

143rd 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 21, 2018
Marriott Dallas/Addison Quorum
Dallas, Texas

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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 Anthony Carr,
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. By His grace, we receive that which we do not 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 24th 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 him to pray for our Grand Old Order called Texas Prince Hall Affiliated Freemasonry.

I now will deliver my 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.

The official acts of the Grand Master this year:

- Issued 3 dispensations to lay cornerstones.
- Laid cornerstone for St Paul Baptist Church of San Antonio, TX assisted by J.T. Maxey Lodge No. 74, District 19 and brothers from around the Jurisdiction.
- Laid cornerstone and consecrated the Lodge Hall of Dewitt Lodge No. 429 of Tyler, Texas assisted by Dewitt Lodge No. 429, District 3 and brothers from around the Jurisdiction.
- Issued 2 dispensations allowing a lodge to hold an election out of term.
- Issued 13 dispensations allowing brothers to regale as Master Masons for a non-Masonic function such as parades, banquets and church visits.
- Issued 9 dispensations to allow more than five candidates to be initiated at one time or other degree work related dispensations.
- Issued 13 dispensations to allow a lodge to meet on a day other than their stated meeting date.
- Issued 2 dispensations to set lodges to work under dispensation.
 - Hour Glass Lodge No. 652, U.D.
 - Light From The East Lodge No. 333, U.D.
- 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
- July 28, 2017, issued letter of reprimand to a brother for inappropriate conduct.
- August 4, 2017, issued letters to GLTX and Head of York Rite Houses on mutual fraternal relations with regular non-PHA York Rite Bodies
- October 24, 2017, issued letter to True Friend Lodge No. 145 with intent to arrest charter and consolidate if the membership is not increased to minimum required number of 7.
- November 11-12, presided over Mid-Winter Special Grand Session and 134 Fellowcraftmen were raised to Sublime degree of Master Masons. Issued charters to Rolling Stone Lodge U.D. of Baytown, Tx and Fairfield Lodge U.D. – number 452 – June 3, 2017 – Fairfield, Tx
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- February 12, 2018, I issued an expulsion letter for Un-Masonic conduct; Felony conviction and not disclosing it on petition.
- March 26, 2018, issued letter to Worshipful Masters addressing issues about courtesy work for petitioners that have received degree(s) in another Lodge, restoration vs. reinstatement and proficiency for advancement.
- April 3, 2018, issued letter on ruling on True Level Lodge No. 226 court case.
- April 20, 2018, I set Light From The East Lodge 333 UD to work assisted by DDGM Vendall Adderley, G. Lecturer Perez and a host of brothers from around the Jurisdiction

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 gradual 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.

There was an increase in building rentals this year. I must commend P.M. Marcus Thomas for serving as property manager responsible for rentals.

Necrology

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

“14 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. ²In 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. ³And 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, 43 brothers were called home to be with Our Heavenly Father in that Lodge of Perfection on high; the Celestial Lodge.

Membership

The report on our membership was part of the Grand Secretary's report. I believe the progress of our membership is due to the use of the background check and the scheduling of our degree work jurisdiction wide. Although the Grand Lodge's constitution set the qualifications for candidates, it is up to you as members to decide who you will recommend into your Lodge. The measuring stick should be, only recommend someone that you feel comfortable around your family.

Membership education and training is a key to retaining membership. I want to thank Grand Lecturer Johnny Perez and his Committee for implementing the 3 part Lodge Operations Certification Program. You can identify those who have completed the program by the blue ribbon medallion that they wear. It may be worn anytime you regale as a Master Mason (accept for funerals). The program will continue to be offered at the District level. We are in the process of developing the Grand Lodge Officers Training program to include District and Grand Lodge Level training.

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.

We welcome those of you who are desirous of serving the Grand Lodge as officers. The Board of Directors determined that the qualifications other than the constitutional requirements of being an actual Past Master for serving as Grand Lodge elective Officers are not documented. By virtue of being an elective officer, one also serves on the Board of Directors of the Grand Lodge. This requires administrative and managerial skills. It also requires additional time and commitment to the office. To

make this information available, an addendum questionnaire has been added to the Works Committee questionnaire. It gives the candidate an insight of what will be required of him when he becomes an elective officer.

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. I thank you for your time and effort you put into the job. I hope the revised reporting system and training has helped. I am happy to announce the appointment of DDGM of Districts 9-10, Past Mast Terrence Suber and designating .

