

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPEMENT CONFERENCE
SOUTHEASTERN VIRGINIA
RT. EX. EUGENE W. WIGGINS, CHAIRMAN
JULY 8, 1989

OPENING REMARKS OF RT.EX. EUGENE W. WIGGINS

Welcome to the Southeastern Leadership Development conference sponsored by the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons in Virginia. There will be five ten minute talks at this conference with closing remarks by the Grand High Priest, Most Excellent Howard F. Coleman.

One of the speakers at a Masonic gathering in Newport News in conjunction with the Bi-Cenennial celebration talked about the Masons who started this Country. It was suprising because he is not a Mason and as far as I know he doesn't know much about Masonry. But he learned an awful lot about it after he learned that he was going to be the speaker. So I congratulated him on giving a very short speech and one that was to the point and that he had done a lot of research. He said well, as far as the brevity of the speech was concerned any man that can't make his point in ten minutes didn't have anything to say to start with. So we're going to proceed on that premise today with our leadership conference. I'm going to ask Bill Vincent, chairman of the finance committee of the Grand Chapter to talk to you.

Rt. Ex. William A. Vincent, chairman of the Grand Chapter Finance Committee gave a presentation about a resolution to be voted on at Grand Chapter November 11, 1989.

RT. EX. EUGENE W. WIGGINS

Our next speaker will be Rt. Ex. Meredith C. Hutto, Grand Scribe who will talk to you about perpetual membership.

RT. EX. MEREDITH C. HUTTO

We have been talking about perpetual membership and I think everyone here knows what it is. Perpetual membership is a program offered by the Grand Chapter essentially that you pay a minimum of twelve years dues and that your secretary sends it in with the annual returns. The following year the Grand Chapter returns a dividend from that investment with the rest of the money. The minimum dividend is currently 8 1/2 percent and I would think that probably that will be in effect for some time until some reserve is built up. 8 1/2 percent essentially equates to one years dues. So the Grand Chapter extracts the capitation tax from the member before they send the money back to the Chapter. So the Chapter does not pay tax on him. You get the money back from Grand Chapter and the man does not have to pay dues again.

He is still liable of course for any assessments that may be made. I can't remember having any assessments in Grand Chapter but we could have them in the future. Its a very simple program and hopefully a very effective program.

Right now we have in excess of \$10,000.00 which has been sent in by members across the State and more is coming in all the time. So the program is starting to take effect. We do have information out.

There was a resolution presented last year at Grand Chapter and held over for action this year which modifies the way it operates slightly to the effect that if this proposed change is made, the capitation tax that will be withdrawn before the return is sent back to the Chapter will be limited to whatever the capitation tax is when you join the fund. So let us see a mad rush with everybody trying to get in this program before the capitation tax is possibly increased in November at Grand Chapter. I would hope so. If that takes effect, what that does is essentially say if the Grand Chapter raises the capitation tax the individual Chapter doesn't suffer from that change on its perpetual members. Because suddenly you would see your return go down because Grand Chapter would be keeping more of the money. And hopefully this would be approved at the Grand Chapter so that the Chapter still benefits to the maximum extent from the perpetual membership program.

Its really designed to be a way to preserve the financial integrity of the individual Chapter. This is the whole purpose of it. I can take a bunch of young men, if we had any in the room and I could probably sell them on the great idea of only having to pay twelve years of dues and they would be a member for the rest of their life. Well I don't see a whole lot of young men sitting around in the room to be honest with you. But it is a way to have a gift to your Chapter when you are gone. That your Chapter is still getting the benefits of your wisdom of becoming a perpetual member. I can't guarantee every body in here that you are going to pay twelve years dues and live to say I beat that system. I am now running on their money. But it is a way to provide funds back to your Chapter whether or not you think you're going to make it to that point where you're going to start working on the Grand Chapter's money instead of your own. Its a nice gift from families for members. There is a lot of ways this can be done to get a companion to be a perpetual member. A birthday gift, an anniversary gift or a Christmas gift is just some of the ways a man's family can show him how much they love him. So think about these things, but mainly we want to make this program work because in other jurisdictions it works fine.

You know down the road if we continue in this vane we will eventually have a very good program going. Its off to a reasonable start and we knew it was going to be a slow start. But its picking up speed and we want every Royal Arch Mason in Virginia to be a perpetual member. Its that simple. Its going to work. We're going to make it work. And your Chapter is going to be the one to benefit from it. So there is no reason you shouldn't be a perpetual member.

