



## Grand Chaplain's Message for Christmas 2015

VWBro John Rushton, Grand Chaplain, Grand Lodge of Alberta

As is so obvious around us, the Christmas season has steadily become a time of commercialization for the retail world. Since the end of World War II, when many items were scarce, such as appliances, nylon stockings, automobiles and even certain food items that were rationed, the two months before Christmas have gradually become the time when most retail businesses realize their greatest profits. This, of course, includes travel and cruise lines which benefit from individuals and families who want to get together with friends and relatives, or simply use the holiday period to "get away" for a break from their day-to-day routine.

With all this happening, there is a great tendency to disregard the real significance of Christmas. With stores open late (even some megastores open 24/7 for a week or so) and hoopla, bright lights and advertising everywhere, it is so very easy to forget what the season is all about. While it is true that many families do attend worship services at Christmas, many people fail to celebrate Christmas in terms of the very meaning of the word. We are about to observe and rejoice in the coming of the Saviour of mankind, the Son of Our Great Architect of the Universe.

As your Chaplain, in party with countless other chaplains, clergy, ministers and bishops, our usual message is to encourage people to focus on the real meaning of Christmas, the Birth of Jesus Christ. It is perfectly in order to buy and give gifts and celebrate, as long as we keep in mind the reason we are doing this. We're not able to adjust the attitude of millions of people around us, but what we can do, as family members, friends, and Brothers, is simply to keep in our minds the gift that Our Great Architect has given us. This we can do with spiritual joy and love, not just at Christmas, but throughout the year.

There is, however, another thing that manifests itself over Christmastide. It

may best be described as a cloud of sadness or depression that many people experience over the season. While the rest of the people are celebrating and enjoying themselves, some find Christmas very difficult. Serious or extended illness may rest behind these feelings, or often it may be because a family member or special friend died at this time of the year, or may have died during the present year, with their absence at Christmas being very painful. Anytime we lose a loved person, or even a beloved pet, we experience grief and enter a period of mourning which often extends into the Christmas or holiday season. This is frequently coupled with a feeling of intense loneliness, and while friends or other family members try to be with them or support them over one or two days on Christmas or Boxing Day, the loneliness and sadness tends to linger over the entire season. Even the anticipation and apprehension of the approaching Christmas season can be very painful.

What we can do as members of the Craft is to watch or keep an eye on our Brothers or their families on the weeks surrounding Christmas. Recall in your mind those who may be living under that cloud of darkness, and never hesitate

to contact them in our spirit of love, brotherhood and relief. All we need to do is walk with them and give them the greatest gift we can offer, which is to listen to them. Avoid the usual clichés such as "Keep your chin up." "You'll get over it." "Time heals everything." Also be careful not to talk about how you felt or what happened to you when someone died or you were in trouble. Remember that you are there for them, and what happened to you is not important at that moment. You are there to listen to them. Don't offer suggestions, simply listen to them and let them tell you what they feel is best for themselves. Support them in doing exactly that: whatever they feel is best for them. By following these simple guidelines, you will be exemplifying our tenets of brotherly love, relief, and truth.

My Brothers in the Craft, we possess a special gift from the spirit and tenets of our obligations, and we have a great potential to support and walk with many people, not just over Christmas but, of course, at all times. As your Chaplain, and also a grief counselor, I pray that the love of Our Great Architect will flow through you and your families and friends this Christmas and in the New Year. May His Blessing be upon you all, now and always.



*St Mary's Catholic Church, Beiseker, Alberta.*

# 75<sup>th</sup> Western Canada Conference

## Banff, Alberta, 14–16 October 2015

RWBro Kenn Culbertson, Junior Grand

Celebrating 75 years of continuous fraternal relations in the four western provinces was the focus of the Western Canada Conference. Each year the Conference has provided an educational format for the Grand Line Officers of the four jurisdictions to progress through their respective offices. This year, the Conference was extended by one day in order to give three Past Grand Masters and our own Grand Master, MWBro Chris Batty, the opportunity to present papers of their choosing.

The site of these presentations was Banff Masonic Hall in Banff. Cascade Lodge No. 5 transferred ownership of the hall on 1 April 2014 to the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies, to ensure that the historic building will be properly maintained and remain a historical entity in Banff townsite. Alberta Brethren visiting Banff are encouraged to take the time to explore the Masonic heritage that is on display in the hall.