Legal Issues

The True Level 226 Lodge lawsuit; On April 3, 2018 the Court of Appeals ruled that the County Court had no jurisdiction over the case filed by Gregory August and his followers because it dealt with the question of ownership. The Court vacated the final judgement and reinstated the initial ruling that the property belong to the constituent True Level Lodge No. 226. 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. and his Board of Directors. A complete report of the Foundation was given by the Chairman.

The Library/ Museum

The Library Museum Committee has provided a complete report of its activities.

Burial Relief Program

Burial relief checks have been made to all beneficiaries eligible to receive them. As per the Constitution, the Board of Directors recommend the rate for burial relief payments. At our winter Board of Directors meeting we reviewed the net revenue collected for burial relief over the past four years and determined that we had paid out 70% of it in burial relief payments over that time. Based on that number, it was recommended that the burial relief payments for this Masonic year be increased from \$350.00 to \$450.00 per year

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. On September 29, 2018 the Texas Grand Court of Ladies Of Circle Of Perfection was constituted. They met in their first Annual Session at the York Rite Weekend held in February 2018.

At the request of Most Excellent Grand High Priest Willie J. Tate, Grand Thrice Illustrious Master Troy A. Cousin and Right Eminent Grand Commander Ronald D. Gerac, the Priory of Knights of the York Cross of Honor and its Ladies Auxiliary, the Princesses of the York Cross of Honor become recognized bodies in the jurisdiction of Texas. The resolution has been turned over to the Resolution Committee and the Jurisprudence Committee for adoption. It requires a constitutional change.

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. Nothing has changed between the two Jurisdictions. There are two other Grand Lodges that have been organized from Prince Hall Grand Lodges, namely The MWPHGL of Virgin Islands and MWPHGL of Congo. Neither are members of the Conference of Grand Masters PHA nor or they recognized by this Grand Lodge.

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. The York Rite bodies are in the process of forming a relation with their GLTX counterparts.

Six of our Grand Lodge Officers attended the 99th Conference of Grand Masters PHA held at the Washington Dulles Airport Marriott, Dulles, Virginia. There was a change in leadership. The new President is PGM Dorian Glover of New York and the new Vice President is MWGM Philip David of District of Columbia. I would be remised if I didn't say that there is still disharmony and contention in the conference but I believe the new president is about adhering to the purpose of the Conference and that its Mission:

“The Conference is an opportunity for jurisdictions to come together to discuss common ideas, share information and recommend procedures that will lead to consistency and promote Prince Hall Masonry by addressing issues that will insure the future of Prince Hall Masons throughout the world.”

The main take-away from the conference this year was the presentation by Mr. Brown of the American Red Cross. He was the point of contact that we had with the Red Cross during the Hurricane Harvey Disaster. He discussed several programs that they have with some jurisdictions to provide smoke detectors for low income housing. The Red Cross provide the devices and the Masons in the designated areas provide the man-power to install them. This is a project that I would like for us to at least visit and see if this could be done in Texas.

The highlight of the year for me was to be invited to and attending the Tercentery Celebration of Freemasonry in London, United Kingdom, England, representing the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Texas. I along with 12 other Prince Hall Affiliated Grand Masters were part of the largest gathering of Grand Masters in the world, totaling 136 Grand Masters. The Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England received and greeted each one of us individually. The highlight of the three day celebration was hearing the name “Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Texas” and seeing our Grand Lodge emblem in lights at the program of over 4,000 Master Masons in Royal Albert Hall.

State of the Nation:

The preamble of the United States Constitution begins with these words,

“We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”

That statement is the foundation of what our founders thought this country should be. When I look around at the state of the country over the last year, I wonder where the United States lost its way.

Donald Trump was sworn in as President of the United States on January 20, 2017.

The next day, half a million marchers demonstrated for gender equality and against the new president during the Women's March on Washington.

The Country is enjoying a healthy economy marked by lower unemployment numbers and strong stock market performance.

Deputy U.S. Attorney General Rod Rosenstein appointed former FBI Director Robert Mueller in May as a special counsel to conduct the investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 presidential campaign.

The President says that there was no collusion and that none of the people working for him were involved in any improper activity. Paul Manafort, Trump Campaign Manager, his aid, Rick Gates, Michael Flynn, National Security Advisor, Advisors, Richard Gates and George Papadopoulos have been charged so far and the investigation continues.

North Korean threats to build a nuclear missile capable of reaching the United States were met by name calling and threats made by President Trump. The two men met to discuss the situation and have attempted to map out an agreement to limit North Korea's creation and use of nuclear weapons. Neither side trusts the other nor we will see what the outcome will be.