RT. EX. E. EARL WATERS, GRAND TREASURER

As of Thursday, July 6, 1989 we had \$11,337.00 in our account counting two certificates. One of those certificates is paying over nine percent and the other one is paying almost nine percent which with the interest added we will have over \$12,000.00.

RT. EX. HUTTO

You have heard it from the Grand Treasurer who sees the money coming in. The program is working and money is coming in all the time and there is absolutely no reason not to participate in this program. It is a very worthwhile thing and I would ask you to support the proposed change. I will be cutting my own throat because I will be cutting the Grand Chapter budget by a slight amount because we'll lose a few dollars on everybody that already belongs but I'm willing to do that. I think its more important for the individual Chapters to benefit to the maximum extent and let Grand Chapter continue to also get the capitation tax on the man living or dead. But I think the proposed change is necessary. I would ask that you do support that at Grand Chapter.

EX. M. WAYNE JOHNSON

I've been told that this is not a life membership but a perpetual membership that is, in the event of your death the Chapter will still continue to receive this benefit in perpetuity.

RT. EX. HUTTO

That is right, the money will come back to your Chapter from now on. That is another benefit for these younger people, is it not? Even after they are gone they are still supporting their Chapter. The money comes back from now on even after we are dead. Every year the money still comes from that investment to your Chapter. Not for twelve years, its forever and thats the whole purpose of it to continue to provide some financial resourses to the individual Chapters. We have got a lot of Chapters in this Grand Jurisdiction that have less than 100 members, and expenses go up all the time. So it is really designed to provide some financial resource back to the small Chapter.

RT. EX. EUGENE W. WIGGINS

The next speaker will be Rt. Ex. Arnold A. Dudley, our Grand Lecturer who is going to talk to you a little bit about the ritual.

RT. EX. ARNOLD A. DUDLEY

I would like to speak just a few minutes about the ritual and I don't know, but I think we all agree that its quite important in the Chapter. Its not the most important thing, but it does rank high. Remember in reading Archer B. Gay's history of Royal Arch Chapters if you have read it and I hope that you have, you'll see that we have been up and down all through the years. From a good period to a bad period and a then a good period. During the great depression people were dropping out of Royal Arch Chapters like flies. They were dropping out for one reason. They just didn't have enough money to pay their dues. But still there was an interest there and one thing that held them together during that time was ritual. So we think this is a very important part of Royal Arch Masonry.

And now I would like to say a few words about learning the ritual. I became a Mason several years ago when I was a young man. Now I'm an old man. In those days I worked with a lot of Royal Arch Chapters and a lot of old people and I guess we thought it was because there weren't very many young people back in those days. Today we still have the same situation, but I don't think that's a problem. I think we'll still go on. As far as these ups and downs, I feel that we're now at the low point and will start to go up. We just have to continue to work at it. One of the many reasons we might want to learn ritual brings to my mind Right Worshipful Brother Ray Pugh. Some of you may remember him. He was a member of Army Navy Lodge on the peninsula. His father is Andy Roberts who is a weather forecaster on channel 3 in Norfolk. He asked the question, "Why do Masons continue to come back to hear the ritual, to hear the same thing over and over?" Now some may think that it gets boring but I don't think it ever does get boring because each time we go over it it's just like the Biblical expressions we use in reading in the Bible. Like each time we recite the 23rd Psalm we get just a little more meaning out of it. We learn it a little bit better. When we hear the 23rd Psalm we might picture ourselves as having problems, walking beside the still waters and it kind of builds you up a little bit. Even in the time of death it is often read and gives us a little consolation. But we are doing the same thing in Masonry in that it does help us in many, many ways when we learn the ritual. As we learn the ritual we continue to get more out of that particular part of Masonry. Some people may criticise Masonry and I've heard some say that they learn the ritual but they still don't know what it's all about. Many of

us don't and I'm one of them. There's a lot I don't about it. Although we don't know exactly what it's all about we have different interpretations as we have different interpretations of the Bible. I know many ministers have their own interpretations.

There have been many changes in churches but I think we still appreciate it because we ourselves have a little bit of understanding and a little bit of appreciation at this point of time. So I think this is one advantage to us in learning the ritual. Another point is that it gives us so many useful standards by which we can live and follow and use as expressions in our daily lives. I'm sure you remember many of the parts of the ritual whether you learned them or not and you use them in your daily life.