Thursday morning the Conference opened, with MWBro Ron Church of Manitoba as President. During the next two days, four papers were presented, written by the Senior Grand Wardens of the Grand Lodges of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia and Yukon. The paper of RWBro Ron Yates of British Columbia and Yukon was “Quality Lodges for Quality Masons.” RWBro Gordon Berard of Alberta presented a paper entitled “The Craft in a Changing World.” RWBro Tom Love of Manitoba gave a paper entitled “Volunteerism.” From Saskatchewan, there was a paper by RWBro Randy Sherstobitoff entitled “Freemasonry: Naturally International.”

After each paper, the Junior Grand Wardens of each jurisdiction headed discussion groups to discuss the merits and substance of that paper. After a timed period, each Junior Grand Warden

Warden, Grand Lodge of Alberta shared with the gathering their group’s analysis of the paper. This is a “rite of passage” for each JGW and SGW: to moderate and analyze the papers or to present a personal paper.

During these discussions and presentations, it was a focus of the Conference to share ideas and differences in each of our jurisdictions. The Deputy Grand Masters and Grand Masters of each province had their own duties that they arranged and presented in a most responsible and educational manner. This was a highlight of the Conference and was an inspiration to us as JGWs and SGWs in looking forward to our years as senior members of the Conference.

At the Thursday evening banquet, the keynote address was delivered by MWBro Doug Collins, the Grand Master of British Columbia and Yukon. The subject “The Qualities of a Grand Master,” was well received and enjoyed by both the Brethren and the ladies present.

The Grand Secretaries and Treasurers of each province, whose knowledge was unquestioned at the conference, enabled Grand Line Officers to be able to enjoy each and every one of their presentations, as they informed us of their thoughts and ideas. No discussion was invited.

These three days of harmony, discussion and fellowship among the western jurisdictions can only assist to increase the education of prospective Grand Line Officers’ advancement, to the betterment of the Craft.

## The 2013 Grand Orator’s Address

**Continued**

WBro Ed McLaughlin, Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Colorado

*[Last month, the address began with the basic lessons of Freemasonry and ended with the realization that not all Brethren agree on every topic. He concluded, “...the only truly Masonic option is simply agree to disagree, agreeably.” He continues...]*

I feel we have collectively begun to overlook the core lessons of what our ritual teaches, because, as taught us in our early lessons, brotherly love must be the constant practice of every Mason, for it is through the repetition and continuing awareness of our fundamental virtues that we can realize and take advantage of the key messages offered by our ritual. And, much like we need to hear those lessons repeated in Lodge during degree work of each newly made Brother, it is likewise vital for us to constantly practice these fundamental values, which, by the way, lie at the very heart of each and every lesson that Freemasonry has to offer. Therefore, I believe that we must all reach deeper

into ourselves and continually work towards the vision of that greater man that dwells within all of us and always make the greatest effort to display our best selves to the world at large.

My Brethren, only together can we make a difference. One of the greatest things about this Fraternity is that it has an almost uncanny ability to seek out and make use the strengths of each of its members, no matter what those strengths may be. Guided by the lessons taught us by those cardinal virtues laid down in our ritual, and strengthened by a unified force of the multitudes of this Fraternity, let us all make every effort to practice the principles of brotherly love, mutual respect, and forgiveness.

Make it your duty to put aside and look beyond petty differences, forgive the past indiscretions and move toward a common future. Try to avoid judging a man by his faults, for they only represent that which lies on the surface of a man.

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Instead, make every effort to look deeper into that inner man so that you may then discover a useful respect for those hidden qualities and character attributes that lie deep within all of us. Seek from within yourself an inner strength to exercise the practice of all the great Masonic virtues and values so that you may then uncover the strengths and value of each and every individual Brother. Consequently, you just might find that you yourself are rewarded with a richer life experience and will no doubt become a better Mason in the process.

In order to fully understand the wisdom of those aforementioned lessons we must realize that words are only part of the equation. Our everyday actions speak loudest. It is through those actions that each of us will display our own strengths of character and through them that each and every one of us has something to share, something to teach to those less informed.

