIG Robert Janey, 33° leads this program with personal donations that have helped to purchase school bags. We supplemented his donation with school supplies and dropped them off to the school. We congratulate our newly elevated GIG A. Ealy, 33°, Class of 2023. He has been assisting the consistory head on and is now our new Chairman/coordinator of the GIG-Elects for our Consistory. He is doing a great job. In our next segment of Tre Duce, our Magazine, we will show our new training programs and short interviews of members.

Karamursel thrilled to unveil its latest initiatives that foster engagement, promote unity, and strengthen bonds in our vibrant Bahrain community. Working together can create positive change and enhance

collective goals and well-being. With our passion for giving back to our community, we have successfully hosted, collaborated, mentored and organized various events by contributing our time and making a difference in the lives of others. We believe that these initiatives will strengthen the unity within our organization and the community inspiring positive change. Our goal is to come together and make our community a vibrant, inclusive and dynamic place to live. In February, we hosted a Children's Party at the School of the Children with Special Needs. In March, 11 Sublime Princes were elevated. We also participated in a Freemasons Basketball Friendship Game to promote fellowship. In April and May, we initiated "Feed, Clothe & Educate", our overseas outreach program to around 200 children in Quezon City, Philippines with the Professional Teachers Association. In June, we assisted "Friendship Society for the Blind" in its shelter beautification drive by repainting the facilities and other hard labor at the compound. A great opportunity to relax, bond and enjoy some recreational activities in the organization. Together, we can achieve great things! In July, our "Bingo Night" fundraiser event at the Kingdom was a success. Spain Military #99 donated \$500 to the Maui Wildfire Donation Drive to aid displaced families.



The Orient's Commanders of the Rite Annual Scholarship presented by Grand Inspector General Earnest Lucas, 33° on behalf of the COR President and his staff. GIG Lucas commented on this moment by saying "It gave me great pleasure to present Miss. Kennedy Allen of Stockbridge High School with a \$500 Grant to assist with her college expenses." She was even more impressive in person than on paper!" In August, the Suicide Prevention Walk in Washington, DC was participated in by GIG Derondo Walton and GIG Marques Jones. The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) mission is to save lives and bring hope to those affected by suicide. Thus, creating a culture



that's smart about mental health through education and community programs, and developing suicide prevention through research and advocacy. The Commanders of the Rite-Europe, President (GIG Jones) and KOSA (GIG Walton) raised over \$2,000 and walked more than 16 miles from dusk till dawn through the nation's capital, to support a community of others affected by suicide.

Orient of the Caribbean

*Sovereign Grand Inspector General
Edward B. Darnell, 33°, Deputy*

On April 26, 2022, in Bridgetown, Barbados, ably assisted by a Degree team from King David Consistory #3 out of New York, we found 27 Master Masons in waiting and via official Scottish Rite ceremony, conferred the degrees 4th through 32nd upon them all. On October 26, 2022, in Antiqua, accompanied by the Sovereign Grand Commander, Dr. Melvin J. Bazemore, 33°, Ill. Robert J. Meekins, 33° Dean of Instructions, Ill. Edward Brooks, 33° Secretary General, H.E, and others, after opening and processing through the Orient's first Council of Deliberation, found an additional 13 Master Masons in waiting, which we collectively via short form ceremony made them 32° Masons, elevating the total Consistorial membership of the newly formed Errol W. Barrow Consistory #109 in the Caribbean to 89.

M.W. Grand Master Claude P. Jackman and GIG Lomax Elder, 33°, continue to instruct and inspire their new Consistory via study classes and Consistory Meetings, and on March 29th they held their first Virtual Renewal & Remembrance Service, with the Rev. Harmon J. Simpson, 33°, Overseer for New York bringing the Sermonette. Overall, in my opinion the service/ceremony came very close to some "more-seasoned" Rose Croix Chapters that have been performing the work for a much longer period of time.

On April 25, 2023, we again sojourned to the Caribbean, this time to St. Lucia, where we Degreed another 27 Master Masons in a class that included the Governor General of the Caribbean in the person of His Excellency, Brother Errol Reid. Brother Reid is a proud member of Mt. Hermon Lodge #9 PHA, and it is noteworthy to mention that he did not receive his three Symbolic Masonic Degrees on site, but rather suffered himself to be raised to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason in a class alongside his brothers.

I applaud our Sovereign Grand Commander for his attentive ear, and positive response to the cry from the brothers in the Caribbean area, in their desire to become a part of the Scottish Rite experience. They are however not without challenges, but the interest they have exhibited thus far is high, and I have every reason to believe that they will continue to grow in numbers, proficiency, and success.

Orient of the Far East

*Sovereign Grand Inspector General
Charles H. Bush Jr., 33°, Deputy*

The Far East continues to exemplify Scottish Rite Masonry stateside and abroad. Since the beginning of 2023, we have continued to support various Orient and USC activities, among others. The Orient is unique because Consistories are located overseas, and many of our members reside in the continental United States.

Although stateside, many support the activities of our recognized Scottish Rite counterparts upholding the spirit of the Statement of Unity between the four legitimate American Supreme Councils.

In January Deputy Bush attended the Mid-Year Deputies Conference in Cherry Hill, New Jersey. He also attended the Councils of Deliberations for Virginia and North Carolina of the Southern Jurisdiction, PHA. On Monday, February 27th, SGIG Stuart A. Lee, II, 33° (#85), along with SGIG Reginald B. Stewart, 33° - USC Grand Historian, attended the “2023 SGIG Bert A.G. Overby, 33° Class” Capping Ceremony in the District of Columbia orchestrated by Johnathan Davis Consistory #1 and the Louis W. Roy, Sr. Council of Deliberation (District of Columbia). 20 Sublime Princes received their 32° Caps and patents. According to SGIG Marcus D. James, Sr., 33°, the **“Capping ceremony is the capstone of the initiation experience of the advancement to a Sublime Prince of the Royal Secret. It is the adornment of the insignia of the Scottish Rite frater where the spiritual and symbolic meaning is explained, giving the new member the responsibility, he has just received.”** SGIG Lee, representing the Deputy and SGIG Stewart, also attended the Louis W. Roy, Sr. Council of Deliberation, April 21-22, in Washington, DC. It included a historic meeting at the House of the Temple. According to SGIG Eric F. Konohia, 33°, Deputy (District of Columbia), this marked the first time in history that any Prince Hall Mason has sounded the gavel in the Temple Room.

The 53rd Annual FECOD was held in the Tokyo Masonic Tower, Japan, on May 1st. Several distinguished guests were in attendance, including the Honorable Gilbert McClary, Grand Master (Washington), and SGIG Daniel R. Poole, 33°, USC Grand Recording Secretary. The FECOD recognized several outstanding performers and SGIG Bush shared his key focus areas for 2023-24. He discussed the USC Membership Reclamation Program and directed

Consistories to begin tracking charitable activities, volunteer hours, and monetary and in-kind donations.

