

PAST MASTER'S INSTALLATION

(Suggested for use during a Past-Master's Night ceremony)

ORIGINALLY WRITTEN BY:

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WEST BEND LODGE #138

FEBRUARY 1995

Revised and submitted by the Esoteric Committee, Jan. 1996

(It is intended that the current Worshipful Master perform this ceremony; however, a Father, Sibling, close relative, or close friend who is a Master Mason may also. If ladies are to be present, especially the Past Master's lady, it is essential that the Lodge close or go informal first, or simply open publicly. It is also hoped that the lodge would exercise diligent effort to attract all its Past Masters and their ladies to this event and honor their attendance and past contributions with a special ceremony, program, or dinner.)

WM: Brother Senior Deacon, please escort Brother Past-Master (and his lady) to the East.

You, along with all the other Past Masters of this lodge, have been a great source of inspiration in preparing me to carry out the work of Freemasonry as Master of this Lodge.

No Master is chosen by his seniority, but is elected by his merit. As in all earthly endeavors, there is a phrase that most uniquely applies to those who have earned a position of leadership. "From the ranks you arose, and to the ranks you shall return."

Brother _____, you will now be returning to join the elite company of those brethren who have distinguished themselves by serving their respective Lodges as its Master, and now proudly wear the title PAST MASTER.

You have suffered the trials and tribulations of leading a Lodge, and as in all endeavors, at each point you learned something that would prepare you for the future; be it in Masonry, or in life itself.

As you progressed through the line of officers, it prepared you for many things, and often one is not fully prepared to be the Master of a Lodge until he has served as Master of a Lodge. Though your year as Master may have been short compared to the calendar of time, the designs, which you laid down on the trestleboard during your term will inspire and bear fruit for many years to come.

Your experiences of having served as the Master of a Lodge has prepared you for a greater service to mankind and to Masonry. You may, and will, be called upon by any of the future Masters of this Lodge to aid and assist in perpetuating the ideals and traditions of Freemasonry; practicing and teaching in all stations in life those excellent tenets of our institution: Friendship, Morality, and Brotherly Love.

I now have the pleasure of presenting you with your Past Master's certificate and card.

<Done. >

The Past Master's jewel is commonly recognized as a square and compasses extended sixty degrees on the fourth part of a circle, or quadrant, with a sun in the center. This is a very fitting jewel, as its components speak volumes to all who truly understand Freemasonry, and are certainly worth reiterating on this occasion.

The square is dedicated to the Master, and is the proper emblem of his office. By the square, Freemasonry instills in its members the quality of virtue. We continually attempt to square our actions by the square of virtue, which is exactly what is meant when we hear "Square up with him," or "A square deal." It is the type of behavior we expect from a man

who has demonstrated his skills as a Master, and will now practice them forever as a Past-Master.

Freemasonry uses the compasses to impress the ideal of circumspection. As the compasses draw a complete circle, we continually use this tool to remind us that our behavior, desires, and passions should be equally circumspect and always kept within due bounds. If done successfully, this tool aids us to be referred to by all as "well-rounded individuals." As before, this type of levelheaded, controlled behavior is expected of a Past Master, and should serve to remind him to set an example for all whom he now leads. The significance of the compasses open to an angle of sixty degrees is that it cannot help but form a square when bisected with the arc.

Since the Past Master is equipped with the knowledge and tools to form a square, this jewel represents that ideal to all who are still striving to attain it. The sun in the center can take on a myriad of meanings. To Freemasons, it has two primary meanings. First, it is a symbol of light; a term used by Masons and the world to mean knowledge. It is believed that you have now acquired sufficient knowledge in Masonry to be considered a "Master" of the craft. It is now your responsibility as a Past Master to impart it to others.

Second, and undoubtedly most important, it is an emblem of Divine Providence; God's power, His goodness, omnipresence, and eternity that Masonry teaches should live in the heart of every human being. In that respect, let it mean to you as a Past-Master that which is stated in the Bible, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven."

(You may use the Optional below for the wife to invest jewel.)

I now have the pleasure of presenting you with the Jewel of

your Office.

(Optional) (Lady _____) We recognize and appreciate the many sacrifices you have made these last several years while our brother was preparing himself to be Master of this lodge. It is a way of life. And though the administration of this lodge has occupied a great deal of his and your time, the virtues inculcated by this fraternity have no doubt had an impact on his character, demeanor, and behavior which I am sure you can attest have indeed positively changed him and improved the quality of life for your family. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to give you the honor of investing our new Past Master with the Jewel of his Office. <WM hands the jewel to the lady, who invests the PM.>

It is also my pleasure to present you with your Past Master's apron, adorned with the jewel so important to your station. You are free to wear it at any communication of this lodge. Wear it with equal pleasure to yourself, and honor to the fraternity.
<Given. >

(Optional: Past Master's Apron Presentation)

Past Master's Apron Presentation

Brother, at your initiation into this fraternity you were presented a lambskin or white leathern apron and were taught that it is an emblem of innocence and the badge of a Mason. As you progressed through the various stages of the craft, you were instructed how to wear your apron as our ancient brethren wore theirs. Finally, when you were raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason, you were presented with your own lambskin and were admonished to live so that no act of yours might stain its spotless purity.

After years of toil in the quarries of Masonry, wherein you did preserve its spotless purity, you have advanced through the chairs and, because our lodge held you in high esteem, were

duly elected Worshipful Master of this lodge. No one but a Past Master has a full conception of the hours spent and the sacrifices made on behalf of the interest of the craft.

It is therefore fitting, and with sincere appreciation and gratitude of those sacrifices made and in recognition of a job well done, that I have the pleasure of presenting you with another apron, your Past Master 's apron, adorned with the jewel so important to your new station. Congratulations.

<Given. >

Finally, may you wear and display these symbols with the honor and dignity they represent. The station of a Past Master cannot be honored by the brethren if it is not equally honored by its possessor. It is your ultimate responsibility for maintaining the respect and dignity of that title and station.

It is an enviable title so long as you make it so by your zeal, interest, devoted labors, and continued attendance.

Brethren, please join me in thanking our brother (and his lady) with a fine round of applause.

(Optional) Brother (Past Master) _____ , it is my pleasure to give you the floor, and we would be pleased for you to share a few words with us. <WM turns the gavel over to the Past Master. >

WM: Brother Senior Deacon, you will escort our Brother (and his lady) to his (their) seat(s).