I think we can all agree that no man is perfect; mistakes will be made throughout a lifetime. Yet inasmuch as a man chooses to pursue a healthy mindset and adopt the valuable principles inculcated by this Craft, then let us do as we are taught in our ritual by displaying kindness and forgiveness, whispering good counsel, encouraging redemption of an erring Brother and remaining a positive aide to his reform. Greater still, let each of us, from this day forward, take every necessary caution to display only those qualities which reflect well on the Fraternity. If imitation is truly the sincerest form of flattery, think of inspiring our younger Brethren to imitate right action; maybe the community at large might choose to imitate our actions, too.

Now maybe you never considered yourself a mentor, but don't sell yourself short. By your everyday actions, both good and bad, you are teaching. Keep this in mind when you are in the public eye and we will all reap the benefit as a whole. Because positive reputation is very fleeting and must be continually reinforced, but negative reputation stays around much longer. Whether you like it or not, someone is always watching, and whether you choose to believe it or not, you are always teaching.

This ideal should be strictly attended to by all Masons, all the way down to those seemingly less significant issues. So, for instance, the next time you are in your car and someone cuts you off in traffic, before you get angry or reply

with some gesture, try to remember you might be displaying a Masonic sticker on your car. The next time you choose to post something slightly questionable on a social network, or forward on a less than tasteful email, or tell a story or joke that may be less than favourable, bear in mind that your message may reach out to those who see you as a representative of the Fraternity. Or worse yet, should you decide to go against that which is proper and speak poorly or untruthfully about another person, regardless whether it is of a malicious nature or unintentional, be aware that your statement may easily remain as a standard of your character.

Brethren, do your best to avoid these pitfalls at all cost, heed the lessons which you have been taught, stand true to your vows and then take a good look around and realize that the whole world is your audience. Be particularly mindful of these things and remember well that you are a Freemason twenty-four hours of the day, and you just might find it easier to try to guard your actions accordingly.

My Brethren, goodness dwells within all men; let us then concentrate our efforts more on seeking out that goodness rather than finding fault — fault inherently within all of us. Let all of us take time to discover, nurture, educate, uphold and guide each other in order that the strengths of the many can uplift and support this fraternity as a whole.

So then, my Brethren, armed with the vision of that first defining moment and fueled by the spirit of the second enlightening moment, I charge each and every one of us to go forth and continue to strive to be a guiding force for our younger, less informed Brethren; to be that shining example of fellowship, friendship, and citizenship; to teach not only the lessons of our ritual, but to teach that which it takes to become better educated. Further, and quite possibly more importantly, to do as we are instructed in our Master Mason charge, *by the regularity of your own behaviour afford the best example of conduct for others less informed*, thus allowing those that follow us the privilege of becoming the better man they sought to be, as well as ensuring we're being the greater men we envisioned not so long ago.

This concept should be widespread. It should not be limited strictly to those within the Craft; as we go forth into the community it is this very principle that

will prove us to be an example to those less-informed men, men of the profane world, and will give them cause to want to be like us.

I, for one, am proud to belong to this hallowed Fraternity. I am firmly committed to uphold the standards set forth by our teachings and continue to reach out to demonstrate the values for which the Fraternity stands. Each and every one of us serves as a beacon to the less-informed that there is a better, greater, and more dignified path on which to travel. I encourage each of you to intentionally shine as that beacon, so that the entire community can see the unwavering spirit that exemplifies why we care enough to do all we do. I charge each of you to be that Mason, and to live by these examples so that the world will have no other cause but to respect us and follow us. Because, my Brethren, only united can we display the undying commitment to the spiritual, moral, and Masonic beliefs that our forefathers set down for us. More importantly, only through solidarity can we impart to the men who follow us in our Craft that the wisdom of our predecessors should not wither away, and collectively ensure that those who follow us are properly instructed, in order that they too can someday become the educator and pass along this wisdom to the men who will follow them; further, to demonstrate to the community at large that the vision of Ancient Freemasonry is not only one of sound reason but that our message has relevance in the modern world and should be viewed and adopted as that which is right.

So then, my Brethren, as a closing thought:

In the end it is up to us, as the present day caretakers of this ancient Craft, because for centuries we as Masons have taken it upon the Fraternity as a whole to separate ourselves from the normal standards set forth by society and to create and uphold a higher standard by which to live.

For that reason, I truly believe, whether we knew it at the time or not, that this was the fundamental reason we sought admission to this Fraternity in the first place. Consequently, I believe that this is this very ideal which will draw those likeminded men of the modern day world to us and allow the rich principles and values of this glorious Fraternity to prosper and to continue well into the future.

