

142nd Annual Grand Communication

**The Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Texas, Free
and Accepted Masons**

Honorable Wilbert M. Curtis
Most Worshipful Grand Master



Annual Allocution
June 17, 2017
Embassy Suites Dallas-Frisco Hotel, Conference Center
Frisco, Texas

**142nd Annual Grand Communication
Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Texas, Free and Accepted Masons
Honorable Wilbert M. Curtis
Most Worshipful Grand Master**

**Annual Allocution
June 17, 2017
Embassy Suites Dallas-Frisco Hotel, Conference Center
Frisco, Texas**

**Rt. W. Deputy Grand Master Michael T. Anderson,
Visiting Grand Masters
Rt. W. Grand Senior Warden Bryce Hardin,
Rt. W. Grand Junior Warden Frank Jackson,
Elected and Appointed Grand Lodge Officers
Most Excellent Grand High Priest Willie Tate,
Most Illustrious Thrice Grand Master Troy Cousin,
Right Eminent Grand Commander Ronald Gerac,
Deputy of the Orient Dr. John Butler,
Grand Worthy Joshua John Humphrey,
Grand Worthy Patron Robert Calloway,
Worshipful Masters, Past Masters, Wardens,
Brothers All!**

“Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.”

I greet you in the name of The Grand Architect of the Universe.

The Constitution of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Texas and its Jurisdiction sets forth the second duty of the Grand Master. He is to present at each annual communication a written message therein, setting forth all of his official acts during the year. The Grand Master is to inform the craft of the general conditions of Freemasonry within the Jurisdiction of Texas and recommend legislation that is deemed necessary for the welfare of the order. I stand before you today as your Grand Master to perform that task.

I thank God for allowing us to meet and greet one more time as Master Masons on the square. It is by God’s grace and mercy that we are able to be here in this place. We need to realize that His grace and mercy goes hand and hand to cover us. By His grace, we receive that which we don’t deserve. By His mercy, we do not receive that which we deserve. And know that He blesses us so that we may be a blessing to others.

I come to you on this Saturday morning, the 17th day of June, bringing you my 15th annual message as your Grand Master.

I ask our Grand Organist to lead us in an inspirational song after which we will be blessed with a prayer by our Grand Chaplain. I ask that he pray for our military brothers and sisters that are in harm’s way, fighting for our freedom. I ask that he pray for our country and wisdom for our President and leaders. I ask him to pray for the widows and orphans of our brothers who were with us last year but have gone on to that celestial Lodge on high. I ask him to pray for our Grand Old Order called Texas Prince Hall Affiliated Freemasonry.

I now stand before you to deliver my fourteenth annual allocution.

I want to thank the entire Prince Hall Masonic Family for your prayers, encouragement and support. We have successfully completed another Masonic year.

I want to thank all of you that made my Testimonial this last February a huge success. I want thank the committee and all who participated. I will never forget your thoughtfulness and generosity. Thank you all!

The official acts of the Grand Master this year:

- **Issued 3 dispensations to lay cornerstones.**
- **With the assistance of DGM Anderson, Mt. Pisgah Lodge No. 135 and brothers of District 11, I laid the cornerstone for Mt. Pisgah Missionary Baptist Church of Dallas, TX.**
- **Issued 2 dispensation allowing a lodge to hold an election out of term.**
- **Issued 20 dispensations allowing brothers to regale as Master Masons for a non-Masonic function such as parades and banquets and church visits.**
- **Issued 8 dispensations to allow more than five candidates to be initiated at one time or other degree work related dispensations.**
- **Issued 16 dispensations to allow a lodge to meet on a day other than their stated meeting date.**
- **September 14, 2016, Issued a directive for explanation to all Concordant and Appendant Bodies on Proclaimed Meetings of Grand Bodies**
- **Presided over the 3 stated Board of Directors meetings. DGM Anderson has given the Board of Directors Meetings Report.**
- **Participated in Charitable Foundation meetings as ex officio officer**
- **September 14, 2016, at the request of MWGM James of the Grand Lodge A.F.&A.M. Republic of Liberia, I responded favorably to allow the M.E.G.C.H.R.A.M. of Texas to assist in establishing Royal Arch Masonry in the jurisdiction of Liberia.**
- **September 20, 2016, I arrested the jewel of Worshipful Master Abdule Robinson, Metropolitan Lodge No. 146 for failure to perform his duty as Worshipful Master. Appointed Bro. Josh Stevens the Worshipful Master to complete the Masonic Year.**
- **October 17, 2016, I summoned all District Deputies and Special District Deputies to attend the mandatory training Workshop at the Mid-Winter Special Grand Session.**
- **October 18, 2016, I appointed P.M. Joseph J. Thomas, III Grand Auditor to fill the vacant position from the last Grand Communication.**
- **February 21, 2017, I sent a letter to the General Grand Conference, and the Grand Encampment requesting that Texas York Rite Bodies host the International session in 2019.**
- **March 17, 2017, I rescinded the commission of DDGM Orlando Henderson for not fulfilling his duties and appointed PDDGM, Rev. Michael King as Deputy of District 1**
- **April 3, 2017 issued Edict #040317-01 – Past Masters Limited Eligibility for Nomination for Worshipful Master.**
- **April 12, 2017, I submitted a letter to the General Grand Conference of Grand Councils Royal & Select Masters, PHA, USA, Bahamas, Inc. requesting that the Most Illustrious Prince Hall Grand Council Royal and Select Masters of Texas become a member of the Conference.**
- **Reactivated 3 Lodges under dispensation, requiring them, as per the Constitution to work at least 3 months before they will be eligible to receive their charter. It is my fervent**

prayer that they will prove themselves worthy to receive their charter at the 2017 Mid-Winter Special Grand Session. Namely:

- Gilbert Grove Lodge U.D. – number – April 14, 2017 – Irving, Tx
 - Rolling Stone Lodge U.D. – number – April 22, 2017 – Baytown, Tx
 - Fairfield Lodge U.D. – number 452 – June 3, 2017 – Fairfield, Tx
- May 25, 2017 set a new lodge to work under dispensation by name of Fiat Lux Lodge U.D. It is my prayer that they too will be able to receive their charter at the 2017 Mid-Winter Special Grand Session.

See attached list for my other acts and Grand Lodge related travel.

State of the Grand Lodge

Presently, the Grand Lodge is in a good state. Financially, we are sound and continue a slow improvement. This is reflected in the financial reports in the Important Report. (Refer to your Important Reports) I thank the G. Auditors for their tireless work to make sure that our business office is running efficiently. I thank Sis. Vicki Edwards, the Office Administrator for doing an excellent job in the day to day operations. Grand Secretary Bittle is doing a fine job overseeing the office and communicating with the secretaries and Worshipful Masters.

We have a very nice facility, we continue to make improvements in order to attract renters that will utilize our facility without destroying it. One of our own brothers has assumed the responsibility of renting the building.

Membership

The report of our membership was part of the Grand Secretary's report. I believe the progress of our membership is the results of two major changes that we have made in the procedures for bringing in new members. One being the requirement of a background check prior to issuing an application. Although there have been some rejections due to background I am convinced that this was a much needed process in order to maintain the integrity of the Order.

The implementation of the initiation schedule has helped improve the process of bringing in new members. The purpose is to make the membership initiation process the same throughout the jurisdiction. I know that some had difficulties acclimating to the schedule because you were not looking at the big picture. The other objective of the schedule is to make the Lodge leadership plan your work.

You should know at the beginning of the Masonic Year, how to plan your initiations and build your other ritualistic work around that schedule. It is also an opportunity to have joint degree work which allows for fellowship among lodges and training for the lodges that may not be as proficient in degree work. This can and will work.

I believe membership education and training is a key to retaining membership. I want to thank Dep. G. Marshall Ronnie Jones, Grand Lecturer Johnny Perez and Committee for implementing the 3 part Lodge Operations Certification Program. We will continue to offer it at the Grand Lodge Level up until the Mid-Winter Session. After which it is to be continued on the District level. At that time it is my plan to start the Grand Lodge Officers Training program to include District and Grand Lodge Level training.

