



93rd ANNUAL ADDRESS

HONORABLE WILLIAM C. RHEUBOTTOM

M.:W.: GRAND MASTER

Greetings;

As Grand Master of Masons for the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Washington and Jurisdiction, I extend to each and every one of you a very warm welcome. I am particularly pleased to welcome our distinguished guests, who are visiting from other Grand Lodges and Jurisdictions. We are honored that you have made it your priority to be with us on this auspicious occasion. We appreciate the opportunity to return the hospitality and friendship our representatives have received while visiting your Grand Jurisdiction.

To the Brethren of Prince Hall Lodges in the Jurisdiction of Washington, I am extremely pleased to see you here. My Brethren, we are at the crossroads of a new era. What we do during the next two and a half days will have a serious effect on the direction this Grand Lodge will take as we move closer to the twenty-first century. We as a Grand Lodge must position ourselves to effectively respond to changes forthcoming in the next century.

My Brethren, on this 93rd Annual Communication another page must be added in our history book and new dimensions in the development and expansion of Prince Hall Masonry, wherever disbursed around the globe, are due to the successes that were accomplished this year.

I wish to thank the excellent staff of officers and each of you for your prayers and support. I cannot say enough about the officers this past year, they all worked overtime to bring credit to our great Jurisdiction. Not once did I see or experience any unwillingness to meet a new challenge placed before them. Each time I called upon their services, the Deputy Grand Master, Senior and Junior Wardens, Grand Lecturer, Grand Trustees and the various committee chairman and those serving on those committees were always there and willing to take on another task or project.

As always the Grand Secretary and Grand Treasurer performed their duties quietly and proficiently. And to the appointed Grand Officers thank you for your excellent services and support as well; I truly, truly appreciate each of you. A special thanks to all my District Deputies for their hard work and support. And to all our Past Grand Masters for their thoughts of wisdom and counsel. A special salute to our Past Grand Chaplain - Rev. Dr. E.S. Brazil, who served this Grand Lodge faithfully for 14 dedicated years. Thank you Rev. Brother Brazil for a job well done, you will be missed.

It is indeed a pleasure for me to stand here today before you, with much humility, and render to you and accounting of my stewardship for the Masonic year, 1995-1996. First, I must say thanks to God for allowing me to serve you, my Brethren, as your Chief Executive Officer. The Bible has always been my guide in my everyday life. This protects me from being robbed of my self-dignity, skills, mental, physical and economic resources by wolves in sheep clothing, or those who masquerade as Brothers!

I wish to thank my wife, family and my very close friend who I talk to daily for the support they gave me this past year. When the real test came, the Bible and prayer were there to give spiritual and physical strength to carry me through.

NECROLOGY

Life is like a flower which blooms today and tomorrow fades and is cast aside, most of us, Brethren, are fast approaching, or have already passed the median of life; the Grim Reaper continues to invade our ranks. We pause to remember with Brotherly love the memory of those of our craftsmen who have fallen asleep in death and passed from our sight during this year. Silently one by one they glided away, leaving a memory rich in love and affection. Let us show by our deeds that we are not unworthy of having known those that who have passed.

A.E. Pendray PGM	True Resolution Lodge #16	July27, 1995
Leslie E. Eddleton	Fred U. Harris Lodge #70	August30, 1995
Leroy Canty	Abiff Lodge #37	September 5, 1995
Charles C. Lewis	Hercules Lodge #17	November 12, 1995
Samuel Smith	Hercules Lodge #17	November 16, 1995
James McKethan	Arthur Ury Lodge #73	December 4, 1995
Frank Bernard Jamerson	True Resolution Lodge #16	December 8, 1995
Phillip Morris Jr.	Egyptian Lodge #44	December 17, 1995
Louis R. Solomon	Harmony Lodge #2	December 22, 1995
Stephen H. Hinton Jr.	Mabuhay Lodge #59	December 27, 1995
Arthur Fox	Cassia Lodge #5	January 26, 1996
Thomas F. Dozier Jr.	Hamma Hamma Lodge #35	February 17, 1996
James W. Adams	Cassia Lodge #5	February 25, 1996
William McClain Factory	Egyptian Lodge #44	March 17, 1996
Albert S. Barnes	Cassia Lodge #5	April 27, 1996
Adron Chandler	Cassia Lodge #5	May 1, 1996
Benjamin Booth	Martin Luther King #65	May 10, 1996
William Gardner	Lee Grant Rogers Lodge #61	May 16, 1996
Bennett Wilburn	Harmony Lodge #2	June27, 1996

STATE OF THE CRAFT

I am pleased to report that the overall State of the Craft is excellent. In an organization such as this, we always expect some problems as a normal part of our everyday business. We meet those problems, make the necessary decisions and move on. I feel that I have been a Grand Master that was sensitive to the needs of those who I was put here to serve, yet mindful of the fact that decisions are based on the needs of the whole, not the individual.