The 142nd Annual USC Session was held in Denver, Colorado, from May 26–30. 3 Fraters were elevated to the 33rd and Last Degree of Freemasonry in the William R. Stark Class of 2023. Congratulations to GIGs Jerry Mayers, 33° (#85), Antonio Ray, 33° (#103) and Thomas Estelle, 33° (#111). This annual session was one of the most successful. A cast of members from the Far East were key players in this accomplishment.

SGIG Daniel R. Poole, 33°, introduced the USC MAD Program which will enable the USC to strategically capture and aggregate community involvement and charitable donations nationally and locally. This may lead to corporate sponsorship and grants. GIG Gardner M. Torrence, Sr. (#111), is a program administrators.

SGIG Dr. Dwayne E. Thomas, 33° (#111), Director, spearheaded and rolled out the USC’s premier Education and Development Department program. Content from the program was presented at the Annual Session. GIG Gary Smith, 33° (#111), presented a course on the 7th Degree, Provost & Judge. GIG Eugene Greenfield (Ohio) presented the 32nd Degree, Sublime Prince of the Royal Secret. GIG Michael Preaster, 33° (#111), and GIG Calvin Cobbs, 33° (#114) assisted with both presentations. All educational content is available to the Orients through a password-protected page on the USC website. Illustrious Thomas also secured GIG Damien Jack, 33°, USC, PHA, SJ, as a guest lecturer.

SGIG Lee delivered a presentation on the “Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act which is the most substantial expansion of benefits and services for toxic-exposed veterans in more than 30 years. It expands VA health care and benefits for Veterans exposed to burn pits, Agent Orange, and other toxic substances. GIG Dandrick Gallegos, 33° (#85), addressed VA benefit-related questions from attendees.

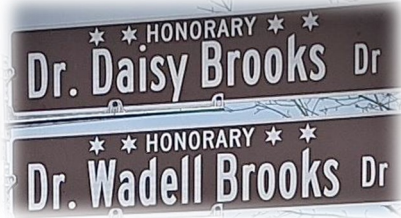


Orient of Illinois

**Sovereign Grand Inspector General
Melvin Frierson, 33°, Deputy**

Under the leadership of Sovereign Grand Inspector General Melvin Frierson, the Fraters and Loyal Ladies have remained busy across the Valleys as revealed at the Mid-Year Meeting of the Illinois Council of Deliberation. The Orient is operating on all cylinders with the extraordinary works of the membership. The relationship with the Alzheimer's Association remains strong. It is planned for CPR/AED related training to take place at the ICOD Session in October of 2023.

On March 31, 2023, the City of North Chicago posthumously bestowed the name of Dr. Waddell Brooks Sr. as the honorary street name on the corner of Sherman and Argonne along with his wife. Waddell was reared in East St. Louis, later migrating to Waukegan. An active member of North Shore Consistory #91 and the community, his weekly community access show reached thousands and contributed community improvements.



Illinois Delta Network, Diabetes Today Resource Team, Jackson County Health department, NAACP Community Health Workers, Community Health and Emergency Services, Equip for Equality, Elder Rights Project, Alzheimer's Association, SIU Nursing Students, NARCAN Education, SIU Dental Hygiene, Shawnee Health, Veteran's Affairs, Centerstone, POA and Wills, and Molina. Awareness saves lives!!!

Balthasar Consistory #92 continued its annual volunteerism at the Special Olympics Youth Spring Games held in Rockford in May. Under the lead of Illustrious George Barmore, they collaborated with Welcome Star Lodge #36 to provide much needed support for the cause.



The Eagles Club of Western Consistory #28 hosted its third annual fishing outing at LaSalle Lake Fish and Wildlife Park to introduce youth to the fishing experience through collaborations with Envision Unlimited and Mentor Teacher Brother Inc. The event has been profitable financially and socially providing youth with new experiences and opening the doors for potential mentorship opportunities. Prizes were given for best catch of the day and most fish caught. Directed by Grand Inspectors General Kenny R. Askew, Carl Pickett, and the Eagles Club, the event was a grand success. In July, Western hosted its Man Among Banquet honoring Dr. Willis L. Lonzer, III and Fredric D. Spears. Dr. Lonzer served as the General President of Alpha Phi Alpha leading the organization to unprecedented heights. He received a distinct honor at the United Supreme Council Session in Denver where he was elevated to the 33rd Degree by Sovereign Grand Commander Dr. Melvin J. Bazemore. He is positioned to successfully lead the National Panhellenic Council. The charitable labors of Sublime Prince Spears are done without the need for fanfare or applause as he freely gives his talents and efforts to improve the fraternity. From food drives to aiding the homeless, the labors that we see are only the tip of his iceberg of service. A natural leader, he inspires others by his works. Salute!!!



Tyree Consistory #64 continued its efforts to aid the East St. Louis and surrounding communities. Under the leadership of Grand Inspector General Kevin Johnson, they partnered with Trinity United Methodist Church to obtain food for distribution supplementing their contributions during the holiday season.



In February, members of Hiram Consistory #51 participated in the Black Men's Health Conference "Focusing on Your Wellness" at the Carbondale Civic Center in collaboration with the Healthy Southern



Orient of Delaware

Sovereign Grand Inspector General

James A. Scott, 33°, Deputy

The Orient congratulates the newly elected Jurisdiction of Delaware Grand Lodge Officers. The Honorable Ronald Q. Vann, 33°, Most Worshipful Grand Master; RW Everett Lewis, Jr., 32°, Deputy Grand Master; RW Vandrick Hamlin, Jr., 32°, Grand Senior Warden; RW Thomas J. Harris, 33°, Grand Junior Warden; RW Johnie A. Burton, Jr., 33°, Grand Treasurer; RW Garcia Walker, 32°, Grand Assistant Treasurer; RW Maurice D. Mobley, Sr., 33°, Grand Secretary; and RW Terrence Wellman, 32°, Grand Assistant Secretary.

DEPUTY'S AWARD—SGIG Scott, Deputy, presented GIG Robert F. Merritt, 33°, with the Deputy's Award. It is the highest in the Orient and recognizes the 8 years of service he has given as the Delaware Council of Deliberation Assistant Secretary.

The Loyal Lady Ruler of Assembly #96, Bernice Gladney, thanked Assemblies #43, #81 and #96 also Consistories #5 and 119 for supporting the BBQ provided for Home of the Brave residents. She gave special thanks to Deputy Scott and SLLR Bernadette Winston for attending the event. *Home of the Brave* facilities provides beds for 15 males and 8 females with their children. Services include case management; mental health counseling; substance abuse program and medical services referrals and transportation; vocational and benefits counseling; transportation for work and appointments; clothing and household items upon discharge.