The Membership Committee of the Conference of Grand Masters presented a “list of Ideas for Solutions” program to assist Jurisdictions in enhancing its membership. It is divided into four different categories: Promoting the brand; Partnership with the other groups; Members bringing value to the lodge and Maximize social media. I want to form a Membership committee of Past Masters that will take this report and find ways to make this work for Texas.

Grand Lodge Officers

The elected Grand Lodge Officers of the Grand Lodge work for you and are accountable to the craft. We along with some appointed Grand Lodge Officers do not remove our collars, fold up our aprons and do nothing at the end of the annual Sessions. The business of the Grand Lodge is a four day a week activity for some. As Grand Master, I give account of my work in the annual address. The other elected officers’ stewardship and accountability are in the Important Reports.

The District Deputies and Special Deputies that labor in the districts in performing their duties have an awesome task of visiting the lodges, examining the records, making recommendations for correction, conducting quarterly district meetings and reporting annually the conditions of the Lodges to the Grand Master. The revised reporting system was implemented after last Mid-Winter Session and the officers of the Lodges should have noticed the new report and information request. I thank the District Deputy committee that helped revise the reports. In order to give other deserving Past Masters an opportunity to serve the Grand Lodge, if I am re-elected, I will be making some new Deputy appointments. For those deputies that will be retiring, I want you to become mentors to your successors. There will be additional work for you to do as well.

Legal Issues

The Grand Lodge continues to be in litigation with the former members of True Level Lodge No. 226 who terminated their membership in the Grand Lodge in June, 2013 but refused to turn over the Lodge’s property. An update was reported by the Grand Legal Advisor.

Charity and the Charitable Foundation

Our Charitable Foundation continues to function well under the directorship of Bro. Willie High Coleman, Jr. who serves as its chairman. You heard the report and presentations made. Bro. Coleman and the Board of Directors has done an excellent job bringing all of the charitable entities under the umbrella of the Foundation.

The Library/ Museum

The library museum allows us to “tell our own story” through our documents and artifacts. We continue to receive artifacts from families of deceased members. One of the activities of the Conference of Grand Masters held in May was a trip to the Grand Lodge and tour the Library Museum. We received nothing but positive comments and feedback from all. We need to continue to promote our library museum. We need both monetary and hands on assistance.

Necrology

John 14:1-3 King James Version (KJV)

“14 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. ² In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go

and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”

This last Masonic year, 35 brothers were called home to be with Our Heavenly Father in that Lodge of Perfection on high; the Celestial Lodge. Once again some were Pillars of this Grand Lodge, namely, HPGM and G. Treas. Emeritus, Bro. Kerven Cater, HPGM and G. Medical Director Ulysses Watkins and Grand Organist Finis Smith. These brothers gave their all to this Grand Lodge. Pray for and support our deceased brothers' widows and families.

The grand reaper has not only invaded the brothers of this Grand Lodge but has invaded family members as well. Pray for Bro. Robert Datcher on the loss of his brother. Pray for Dr. John Butler on the passing of his mother. Pray for Bro. Willie High Coleman, Jr. on the passing of his Aunt.

Burial Relief Program

Burial relief payments are being made to all beneficiaries eligible to receive them.

In the case where a brother over 65 was a long time Mason but has fallen off the roll and now want to reinstate so that he can receive burial rites as a Master Mason, consideration for reinstatement will be given with the understanding that it will be without burial relief benefits.

Fraternal Relations with Concordant and Appendant Bodies

I continue to work in harmony with the leaders to insure that all Masonic Houses in this jurisdiction are all on one accord.

We welcome the “Most Illustrious Prince Hall Grand Council of Texas, Royal & Select Masters, Prince Hall Affiliated” under the leadership of Grand Thrice Illustrious Master Troy Cousin to the Masonic Family. It is my prayer that the Texas Grand Court of Ladies Of Circle Of Perfection will be constituted this September. This will make way for the Cryptic Degrees bodies to be included in the York Rite Weekend starting in February 2018. My hat goes off to the York Rite Bodies for working so harmoniously together.

