

DISTRICT GRAND CHAPTER OF SOUTH AFRICA, NORTH

Of Royal Arch Masons of England



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GRAND SUPERINTENDENT'S ADDRESS ANNUAL CONVOCATION – 4 OCTOBER 2014

Welcome to you all to this 111TH Annual Convocation of District Grand Chapter, and I extend a warm welcome to our distinguished guests and trust you have enjoyed our proceedings. Companions in previous years we have held the Annual Convocation at the Linder Auditorium. This year, our booking was cancelled without any warning and we were unable to find a suitable venue mainly to accommodate the Craft. To resolve the matter, we made a decision to hold our meetings here at our Masonic home and headquarters.

I acknowledge the presence of E.Comp Gerald Fotinakis, Past Grand Superintendent and thank him for his attendance. I would also like to acknowledge and welcome E Comp Randhir Ramloll Charter First Principal of the Chapter of Friendship in Mauritius accompanied by Companions Ajay Nunkoo, Kailash Juddoo and Dan Seewooruthun. I would ask the Companions from Mauritius to please stand and Companions please give them a warm welcome.

Congratulations are extended to those Companions who have received District Grand Rank today. In particular, I congratulate E Comp Tim Smith on his appointment to Deputy Grand Superintendent and wish him well with his future duties. I would like to thank E Comp Cleve Wiehahn who has stood down as Deputy. He has carried out his duties in an exemplary manner and I wish him well in his well-earned retirement.

Congratulations are also extended to E Comp Dave Gamble and E Comp Howard Freeman who have been installed as Second and Third District Grand Principals, respectively. I thank E Comp Brian McDermott for carrying out his duties as Second District Grand Principal and prior to that as Third District Grand Principal. I am extremely grateful that he agreed to continue this year as Second District Grand Principal whilst also carrying out his new duties as Assistant District Grand Master in the Craft.

Earlier this year, the Most Excellent the First Grand Principal was pleased to appoint the following to Grand Rank: E. Companions Percy Green and David Johnston received first appointments to PGStB and E Comp John Ebdy to PAGDC. E. Companion Stanley Elms was promoted to PAGSoj and E. Comp. Bradshaw Gillies was promoted to the senior rank of PGSoj. I extend congratulations to them all and we look to them for their on-going support of the District.

In November at the beginning of the Masonic year, I had the pleasure of acting as the Installing 2nd District Grand Principal at the installation of E Comp Jaynant Patel as Grand Superintendent in

and over Zambia. Last month, I travelled to Bloemfontein for the installation of E Comp James van Zyl as Grand Superintendent in and over the Orange Free State and I welcome him here today.

This Royal Arch District is making excellent progress. Membership has again increased for the fourth successive year. This year, the membership increased by 41 or some 5%. However, whilst we are seeing an increase in membership, it is true that there are some Chapters that are in a weak state. Companions, it is extremely important that these weak Chapters are identified and talks are implemented with me, my Deputy and the District Principals to address the problems in these Chapters. I'm not sure that we will have all the answers, but we must try to find solutions.

I am delighted to learn that the Chapter of Friendship in Mauritius is making excellent progress since its consecration last year. Some 13 candidates have been admitted, with more in the pipeline. The Chapter was set-up to serve both the Lodge of Friendship and Phoenix Lodge and is indeed also open to Master Masons under of the Grand Lodge of Mauritius or any other recognised Constitution.

Today, we welcome the South Africa North First Principals Chapter No. 8288 as a new addition to the District, being the 41st Chapter in the District. I have been able to re-introduce the office of Assistant to the District Grand Principals and I congratulate E Comp Colin Robinson on his appointment.

Three weeks ago I had the pleasure of leading a team to consecrate the South Africa North First Principals Chapter here at Freemasons' Hall. I would like to place on record my appreciation to E Comp Richard Moore, PGSwdB, Consecrating 2nd District Grand Principal, E Comp Dave Gamble, Consecrating 3rd District Grand Principal, and E Comp Tim Smith who carried out the duties as Consecrating DC in an exemplary manner. The consecration was most successful and I thank those involved with the consecration for their time and effort. E Comp Richard Moore also delivered the Oration which was well received and I have directed that it is reproduced in the year book for further reference.

This Chapter takes its number from the Transvaal District Grand Stewards Lodge and has been primarily formed to serve the District. Its purpose will be to demonstrate the Royal Arch workings and where necessary assist Chapters at regular exaltations and at Installations. Members will also have the opportunity to give walk-through demonstrations and explanations of the Chapter and its ceremonies. Lectures will be presented on the ritual to Chapters on request. The members of this Chapter will hopefully also carry-out an important function of explaining the importance of the Royal Arch to Lodge meetings in the Craft. From this interaction with the Craft Lodges it is hoped to improve the number of Royal Arch Masons. I wish the Charter First Principal, E Comp Cleve Wiehahn, the Second Principal, E Comp Brian McDermott and the Third Principal, E Comp Hans van Gaalen and the Founders every success with this new Chapter.

Companions, in this District, only 38% of the Craft are currently members of the Royal Arch. This figure must be improved. I make no apology for insisting that as part of our English system of Masonry, the Royal Arch is an integral part of Pure Ancient Masonry and the completion of Craft Masonry. Companions I call on all of you to be pro-active in your own Craft Lodges and ensure that every Master Mason is brought into the Royal Arch as soon as possible.

In conclusion Companions, I would like to thank the District Grand Directors of Ceremonies, E Comp Steve Cousens and his team for the Ceremony today. In addition, sincere thanks are extended to District Grand Scribe Ezra, E Comp David Pickard, together with Mrs Fern Rowles and the administrative staff, here at Park Lane. I thank E Comp Graeme MacKenzie, Chairman of the Organising Committee and members of his committee and the substantial work of E Comp David Whitfield in organising seating, ticketing and printing, together with work carried out by E Comps Stanley Elms and David Johnston. I look forward to seeing you all at the Craft meeting later this afternoon.

E Comp Prof E Guy Charlesworth
Grand Superintendent
Johannesburg, 4 October 2014