



## GRAND MASTER'S REPORT 2018-2019

It has been an amazing year representing the Masons of the Great State of Arizona as your Grand Master. Working with the dedicated Officers of the Grand Lodge of Arizona has been a wonderful experience and a time that I shall remember forever. It has been a labor of love and an opportunity that I just cannot put into words. The lasting friendships I have made along with the receptions and respect that I have been given fills my heart. At the beginning of this year I asked all the Masons of Arizona to STAND TALL and show the world the value of Masonry. You have done a wonderful job, and I commend you all for your efforts. However, we need to continue to improve in all we do. We all need to improve and not accept the mediocre or mundane. Being just OK is not good enough. We must strive for excellence in everything that we do. Only by being exemplary will we build the Fraternity.

This year I visited numerous Lodges in Arizona for degrees, stated meetings, installations and award presentations. I also had the privilege of representing you at the Grand Lodges of Prince Hall Arizona, Oregon, New Mexico, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, Nevada, and Utah; at the Conference of Grand Masters in South Dakota, the Western States Masonic Conference, and the Rocky Mountain Masonic Conference in Utah. I participated in the Cochise County, Fain Ranch, Lost Dutchman, and Hualapai outdoor degrees, the Lodge Leadership Conference and many other degrees, ceremonies and festive boards. A few of real highlight were the consecration and installation of Officers at Ascension Lodge (our newest Lodge in Arizona) and the dedication of the new home to the Scottish Rite Valley of Phoenix. In addition, I was able to attend Scottish Rite meetings and reunions, York Rite meetings, the Colorado River Festival, and Shriner meetings/festivities. I represented you at Grand Eastern Star, Grand Amaranth, Daughters of the Nile, and the State/local functions of DeMolay, Rainbow and Jobs Daughters. In all cases they were a tremendous learning experience, in addition to the great information and ideas which were brought home to be put to use in Arizona.

Visiting Lodges gives one a clear view on the pulse of Freemasonry in Arizona and the activities of our dedicated Brothers. There are several things that I have learned and observed during this time in office that I would like to share with you. Our Lodges are filled with great Brothers who love the craft and believe in its tenants and teachings. Unfortunately, there are just fewer of us. Not that being fewer is a bad thing. Many of our Lodges struggle just to fill the chairs and perform degree work, but those that are there are spreading the teachings of Freemasonry in the communities. The Lodges that are spending time out in the community, doing things for others and being in public view are the Lodges that are doing well. Take your Lodge out of the Lodge room and into your community. It will pay great dividends to us all.

The dedicated Officers of the Lodges are struggling with leadership issues and the general administration of the Lodge. We have lost so many dedicated and involved Brothers to the ravages of time and the hand of the grim reaper, and so much of that knowledge has not been transmitted to our newer members. Do not allow the light of our great Fraternity to be dimmed. Go to work



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in the quarries and help change that rough ashlar into the perfect ashlar so that the beautiful Masonic edifice that is our Fraternity may grow and prosper with a proper foundation.

I want to acknowledge the dedicated Brothers who have served as DDGMs and DDGLs for this year. The DDGMs and DDGLs are the direct conduit between the Lodges and the Grand Lodge Officers. They play a major part in disseminating information and helping with our ritual and Lodge proficiencies. These Brothers travel many miles with little compensation. This job is one of the most demanding in the Fraternity. It is their main job to ensure that the Lodges follow the Arizona Masonic Code and have the most current information available. Thanks to their dedication there were fewer problems with proficiencies and the general operations of Lodges. The DDGMs meet on a quarterly basis to obtain training from the Grand Lecturer and discuss issues and problems with the Grand Lodge Officers. This coordinated effort allows for a consistency of information being provided to the Lodges. The DDGLs and our dedicated Grand Lecturer are tasked with training the Lodges on floor work and Lodge operations. Their districts comprise many Lodges and require many miles of travel. The Grand Lecturer increased the number of programs from last year and the DDGLs have completed many Lodges of Instruction around the State, earning much praise for their efforts. WB Ron Allen, our dedicated Grand Lecturer, has participated in most of them and also provided a stellar and humorous presentation at the Lodge Leadership Conference. I truly appreciate the opportunity to work with these Brothers and thank them for their dedication to the Craft. I strongly advise that the Lodges take more advantage of the information and dedication that these Brothers have available. They are here to work for you.

The Grand Line Officers meet on a regular basis for Long Range Planning and coordination. It has been my honor to assist this group of dedicated Brothers for the past year, especially the Deputy Grand Master, RW Greg Vasquez, who has led them so well this year. In the LRP meetings they discuss issues from around the State and formulate solutions to solve problems and establish programs. They also use this time to plan for the future of the craft and insure that we are all traveling upon the same road for the betterment of the Fraternity. Many projects of the LRP are multiyear programs. A major duty of the LRP is to develop programs for the Lodge Leadership Conference and support educational programs for the State. The Grand Officers are assigned to manage and oversee projects and initiatives, which has improved the participation and input into improving our management and problem solving capabilities. This year they have helped especially in making major advances in updating our technology and making information more available to the craft.

My conclusion is that Masonry is alive and well in Arizona. While we have faced many trials and tribulations, we have emerged triumphantly. I see our Brothers working hard to be successful and to keep our Lodges alive and prosperous. We need to return to our roots and what has worked in Masonry for centuries. The concepts of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth are more important in



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today's society than they ever have been. We are a society of friends and Brothers, we have nothing magical to offer, only truths to guide us in our daily lives.

I look forward to the future of the Craft and the many successes we will have. I wish to thank you all for the love, respect and support you have all given to me. Continue to STAND TALL and work for the betterment of the Fraternity. Together we will continue to grow, prosper and retake the position in society that Freemasonry deserves. I was only able to be as successful as I was because of those who came before me. We see more and farther than our predecessors, not because we have keener vision or greater height, but because we are lifted up and borne aloft on their shoulders. To those who toiled and planned and labored before me, I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

My report would not be complete without acknowledging the Brothers of my Lodges, Tucson No. 4 and Nelson Bledsoe No. 74. They have supported me financially, spiritually and bodily in the many years of this journey and I can never repay them enough. Anytime I have been in need they have responded and have never failed me.

And finally, last but certainly not least, I owe a huge debt of gratitude to my spouse Lynda who has traveled with me as a partner for all these years and kept me organized and somewhat sane in keeping track of all I needed to do and where I needed to be. I would have never been able to accomplish this task without her love, support and understanding.

My Brothers, please continue to work for the good of the fraternity and help make this world a better place. Freemasonry is more important today than it may have ever been. The world needs Freemasonry. Find those good men and help make them better. Every little action of the common day makes or unmakes character. Each one of you can make a difference, if you will only choose to do so.

Sincerely and Fraternaly Submitted,

Craig L. Gross, Grand Master  
Grand Lodge of Arizona F&AM