In early October, back-to-back bombshell reports in The New York Times and The New Yorker Magazine reported wide spread sexual harassment and assault allegations in the entertainment industry. These allegations have expanded to almost every area and industry in the country resulting in convictions, firings, civil suits and destroyed families and communities. The "ME TOO" movement continues to expand and has shown itself to be a formidable opponent.

On Oct. 1, a lone gunman unleashed a rapid-fire barrage of bullets down on a crowd of concertgoers from the 32nd floor of the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino in Las Vegas, killing 59 people and injuring more than 500 others. It was the deadliest mass shooting in modern American history.

On Nov. 5, an armor-clad shooter entered a church in rural Texas and opened fire, killing 26 parishioners and injuring at least 19 others.

May 18, 2018, 9 students and 1 teacher were killed at Santa Fe High School.
Senseless shootings. When will they end?

A hurricane season unlike any other came to a close in December after causing billions of dollars in damages, devastating those who were impacted by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria when they plowed through southeast Texas, Florida and the Caribbean.

Finally, the Trump Administration has implemented a policy which requires the children of migrants seeking asylum in this country from persecution and mistreatment in their countries to be separated from their parents while the parents go through a process of qualifying for legal entry into this country. Currently, more than 2000 children of all ages are separated and housed in government facilities that resemble prisons and they have not committed any crimes. This separation process reminds me of another time in the history of this country when members of families were separated from each and had no choice in the matter.

There is a phrase associated with the Statue of Liberty that says, "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free." Most Americans came to this country from somewhere. Some

came voluntarily and others came by force and we all were received in this country and given an opportunity to experience the American dream. It appears that President Trump and his followers believe that this phrase and ideology is fake news and not a valid idea. It seems like America has lost its way.

Recommendation:

1. The Grand Lodge collaborate with the Charitable Foundation again in the “Charity in the Community” program and “Lodge Building Initiative Assistance” program.
2. The amount for burial relief benevolence paid to beneficiaries increased from \$350.00 to \$450.00 for this Masonic Year effective the close of this Grand Session.
3. Recommend that the York Rite Honorary Bodies, Knights York Cross of Honor (KYCH) and Princess York Cross of Honor (PYCH) be added to the recognized Bodies of the Texas Prince Hall Masonic Family.
4. At request of DDGM Marcus Walker, I recommend that Gilbert Grove Lodge No. 363 U.D. receive its charter.

Conclusion:

As I close, I want to leave you with this thought. Because of the deterioration in the morality of the governmental leadership of our nation, Freemasonry may have to take the lead on being a fighter for taking a stance on the relevance of truth. In order for Texas Prince Hall Freemasonry to survive and thrive, it has to remain relevant to our values and world needs. Relevant meaning “closely connected or appropriate to what is being done or considered”. In some cases, Freemasonry must work hand in hand with our faith in God, love for our family and charity for our fellowman. I pray that we stand strong and meet that challenge.

I remain...