The Orient has been active at all levels of service. GIG Dr. Lawrence C. Carter, a member of Corinthian Consistory #5, and his spouse Deloris, played a role in a national Veteran's Day event. Sharon Hodge, Executive Director for Policy and Government Affairs, called in October 2022 to ask GIG Carter, retired U.S. Army, and his wife, Deloris, retired U.S. Air Force, Lifetime members of Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA), if they would serve as flag bearers for the Veterans Day celebration. Ms. Hodge informed GIG Carter and his wife, on that same day, that they would be receiving an invitation from the White House to attend a breakfast. Dr. Jill Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris and Second Gentlemen Douglas Emhoff welcomed the Carters to the White House and thanked them for their service. After the photographs they returned to the buses that took them to Arlington National Cemetery for the National Veterans Day Observance.

With VVA being the host service organization, The Carters carried the American flag. They were third in the lineup after the Gold Star Mothers of our Nation's colors and our veteran's service organizations. After a reef laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldiers by the Vice President, the flag bearers marched into the Amphitheatre on the "National Emblem March" played by the U.S. Navy Band. The American flag carriers sat on the left side of the Amphitheatre and the veteran's service organizations flag carriers sat on the right side. Jack McManus, VVA President spoke, and Vice President Kamala Harris gave the keynote address. Retiring the flags, they marched out of the Amphitheatre.



The Delaware Consistories will have a Joint Elevation in October. The new Commander in Chief of Corinthian Consistory #5, GIG Samuel R. Harbison, Jr., 33°, as well as continuing Commanders in Chief SP Bruce K. Duffy, 32°, of G. Oscar Carrington Consistory #93, and GIG Maurice D. Mobley, 33°, of C.P. Houston, Jr. Consistory #119 will perform various degree work. The Orient of Delaware has a new Assistant to the Deputy. He is SGIG Dr. Johnie A. Burton, Jr., 33°.



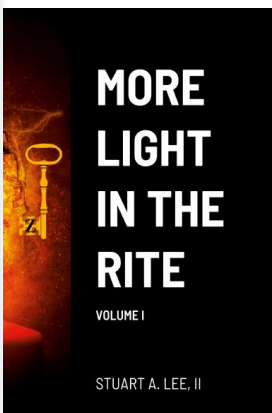
USC CONSTITUTION QUIZ #5

Sovereign Grand Inspector General Thomas R. Hughes, Sr., 33°

Reference Material: 2010 Constitution and General Regulations of the United Supreme Council of the A.A.S.R. of Freemasonry, Prince Hall Affiliation, Northern Jurisdiction, U.S.A., INC.

- An applicant for any Scottish Rite Degree having been once rejected may not again renew his application until _____ from the date of such rejection.
 - 30 days
 - 6 months
 - 90 days
 - 45 days
- The Secretary of any Body in which an applicant is rejected shall within ten business days thereafter give written notice thereof to the Illustrious Deputy of the Orient and Illustrious Grand Recording Secretary.
 - True
 - False
- A single petition may suffice for all degree conferred in a Valley and may be acted upon successively in the several bodies.
 - True
 - False
- Any member of the Consistory who has been suspended for the non-payment of dues may be reinstated upon the filing of a written application and payment of a reinstatement fee. If would require a _____ vote of the members present for the applicant to be reinstated.
 - Majority
 - Unanimous
 - One-third
 - Two-thirds secret
- Any member, regardless of grade or classification shall automatically be suspended from Scottish Rite Masonry if they are suspended or expelled from a Symbolic Lodge having jurisdiction.
 - True
 - False
- A person who has been indefinitely suspended by reason of a judgment following charges and trial for an offense other than non-payment of dues may be restored in membership upon presentation of a new petition and _____.
 - By a two-thirds vote of the members present at a regular meeting
 - With approval of the Deputy for the Orient
 - By order of the Sovereign Grand Commander
 - All of the Above
- A member of a Subordinate Body, who is clearly upon the books and against whom no charges are pending and as to whom no official investigation of inquiry might result in such charges has begun, may voluntarily withdraw form membership and be entitled to a demit upon application and payment of the required fees. Said demit shall be dated from _____ by the Secretary and shall be _____ next meeting of the Body.
 - receipt of the application/voted upon during the
 - the meeting during which it was read/approved during
 - approved during receipt of the application / reported to the
 - None of the Above
- If the holder of a demit returns it within sixty days to the Body by which it was issued with a request that it be canceled, such Body shall reinstate the brother's name in the membership roll and adjust his record to show continuous membership.
 - True
 - False
- A petition for affiliation presented to Body of the Rite in a Valley in which the petitioner does not reside shall require _____ before the petition is acted upon.
 - an affiliation fee imposed by the Subordinate Body as found in the bylaws of said body
 - a legally issued demit accompanied by an affiliation fee imposed by the Subordinate Body
 - a legally issued demit or other legal evidence of current Scottish Rite membership
 - Both a & c
- The character and Masonic standing of all applicants for membership in the Scottish Rite shall be canvassed by _____ Committee of Investigation whose findings shall be reported to the Body before any ballot is taken on the application for petitions.
 - a proper
 - at least a 3 person
 - at least a 5 person
 - at least a 2 person

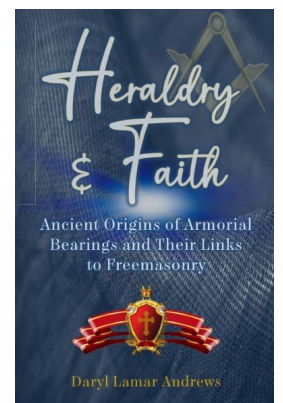
Book Corner



MORE LIGHT IN THE RITE is a collection of introspective and retrospective essays on various aspects of the Scottish Rite by **SGIG Stuart A. Lee, II**. It is a valuable tool for instruction highlighting lessons in the Scottish Rite degrees and more and a must-have for your Scottish Rite library.

The origins of the emblems utilized in the Scottish Rite and Freemasonry have their roots in societies more ancient than the Knights Templar. **HERALDRY & FAITH** by **SGIG Daryl L. Andrews** provides great historical insight into these origins.