We have in the Jurisdiction at present, 61 chartered Lodges and two (2) U.D. Lodges. Two U.D. Lodges are requesting charters to be granted at this communication. Brothers, we are on the move. Our membership has not increased as much as our potential shows it should, but I think we will begin to pick up in the coming year. Our new lodges have great potential for growth.

As most of you are aware, we continue to experience a negative impact on our lodges in District #9 (Europe). District Deputy Grand Master Andrew Morgan has done a truly remarkable job in holding those lodges together. He reported that the Masonic year of 1995-1996 has been a watershed year. It has been one peace keeping mission after another, and the latest operation, a joint endeavor to support the Bosnia Mission, totally impacted all of the lodges in the District to some degree.

District #9 has established programs to visit the family members of the Brothers who were left behind. Mainly providing transportation to and from shopping areas and doing maintenance on cars which seemingly break down everyday. Additionally, the District is providing care packages to the Brothers in Bosnia. They mostly want food and personal hygiene items.

The Bosnia Peace Mission has severely plagued our operation in Europe, I believe if we can survive through December 1996, when everyone is supposed to return, and I have no doubt, they will, the lodges should be fully functional in a few months thereafter.

State of District #1

Membership in the District is slowly growing. Community projects in this District have increased and interest in Masonic activity are drawing attention. Harmony appears to prevail in the District.

State of District #2

Membership is also increasing in this District. Most of the Worshipful Masters are dedicated, and hard working, whose goals are the betterment of their lodges and the Grand Lodge.

State of District #3 & #4

Lodges in these two Districts have experienced a slight increase in membership. The lodge in Yakima is not functioning as well as I would like it to. Hopefully, and soon more military people will be permanently stationed at the Yakima Firing Center.

State of District #5

This District, located in Vancouver B.C., is the host lodge for our 93rd Annual Communication. This lodge is doing an excellent job in pursuing Masonry in its truest sense, both in ritualistic work and community outreach programs. Our Grand Lodge has had a least two other Prince Hall Lodges in the province of British Columbia; one lodge located in Victoria B.C., was chartered in 1923. We also had a Prince Hall Lodge chartered in 1920 in the province of Alberta called "Pride of Alberta #20."

State of District #6

These lodges are located in Japan and are doing very well. They are also pursuing Masonry in its truest sense, both in ritualistic work, community outreach programs and charitable contributions.

State of District #7

This District is the home of Toni Lodge #46 and is located in Okinawa, Japan. This District is showing a slight increase in membership. They are also doing very well in their ritualistic work and an excellent job in its community outreach programs and charitable contributions. The following are some of the endeavors they have accomplished this past year:

- They provided financial assistance to distressed Okinawa families and several orphanages.
- Provided food baskets for the needy during holidays.
- Provided educational awards to both Kadena and Kubasaki High Schools.
- Purchased uniforms and equipment for the young (youth) Marine Corps programs.
- Provided support for the Make-a-Wish Foundation and the Special Olympics. Total charitable donations were \$5,818.00.

State of District #8

This District, home of the Marianas Travelers Lodge #49, is located in Guam. Whose District Deputy is Billy Hall. They are doing very well keeping with the rich traditions of Prince Hall Masonry. In fact, WM Glenn Marshall is present here today.

State of District #10

With five lodges in the District #10, located in South Korea, they are performing very well considering the fast turnover of its members, long field training exercises and the diversity of the Masonic organization operating in Korea. District Deputy Shepard has instituted a campaign to simply get "back to the basics". Both ritualistically and administratively. They have automated and simplified administrative procedures assuring continuity throughout the District. Training of leaders in those areas is ongoing, because of the rapid turnover of members.

There were allegations, where-by several incidents have occurred where soldiers identifying themselves as Prince Hall Masons are being investigated with being associated with gangs and for acts of theft, perjury and in one case, an attempted rape. The Masonic leadership in Korea has taken actions to investigate these allegations. We have asked the lodges and chapters to look very close at the men and women who petition for membership. This District's charitable actions are outstanding.

