



## **Annual Meeting District Grand Chapter of South Africa, North Most Excellent Grand Superintendent's Address**

30<sup>th</sup> October 2021

I welcome you all to this our 118<sup>th</sup> Annual Convocation of District Grand Chapter and thank you all for your attendance here today.

Although we are once again limited in number due to Covid regulations, we are double the number from last year. This assembly represents the heart of the Order and I am privileged once again to have the opportunity to address you.

E Comp Howard Freeman Deputy Grand Superintendent

E Comp Vaughn Williams Second District Grand Principal.

E Comp Tom Korff Third District Grand Principal.

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

I likewise acknowledge our distinguished guests and heads of Progressive and Independent orders.

So too, I acknowledge all who were unable to attend due to restricted occupancy, travel restrictions, or health concerns. I recognise you in your absence.

To all the active officers and Companions who have received promotions or first appointments' to District Grand Rank today, I congratulate you and I look to you for continued support and guidance in our Chapters.

To all the active District officers who effectively remained in their offices for a second year, my most humble gratitude for your patience and understanding. Never before has our District retained its officers for a second year, a small consolation compared to the tumultuous stop start covid adapted ritual run around. I trust you enjoyed your sojourn Companions.

Sadly E Comp Bill Hynds suffered a stroke three weeks ago, upon advice from his doctor, rest was prescribed, prompting Bill to stand down as DistDepGDC. I on behalf of the District wish him well and a speedy recovery. Consequently, a qualified companion was then required to fill this position. I'm please to acknowledge E Comp Dale McLean has accepted the appointment and we wish him every success.

E Comp Rory Jones accepted an appointment as DistDepGDC in the Craft and stood down, Leaving the vacancy to be filled by E Comp Charles Fox, I like wise wish Charles every success as DistDepGDC.

I extend my sincere congratulations to those Brethren who received Grand Rank earlier this year. The Most Excellent the first Grand Principle was pleased to appoint the following Companions to Grand Rank.

E Comp's Lance Epstein and Nicholas Griffin, first appointment to PGStdB, Richly deserved, well done Companions and I look to your ongoing commitment to this District.

I would like to thank the District Grand Directors of Ceremonies, E Comp Lawrence Atrash and Rory Jones and E Comps Charles Fox and Dale McLean for the Ceremony today. In addition, sincere thanks are extended to the District Grand Scribe Ezra, E Comp Roland Dunstan, together with Mrs Fern Rowles, here at Park Lane. I thank E Comp Leighton Shaw, Chairman of the Organising Committee and members of his committee and the substantial work of E Comps Richard Fahrenheit.

The Past Grand Superintendent had clearly underlined the 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.

In conclusion I would like to thank the Deputy Grand Superintendent 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 strategizing and implementing my vision for the Holy Royal Arch without 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 making the Holy Royal Arch the preferred Order to belong to. May this Order go from strength to strength.

Brethren, I thank you for your attention

Ex Comp Christopher van Gaalen  
Grand Superintendent  
Freemasons Hall  
Johannesburg