



GRAND SUPERINTENDENT – DESIGNATE
ANNUAL CONVOCATION - 3 OCTOBER 2020

I welcome you all to this 117th Annual Convocation of District Grand Chapter and note that, although few in number we are high in value. This assembly represents the heart of the Order and I am privileged to have the opportunity to address you.

E Comp Howard Freeman Deputy Grand Superintendent – in Charge.

E Comp Vaughn Williams Second District Grand Principal.

E Comp Tom Korff Third District Grand Principal.

Assistant to the Principals, Past Grand Superintendent, Members of the Executive, Excellent Companions all.

I would like to begin by congratulating all the Active Officers on their appointments and reappointments. We had just got into a rhythm as Active Officers at the beginning of the year when the unthinkable had to be put into effect, a general suspension of all masonic activity due to the pending threat of COVID-19. I assure you that this decision, taken by the Past Grand Superintendent was not without good and sufficient reason. Having considered the implications of the pandemic sweeping across Europe and America, we ceased labour barely three days before government regulations would have prevented our meetings from taking place. By accepting reappointment for a second year in office, I hope that you will have the opportunity to complete a full year as an Active Officer and so look back on your Royal Arch journey one day and recognise the valuable contribution made in stabilising the COVID disruption.

Under the direction of the Deputy Grand Superintendent in Charge, E Comp Freeman, the Committee of General Purposes was convened and chaired by The President of the Committee, E Comp Richard Moore, **PGSwdB**. Having observed that the outstanding debtors stood at an extraordinarily high amount, the task of recovering the overdue monies was set about. In addition, overdue annual returns and registration forms were likewise on the radar. I can report that a massive effort was put into the recovery of funds, returns and registration forms over a period of four months. The effort was well received by the secretariat for having reduced their burden. Allow me to say, "Well done!" to the ExCo for having diligently resolved 90% of the task at hand. The remaining 10% is not without further challenge and will be resolved in due course.

You might wonder why I have raised this point. The duties of the Chapter Scribe Ezra and Treasurer are on occasion downplayed in the interest of a body to fill the office. The importance of good housekeeping undermined by a poorly equipped or inexperienced Companion has negative consequences on the health of the Chapter. Chapters are to guard against such practice and to recognise the challenges presented through inefficiency. The Presiding Officers have been briefed, and will, in advance of an Installation Meeting, contact the Scribe E and confirm all returns and dues are available for submission on the evening of installation. I strongly encourage the Principals of the Chapter to select carefully from among their eligible companions a suitably qualified candidate for the office of Scribe E and Treasurer.

The Past Grand Superintendent has clearly underlined his requirement for all Active District Grand Officers in the craft to be members of the Holy Royal Arch. I wish to reinforce that requirement and indorse the status quo - all Active Craft District Officers are required to hold membership in the Holy Royal Arch. Furthermore, should a request be motivated for an early first appointment or promotion in the Craft, I will be considering various qualifications, including membership of the Royal Arch. The freedom of choice is to be respected and opportunity to migrate towards an interest in any particular Degree or Order likewise to be respected.

However, and here is the point I wish to make, our Constitution clearly states, under (General Laws and Regulations for the Government of the Craft – preliminary declaration) "... it was 'declared and pronounced that pure Antient Masonry consists of three degrees and no more, viz., those of the Entered Apprentice, the Fellow Craft, and the Master Mason, including the Supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arch' and hence the completion of the Master Masons degree. At no time should a new Master Mason be discouraged from completing his Master Masons degree by not being exalted into

the Holy Royal Arch. Once he has completed the final step, his curiosity and search for further knowledge can be encouraged by considering many of the Progressive Degrees and Independent Orders.

Certain Orders require membership of the Holy Royal Arch, others not. The point is that we are disenfranchising the new Master Mason from completing his Third Degree by not pointing out this requirement. Many senior active masons from other Orders and Degrees are in attendance at this meeting and they likewise hold senior positions in the Holy Royal Arch. I appeal to you to encourage Master Masons looking to broaden their Masonic horizons to first complete their Master Masons Degree by being exalted into the Royal Arch.

Companions, the Annual Grand Festival and investiture of Grand Officers in April at Freemasons Hall, London, was cancelled due to the Covid Pandemic and the consequent regulations barring social gatherings. Grand appointments and promotions were nonetheless conferred, and I congratulate the following Companions for the honours they received:

1st Appointments:

- E Comp Charles Burn to **PGStdB**, Past Grand Standard Bearer;
- E Comp Tom Korff to **PGStdB**, Past Grand Standard Bearer; and
- E Comp Paul Knight to **PGStdB**, Past Grand Standard Bearer.

Promotions:

- E Comp Howard Freeman to **PGSwdB**, Past Grand Sword Bearer; and
- E Comp David Whitfield to **PGSoj**, Past Grand Sojourner.

Well done and well-deserved Companions.

As it is the first time that they are wearing their various new Grand Ranks, I ask you to give them a round of applause.

In conclusion I would like to thank the Deputy Grand Superintendent in Charge for working in conjunction with me in the task of managing and directing the District Grand Chapter of South Africa, North. You have afforded me the liberty of strategising and implementing my vision for the Holy Royal Arch with out prejudice. I look forward to a functional and efficient discharge of the tasks that lie ahead. Furthermore, I look forward to working with the entire Executive in developing and strengthening the order and taking the Holy Royal Arch from strength to strength.

E Comp Atrash, District Grand Director of Ceremonies, I thank you and your team for presenting a first-class annual convocation, including a demonstration of how the adaptive ritual could be used when we meet in Chapter to conduct our Royal Arch business, once again. Thank you.

E Comp Deputy Grand Superintendent, thank you for the opportunity to address the Companions. I will have more to add under the Deputy District Grand Master's address at the annual meeting of the Craft which will follow this convocation.

E Comp Christopher van Gaalen **PGStdB**
GRAND SUPERINTENDENT – DESIGNATE