The lodges have donated over \$3000.00 to community programs and have provided more than over 5000 hours of community service.

State of District #11

This District is located in Puyallup, Fort Lewis, Lacey, Olympia, and Vancouver, Washington and all points in between. In the past Masonic year, these Brothers have had a very successful working year. One of those successes was the eye opening Community Night and very informative District Workshop. This District is one of the sleeping giants of this jurisdiction.

State of District #12

This District is located in Angles City, Philippines and is the home of Mabuhay Lodge #59. This lodge was reissued its charter on February 22, 1995. Members of this lodge consist mainly of retired military personnel. When I went to visit them in March they were proud to have their charter back and were busy performing their Masonic duties.

STATE OF THE CRAFT - CONCLUSION

For many, membership, pure numbers is important. Numbers and totals are important because it is from this source that we derive revenue by which our various charities, philanthropies and other programs are funded. Fewer members means less revenue. To overcome this reduction, additional funds must be sought from those who remain dedicated to our principles and purposes, or we adjust our operating budget, with current and projected membership without increasing taxes - no, we are not considering raising taxes.

Sure, numbers and totals are important. But, is this where our greatest concern should lie, in numbers? In quantity? I think not. It is my contention that we as a total Fraternity, that we as the complete body of Freemasonry should be concerned with quality. **Quality of character, quality of knowledge, quality of our charities**, quality of our actions as Masons in the work place, in our communities, our homes, our places of worship and in our lodges.

Yes, numbers, quantities are important. Numbers and quantities without substance, without quality will not enhance the status of Freemasonry Numbers and quantity alone without imparting and instilling the beauties and philosophies of Masonry in each member will not generate long term success and recognition for our cause.

Is there a solution to the small number of members attending their lodge meetings, or those that have dropped out because of lack of interest or other causes? Is there an answer to a need to inspire leadership and participation in our lodges? I believe there is.

But it will take planning, direction, dedication, commitment, and work on the part of every concerned Mason if we are to realize success. The lack of involvement of those members mentioned above speaks loud and clear of a crying need to give attention to the care, education, and nurturing of these important people.

All-in-all, I would describe the State of the Craft as being relatively healthy with known and recognized illnesses. Some of our ailments have been identified and prescriptions for recovery are being addressed by our Membership Committee. Our illnesses have been generated over a long period of time. Some ailments are so deeply imbedded that quick cure and a rapid recovery need not be expected. Application of good leadership principles education of members and training of officer's will play a large part in making Prince Hall Masonry a healthy, vital part of society, and will enable us to practice charity and do good unto all mankind.

STATE OF THE NATION

With the State of our Nation as it appears today, there is even a greater need for our Masonic order to open its door and become more visible. With some progress having been made, racism is still around and doing well. There is much to concern ourselves with today. "For African-Americans the future is looking like the past once again, black churches are burning, a repeat of the 1890's and the 1960's; Affirmative Action and immigration policies are under attack; and supremacist militias are returning unchecked. Recently a conservative u.s. Supreme Court struck down two more "majority-minority" voting districts, making it tougher to elect people of color to congress and to state offices. Ironically after the Civil War there were two Black U.S. Senators, one more than then there is now. The Reconstruction Act of 1867 forced southern states to allow black men to vote, resulting in former slaves being elected in record numbers. Between 1870 and 1900, southern states sent 22 blacks to congress and to hundreds of local offices. But by 1901 all the southern black congressmen had been driven out of office, along with local elected officials. North Carolina's George White was the last to go. Whites (the majority) rigged the primary to get rid of him~. Blacks were burned, shot and mutilated by lynch mobs to destroy their political rights." Instead of providing protection, Federal troops were pulled out of the south, and in 1876 the Supreme Court ordered congress to stop penalizing state officials who denied blacks the right to vote. In 1896, the Supreme Court passed the horrible, "separate but equal" law of Plessy vs. Ferguson, and states introduced poll taxes and literacy tests, for blacks, and majority only primaries. These measures pushed blacks into political, social and economic apartheid because of their role. With the 1965 voting rights in record numbers. The election of Georgia's Andrew Young and Texas's Barbara Jordan in the 1970's marked the first return of southern blacks to congress since 1901.