Order at www.LuLu.com/Bookstore



BROTHERHOOD & FRIENDSHIP

A Personal Perspective

Grand Inspector General Charles Barfield, 33°, Hartford Consistory #80, Orient of Connecticut

John 15:13 *“Greater love has no one than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friend”*

Upon reflection, I am reminded of one of the reasons that I became a mason. It was my desire to be a part of something larger than myself, something that transcended the I and me of everyday life. The very first obligation of masonry asks succinctly, how were you made a Mason and without hesitation I answered “In my Heart”. The question is a profound revelation with far reaching implications. The question suggests that we look within ourselves for the divine connection that binds all of mankind and more especially Masons to each other. It really boils down to the spirit of Masonry and speaks to a larger issue, are we our brother’s keeper?

Brotherhood is the cement that binds us as Masons. It is like Christianity, it galvanizes and solidifies. Like Christianity, the fraternal order of Masonry galvanizes the human spirit and fills us with brotherly love and friendship for one another. Masonry does not make the distinction between white, Black, yellow, red or brown, between white masonry A. F. & A. M. and Prince Hall Masonry F. & A. M. These are affinities that we choose to identify with. Our obligations do not bind us to our affinities but rather as brother’s of like minds and ideals. Our Brotherhood sets us apart from all other fraternities. It exemplifies who we are and what we represent. The cable tow does not recognize color and is less interested in status or ethnicity. There are biblical and historical and examples of brotherhood.

BIBLICAL: The biblical story of The Good Samaritan is a striking example of how a Mason should act when a brother is in distress (Luke 10:25:37). It is a story to illustrate how we love our neighbor as ourselves when other people need our help the most, like the man on the road, is when our love for neighbor is truly tested. God in his infinite wisdom and mercy, gives aid in spite of those who look the other way. By extending the cable tow in a brotherly way brings satisfaction and inner joy that adds meaning to brotherhood, externally and internally followed by a surge of euphoria; real happiness-brother to brother.

St. John the Baptist, whom we as masons celebrate on St John’s Day, with his influence, relationship and legacy to Masonry, is another example of brotherhood. He chose martyrdom rather than betray his belief in God. He made the ultimate sacrifice as did our lord and savior, Jesus Christ. Both reached out to brethren to

embrace Almighty God, by opening their hearts and minds to trust. Obedience and an understanding of the word of God is the pathway to spiritual brotherhood; the foundation of Masonry.

HISTORICAL: It was the historical sense of brotherhood and brotherly love that The Grand Lodge of Connecticut, A. F. & A. M and Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Connecticut birthed mutual recognition thirty-four years ago (1986). It was an effort to bridge the void between them. After all, both Grand Lodges were chartered by the Grand Lodge of England without any distinctions. The Grand Lodge of England in its infinite wisdom understood that Masonry transcends political, religious and secular divides. When we visit one another’s Lodges, we are greeted as fellow Masons not by our affinities. We are accepted on the level.

As our brother’s keeper, we are bound to extend our cable tow not just to masons but to mankind in general, showing respect and exercise character and integrity. A unique example of brotherhood was witnessed during the Selma march lead by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. People of all colors and ethnicity closed ranks and merged together as brothers and sisters marching and holding hands to raise the consciousness of America that we are one in the sight of the Grand Architect.

BROTHERS IN DISTRESS: Regardless, of your lodge, Rank, whether you are a symbolic mason, Ancient Accepted Scottish Right mason, Royal Arch mason, Knights Templar etc., the first degree made you a mason. Therefore, when a worthy brother is in distressed, we are obligated to come to his rescue as long as it does not cause injury to our self. I do not believe that there is a brother in any lodge black or white that would not go to the defense of a worthy brother Mason in distress regardless of his race, political or religious views. We can disagree and often times we do, but those disagreements should not supersede the ideals and tenets of Freemasonry.

Without brotherhood, that sense of belonging and oneness that extends to all Free Masons would have little meaning and Free Masonry would be just another boys club. We share the glorious history and traditions of Free Masonry. Lets us not forget that Masonry is in our hearts and minds not in the differences between affinities or the color of one’s skin. The very survival of our institution of free Masonry is based on harmony and those time-honored ideals and traditions.



THE CROWN

Sovereign Grand Inspector General Floyd E. Bagwell Jr., 33°

A Masonic poem written by Charles R. Barfield, 33° entitled: "Brotherly Love and friendship," captures the spirit of brotherhood:

"There was a vineyard and in that vineyard there were tall vines, short vines but all were bearing fruit, they were connected and supporting each other. They were nurtured from the same spring of life, there were no contentions, they were common in their purpose and when the season arrived, in unison, they offered up their fruits. The brotherhood can never be lost or broken, time and space only strengthens the resolve that we are never alone and that distance and the unspoken word is tantamount to what cannot be concealed, that brotherly love is the purist form of friendship, that character is the hallmark of integrity, that the heart is often the guide, and realize brotherly love survives.

If one forgets, if only for a moment, he is reassured by that voice only he can hear: "We're here and we're there," never far and never apart, brotherhood reigns supreme and can be found in the infinite recesses of our minds; where space and time sometimes create the illusion that out of sight is out of mind. Brotherhood is not without contentions but full of lessons. We are blessed by shared experiences, guided by the light of that all-Seeing Eye that paves our way, an omnipresent spirit that while unseen is like a gentle breeze on a warm summer night, comforting and soothing. Regardless of what tomorrow brings, we stand on the level, together, in the knowledge of an unbreakable bond and an unshakable resolution that we are never alone".

In our hearts we are all Masons!

In order to fully understand and grasp the meaning of Masonic mysteries and associated bodies, it is extremely important to study early culture, religion, signs and symbols of ancient societies. Even more helpful would be to learn more about the Egyptian's worship customs, symbols and beliefs. To make our knowledge more complete of crowns and their wearings, it is highly suggested to study Spiritual Astrology, the religions and cultural practices of Pygmy tribes and Eschatology. More and more current research identify that these early civilizations were of African origin who advanced and religiously practiced "living in concert with the Natural Law which espouses "what goes around will come around." The rotation and orbit of the planets and study thereof were all the basis of the Ancient's belief systems. It is documented and posited by many that that very life formed in Ancient Africa. The crown is one of those symbols that, through the ages, became a symbol of wisdom and authority by those ancient cultures.

Even some aspects of our current ritualistic ceremonies and customs can be traced back to those ancient cultures. The Crown is a symbol in the Scottish Rite that is an important emblematic symbol of authority, achievement, advanced knowledge and commitment to the Masonic Order and Humanity. From the very earliest times, it was used by learned leaders to denote their rank and position. Down through time, it has taken many shapes, forms, colors and trappings. All this, again, can be traced back to the Egyptians and other ancient orders and their practice of the religions of antiquity. We use its very shape to adorn our heads which is of the form of the Royal Cartouche taken from the course of the sun as depicted below:

Summer Solstice



Autumn Equinox

Spring Equinox

Winter Solstice

"When it's all over, we shall wear a crown"; yes, we ALL shall wear a Crown. So it may be.