Our former president, Ronald Reagan was also an actor. He was known as the great communicator. You may recall in some of his speeches he would recite a line someone had said in a certain movie. He would say a line and would use it as a principal in which to prove a certain point according to his own experience. We have the same thing in Masonry. We have many beautiful lines, expressions and ways of living which I'm sure we can use in our daily lives. But the very sound principals and goals are as we say, mercy and justice, our conduct, uprightness and integrity which should be our way of life and so forth.

We also give a little warning that men in all ages have sought to erect monuments to perpetuate their own greatness to exempt themselves from the grave but without success. So think about those things that we don't want to be and not the type to meet those failures or whatever it might be. So the ritual does give us many, many beautiful lines in which to follow. A way of action in which to live and move and have our being. One in particular that always impressed me when I first went into Masonry was the working tools of a Master Mason that ended by saying that "Emulation of who can best work and best agree." Well those few words always impressed me and I have always thought about them. Wouldn't it be fine to have a group of people who could all work together and agree?

During my career I had the opportunity to select quite a number of people for promotion. I was working for the Government Service and you know in Government Service we had a lot of paper work. We had a personnel policy about six pages long which we had to follow plus a supplement of three more pages. All those things amounted to just one thing. After being sure that we had followed them and didn't violate any of them we always gave the job to the best person. The one who can best work and best agree. That was just one of many lines that have always impressed me in Masonry. But there is so many more.

And thirdly I would like to mention that the satisfaction of the interest that we have about learning ritual. So much of it continues on for a long period of time but it is always a pleasure to give. We read in the Bible, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." And we don't enjoy just giving time to a new Mason, but we enjoy teaching the ritual or conferring the degrees, or as we have mentioned, giving that Principal Sojourner's lecture. As someone said earlier, he was impressed by the Principal Sojourner's lecture and it would be a pleasure for someone to tell you that so and so did such a good job of doing it. Not to talk about myself but some twenty five years ago, I gave the Principal Sojourner's lecture and a Companion told me he still remembered it. I don't remember who he was but I do know that it was as much pleasure for me to give it as it was for him to receive a little bit of Masonry. Because we are actually giving a little bit of ourselves away to other people and this is the way we can really enjoy the spirit of giving. These are some of the things I think are important in learning the ritual. I think we can all enjoy it and understand it better when we try to learn and improve our ritual at our Chapter schools, by individual instructions or at our statewide schools. I think that we can get so much out of it and certainly we will never be sorry for the time we have spent learning ritual in a classroom, sitting under a tree or in a car. That's where I learned the bulk of my ritual, in a car going to and from meetings. I know we'll all appreciate the ritual more and never regret the time we spend learning it. So I hope the Companions will continue to study and learn a little bit more ritual.

RT. EX. EUGENE W. WIGGINS

The next speaker is going to be Rt.Ex. Edwin Clifton Whitlock. I have asked him to talk to you about improving attendance and the need for petitions. Now I know that he knows more about this subject than anybody in Virginia.

RT. EX. E. CLIFTON WHITLOCK

I had a real "first" one time that I got from the Grand Chapter years ago that said the way to increase your membership was one word, sure fired and you can't lose and when you opened the pamphlet it said "WORK". The only way we're going to get petitions in our Royal Arch Chapters is by working and you're not going to be able to get them by sitting around wishing. And the place to get our petitions for the Royal Arch Chapters is in the blue lodge. We need to go to the blue lodges and we need to solicit our members.

I have heard a little bit of talk here today and something that really bothers me about Royal Arch Masonry and Masonry is that we seem to have a lot of negative thinkers in Masonry. Every

time you go to a meeting you hear about how our membership is going down and our money is going down, and this is happening. Why would our newly raised young Master Masons want to join an organization that is falling on its face? We've got to change our attitude. When we have a positive attitude we have a vibrant organization that has the most beautiful ritual in the world. I love Royal Arch Masonry. We have to convince them that we believe in Royal Arch Masonry. We need to show them a positive attitude. If you do they will want to join. Who wants to join a Chapter and the first thing you hear from the High Priest is, companions we don't have enough people here. We only have enough to fill the chairs. We have got to do something. These guys are going to say, why should I come here and listen to this. They can watch television and that is exactly what happens when we've got to compete with television and all the other outside interests that are competing with our meetings.