Fraternal Relations:

The report of the Fraternal Relations Committee was presented by that committee. As of this date, The Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Texas is in harmony with our sister Prince Hall Jurisdictions and other regular Grand Lodges of which we have established mutual recognition except for The Most Worshipful Prince Hal Grand Lodge of Louisiana. On Friday, June 9, 2017 at 8:45 a.m. I received a call from Grand Master Ralph Slaughter, just prior to him going into his session requesting that he and I sit down and meet to see if we can resolve the issues between the two Grand Lodges. He said that he would do whatever it takes to resolve the issue. My answer to him was after both of our Grand Sessions, we can talk.

We are in amity with the Conference of Grand Masters, the General Grand Conference Holy Royal Arch Masons, the General Grand Council of Royal and Select Masters, the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar and the Sister Counter-parts to those Conferences.

Texas hosted the Conference of Grand Masters and Conference of Grand Matrons and Grand Patrons in Dallas Texas, at Dallas/Addison Marriott Quorum on May 17-21 2017. From the standpoint of hosting, it was a huge success thanks to all who volunteered and worked. My hat goes off to DGM Michael Anderson for chairing the Texas Host Committee.

STATE OF THE COUNTRY

Over the years I have described the state of the country with different descriptive ways. My words to describe the state of the country this year are Rocky, Crazy and Uncertain.

President Barack Obama's eight year term as President ended with the election of Donald Trump as the 45th President. President Obama will be remembered as the leader who led the country out of an economic recession to a thriving economy with the lowest unemployment in 30 years and the president who made health care available to all citizens. He was not able to solve all of the issues of the country, but an objective analysis will result in a conclusion that the country is better off when his presidency ended than we were when his presidency began.

The election process for the 45th president was the most unusual that I have observed in my lifetime. The campaign was negative and divisive pitting ideologies and races against one another and it led me to question whether we were citizens of the same country. The country elected a president who displayed racist tendencies, disrespect for women and questionable business practices by a landslide. Regardless of what we may think Donald Trump is the President and we must acknowledge that and respond to his presidency.

President Trump's immigration proposals created some of his biggest headlines during the campaign: building a wall along the southern border and a proposed ban on Muslims entering the U.S. made waves as being particularly restrictive policies and these issues will ultimately be decided in the courts. In addition, he railed against bringing in more refugees. That means these numbers could change considerably, depending on how much he gets his way on immigration policy. America seems to have forgotten that either voluntarily or involuntarily all of us except native Americans are immigrants from somewhere.

It appears that most of the countries in the free world are angry with the United States because of some of the foreign policy changes made by the Trump administration. Terrorist activity is increasing abroad and in this country and North Korea is presenting a more dangerous concern.

There are many more matters that I could discuss, but I will stop with this. There appears to be a civil war like atmosphere between law enforcement officers and the general public and there is no valid excuse for the killing of unarmed citizens and likewise there is no valid excuse for citizens like the black man in Dallas and Baton Rouge last year indiscriminately shooting police officers.

The state of the country is rocky, crazy and uncertain and we must respond to the issues that face us in such a way that results in a stop to the madness.

Recommendation:

1. Establish an ad-hoc membership committee that is to report back to the Grand Lodge at the Mid-Winter session, ways to implement the ideas and possibly more that were identified in the CoGMs Membership Committee report: Promoting the brand; Partnership with the other groups; Members bringing value to the lodge and Maximize social media.
2. The amount for burial relief paid to remain the same as the previous Masonic Year.

Conclusion:

As I close, I want to leave you with this advice.

This was penned by Grand Master Norris Wright Cuney in his address at the Sixth Annual Communication on June 7th, 1881. Lessons of our past, are still applicable today...