Orient of Wisconsin

Sovereign Grand Inspector General

Marshall E. Tharpe, 33^o, Deputy

The Orient of Wisconsin continues to make strides in its efforts to reclaim members and bring them back into the fold. COVID has taken a toll but we are making slow progress. The Orient also had its first in person Remembrance and Renewal this past year as the ones prior were held via Zoom. The participation was well attended with family and friends of those who we have lost joined in the Remembrance - "Lest we forget".



The Madison-Beloit Consistory #84 sponsored two successful blood drives which resulted in collecting enough blood to care for over 600 Sickle Cell patients in pain crisis. As result of the gallant effort by the Consistory who partnered with the Urban League-Guild. The Guild was awarded 1st place in community service at the Urban League National Conference in Houston Texas (July 25-30). The Guild and Consistory received the award for the second straight year. Madison-Beloit has also partnered with the University of Wisconsin Medical School to help the community with issues associated with Alzheimer's. GIG Bobby Moore 33^o chaired the community advisory board which sponsored the leading researcher, Dr. Thomas Karkari, Assistant Professor, University of Rothenburg, Sweden, and University of Pittsburgh, to the *Solomon Carter Fuller Brain Health Brunch*. Madison-Beloit also partnered with the National Alliance on Mental illness (NAMI), to highlight how Mental illness effects the Afro-American Community by participating in the NAMI Walk and their NAMI Banquet. Dr. Corinda Rainey-Moore was the Keynote speaker at the star-studded event. The Consistory also worked with Friendship Chapter OES with their *Mardi Gras and Cancer Pink Affair* event and worked with the Divine 9 Fraternities and Sororities on voter's registration.

The Orient under the leadership of Deputy Marshall E. Tharpe, 33^o, conducted the ceremony of Remembrance and Renewal Program on March 26th which honored the late Grand Minister of State, SGIG William R. Stark, 33^o and SGIG Frank A. Humphrey. The families were very pleased. A joint Reflection Banquet with Madison Beloit and Ionic Consistory #70 was held on Saturday, August 12th in Madison highlighting the past year's work of Commanders-In-Chief Bobby L. Moore, 33^o (#84) and Velvon Summers (#70). The inspirational speaker was

Rev. Joseph Baring (#84) and we had a delicious meal. The Consistories plan to continue working together as they realize the whole is better than the sum of the parts.

President of the Commanders of the Rite, SGIG Ralph Sirmons, Sr., and members sponsored the Deputy Marshall E. Tharpe, 33^o Bowling Tournament and a Golf Outing for the Scholarship fund.

Orient of Nebraska

Sovereign Grand Inspector General

Johnny Cummings, 33^o, Deputy

Nebraska continues to support community-based activities, along with working on improving its membership's growth and development. Joshua David Kelley Consistory #27 is engaging in its 2nd year partnership with participating in and supporting the second annual Bobby Byars Foundation.org Community Safety Day Program. This year, the Orient conducted a CHIP (Children Identification Program) project to provide families with an opportunity to have their children provide DNA at no cost, for future emergency events, if needed. The Orient also participated in its 6th annual scholarship and youth benevolent golf tournament. The Orient will continue to partner with the *Open-Door Mission* community drives to support the citizens, along with partnering with the US Marine Corp *Toys for Tots* program. This year, we are looking to exceed the 1,150 toys donated last year.



The Orient is also continuing its efforts of getting involved in the USC's Cradle to College Program. We are reaching out to members of the community assist them in becoming outstanding citizens, both educationally, and socially. The Orient is also partnering with the Orient of Nebraska, Southern Masonic Jurisdiction, to have a joint elevation. This will be an outstanding event, and will take place in November. A special committee is being established to address and develop a means for the members to actively participate in civic engagement on social justice. In addition, a partnership with the NAACP was formed to engage in the protection of voting rights and voting education through the establishment of numerous community and precinct forums. We will also join forces with other organizations to provide meals to needy families on a monthly basis.

Orient of Indiana

*Sovereign Grand Inspector General
Carl Drummer, 33^o, Deputy*



The Orient of Indiana held its annual wreath laying on May 13, 2023 at Crown Hill Cemetery in Indianapolis, Indiana. The annual event pays homage to deceased Sovereign Grand Inspectors General who served in the Grand Cabinet of the United Supreme Council. Over 25 Fraters gathered to pay respects to Past Sovereign Grand Commanders Sumner A. Furniss and Algie Oldham; and to Grady B. Hinkle, former Grand Minister of State. SP Robert Mays, GIGs Cameron Foreman and Kenneth Allen read brief tributes. SGIG Drummer gave final remarks. Immediately after the wreath laying event, Fraters convened at the Prince Hall Masonic Temple Association for the Scottish Rite Spring Workshop. SGIG Drummer and GIG Cornell Murrell moderated and led those in attendance through exercises designed to increase knowledge about one another and to develop stronger leadership skills.

On Saturday, June 10th, the Orient held its annual Commanders of the Rite Retreat at the Prince Hall Farm in Weaver, Indiana. In a break from past practice, SGIG Drummer opened the retreat up to all grades within the Rite. The agenda focused on cybersecurity and the Internet. A presentation was provided by Scott Morris, Chief Information Officer of Eskenazi Health. With more event registrations and ticket payments moving online, the agenda was timely and well-received. There was a lively question and answer session that proved to be very informative.

GIG Jeffrey Peele, President, Indiana Commanders of the Rite, asked each consistory to conduct a voter registration drive on Juneteenth. The Consistories helped

to spread the importance of exercising one's right to vote. At a time when some politicians are trying to make it harder for some Americans to participate in the democratic process, community-based voter registration drives continue to increase the number of eligible American voters. Drives conducted by nonpartisan organizations, such as the Scottish Rite, have dramatically increased voter registration rates among groups that have traditionally faced the greatest barriers, including low-income, minority, and young voters. This is especially important as, in recent years, various state legislatures have attempted to make it harder not only for voters to vote, but also for voter registration drives to operate.

Orient of Iowa

*Sovereign Grand Inspector General
Osumana V. Cassell, 33^o, Deputy*

The Orient of Iowa continues to progress with activities involving the Members of the Orient and Communities, but not without some challenges. We have lost the service of a long time Commander-In-Chief through resignation because of personal reasons; and his presence will surely be missed. The Orient is actively involved in reactivating its Order of the Golden Circle Assemblies with the Sisters of Electa Grand Chapter, OES, and the Loyal Ladies with inactive status. During the year, some activities to be noted were Joint Celebration of the Ceremony of Remembrance and Renewal in the Valley of Des Moines with both Consistories – Alexander G. Clark #68 and William F. Powell #46; the Most Worshipful Grand Master; the Grand Worthy Matron's representatives and Chapters, from Electa Grand Chapter; and Friends.