# Portrait of a Mason

VWBro Roger L. Terry, Past Master, Union Lodge No. 2, Madison, Indiana; Past Grand Steward and Tyler, the Grand Lodge F&AM of Indiana. *The Indiana Freemason*, April 1993

If I were to paint a portrait of a Mason, I would start with a canvas woven of threads from around the world, to show the universality of Masonry. The warp and woof would be tight, because Masons are united tightly by the ties of Brotherhood. The material would be of the highest quality to ensure survival into eternity, for as Masonic principles have endured since time immemorial, they will persist into time inconceivable.

The canvas would be pure white, unspotted by the world, because it represents the lambskin or white leather apron, an emblem of innocence and the badge of a Mason, its pure and spotless surface being symbolic of the purity of life and conduct. As white is the reflection of every colour in the rainbow, so the white canvas should reflect the individuality of each Mason within the Brotherhood of men.

Although many colours will be added, its white surface must be a reminder that Masonry regards no man for his worldly wealth or honours and that the internal — not the external — qualifications of a man should render him worthy to be made a Mason.

If I were to paint a portrait of a Mason, I would start with the colour gold, representing deity, because every Mason is taught that no man should enter upon any great or important undertaking without first invoking the blessings of deity. I would use many shades of reds and blacks and whites and yellows and browns, representing all the races of the world, because Masons are taught that the whole human species is one family — the high and the low, the rich and poor, created by one Almighty Parent — and inhabitants of the same planet. But I would especially use lots of blue, because blue is symbolic of beliefs, and beliefs are what distinguish a Mason. My Masonic figure would be painted with a belief in the Ancient Landmarks: monotheism; immortality; the Book of the Sacred Law; plus additional beliefs and obligations which contain nothing

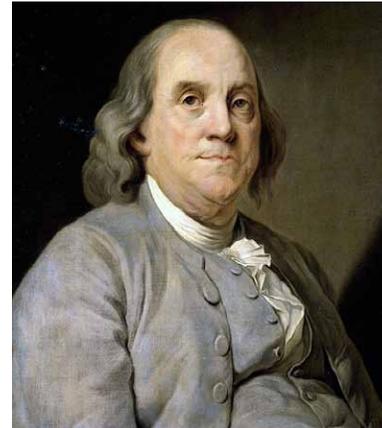
which conflicts with his duties to God, his country, his neighbours or himself.

Being mindful of our country's motto — *e pluribus unum*, one from many — I would strive to blend my colours so as not to lose the essential character of each one, because Masonry is a *unitas multiplex* — a unity out of diversity.

Because Masonry values the integrity of each individual, my Masonic portrait would like no other Mason's. Yet it would resemble all men who chart their travels by the Sacred Volume in pursuit



*François-Marie Arouet, AKA Voltaire (1), became a member of Loge des Neuf Soeurs in Paris on 4 April 1778 accompanied by his friend Bro Benjamin Franklin who was Master of that Lodge from 1779–1781. Franklin became a Freemason in 1731 and that same year published the first Masonic book in North America, a reprint of Anderson's Constitutions.*



of further light.

I would paint him as a temple builder, because Master Masons endeavour to fit themselves as a dwelling place for the Supreme Architect according to the grand design on the Celestial Trestleboard above. He would be facing East, for as the sun rises in the East to light the day, so rise the Inspiration and Light in the East to guide all his endeavours.

If I were to paint a portrait of a Mason, I would enclose it in a frame fashioned with all the working tools of Masonry indiscriminately, because Masons are admonished to apply their working tools of life for the noble and glorious purpose of framing their actions with the frame of rectitude. The construction would be guided by the square and compasses, for should all Masons square their actions and circumscribe their passions.

The four sides of the frame would be composed of the Cardinal Virtues of a Mason, for should all Masons be

bounded by temperance, fortitude, prudence, and justice. And because the individual Mason gains strength from his Lodge, the frame will be painted as an indented tessel, representing the beautiful tessellated border or skirting which surrounded the ground floor of King Solomon's Temple, emblematical of those blessings and comforts which surround us and which we hope to obtain by a firm reliance on divine providence.

If I were to paint a portrait of a Mason, I would support it on an easel of acacia, that tree which serves to remind us of that imperishable part of man which survives the grave, and bears the nearest affinity to the supreme intelligence which pervades all nature, and which can never, never die.