Fraternally yours,

Wilbert M. Curtis

Wilbert M. Curtis,

M.: W.: Grand Master

The Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Texas

| From Date | To Date | Grand Master Itinerary |
|-----------|-----------|--|
| 14-Jun-17 | 18-Jun-17 | MWPHGL Tx 142nd GL Session 2601 Avenue of the Stars Frisco, TX 75034 USA |
| 20-Jun-17 | | Meeting with hotel in Addison at Dallas/Addison Marriott Quorum by the Galleria |
| 19-Jun-17 | | Issued letter to LOCOP about Presentation made during Family Banquet |
| 25-Jun-17 | 26-Jun-17 | MWPHGL New Mexico GL Session Albuquerque NM |
| 27-Jun-17 | | Office visit to update deputies and appointed officers |
| 28-Jun-17 | | Wrote Ltr to Lyons Jr No. 290 on investments |
| 10-Jul-17 | | Charitable Foundation Conference Call |
| 11-Jul-17 | 13-Jul-17 | MWPHGL of Missouri GL Session ST. LOUIS, MO. 63134 |
| 14-Jul-17 | 16-Jul-17 | Robert E. Connor Youth Camp Cathedral Oaks Retreat Center |
| 17-Jul-17 | 18-Jul-17 | MWPHGL Alabama GL Session |
| 27-Jul-17 | | Issued letter to Bro. Alton Roundtree requesting donation of his books for library |
| 28-Jul-17 | | Issued letter of reprimand to brother for inappropriate conduct |
| 31-Jul-17 | | Conference call - GL Session Closeout By phone |
| 8/4/2017 | | Issued Letters to GLTX and Head of York Rite Houses on Fraternal relations |
| 19-Aug-17 | | GL Board of Directors Quarterly Meeting Jurisdiction |
| 14-Sep-17 | | Issued Harvey Disaster Effectuated Ltrs to Head of house and affected districts |
| 14-Sep-17 | | PHCF Board meeting Harvey Hurricane Disaster Relief |
| 16-Sep-17 | | Dist. 19 Black and &White Ball, San Antonio, Texas |
| 17-Sep-17 | | Prince Hall Americanism Day - Westridge Park First Baptist Church, San Antonio, TX |
| 23-Sep-17 | | GL Board Meeting |
| 28-Sep-17 | | DDGM Pre-Mid Winter Session Conference Call Meeting |
| 29-Sep-17 | 30-Sep-17 | Lone Star Commandery Guild Mid Year Conference MWPHGL of Texas |
| 4-Oct-17 | 10-Oct-17 | United Supreme Council Jacksonville, Fl |
| 24-Oct-17 | | Issued Letter to True Friend Lodge No 145 - Intent to arrest charter and consolidate |
| 28-Oct-17 | 1-Nov-17 | UGLE Tercentery Celebration, London England |
| 11-Nov-17 | 12-Nov-17 | 2017 Mid-Winter Grand Session MWPHGL of Texas |
| 2-Dec-17 | | Hopeful Lodge No. 78 125th Anniversary Banquet 216 Falls St |
| 16-Dec-17 | | Christmas Gift Give-Away MWPHGL of Texas |
| 13-Jan-18 | | GL Board of Directors Quarterly Meeting Jurisdiction |
| 18-Jan-18 | | Meeting with hotel Addison at Dallas/Addison Marriott Quorum by the Galleria |
| 21-Jan-18 | | Cornerstone Laying Ceremony St Paul Baptist Church, San Antonio, Tx |
| 1-Feb-18 | 4-Feb-18 | York Rite Weekend Conference Courtyard by Marriott Killeen |
| 2/10/2018 | | Lockhart and Luling to look at Carver School and Reed Lodge No 14 |
| 12-Feb-18 | | Issued expulsion letter for Un-Masonic conduct - Felony conviction |
| 12-Feb-18 | | Wrote letter to Logos Lodge No 659 to address member felony questions |
| 15-Feb-18 | | Transport Reed Lodge No. 14 furnishing to GL for Library |
| 22-Feb-18 | 25-Feb-18 | Arkansas Grand Lodge 146th Grand Session Pine Bluff |
| 23-Feb-18 | 25-Feb-18 | Conference Call about Carver School bldg. - Lockhart, Tx |
| 3-Mar-18 | | Attended Pride of Killeen Lodge No. 620 Mortgage Note burning ceremony |
| 3-Mar-18 | 4-Mar-18 | Killeen Lodges Joint Banquet, Killeen, Tx |
| 9-Mar-18 | 11-Mar-18 | Texas Council of Deliberations - El Paso Radisson Hotel El Paso Airport |
| 17-Mar-18 | | Nolan Creek Masonic Lodge No. 227 Harris Community Center, Belton, Tx |

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| 22-Mar-18 | | CoGM Conference Call - Home |
| 24-Mar-18 | | Heroines of Jericho Rahab Day - Texas City, Tx |
| 26-Mar-18 | | Issued letter to Worshipful Masters addressing three items of concerns |
| 2-Apr-18 | | Met Barbara Hawkins of the Gervin Foundation in San Antonio |
| 3-Apr-18 | | Issued letter on Ruling of True Level Lodge No 226 court case |
| 14-Apr-18 | 16-Apr-18 | Most Worshipful Union Grand Lodge of Florida Grand Session |
| 21-Apr-18 | | District 24 quarterly meeting at Killeen Texas |
| 23-Apr-18 | | Wrote letter providing information to family member on Bro. Mack Hill |
| 26-Apr-18 | | Baylor University President Breakfast McMullen-Connally Faculty Center |
| 26-Apr-18 | | Set Light From The East U.D. Lodge to work, Waco, Tx |
| 27-Apr-18 | 28-Apr-18 | Dewitt Lodge No 429 Lodge Hall Dedication and Cornerstone Laying |
| 3-May-18 | | CoGM Conference Call 731 Seminole Trail |
| 5-May-18 | | Keynote Speaker for District 24 Black and White Ball, KC Hall, Killeen, Tx |
| 16-May-18 | 20-May-18 | Conference of Grand Masters 99th Washington |
| 23-May-18 | | Office visit for work |
| 25-May-18 | 28-May-18 | Northern Supreme Council Session Sheraton downtown, Denver, CO |