The representation by the Orient at the 142nd Annual Session of the United Supreme Council was a rewarding experience. The Deputy was presented with the USC Gold Medal of Achievement Award; the Assistant to the Deputy, Patrick L. Peacock, 33^o, was reclassified to Sovereign Grand Inspector General Emeritus; and the Most Worshipful Grand Master, the Honorable Ike Rayford, was elevated to the Grade of Grand Inspector General. Because of the Deputy's focus goal - 3Rs (Reclaim our non-active Members, Recruit new Members from the Blue Lodges, and Retain our current Members), and the USC Reinstatement Program, GIG Eugene Taylor, 33^o, was reinstated and has accepted new and added responsibilities in the Orient's Education Program as outlined by the United Supreme Council Education and Development Department.



Orient of New York

Sovereign Grand Inspector General

Rev. Hermon J. Simpson, 33^o, Deputy

On May 27, 2023, Sovereign Grand Inspector General Grady Edge, former Deputy of the Orient of New York was unanimously elected to the office of Grand Minister of State for the United Supreme Council and I, Sovereign Grand Inspector General Rev. Herman J Simpson, was appointed Deputy by our Sovereign Grand Commander Melvin J. Bazemore to succeed him, for no one could ever replace him. He has served the Orient of New York as Deputy for 22 years and given a rich legacy to uphold. I, as Deputy, will strive to my utmost to build on that legacy and guide the Orient of New York into a new era of service. With the help and dedication of the members of the Orient of New York I have no doubt that we will succeed in enhancing this rich legacy. I served for 18 years at the side of our former Deputy as his assistant, and I don't believe anyone could have received a finer education. I would like to Thank once again Sovereign Grand Commander Bazemore for the trust that he has reposed in me to lead this Orient into the future.

Initiatives taken will be the first in-person meeting of the Sovereign Grand Inspectors General's Council and the Past Commanders-In-Chief Council which will convene at the Council of Deliberation. The reformation of the Commanders of the Rite will maximize training for future leaders by providing more opportunities for leadership training, which will be enhanced by the Leadership Academy. We will utilize available technology to seamlessly tie in all information that is necessary to enhance the reporting to the *Make A Difference and Reclamation and Recruiting* programs by creating an Orient wide database for real-time reporting when activities occur including meetings, attendance, social and civic projects, charity, scholarships, community outreach and community charity and donations.

On Saturday April 29th, King David Consistory #3 hosted a Heritage Founders' Day Program that commemorated the celebration of the founding of the United Supreme Council PHA Northern Jurisdiction in 1881. This momentous occasion brought together the founding consistories, DeMolay Consistory #1 (Pennsylvania), DeHugo Consistory #2 (New Jersey), and King David (New York). Deputy Simpson led the event and started by telling an interesting story about April 29, 1881. On that day in 1881, there was a special celebration to recognize the formation of The United Supreme Council. Each founding Consistory's rich history was, then, eloquently presented. Among the distinguished attendees were members from consistories constituting the Orients of New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and esteemed members of the Order of the Golden Circle. The program culminated with the solemn signing of a "Visitation Pledge". Notably the signatories were esteemed figures, including Sovereign Grand Commander Dr. Melvin J. Bazemore, Most Worshipful Gregory R. Smith, Jr. Grand Master, Sovereign Grand Inspector General Simpson, Sovereign Grand Inspector General Irvin C.

Oglesby, who represented Sovereign Grand Inspector General Leonard Heard, Deputy (PA) and Sovereign Grand Inspector General Robert C. Oglesby (NJ). Sovereign Grand Inspector General Edward M. Brooks II, Secretary General, graciously presented a replacement Honorary Patent to Grand Inspector General Raul Rodriguez of King David Consistory #3 who lost his original patent in a devastating fire. The thoughtful and unexpected gesture garnered a well-deserved ovation, celebrating the spirit of camaraderie and support. For the event, a special travel coin was made, and it has logos from the Orients of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York embossed. The current serving Commanders in Chiefs are:

- *Illustrious Lucius Newman, DeMolay Consistory #1*
- *Illustrious Darald Stancil, DeHugo Consistory #2*
- *Illustrious Hondri Spear, King David Consistory #3*

King David hosted a collaborative joint degree event with Long Island Consistory #61 and Pentecost Consistory #98. King David conferred 19^o—32^o, Long Island conferred the Lodge of Perfection Degrees, and Pentecost conferred the Rose Croix Degree. 68 new fraters were initiated with 23 joining King David. King David, Long Island and Pentecost, also organized the Annual Ceremony of Remembrance and Renewal at the Macedonia Community Center. The ceremonies reinforced the sense of unity and tradition within Scottish Rite Freemasonry.

In a harmonious and purpose-driven setting, the Bison hosted its annual event on July 16th at the elegant Classics V Restaurant. Around 70 distinguished individuals gathered for this remarkable evening, guided by the Deputy Simpson. His eloquent speech set the tone. The event honored young talents in STEM with a \$750 gift, a shining tribute to their academic achievements. A town hall meeting on July 15, 2023, united Fraters and Loyal Ladies in knowledge-sharing and camaraderie. This vibrant exchange culminated in a lavish feast. SGIG Stanley Mack and Illustrious Jerrell Moss provided instructive sessions, guided by the USC Supplemental Training Guide, enhancing self-improvement. SGIG Dr. Adam Sumlin championed knowledge and well-being through the Grady Edge Reading and STEM program. Nourishing young hearts at St. Mary's school for the deaf, the program impacted over 100 children. His appointment as the State's Medical Director marked a distinguished milestone. He addressed health concerns spotlighting Prostate Cancer awareness and calling for early screening. Diverse treatments emerge, emphasizing the importance of knowledge and empowerment from active surveillance to Cyber Knife technology, highlighting the importance of proactive health management.

Utica remains committed to the Grady Edge Reading Program. GIG Cedric T. Bolton coordinates the program in Syracuse. His efforts include securing book bags, books, and supplies for Vann Dyne Elementary School. Over 200 books have been provided over the past two years. MWPM Calvin Robinson expressed interest in providing materials to potential new members and we are currently developing handouts. CIC Bernard McMillian, MWPM Robert Rivera, and TPM Norman Ashley are dedicated to enhancing members' knowledge. Time is allocated at each meeting for instruction.



On August 26th, Long Island assisted State Senator SP Kevin Parker with the Annual School Bag giveaway in Brooklyn. We donated to the family of the late Mr. Eric Galvin of Staten Island, who was slain in Chile while on vacation. We are establishing a program in Staten Island to help with new arriving Migrants with life's necessities. On October 8th, we will host our Annual Divine Service at the Family & Community Empowerment Church in Copiague, where our VP COR GIG Rev. George Jackson is the Assistant Pastor. On October 20–22, we will be attending the NYS Council of Deliberation in Binghamton. On November 18th, we will donate 100 turkeys to Brooklyn's Red Hook community.