The three legs of the easel would represent the pillars of Masonry, because there must be wisdom to contrive, strength to support, and beauty to adorn all great and important undertakings. The legs

would be painted with the tenets of a Mason's profession. Thus should all Masons support brother Master Masons, their widows and orphans with brotherly love, relief and truth.

If I were to paint a portrait of a Mason, I would work with freedom, fervency and zeal, because that is how all men should serve their Master. I would ask only for the emblematical wages of plenty, health and peace because the making of a Mason is a spiritual, not a worldly undertaking.

When my portrait of a Mason was completed, I would display it openly in public, rather than only in a Lodge room, so the whole community could appreciate its worth. And I would dedicate it to the glory of the Grand Artist of the Universe, with confidence that He would say that, thus painted, there stands a just and upright Mason, worthy to adorn that spiritual building, that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

# Your DDGMs 2015–2016 (Continued)

We are pleased to introduce to our readers the District Deputy Grand Masters serving the Craft in Alberta during the 2015–2016 term. This will be completed in the next issue of The Alberta Freemason.

## Battle River District

**RWBro Kevin P. Cripps** was born in Calgary in 1970, the youngest of four boys, and he has a younger sister. He was raised in Camrose from the age of seven and spent 13 years as a member of Scouts Canada (Cubs, Scouts, and Venturers), receiving the Chief Scout Award. He attended Camrose Composite High School, graduating in 1989, and attended Red Deer Collage, receiving a degree in Business in 1995. In 2006 he attended NAIT for 5<sup>th</sup> Class Power Engineering. RWBro Cripps has worked in several industries, ranging from sales to labourer in mills or on road construction. He is now working for MGN Construction as a Superintendent. He volunteers at St. Andrews Anglican Church in various capacities. His daughter Kailee Elizabeth was born in 1998.



He was initiated in November 2003 in Camrose Lodge No. 37, passed June 2004 and raised October 2004, serving that Lodge as its Worshipful Master from June 2009 to June 2013. He is also a member of Mount Olivet Chapter No. 17, Royal Arch Masons.

## Northern Lights District

**RWBro Wayne Barker** was born in the City of Edmonton in 1952. He graduated from Jasper Place Composite High School in 1970 and in 1972 graduated from the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology, where he received his diploma in Architecture. The past 32 years he was employed by the Alberta Provincial Government in the Transportation Department as a Drafting Technician, drafting plans for bridges and culverts throughout Alberta, and in the later years with the government as a Surveys Plan Technician for the Surveys Section of the Land Titles Department.



His wife, Donna, and he have been married for 37 years and they both enjoy the company of their two daughters, even when they travel far from home. He has recently retired from the workforce and looks forward to more time with the family and volunteering. He has always prided himself as being a person who would always be involved in the community while committing to the family, and always found time to volunteer for the local Community League as a volunteer, vice-president and president while also being involved in the production of the local Variety Show to help in raising funds for community projects.

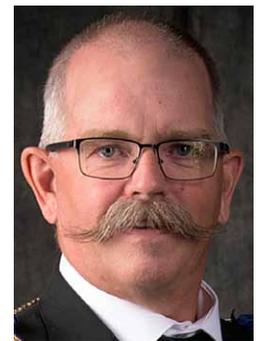
RWBro Barker was initiated into Evergreen Lodge No. 166 on 19 April 1999, passed 19 September 2005 and raised 17 October 2005, serving as the Worshipful Master of Evergreen Lodge for 2011. He found his involvement with the Northern Lights District very educational, as he was the District Masonic

Foundation Representative from 2012 to 2014 for two DDGMs whom he was proud to serve, and as District Secretary from 2013 to 2014. It has also been a very motivating and inspiring experience being involved with the Grand Lodge of Alberta, where he was elected to a three-year term on the Board of General Purposes at the June 2013 Grand Lodge Communication. At the first meeting of the Board, he was elected to serve as the Chairman of the Finance Committee for two years, from 2013 to 2015.

Masonry has brought to him many experiences throughout his years as a Mason. He has enjoyed the fellowship that comes with being a Mason and he has expressed to other Brothers that the most important values in Masonry, being friendship and brotherly love, may be found by visitations between Lodges. It brings about that fellowship we strive to achieve.