Ironically, Jordan's district is one of those affected by the court's recent ruling. My Brothers we cannot afford to be complacent, we must wake up and involve ourselves. We must take responsibility for our own destiny; no one is going to do it for us. We must remember our forefathers and the sacrifices they made in a effort to make things better for us. What about our future generations? Lets face it, America with all of its problems, I cannot name any other place that I would want to live. Can you? Let us all work very hard to make America a better America for all of its citizens!

1995 -1996 SIGNIFICANT GRAND LODGE PROGRAMS

Listed below are the Grand Lodge Programs that a considerable amount of human resources were devoted to. Each of the program chairman will report on their respective programs.

- Scholarship & Investment
- Roslyn Cemetery
- Insurance Program
- Officer/Leadership Training
- Annual Spring Workshop
- Prince Hall Commission
- Grand Lodge Research & Publication (Grand Historian)
- 7-10 Year Review Committee
- 3-5 Year Planning Committee
- Grand Entertainment Committee

OPEN HOUSE/OFFICIAL VISITATIONS

During my official visits to District #1, #2, #3 & #4 and #11, we invited the families of our membership and the community to attend these visits. There they observed the host lodge receiving (the altar disarranged) the Grand Lodge officers and the Grand Master (and giving them public Grand Honors only). A short program followed, with the Grand Lodge officers introducing themselves and briefing the audience on Prince Hall Masonic history, the structure of the Lodge, the Grand Lodge and some of its programs.

3- 5 YEAR PLANNING COMMITTEE

During the Annual Session you will be briefed on the various projects. This is an attempt to do some long range planning on those nine improvement projects identified by the committee.

7-10 YEAR GRAND ENTERTAINMENT RECORD REVIEW COMMITTEE

This committee has nearly completed compiling pass and present Grand Entertainment records and related documents. Once the review and evaluation process has been completed of said documents then and only then will a comprehensive and all inclusive report be presented.

THE CONFERENCE OF PRINCE HALL GRAND MASTERS

In May of this year I had the privilege of attending the Conference of Grand Masters, held in St. Louis, Missouri, hosted by Most Worshipful Grand Master Lucas Lowry. The conference was very enlightening and well attended, with forty one of our forty seven Prince Hall Grand Masters present.

While there, I had the honor of serving as the chairman of the Audit Committee. This was very rewarding and afforded me an opportunity to review and offer minor adjustments to the financial structures of the Conference of Grand Masters. I, also, wrote a letter of commendation to the executive secretary-treasurer Past Master John D. Howard for the excellent management of the finances for the conference.

There was some dialogue regarding those jurisdictions having passed joint resolutions of recognition and right of visitation, between Prince Hall and Caucasian Lodges. I was impressed by the number of jurisdictions desiring and working toward the achievement of that goal. Needless to say there were some jurisdictions that opposed this action, but respected the right and decisions of those who were in favor. We were also informed that, this fall, construction will begin on a new monument in Washington D.C. This monument will be the "Afro-American Civil War Memorial", the first and only memorial erected in memory of those black soldiers who bravely fought as part of the Union Forces during the historical war between the states. The memorial will be located on Federally donated property immediately adjacent to the historic Masonic Temple, home of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of the District of Columbia. The semi-circular walls of the memorial will bear plaques with approximately 185,000 names of which 178,000 are black soldiers, some of whom were reported to have been Prince Hall Masons.

For entertainment the Buick Motor Company sponsored an "Evening of the Blues" with blues singer "Little Milton". This affair was most enjoyable.

FRATERNAL RELATIONS

We have established a very good relationship with most of our sister jurisdictions throughout 46 Prince Hall Grand Lodges. Our ties to these bodies and my personal relationship with Grand Masters has been a wonderful experience for me. I have gained personal friends whom I feel I can call on at any given time, to assist this Grand Lodge in any worthwhile endeavor.

I am pleased to report that relations among our grand organization of the Prince Hall family of Washington are excellent. Grand Worthy Matron Millicent Blocquer of Prince Hall Grand Chapter, Order of the Eastern Stars and Most Ancient Grand Matron Rose Enoch of Prince Hall High Court, Heroines of Jericho and I have had a harmonious working relationship this past Masonic year.

I must state that a similar relationship existed with Sovereign Grand Inspector General Frank Russell, Deputy of Scottish Rite Masonry, Orient of Washington. I also have similar working relationships with Deputy of the Desert, Billy V. Morris and Grand High Priest William Gardner, of the Holy Royal Arch Masons.

The Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Washington and Jurisdiction now shares and enjoys a harmonious and productive relationship with the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Washington, F. & A. M., contrary to some beliefs and for perceptions, Prince Hall Masonry has maintained its uniqueness, customs, tradition and its proud heritage.

