

STATUTES
OF THE GRAND COUNCIL OF
KNIGHT MASONS
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

ADOPTED FEBRUARY 18, 1967

Revision of 2010

PREAMBLE

The Order of Knight Masons was formed in Dublin, Ireland, on June 18, 1923, for the purpose of governing the degrees previously known as the "Green Degrees." These degrees were formerly controlled by the Orders of Knights Templar in Ireland (for more than eighty years) and conferred in their subordinate bodies. They were introduced in the United States on May 20, 1936, when the Grand Council in Ireland chartered three Councils in North Carolina. Subsequently, seven additional Councils were chartered by that Grand Council in the United States. The degrees are Knight of the Sword; Knight of the East; Knight of the East and West; and Installed Chief and are not to be confused with degrees which may have similar names in other Orders. (Revised 1997)

I – RIGHTS

The Grand Council of Knight Masons of the United States of America possesses the supreme authority over the Order in the United States of America, with the right to enact such laws as may be necessary to govern the Order; the powers to repeal or abrogate the same; to regulate and decide upon all matters pertaining to the Order; the right to warrant new Councils and to recall warrants issued; and to discipline its members.

II – NAME

The body shall be known and designated THE GRAND COUNCIL OF KNIGHT MASONS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

III – MEETINGS

There shall be an Annual Meeting of The Grand Council in February of each year, at a time and place selected by the M.E. Great Chief, but the month may be changed by notifying the subordinate Councils fifteen days before the new date. Special meetings may be called at the discretion of the Great Chief.

IV – OFFICERS

The officers of The Grand Council, hereinafter named, shall be elected and installed at the Annual Meeting. Their term of office shall be one year, or until their successors shall have been elected and installed: Great Chief; Deputy Great Chief; Grand Senior Knight; Grand Junior Knight; Grand Scribe, and Grand Treasurer.

The following officers shall be appointed by the Great Chief for a term of one year, or until their successors shall have been appointed and installed: Grand Senior Warden; Grand Junior Warden; Grand Director of Ceremonies; Grand Priest; Grand Steward; and Grand Sentinel.

V – TITLES

The honorary title of the Great Chief shall be "Most Excellent;" the other elected officers of the Grand Council shall carry the honorary title of "Right Excellent," the other officers shall carry the honorary title "Very Excellent." The Chief of a Council shall be "Excellent," and all members of the Order shall be "Sir Knight." (Revised 1996)

VI – MEMBERSHIP OF THE GRAND COUNCIL

All Past Excellent Chiefs, Excellent Chiefs and sitting Senior and Junior Knights shall constitute The Grand Council. However, except for the offices of Grand Scribe and Grand Treasurer, only Past Excellent Chiefs may hold office in The Grand Council. All other members of Councils shall be entitled to a seat in The Grand Council but without voice or vote. The M.E. Great Chief must receive two-thirds of the votes cast for election and the other officers a majority. In subordinate Councils a majority vote constitutes election of all officers. There are to be no proxies. (Revised 1997)

VII – POWERS OF THE GREAT CHIEF

The M.E. Great Chief shall have power to:

1. Convene Grand Council at his will and pleasure.
2. Interpret the Statutes and issue Edicts, which are reviewable by The Grand Council.
3. Make "Knight Masons at Sight" and confer Past Grand Rank.
4. Issue Dispensations for the erection of new Councils.
5. Remove Grand or Council officers from office, which acts are reviewable by The Grand Council.
6. Decide all other things pertaining to the Order not otherwise covered by these Statutes.

VIII – DEGREES

The degrees controlled by The Grand Council are Knight of the Sword; Knight of the East; Knight of the East and West; and Installed Chief. The subordinate Councils are empowered to confer these degrees and The Grand Council reserves the right to do likewise. (Revised 1997)

IX – MEMBERSHIP

Petitioners for admission into this Order shall be Royal Arch Masons in good standing in both Lodge and in Chapter. To continue membership in the Order they must continue membership in good standing in the Lodge and the Chapter. Elections in a Council shall be by unanimous vote.

Plural and dual memberships are permitted with full rights and privileges in each Council in which membership is held, except that the same Sir Knight shall not be Excellent Chief in two Councils at the same time. Per capita tax shall be paid by each Council on all members except those who for meritorious service are elected to Honorary Membership and who hold membership in another regular Council. (Revised 1985)

X – CHARTERS

Seven (7) Sir Knights may petition the Grand Council or the Most Excellent Great Chief for a Dispensation to form a new Council. The Grand Council or the Most Excellent Great Chief shall report all dispensations to the Committee on Charters, who shall make a report on same to the Grand Council at the next Annual Meeting. There shall be no jurisdictional limits within a State, and a Council may not extend an invitation to, or accept an application from, anyone in another State where there is a Council except by waiver of jurisdiction from the Council located closest to the applicant's place of residence. A fee of twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) must accompany an application for a new Council. (Revised 2010)

XI – GREAT CHIEF'S COUNCIL

There shall be a Charter issued to a Council to be known as Great Chief's Council. It shall meet at the time of The Grand Council for the obligating of members. An Excellent Chief shall be appointed by the M.E. Great Chief for this Council each year from those enrolled in said Council.