“I am happy to say that the order as a whole is in much better condition than it was at our last annual meeting... Our greatest need, my brethren, is the selection of our most worthy and intelligent members to occupy the East (remembering the old adage, like master like lodge), as the man selected as a teacher in a Masonic Lodge ought certainly to be more intellectual than those whom he proposes to teach, as he would certainly be better enabled to impart useful knowledge and spread a ray of light to those in darkness; thereby making it a pleasure to attend lodge meetings. I think, my brethren, if this rule was strictly adhered to in all of our lodges, we would soon find a marked improvement in them. I sincerely trust, that you will endeavor to impress this upon the minds of the brethren of the subordinate lodges.”

I remain...

Fraternally yours,

Wilbert M. Curtis

Wilbert M. Curtis,

M.: W.: Grand Master

The Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Texas

Date	Activity
Mon Jun 6, 2016	Grand Lodge Session Conference call - Via phone
Wed Jun 15, 2016	141st Grand Session - Embassy Suites Dallas - Frisco/Hotel, Convention Center, Frisco, TX
Sun Jun 26, 2016	Laid Cornerstone for Mt Pisgah Missionary Baptist Church
Tue Jun 28, 2016	DDGM Procedures Conf Call 7
Wed Jul 6, 2016	District 11 District Meeting - Paul Drayton #9 PHA, 3223 Lagow St, Dallas, TX
Thu Jul 7, 2016	GL Office Visit - 3433 MLK JR FRWY, FT WORTH, tx
Thu Jul 14, 2016	Robert E. Connor 16th Annual Youth Camp - Cathedral Oaks Retreat Center, Weimer, Tx
Sat Jul 16, 2016	District 24 District Meeting - St James Lodge #71, Temple, Tx
Mon Jul 18, 2016	MWPHGL of Alabama Grand Session - Sheraton Birmingham Hotel, Birmingham, AL 35203
Sat Jul 23, 2016	District 20 - District Meeting - Fort Worth, TX
Thu Jul 28, 2016	2016 KOP Leadership Conference - Texas College (Tyler, Tx) Texas College
Mon Aug 1, 2016	Tenn Grand Session - Memphis
Tue Aug 2, 2016	District 11 District Meeting - Paul Drayton #9 PHA, 3223 Lagow St, Dallas, TX
Sat Aug 6, 2016	Attended PGHP Huggins Wedding Anniversary
Sat Aug 12, 2016	District 15-B District Meeting -Amity Lodge #4, Galveston, Tx
Sat Aug 12, 2016	Douglas Burrell Consistory No 56 Banquet - Houston, Tx
Sat Aug 20, 2016	District 15-A District Mtg - True Level Lodge 226, Lyons Avenue, Houston, TX
Sat Aug 27, 2016	District 20 - District Meeting Workshop
Wed Aug 31, 2016	Eviction Lawsuit - True Level Lodge No 226 - 333 Lockwood, 1st Floor Houston, Tx. 77011
Wed Sep 7, 2016	GL Office Mail out September Reports and Mid-Winter Packets - PHGL of Texas
Fri Sep 9, 2016	Prince Hall Americanism Day Weekend and Black and & White Ball, San Antonio, TX 78251
Sun Sep 11, 2016	Prince Hall Americanism Day Service with District 19 - San Antonio, Tx
Sun Sep 11, 2016	Prince Hall Americanism Day Service with District 24 - Austin, Tx
Fri Sep 16, 2016	Drive to Mesquite, Holiday Inn Express to Drive to Commerce on Saturday morning
Sat Sep 17, 2016	District 2 meeting - 1128-1198 Martin Luther King Drive Commerce, TX
Sat Sep 17, 2016	Killeen York Rite Youth Banquet - Fort Hood, Texas .
Fri Sep 23, 2016	Constituted and Consecrated the PHA Grand Council Royal and Select Masons of Texas
Fri Sep 23, 2016	Lone Star Grand Commandery Mid-Year Conference - Fort Worth, TX
Wed Oct 5, 2016	United Supreme Council - Memphis, Tn
Sat Oct 15, 2016	District 14 - District Meeting - October 15,2016 @Wyatt 21 This event has notifications.
Fri Oct 21, 2016	Trail Blazer Banquet - Hilton Garden Inn, Pearland, Tx
Sat Oct 22, 2016	Central Texas consistory # 306 annual CIC banquet. - Hilton Garden Inn Killeen, Killeen, TX
Fri Oct 27, 2016	Charitable Foundation call -
Sat Oct 29, 2016	District 3 Meeting - 912 Queen Street, Tyler, Texas
Tue Nov 1, 2016	True Level Lodge 226 Trial - County Civil Court No. 4, 201 caroline, Houston, Tx
Sat Nov 5, 2017	Funeral Service and Last Rites for HPGM Kerven Carter, Greater Saint James Baptist Church
Fri Nov 11, 2016	MWPHGL Mid-Winter Special Grand Communication -Masonic Grand Temple
Sun Nov 27, 2016	Certification Comm conference call
Sat Dec 3, 2016	Banquet Speaker - St James Lodge
Thu Dec 15, 2016	CoGMs Website Confernce Call - FreeConferenceCall.com
Fri Dec 16, 2016	Annual Christmas Gift Give Away This event has notifications.
Sun Dec 18, 2016	Senior Citizen Prom - Nursing Home - Lancaster Nursing & Rehabilitation, Lancaster, TX

