



**Allocation of
Dennis N. Zier
Most Excellent Great Chief
2009-2010**

Sir Knights and Cousins,

I wish to extend to all of you present a welcome and greeting to this 44th Annual Meeting of the Grand Council of Knight Masons of the United States of America that is far warmer than the post blizzard conditions outside. I applaud and admire all of you who have demonstrated your desire and dedication and possibly ingenuity in arranging to be here this week.

Now that Super Bowl XLIV is in the history books and has made history with the first victory by a team from Louisiana, we can turn our attention to our own 44th Anniversary and a year in which Louisiana also made history for Knight Masonry in the U.S.A. But before we work our way to Louisiana, I want to start with some observations on the nature of Masonic leadership and the examples we have in Knight Masonry.

The strength, stability, and fortunes of most Masonic organizations depend upon the diligence, dedication, and knowledge of the Secretary and the Treasurer. The Grand Council has been extremely fortunate to have had such a talented and capable pair of Grand Officers in the position of Grand Scribe, R.E. Douglas L. Jordan, and Grand Treasurer, R.E. Charles W. "Buddy" Wagner. Both have been supporting and guiding Great Chiefs since before I was in the Grand Line. And I am grateful that they were available from the early days of my tenure to the completion of my year to assist in the essential functions of our institution. My thanks to R.E. Doug Jordan and R.E. Buddy Wagner for acting on my behalf in Instituting Rock of Cashel Council No. 100 U.D. on February 21, 2009. It is with no little sadness that we note Buddy's decision to step down as Grand Treasurer.

The presiding officer of any Masonic organization is faced with a spectrum of choice on how to pursue his administration ranging from the Hippocratic injunction *Primum non nocere* (first, do no harm) to Captain James T. Kirk's quest to Boldly Go Where No Man Has Gone Before. And it is the wise counsel of Leaders such as Doug Jordan and Buddy Wagner that help to keep the presiding officer on a path within due bounds.

One of the high points of my term was when my path took me to Pine Bluff, Arkansas on June 6th where I had the privilege of Instituting Harvey I. Mize Council No. 101, U.D. It was my first opportunity to exercise this power of the Great Chief, and I will cherish the warmth of the reception and impressive caliber of the nearly 40 Cousins who were Charter Members of this Council. My thanks to Royce H. Taylor who was installed as Excellent Chief for all the effort he put in to arranging the date.

I am grateful and delighted that I did have the chance in the closing days of my year to go where no Knight Mason in the U.S.A. had gone before when I Instituted Ray Wesley Burgess Council No. 103 U.D. on January 16, 2010 in Alexandria, Louisiana. Not only did we add a new Council to Knight Masonry in the U.S.A., but we added a new State, bringing the total under the Grand Council's jurisdiction to 39! Special thanks to M.E.P.G.C. Van Evans for assisting me in the Institution and for his tireless work to nail down all the necessary commitments and approvals to allow the Council to be created. I also want to thank John L. Belanger who I installed as Excellent Chief for his incredible hospitality and warmth and to compliment him on the caliber of the Charter Members of this fine new Council.

So we have come full circle in this past year, from the Institution of a Council in Virginia by our Grand Scribe and Grand Treasurer, to the Institution of a Council in a new jurisdiction, Alexandria, Louisiana with the assistance of a Past Great Chief, to the entertainment of SuperBowl XLIV won for the first time by a team from Louisiana, to our 44th Annual Meeting here in Alexandria, Virginia.

Before closing this allocution I would like to make some observations on the character of the people I met this year and then close with a brief review of some of the Masons who have shaped my Masonic experience.

In my travels this year I have been pleased to meet so many leaders in the craft whose early Masonic experience was formed, like mine, in the Masonic youth organization DeMolay. There is something about that organization that builds its members into capable men and good Masons. It is for that reason that I am recommending that Knight Masonry once again contribute to that organization as part of its annual contribution.

I was also incredibly impressed with the quality of the new Members in the Councils I instituted. Not only are they men of distinguished Masonic rank, but they are enthusiastic about learning and properly performing the ritual of Knight Masonry. I am confident the Arkansas and Louisiana Councils will thrive and be magnets for high quality new Members.

Of course I am thrilled that Knight Masonry continues to grow in this country, but Masonry is not about the numbers, it is about the quality. And I count myself extremely fortunate to have met and become friends with Freemasons of the highest quality at these annual Masonic Week meetings in Washington.

My first attendance at an AMD annual meeting was in 1977 shortly after I became a Mason. As most of you know the meetings at that time were held at the Washington Hotel across the street from the Treasury Building (or, as I more fondly recall, across the street from the “real” Old Ebbitt Grill). I was encouraged to attend by John Mauk Hilliard who had recently published an article on returning to the roots of Freemasonry—an idea that then, as now, can cause a great deal of controversy. The article had been published in The Philalethes and was a topic for discussion at their open forum meeting. At the end of a robust exchange of views I found myself at the back of the room (near the exit) with John and partly shielded by a couple of other young Masons who were attempting talk to John and also get us safely out of the room before things got too robust. One of those young Masons was S. Brent Morris and the other was Terry McCammon. Not a bad introduction to Masonry looking 30 years forward.

It is essential not to underestimate the importance of the setting and appearance of a Masonic venue. The Washington Hotel was perfectly set up and located to permit and encourage Masonic discourse almost 24 hours a day. During Masonic Week if you wandered through the halls there would be countless doors open with groups of Masons talking about Masonry. The Lobby was a market place of ideas. Brunch and/or a late night burger at the Old Ebbitt. Pipes and Cigars lighted most everywhere. And a desire to talk about Masonry. Pick your group. Or wander around and sit down at another. So in the first weekend a young Mason could make the acquaintance of someone like Dwight Smith (PGM & PG Sec of Indiana) or Jerry Marsengill (then Editor of the Philalethes) and sit down and talk Freemasonry with them. I guess that is why I am still interested in this Masonic Week more than 30 years later---even though we have been outcast to the suburbs, the Old Ebbitt townhouse is no more, and a place to smoke a cigar is hard to come by. The point is to talk Freemasonry.

Sincerely and Fraternaly

Dennis N. Zier
ME Great Chief