In the absence of the Excellent Chief the M.E. Great Chief presides. The other Grand Officers shall serve *ex officio* as the officers of the Council. (Revised 1996)

Candidates for Great Chief's Council shall reside in States where no subordinate Council exists. Candidates shall pay a fee of fifteen dollars (\$15.00) for admittance. Annual dues for members of Great Chief's Council shall be three dollars (\$3.00). A member in good standing may become a life-member of this Council by the payment of \$60.00 to the Life Membership Fund. Members who join other Councils may retain membership in Great Chief's Council if they desire. (Revised 1996)

XII – SUSPENSION OR EXPULSION

Excepting S.N.P.D., The Grand Council shall have the sole power to suspend or expel any member of the Order.

XIII – FEES

Subordinate Councils shall establish fees for the three degrees, but not less than twenty dollars (\$20.00). Annual dues may be assessed as necessary. (Revised 1999)

Subordinate Councils may provide in their By-Laws for the establishment of a life membership for the payment of not less than twenty (20) times their annual dues. The principal of which must be retained in a separate interest bearing account, only the earnings from which can be spent. (Added 1983)

XIV – FUNDS OF THE GRAND COUNCIL

The funds of Grand Council shall be deposited in accounts specified by Grand Council, in the name of The Grand Council of Knight Masons of the U.S.A., by the Grand Scribe or Grand Treasurer. Withdrawals shall be by check signed by the Grand Treasurer (except in an emergency when the Great Chief or Deputy Great Chief may sign.) The Grand Scribe and Grand Treasurer shall present an annual budget to the Grand Council for approval. Expenditures within this budget shall not require prior approval by the Great Chief. For other expenditures, vouchers for payments, with invoice, shall be executed by the Grand Scribe and sent to the Great Chief (or the Deputy Great Chief in an emergency.) Upon approval the invoice and voucher shall be sent to the Grand Treasurer for payment. (Revised 1996)

Life Membership fees received from the subordinate councils shall be accounted for separately from the general funds of the Grand Council, and deposited or invested as determined by the Investment Committee. Funds may be transferred annually from the Life Membership fund to general funds in lieu of capitation. The amounts transferred shall be determined by the Grand Council, but are not to exceed 5% of the funds on deposit. (Added 2007)

XV – COMPENSATION

The Grand Scribe shall receive such compensation each year as may be determined by The Grand Council at the Annual Meeting. He shall also receive compensation for office expenses and secretarial aid.

XVI – COMMITTEES

The M.E. Great Chief shall appoint all Committees of The Grand Council, but the following shall be Standing Committees: 1-Constitution; 2-Charters; 3-By-Laws; 4-Auditing; 5-Ritual; 6-Nominations; and 7-General Purposes. (Revised 1985)

XVII – SUBORDINATE COUNCILS

The following officers of Subordinate Council shall be elected and installed each year and serve until their successors shall have been elected and installed: Excellent Chief, Senior Knight, Junior Knight, Scribe and Treasurer.

The following officers shall be appointed by the Excellent Chief and serve for one year or until their successors shall have been appointed and installed: Senior Warden, Junior Warden, Director of Ceremonies, Priest, Steward and Sentinel

XVIII – BY-LAWS OF SUBORDINATE COUNCILS

Each subordinate council, except Great Chief's Council No. 0, shall adopt the Universal By-Laws for its government. They must be submitted to the Committee on By-Laws. When approved by the Committee, the Chairman shall send them to the M.E. Great Chief for his approval and signature. They shall become the law of the Council on the date of the approval by the M.E. Great Chief. The original shall be returned to the Committee Chairman to be filed in a book kept for this purpose. Two copies shall be sent to the Grand Scribe, who will send one to the Scribe of the Council. (Revised 1997)

Amendments to By-Laws shall be submitted and processed in the same manner using the Universal By-Laws form. A covering letter will identify the paragraphs that have been changed. (Revised 1997)

Alternatively, a council may submit a new or amended set of bylaws to the Grand Scribe as an attachment to an email message. The Grand Scribe will distribute the message to the By-laws Committee and the Great Chief. On approval by the Committee and the Great Chief, the Grand Scribe will prepare a printed, signed copy for the Council and file one copy. (Added 2003)