There has not been any attempt from either Grand body to merge change, or infringe upon each other's sovereignty and I seriously doubt that there ever will be. We are also enjoying a harmonious working relationship with the Grand Lodge of Idaho, who, in my view are trailblazers in their own right.

RECOGNITION ISSUES

On June 20, 1996 the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons of British Columbia approved with an overwhelming majority to grant full recognition to the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge Free and Accepted Masons of Washington and Jurisdiction.

A Resolution will be presented to you for approval, to grant full Fraternal Recognition to the Grand Lodge of British Columbia.

RECOMMENDATIONS

I recommend the following:

1. African Genesis Lodge, F. & A. M., U.D.'s request for a charter be granted and given a number.
2. Julius A. Headen Lodge, F. & A. M., U.D.'s request for a charter be granted and given a number.
3. The resolution for Masonic Recognition for the Grand Lodge of British Columbia be approved.
4. That Past Master Isiah Simon of Harmony Lodge #2 who has served this jurisdiction with honor, be granted and appointed a honorary Past Grand Master.
5. That PM Jody McCrackin of Martin Luther King Lodge #65 be given an honorary Life Membership of the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Washington and Jurisdiction.

In conclusion, I would like to say "thank you" to a fine staff of officers who have worked diligently throughout the year. To the executive team, the cabinet and the deputies, both special and at-large, your loyalty and support throughout the year has been immeasurable. I compliment each of you for giving unwaveringly of your time, money and dedication.

And so, my Brothers as I come to a close, I must offer you my personal perception of how I view our organization. Freemasonry does not exist to combat any particular evil, to provide a solution for national, regional or local problem, or to propagate any specific dogma.

It has no patent remedy for the ills of humanity, and no special theory for the political or economic adjustment of the problems in national life. It does not solely exist even for social fellowship or benevolent ministries. It is aware that everywhere want, misery, crime, vice and racism abound, but for these things it makes no economic or remedial provision. Freemasonry does however; emphatically say to its members. "on the Square." The assumption is that, just as a building is unreliable and unsafe, if not built on the square, so a man's life will only be to the community what it ought to be in so far as it is lived. "On the Square". Living on the square, to all devout and sincere Masons, means the dedication of personal knowledge, acquirements, and possessions to the highest purposes of life.

In other words, Freemasonry exists to ensure the right direction for man's power and purposes, and that in all the circumstances and relationships of life his character and conduct shall be in complete harmony with those principles and high ideals to which the Fraternity is dedicated. The three great tenets of the Craft are Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth, and its four Cardinal Virtues are Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence and Justice. Unfailing adherence to these Tenets and Virtues is demanded of every Freemason whatever be his rank or profession, and failure in the application of any one of these Tenets or Virtues means failure to live out in daily life the traditions and ideals of the Craft. It is well that non-Masons should know these things, and the result inevitably will be that Freemasonry will stand higher in their esteem.

Some men are known for their knowledge; some for their eloquence and some for their wealth, but Freemasonry does not measure men by these standards. Unfortunately some members of the Craft do, and find it very difficult to stay with the truth and carry out their promises. Nevertheless, Freemasonry measures men by the presence or absence of love in their souls, love for one another and love for humanity. It's endeavors to develop a fraternity of great feats. A true Mason is never knowingly guilty of rudeness, never selfish, never resentful, never glad when others go wrong, but is always hopeful, always patient and always eager to believe the best. He is generous, mild and modest; his hand is ever ready to lift the fallen, cheer the disheartened, help the widow and orphan, and give relief and comfort to those in distress. Hence, it will be seen that love is the dominating quality in applied Masonic teaching. It is a reflection of divine love in our dealings with our fellow man. Without love, the beautiful ceremonies of the Craft would be nothing more than empty and idle words. Love is above eloquence, above knowledge and certainly above wealth. No true sense of love can be expressed by men who cherish thoughts of envy, malice, resentment or ingratitude. If we are ever to have "peace on earth" and goodwill among men, it can only be mutual love and by sharing each others trust and confidence. My Brothers Act on the Square.

My Brothers, the power in which you entrusted and turned over to me at the close of our 92nd Session, I now return to you. Thank you for allowing me to serve you.

Fraternally,

/s/WILLIAM C. RHEUBOTTOM
Most Worshipful Grand Master
Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Washington
and Jurisdiction