The New York State Council of Deliberation has successfully initiated a new program to increase the ranks of all Consistories in the orient. This innovative program has afforded Master Masons the opportunity to join or reaffiliate with the Scottish Rite. Albany is embracing this progressive recruitment effort to enhance Masonic careers and strengthen membership rolls. We are on course to increase our ranks by 15-20 Sublime Princes through recruitment and reaffiliation. On September 30th, Albany will hold an elevation in the Albany area. The Grady Edge Reading Program is quickly approaching 10 years of promoting literacy and encouraging the love of reading to thousands of students of underserved communities across New York. Originated in 2014 by SGIG El-Wise Noisette, the program now includes representatives from every Consistory. The hard work and dedication of the volunteers has led to the development of its STEM component. On September 9th, the program will partner with *United the City* to host the annual *Back 2 School Community Event*, a free public event, at Washington Park featuring school supplies, book bags, books, food, giveaways and more.

Led by Commander-In-Chief Jerry L. Bailey, Jr., Pentecost is experiencing rapid growth and improvement. He introduced a trestle board with impactful programs to strengthen the Consistory. Monthly Scottish Rite Lectures by SGIG Leonard LaRue cover diverse topics, deepening our understanding of Scottish Rite Mason responsibilities. Pentecost collaborated with King David and Long Island for the Feast of Remembrance and Renewal, participated in the historic meeting of the three oldest Prince Hall Consistories; assembled at Macedonia Baptist Church in Mount Vernon, led by GIG Rev. Dr. Darren M. Morton, uniting through a powerful message; hosted a Family Barbeque with Pentecost Assembly to strengthen bonds; and partnered with Elejmal Temple #185 to distribute gift cards to local homeless shelter children, aiding their back-to-school preparations. These activities culminated in 14 new Fraters and reclamation of a member. Efforts

to initiate and reconnect with lost members are progressing well. State Grand Loyal Lady Ruler Belinda Grant (top-right), announced that all New York Assemblies are operating seamlessly, embracing the new rituals. As they engage in their collective endeavors as members of the Order of the Golden Circle, they remain resolutely focused on our shared purpose alongside the deputy, whose presence will undoubtedly enrich their path forward. Together, their actions will reflect dedication, and bring honor and unity to our noble cause.

Orient of Ohio

*Sovereign Grand Inspector General
Carl A. Williams, 33^o, Deputy*

The warmer months of the year found the Orient of Ohio still performing at a high level. Events took place statewide that illustrated the commitment to the principles of the Scottish Rite and progressiveness of our members. Bezaleel Consistory #15, Valley of Cleveland, held a Reunion on Saturday, March 11, 2023. Commander-in-Chief Eugene "Bo" Haynesworth, 33^o along with his complement of officers Advanced 4 Brothers to the degree of Sublime Prince of the Royal Secret—Jojuan Bradley; Steve Marcus; Kevin Jackson Sr.; and James Smith—welcome to the Rite!



Downstate in the Valley of Columbus on March 25, 2023, L.D. Easton Consistory #21, (with Bezaleel and King Solomon Consistory #20, Cincinnati) joined together with the Valley of Columbus, Orient of Ohio, Northern Masonic Jurisdiction to perform the "Exemplification of the 20th Degree" at the Northwest Masonic Temple. Prince Hall Fraters performed their version of the 20th degree—Master Ad Vitam with Prince Hall being a central character. The degree was followed by a break for dinner and degree work resumed with the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction Fraters performing their version of the 20th degree—Master Ad Vitam with Benedict Arnold as a central character. The only regular and recognized Orients in Ohio performed their respective versions outstandingly!

April was welcomed by the release of the highly anticipated “The Dove and The Quill” highlighting the thoughts and experiences of the Loyal Ladies of the Order of the Golden Circle of the jurisdiction. The Loyal Ladies of the Orient were represented in grand fashion. LL Dorothy Gordon (22) submitted a piece reflective of her experiences and LL Vivian Hawkins (36) served as an Associate Editor. Bezaleel Assembly #19, Valley of Cleveland, participated in the Purple Stride Walk in support of the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network at the Cleveland Zoo on Saturday, April 19, 2023. This charity is a special one for Loyal Lady Ruler Joan Hampton as her older sister Bobbie succumbed to pancreatic cancer many years ago. The month of May found the release of “Scottish Rite Reflections Vol. 3” to rave reviews. Once again, Fraters contributed and assisted with ensuring this educational offering is a success. GIG Samuel E. Lindsey (15) served on the submission review team. He also contributed an interview of SGIG Charles L. Davis — “A Worthwhile Endeavor.” SGIG Reginald B. Stewart (15) served as an Assistant Editor for the project and contributed a piece as well—“Is it Yours?”

The 142nd Annual Session was held in the Mile High City of Denver, Colorado. Things started off early for the Orient of Ohio. On Friday morning, May 26, 2023, two Fraters from the Orient of Ohio were reclassified. Please congratulate Lawrence E. Coleman Sr. (20) and Howard D. Melvin (20) who are now Sovereign Grand Inspectors General of the Emeritus grade. Illustrious Coleman replaced longtime USC Music Director SGIG Barrington Lessene (1) Illustrious Howard D. Melvin has joined his brother, Illustrious C. Keith Melvin, in the USC Medical Department. A change in the usual schedule of activities during an Annual Session allowed for the awarding of the Gold Medal of Achievement during the first executive session. Assistant Convention Director SGIG Embie R. Bostic (15) was recognized. It was certainly earned and appropriately recognized.

On Saturday morning, May 27, following the presentation of the name of the Class by Sovereign Grand Commander Dr. Melvin J. Bazemore, Grand Historian SGIG Reginald B. Stewart (15) provided further enlightenment on SGIG William R. Stark—the Class name honoree. Saturday afternoon was highlighted by GIG Eugene W. Greenfield (20) facilitating a thorough explanation of the 32nd degree, Sublime Prince of the Royal Secret, complete with a demonstration of the passwords and signs. Illustrious Greenfield is a member of the USC Education & Development Department.