XIX – ANNUAL REPORTS AND FEES TO GRAND COUNCIL

As of December 31st of each year, the Scribe of each Council shall execute, in duplicate, an Annual Return, on forms supplied for that purpose by the Grand Scribe. The duplicate will, if correct, be returned to the Scribe for his record. A penalty equal to fifty (50) cents per member or \$50.00, whichever is greater will be assessed on any Annual Return that is received after the close of the Annual Meeting following the year covered by the Return. (Revised 2008)

When new members are greeted, the Scribe shall send to the Grand Scribe, on forms provided, the names of the new members, together with the following fees:

(a) Twenty-Five Dollars (\$25.00) for each member initiated, Ten Dollars (\$10.00) of which shall be designated as and shall constitute a Grand Council life membership fee, and which shall be deposited into the Grand Council Life Membership Fund as more fully provided for in Article XIV of these Statutes;

(b) Ten Dollars (\$10.00) for each dual affiliation, which shall be designated as and shall constitute a Grand Council life membership fee, and which shall be deposited into the Grand Council Life Membership Fund as hereinabove set forth; and

(c) Ten Dollars (\$10.00) for each member restored to membership for whom no fee has been previously paid, which shall be designated as and shall constitute a Grand Council life membership fee, and which shall be deposited into the Grand Council Life Membership Fund as hereinabove set forth. No fee shall be paid on transferring members who are demitting from membership in their former Council, nor shall any fee be paid on those restored members on whom the Ten Dollar (\$10.00) fee has been previously paid. (Revised 2010)

For each member for whom the Grand Council Life Membership fee is paid, the Grand Council shall thereafter remit the annual per capita tax of fifty cents (\$0.50). (Revised 2010)

The Grand Scribe shall send to the Scribe a certificate and membership card for each new member. Duplicate certificates are obtainable for a fee set by Grand Council. (Revised 2007)

XX– QUORUM AND ABSENCE OF OFFICERS

The quorum necessary to open Grand Council shall be five. Should the Great Chief be absent the next ranking officer shall assume his position, down through Grand Junior Knight. However, one of the first four ranking officers must be present.

The quorum necessary to open a subordinate Council shall be five members of the Council. Should the Excellent Chief be absent the next ranking officer shall assume his position down through Junior Knight. However, one of the first three ranking officers must be present.

XXI – GRAND REPRESENTATIVES

The M.E. Great Chief may appoint a Grand Representative to any Grand Council which our Grand Council recognizes.

XXII – AMENDMENTS

Amendments to these statutes may be made at any Annual Meeting of The Grand Council, provided that no objection is voiced. Otherwise, the amendment shall be held until the next Annual Meeting when it may be offered for action.

DECISIONS, ACTIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

APPROVED BY THE GRAND COUNCIL

ANNUAL MEETINGS AND INSTALLATION

Dispensation granted for a Council to conduct the business of the annual meeting at a special meeting when a quorum was not present for the annual meeting. Bell, 1984

Dispensation granted for a Council to hold its Annual Communication even in the absence of a quorum. It was also suggested to the Council that in the future they hold their annual meeting either earlier in the month of December or change their by-laws to have their annual meeting during the month of November. Bruner, 1993

Dispensation granted for a installation without regard to the number of Past Excellent Chiefs present due to the lack of Past Excellent Chiefs in that area. Watts, 1994

Dispensation granted for a Council to confer the Installed Chief's Degree upon newly elected Chief provided that at least two Past Chiefs are present. Fleming, 1995

A Council may change the place of its Stated Meetings by an approved By-Law change. There is no requirement for the Charter to be reissued in this case. Henry, 2006

ELECTIONS

The regularly elected and installed Chief having moved as a result of his employment prior to the first meeting of the year, dispensation was granted for a Council to elect an Excellent Chief at a regular meeting and to fill any vacancies resulting from this election. Further, the regularly elected Chief shall to have the rank and title of Past Chief following this election. Pace, 1998

The elected Scribe having failed to submit timely reports, dispensation was granted for a Council to elect and install a new Scribe at a regular meeting and to fill any vacancies that may result as a consequence of the election. Pace, 1998

MEETING DATES

Dispensation was granted for a Council to set aside the provisions of Article II of their By-Laws and meet on a different date to avoid conflict with other Masonic activities.

Saunders, 1997

Dispensation was granted for a Council to change the date of a meeting to coincide with the meetings of the other Masonic Bodies. Recommended they change their By-Laws avoid this problem in future years.

Pace, 1998

Dispensation was granted for a Council to set aside the provisions of Article II of their By-Laws and to hold meetings at such time and place as the Chief may designate so that the Council may be reactivated.