I worked with Demolay for a number of years and when we brought in a young man we would ask him to bring in two petitions. One to replace him and one for the growth of his Chapter. You have got to take the same attitude about Royal Arch Masonry and Masonry in general. Once a man becomes a Royal Arch Mason he ought to be told that they want him to bring in one petition to replace him if something should happen to him. I guarantee that every Mason in this room, every Royal Arch Mason knows one man in his blue lodge who is not a Royal Arch Mason. No body is making an effort to get him in here. I have been to a lot of blue lodges recently and very seldom have I ever heard anybody stand up in a blue lodge and say, companions we have a Royal Arch Chapter here and we can use some help. We need members and let us start talking about the good things we are doing. I don't care if it is a roast or a picnic or the beautiful ritual or the Principal Sojourner's lecture. We need to stand up and show some enthusiasm in what we are doing and that we are really enjoying ourselves and having a great time and thats the way we are going to get them in here.

And we talk about attendance. When we get them to a meeting the worse thing a High Priest can do in my opinion is to run a meeting in a very poor fashion. He has no planned agenda. He has to look at the secretary and ask him if he has anything, and look at the treasurer and say, whats next and he has no idea what is going on. You need to have some speakers and I don't mean dull speakers. Have speakers to come to your Chapter and give you a good attitude about Masonry and about Royal Arch Masonry. Do something so that the companions in the Chapter will want to come and listen to him. Its nothing wrong with having a picnic or a ladies night or whatever it takes to get the companions back and show them that your Chapters are alive. And once they get back

and know you are alive they will come back. When I was High Priest I averaged calling 30 to 35 people for a meeting and let them know when the meeting was. I had one guy to ask me who I was one day when I called him and invited him to Chapter. I said that I was the High Priest. He didn't know who I was. I asked him how long it had been since he had been in Chapter? But I got him to a meeting. One of the things I consider to get your attendance back up is that your High Priest, King, Scribe and Captain of the Host take 5 to 10 names and call them every month and invite them. They are either going to demit or start coming because they are tired of that guy calling. I don't think we ought to force them but we ought to let them know that we need them. We want them to know that Royal Arch Masonry is still there. And that is the way you are going to get your members out. You can write to them and they will throw it in a trash can. You need to have the time to call them on the phone and say, look we miss you, we need you. Our Chapter is doing great things. Don't tell them that you are falling on your face. Tell them the good things you are doing. Every Chapter is doing something good. Let them know the good side of Royal Arch Masonry. I think that is what its going to take.

RT. EX. EUGENE W. WIGGINS

Every good organization has a closer and last year we had a Grand High Priest who had as a motto "Accentuate the Positive". So I have asked Most Excellent Bernie Belote to say about 10 words to you on the subject of Royal Arch Masonry, and talk a little bit about our public image.

MT. EX. BERNARD B. BELOTE, JR.

After hearing Cliff Whitlock talking I had to see if he had found my notes. I thought I had dropped them outside. We believe in each other. But how many people in this room would be willing to sacrifice their life for Freemasonry? Just think about that. I was surprised somewhat when Gene asked me to say a few words. Most of you know I am not capable of saying just a few words. We can spearhead this as a leadership conference, but I would prefer to use the word area conference because I think if we talk leadership conference some of the companions get the idea that we just want to talk to the officers, not the members.

Another reason I was surprised to be asked to speak here today is if you remember two or three weeks ago we were at the Valley Royal Arch School in Harrisonburg and the Grand High Priest had a meeting with all the Grand Chapter Officers and "almost" Mt. Ex. Hutto had a meeting with the DDGHPs designates and sometime after the meeting was over, Tom Jones, Grand Master of the second veil of the Grand Chapter came to me and said, "Bernie why don't they invite the PGHPs to these meetings". I said

Tom, you are a new man because the main reason is that most of the PGHPs when they get an opportunity to talk, the first thing they say is "when I was Grand High Priest." I hope I don't have to use that term too many times today.

We often wonder about our public image and wonder what the public thinks of Freemasonry. I expect most of you have received your new Donnally Directory. Those who haven't, it has taken the place of the yellow pages of the telephone directory and if you look through the the yellow pages you will find listed under fraternal organizations the order of the Eagles - the order of Forresters - and the order of the Sons of Italy. Now they have got the Masonic Lodges listed under fraternities and sororities, but not many of those. Only the Masonic Temples at Ocean View and on King Street in Portsmouth and the United order of Tents on Church Street in Norfolk. Most of the Masonic Temples in this area are listed in the business section of our directory and not in the yellow pages. Are we a fraternal organization or are we a fraternity. Fraternal relates to or involving brothers socially of an order or brother associated in a brotherly union for a common purpose. A fraternity is a relation of brotherness of men of the same class and same profession and the same interest. Stop to think which we are. As we all know a Sorority is a club for girls.