## Palliser District

**RWBro Scot Douglas Bell** was born in 1963 and raised in Bassano, Alberta. He is married to Lorelee and has three children, Kayla 21, Casey 20 and Mason 14. He owns and operates a farm/ranch and also works for Cenovus Energy Inc.



RWBro Bell was balloted on, initiated, passed and raised in Bassano Lodge No. 55 in 2000, was Worshipful Master in 2006, and has been Treasurer since 2010. He has been a mentor for new candidates since 2001, which was a job his grandfather, WBro William Bell, did in the 1960s and 1970s. He was on the Centennial Committee for Bassano Lodge in 2011, which he sees as one of the best events so far in his Masonic career. He enjoys the fellowship and the learning that Masonry provides, and believes you get out what you put into anything, more especially Masonry.

## Phoenix District

**RWBro Mark Erling Ross** was born in 1954. Mark married Alice, his wife of 39 years, in 1975, and they will be celebrating their 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary this coming Christmas. They have two adult children and three grandchildren, ages eight, five and three. Mark is the Broker/Manager of RE/MAX House of Real Estate in Calgary and has been a licensed real estate agent and broker since 1977. Mark has spent a lifetime involved in public service of one sort or another. He is a retired Master Kinsman and served as the President of two Kinsmen Clubs, as well as the Deputy Governor for District 4 (Alberta and the NWT) in 1985. Mark also served as the President of the Whitehorn Community Association in Calgary for six years and he and his family are Life Members



of that organization.

He was initiated on 26 March 2002, passed to the Fellowcraft degree on 24 September 2002 and raised to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason as a member of Crescent Lodge No. 87 on 26 November 2002. He was privileged to serve as the Worshipful Master of Crescent Lodge in 2007.

Mark has 2 themes for this year:

- To promote personal giving to the Masonic Higher Education Bursary Fund. "Presenting the Bursaries last spring was a life changer for me," he says. "Seeing the determination that these young adults have to make life better for their families and themselves was inspirational." Mark truly believes that Canada is the best country in the world to live and that we can make this an even better country to live in by providing the best possible education to our brightest minds regardless of family income.
- To promote and encourage "Growth From Within." The Masonic family is vast and as Master Masons we have much to offer our DeMolay and Job's Daughters members. We can mentor, encourage, guide and influence. Instilling Masonic principles in youth will lead to their wanting to live those principles the rest of their lives. They will want to continue to learn and practice within the Masonic Family. To serve as District Deputy Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Alberta is a privilege and an honour for Mark. Mark enjoys the camaraderie of being in Lodge and looks forward to visiting each Lodge in Phoenix District many times this Masonic year.

## Yellowhead District

**RWBro Brother Wilfred Leano** was born in 1969 in the Philippines. He earned a Degree in Agriculture from the University of the Philippines in 1993 with a Major in Animal Science, and has experience in both private enterprise as well as public service. He became one of the youngest elected officials in his hometown and served in the local government as a Municipal Councillor. Will currently resides in Edmonton, Alberta with his wife Rina and their two daughters, Gianina and Tabitha. He is a Red Seal Journeyman Steamfitter and also a National Construction Safety Officer. His work brings him to different places but he remains a loyal and dedicated Brother of the Craft.



He is a proud and faithful third generation member of the Masonic Brotherhood, stemming from his paternal grandfather and father. RWBro Leano was initiated, passed and raised in 1996 at Cagayan Valley Lodge No. 133, under the Grand Lodge of the Philippines. By that time, the Masons of his hometown were organizing a Lodge of their own, which was constituted in 1997. He immediately affiliated with them and became the first Junior Warden of San Mateo Lodge No. 319 and later Worshipful Master in 2000. He served as Grand Lodge Inspector in 2001 and District Grand Lecturer in 2002 in the then Masonic District No. 51, Philippine Jurisdiction. He earned various honours and awards in different capacities during those years of Masonic service both in Lodge and the District. He affiliated with Highlands-Unity Lodge No. 168 in 2004 and served as its Worshipful Master in 2013. He is a member and officer of a number of York Rite Orders as well as being a Shriner. As a Mason, he has always been fond of rituals and floor work. As such, he has been active in all the ritual degrees of the various orders of which he is a member. He holds the distinction of being a Past Master in two different Masonic jurisdictions with two different rites. His proudest moment as a Mason was when, in a rare and memorable event, he raised his father to the sublime degree in 2013 while serving as Master of the Lodge.