Pace, 1998

COUNCIL FUNDS

All subordinate councils shall hold their funds in a financial institution in an individual account(s) under the name of the subordinate council.*Law, 1992*

MEMBERSHIP AND JURISDICTION

Our Concordat prohibits us from chartering Councils in Canada, but Canadians may be members of Great Chief's Council. *McCracken, 1982*

Although Great Chief's Council is a holding unit for Knight Masons who have as yet no Council in their home states, there is no law requiring a demit from any Council upon affiliation with another. *McCracken, 1982*

Nothing prohibits us from receiving residents of Ohio as members of Councils outside that state. *McCracken, 1982*

Councils may elect to honorary membership deserving and outstanding members of the Craft who are active members of other Councils of Knight Masons.*Stiles, 1983*

A member of Great Chief's Council 0 who joined South Carolina Council 20 by regular initiation had, in effect, been a transfer since he petitioned, passed the ballot, and was initiated into the several Degrees and had purchased a Life Membership. The application of No. 20 required no information of previous petitioning, so what was done is legitimate. *Womack, 1985*

Demits were issued to two members who were improperly suspended from a Council for non-payment of dues. The Excellent Chief and Scribe were reprimanded for the irregularities permitted in their membership changes. *Law, 1987*

The interval between Annual Meetings may be considered as one year. It was therefore proper for a Council to withdraw an invitation to a candidate who had been elected at the previous Annual Meeting but had failed to present himself for the degrees. *Deutsch, 1992*

Canadian and other non-USA members shall belong to Great Chief's Council No. 0. *Deutsch, 1992 (Decision reversed by Grand Council action 2002.)*

Ordered a Council to cease sending to Masonic brethren what appeared to be a letter of solicitation until notified otherwise. Ours is an invitational order. *Watts, 1994*

Did not permit a Council to accept applications from Kentucky or Ohio pending Grand Council consideration. *Fleming, 1995*

A Council of Knight Masons is not permitted to accept a State Charter of Incorporation. *Harrison, 1996*

Current members who form a new council and desire to transfer their membership are transferred to the new council from their present council when The Grand Council charters the new council. *Harrison, 1996 Rescinded 2008*

Healed error and admonished Councils who had received in membership Masons who lived out of their jurisdiction. Directed that waivers of jurisdiction be obtained in the future. *Saunders, 1997*

Rescinded the earlier decision and ordered that transfers of members to newly formed councils will be recorded as of the date of institution of the new council or such later date before the end of the year that the member requests a transfer. The new council will not be liable for a fee except for Dual Members. *Elkins, 2008*

ANNUAL REPORTS

Informed a Council that if their per-capita tax was not paid in full and the check cleared before the Annual Communication of the Grand Council, that their Annual Report would not be received, and I would lift their Charter prior to this Communication. *Bruner, 1993*

The \$10 per member fee may be paid annually with the Annual Reports due on January 31, 2007, 2008, and 2009. Each payment will be a multiple of \$10, and be at least one-third of the total amount due. *Elkins, 2008*

JEWELRY AND INSIGNIA

Each Great Chief shall retain his apron when he retires from office. *Elliott, 1975*

The ritual states that the new members are invested with the jewel on resumption of labor after the closing of the Degree of Knight of the East and West. Councils that do not give each new member this jewel should consider adopting this practice even if they have to raise the membership fee. *Ritual Committee, 1981*

An Excellent Chief receives his PEC apron at his installation and the jewel when he goes out of office. *i.e.* If the Council provides an apron for a Chief to use and keep, it should be presented at his installation. There is no special Past Chief's apron. *Deutsch, 1992, clarified by McCammon, 2002.*

The Grand Council will provide a 40-year membership service award as currently in use in Ireland. *Harrison, 1996*

Past and Present Great Chiefs should acquire the cuffs of a Grand Officer. *Harrison, 1996*

CHARITABLE GIFTS

The recipient of 50% of the charitable gifts made by the Grand Council shall be determined by the Great Chief and 50% by vote of the Grand Officers and the Past Great Chiefs. *Deutsch, 1992*

RITUAL

Our "Installed Excellent Chief" degree is properly the degree of "Installed Chief." *Harrison, 1996*

Expand our Ritual Book to include the Instructions in Ireland's Instruction Book and the Odes in Ireland's Ode book, and conform our Installed Chief chair degree to conform to Ireland's. *Harrison, 1996*

SUPERINTENDENTS

A representative is to be appointed in each state where one or more councils are constituted or are under dispensation. His responsibility would be to inspect the administrative and ritualistic affairs of the council and annually report to the Grand Council. *Fowler, 1988*

The three-year trial having been completed, the Grand Council determined that the Superintendent program was unnecessary. Each Great Chief has the authority to appoint a superintendent in any state or area in which he needs representation. The appointment is at the will and pleasure of the Great Chief and will not exceed his term of office. *Bruner, 1993*