Mt. Ex. companion Coleman this year has chosen 10 goals for Grand Chapter. And his first goal is to brighten the Royal Arch image in Masonry. In one of his comments of this goal he suggested that we continue to "Accentuate the Positive". This is a theme I used when I was GHP (see I told you I was going to say that). Companions we've got to think, talk and act positively. Positive thought and positive action will surely bring positive results. As I said before positive thinking doesn't mean ignoring a negative. We all know that the negative exists. But let us not dwell upon it. We know that we have got problems with attendance as Cliff Whitlock just told us, getting officers, getting petitions, conferring degrees and the list goes on and on. All active Royal Arch Masons know these problems exist so why keep repeating them. I implore you not to discuss these negative problems around new members and around non-members. Do you think that you would want to join an organization if all you ever heard was we don't have any attendance. We can't get officers. We never do anything. Nobody knows anything. Think about that. Norman Vincent Peale wrote a book called "The Power of Positive Thinking." And we all know what great heights this man has reached. It has all come from positive thinking. Some of the clergy objected to his methods of positive thinking but I think it was a great book.

When we have a Chapter meeting let the word get around. As I said today we had a good crowd at the meeting. It don't have to be a large crowd to be a good crowd. Others may be getting the word too, that they had a good crowd down at the Chapter the other night. They had a good speaker. Pretty soon they will find out that maybe they will want to attend.

You know attitude is more important than facts. You talk about our officers in Masonry, suppose our officers were evaluated on their performance like they do in the military. As you know most of the military officers were graded by their superiors. I guess in the Navy they call it fitness reports, and in the Army they call it evaluations. All of the years these reports were sent in, there was a branch of the Army that compiled all of these fitness or evaluation reports. They kept them together and took excerpts from each one of them and made a file. Now I would like to give you some of the quotations from the fitness reports of some of these officers. They have been culled from the most sober of military documents. An evaluation of how an officer had been doing in his or her current assignment. Leadership is outstanding except for his lack of ability to get along with his subordinates. He failed to show up at the required time and place for a briefing. To make matters worse he was supposed to conduct the briefing. His attitude was one who looks forward to the end of the day. At the beginning he seems to suffer, sometimes severely from an allergy to hard work, and procrastination seems to be a side effect. His drinking habits are below minimum. With several years of post supervision under a hard task master this officer should be able to do an adequate job. This officer is sympathetic, good natured, courteous, pleasant and friendly, and he would be a much better officer if he wasn't. Do to his age he is prone to use less tact and judgement than he should. But I feel that he would develop these weaknesses.

I don't think any of our Chapter officers fall in that category. How could we improve our image and our public relations of Masonry. There is no better or older definition of public relations than that found in the new testament. You'll find it in Mathew 5 verse 16 wherein we are advised "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works". If we shift the emphasis on Freemasonry from a defensive to an offensive posture we could indeed focus on a brighter light on our good works. In closing I would like to say avoid the introduction of negative consideration to the minds of newly made and uninformed Masons and forever and ever "accentuate the positive". I thank you.

RT. EX. WIGGINS

This concludes the formal portion of our leadership conference and I'm going to ask the Grand High Priest if he wants to say something, but before I do as a former military person we used to have a comment about someone that you really like but you don't really think they ought to be promoted. One of the comments that one of these Navy guys had was one of the effectiveness that this ensign never makes the same mistake twice. However I've noticed that he makes them all at least once.

MT. EX. HOWARD F. COLEMAN
GRAND HIGH PRIEST

I was in a Chapter the other evening and they talked about the lack of attendance. They had a dispensation to meet at 5:30 PM so they could do the Most Excellent Masters Degree. When they started at 5:30 they had 28 members present. They stopped for dinner at 6:30 PM. They went back and conferred the Royal Arch degree. I believe there was 58 members present that evening. This Chapter is a growing Chapter. I believe they have had 9 or 11 companions exalted this year. The people are there at the meeting. This is one example of what can be done but it does take work.

We've had another Chapter that a couple of years ago in Mt. Ex. B.Bs.(Belote) year that in December they had not had their election of Officers. They may have had 2 or 3 meetings that intire year. They had a special meeting on December 21st, a number of letters were circulated to concerned companions in the area. They had 32 companions present that evening. They did manage to hold elections. The next year in September they had ten of their companions present. They affiliated another companion. They closed with 11 companions present. Next Saturday, (July 15, 1989) they are exalting 2 companions. They have affiliated 3 companions this year. This Chapter, companions was essentially gone. The companions of that Chapter went out and worked and they worked hard. And they are continuing to work hard. Companions it can be done. Thank you.