On Sunday, May 28, newly reclassified SGIG Lawrence E. Coleman Sr. (20) led the USC Mass Choir in a few selections during the morning’s church service. Illustrious Grand Master of Ceremonies SGIG Jerry D. Springer (26) introduced the pastor for the sermon—Illustrious Grand Prior SGIG Dr. Wilton E. Blake I (20). Illustrious Blake delivered the Preached Word to the assemblage—“Trusting God in Hard Times.” Monday, May 29, GIG Lonnie Jones II (20) assumed his newly appointed role as Grand Standard Bearer. He succeeded SGIG Kenneth E. Lewis (20) in the position. Quite a few members of the Orient were prominently displayed during the photo montage at the banquet. The Orient was blessed to welcome 13 new Grand Inspectors General into the fold in the William R. Stark Class of 2023. Overseeing all the Annual Session activities was Convention Director SGIG Carl A. Williams (15).

The Unified Ladies of Miami Assembly #22, Valley of Dayton hosted a fish fry fund raiser at Zion Baptist Church. It was a successful event. Bezaleel Assembly #19, Valley of Cleveland, led by Loyal Lady Ruler Joan Hampton, hosted a virtual “Yellow and White Tea.” The guest speaker, Rev. Dr. Robin Hedgeman of Bethany Baptist Church, delivered a very positive, encouraging, and spirit-filled message. On their countdown to 100 years in existence Miami, Valley of Dayton, held its “Cheers to 99 Years” celebration with a brunch on the B&B Riverboat on August 12th. This event was accompanied by a souvenir journal. Also, the Orient is proud to acknowledge the inclusion of GIG Tony J. Dye (15) on the Make a Difference reporting committee and GIG Roscoe Simmons (15) and GIG John Winlock (26) involvement on the USC Reclamation Committee. Congratulations to GIG David Whitehead (20). Due to his extensive community service and voter awareness efforts he will be honored at the 2023 Freedom Fund Dinner on October 7th in Cincinnati. The Orient is growing and moving in the right direction and in full support of the Sovereign Grand Commander’s program.

The Ohio Council of Deliberation 2023 Voter Awareness Team has been extremely busy this year under the direction of the Deputy of the Orient SGIG Carl A. Williams. We operate on a fundamental pledge to afford to make voters aware of their opportunities throughout Ohio. This committee works to synergize the efforts of the various masonic bodies of the jurisdiction of Ohio using a multipronged approach working in conjunction with other civic, fraternal, faith-based, and community-mobilization organizations to push out the message of the importance of voting as well as educate voters on candidates, issues, and proposed legislation. These efforts were augmented by voter registration drives held at parades, cookouts, and citywide community events; nonpartisan canvassing in neighborhoods; hosting candidate nights and candidate forums in-person and on Zoom; and pushing information out via the Voter Awareness in Ohio Facebook page. Notably none of the participating organizations engage in (or will engage in) partisan politics. Collectively, we promote no candidate or stance over another. Rather we all are about providing the impetus for the voter to educate themselves on the issues and then vote their conscious. We took a stronger stance by being in leadership positions within these partner organizations. The goal is always to Engage, Educate, and Mobilize!

We were excited to have successfully assisted with the defeat of Issue 1 during the August 8 special election. In Cincinnati, King Solomon Consistory #20 via GIGs David Whitehead and Fanon Rucker conducted multiple events. They held an in-person event on the last Friday of each month in collaboration with the Hamilton County Reentry program averaging five (5) registrations and five (5) address changes per event. They established a “Train the Trainer” program at jail in collaboration with former Judge Allen. We now have access to register incarcerated individuals that are eligible prior to release. They partnered with the public school health committee to register during vaccination and afterschool learning events—Fifteen (15) events were held this year with six (6) more scheduled for the year. They partnered with the Cincinnati Reds to register voters at their outdoor events. We will host National Voter Registration Day at another



Cincinnati Reds game this year. They partnered with the Black Softball Circuit to host a table at their softball tournament. We had a tent and a booth at the Midwestern Championship with more than 100 teams from around the state. They partnered with youth football leagues for voter registration tables for five games and held nine virtual Candidate Forums with 21 more scheduled in this election window.

Our **Facebook Live Team in Toledo** worked the polls in November by the direction of Tanya Roach; Charlesena Smith; Toiya Coffee; Charia Grainger; and LaVera Scott. On Sunday, July 9th, Scott and Roach worked a voter registration and education table at a festival in Toledo. We were able to educate on Issue 1, the identification requirements, and registration. T-shirts were donated by the Ohio Unity Coalition.

The Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Ohio Team obtained "The Freedom Bus" (above). The bus stopped by the 174th Annual Session in Columbus for a special engagement. The Black Voters Matter group is the sponsor of the bus and its travels function as a new age Freedom Ride for voting rights.

Many thanks go out to GIG Joseph Clark Jr. 33° for coordinating the stop. Another facet of voter education and empowerment is the Souls to the Polls program. The most notable function of this program is to provide voters rides to their polling station to vote or drop of their absentee ballots. LL Dee Dee Howell was the main force behind coordinating this program.

Orient of Washington/OR

Sovereign Grand Inspector General Gregory D. Wraggs Sr., 33°, Deputy

On April 23, 2023, History was made in the Orient of WA & OR for the first time Capitol City Consistory #106 Hosted The Southern Masonic Jurisdiction AASR Masons Valleys of Tacoma and Olympia (below). It was indeed a great meeting and a great day to be a Scottish Rite Mason, all those attended were extremely excited to be a part of this Historic Milestone. The effort would not have been possible without the recognition agreement between the Four Sovereign Grand Commanders, of the Four United Supreme Councils who brought unity to the Rite.

The 78th Council of Deliberation and 51st State Grand Assembly began on September 8, 2023 with congratulations for GIGs Antonio Graham, Damion Jiles, Edward Gales, Ell White, and Darrell A. Wheatley of the William R. Stark of 2023. The Commanders of the Rite held breakfast on the next morning and discussed their business. The Council of Deliberation was open with the Most Illustrious Commander in Chief SGIG Gregory D Wraggs, Sr., being received. He received the Deputy from the Southern Masonic Jurisdiction SGIG Alvin Jorgensen, 33°, the MWGM Terrell D. Hicklin, 33°, of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Washington, GTIM Harry DeBose, SGIG Harden M. Keys, Jr., 33° and SGIG Henry Sheegog, 33°, and many staff officers from other organizations. The Most Illustrious Commander in Chief



attended the Grand Assembly to conduct elections and install the elected officers for the Grand Assembly. Loyal Lady Cassandra White (below) was elected State Grand Loyal Lady Ruler.

Highlights included the presentation of two \$1,000 Scholarships one from the United Supreme Council and one from the Washington/Oregon Council of Deliberation to Ms. Armani Wells and Ms. Vallane L. Sneva. For the first time since the Unity Statement was signed, we had the Deputy of the Orient of Washington SGIG Jorgensen join us at this meeting.



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Congratulations on a successful Denver Session!!

Denver 2023



See Centerfold for photos



*SGIG Lionell Cummings
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USC 2024 is right around the Corner!!!



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