Mon Dec 19, 2016	Feeding at Estella Maxey Apts - Estella Maxie Apts, Waco, Texas This event has notifications.
Sat Jan 14, 2017	Norris Wright cuney grand chapter luncheon - 8505 Cypress Street Houston, TX
Sun Jan 15, 2017	Grand Masters/Matrons Conference -conference call.
Thu Jan 19, 2017	Rev. F.D. Sampson Sr. Retirement Banquet - Hyatt Regency North Houston - Houston, TX
Sat Jan 22, 2017	Presented Daniel Carter Beard Masonic Scouter Award to Bro. Bobby Ray Williams, Jr.
Wed Feb 1, 2017	York Rite Weekend Conference - Riverwalk North San Antonio, TX
Fri Feb 10, 2017	Funeral Service and Wake for Sis. Lillie Calloway, Graceland Community Baptist Church
Fri Feb 17, 2017	Grand Master Testimonial
Sat Mar 4, 2017	OES North Texas Regional Workshop - Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Texas
Sun Mar 5, 2017	COGM Conference Call
Tue Mar 7, 2017	Phylaxis Society 44th Annual Convention - Holiday Inn St. Louis, St. Louis, MO.
Thu Mar 9, 2017	Texas Council Of Deliberations - San Antonio, Tx
Tue Mar 14, 2017	Conference Call - Grand Session Conference Call
Sat Mar 18, 2017	Nolan Creek Banquet - Belton This event has notifications.
Wed Mar 22, 2017	Meet with District 14 Worshipful Masters at Wyatt Lodge 21 - Waco, Tx
Sat Mar 25, 2017	First Annual Rahab Day Celebration-HOJ Red & White Affair, Texas City, TX
Wed Mar 29, 2017	Conf Call on GM Conf This event has notifications.
Fri Mar 31, 2017	Corpus Christi, Gulf Coast Lodge 361 Meeting - Corpus Christi, Tx
Sat Apr 1, 2017	JT Maxey Black and White Ball - San Antonio, Tx
Wed Apr 5, 2017	District 11 District Meeting - Paul Drayton #9 PHA, 3223 Lagow St, Dallas, TX 7
Fri Apr 7, 2017	MWPHUGL of Florida Grand Session, Jacksonville, FL
Fri Apr 14, 2017	Set Gilbert Grove Lodge No. 263 To Work - Masonic Grand Temple, Fort Worth, TX
Sat Apr 15, 2017	Funeral Service for Dr. Butler's Son – Van Cleave, MS
Sat Apr 22, 2017	Set Rock of Ages Lodge UD to work in Baytown, Baytown, TX
Sat May 6	Call PGM David McWilliams of D.C. to give COGM Host budget report.
Tue May 16	Worked in GL Office preparing for GL and CoGMs
Wed May 17	COGM conference - Dallas/Addison Marriott Quorum by the Galleria, Dallas, TX
Thur May 25	Set Fiat Lux U.D. Lodge to work.