

Master's Installation Message
December 11, 2009

- I would like to once again welcome the Wisdom Lodge family to this installation of officers for the 2010 Masonic year. This family includes both our lodge members and their families, as well as our guests who are the extended family of this Lodge. It is indeed an honor and a humbling experience to stand before you having just been installed as Master to lead this Lodge along with the fine officers seated before us.

- When I first walked through the doors of this Lodge, I was looking only to find a place where I fit in and expand my knowledge of this Fraternity – I had no thought of being in the position I now find myself in. I found the brethren and their ladies extended a warm hand and made me feel welcome. As I spent more time here, I saw a place where the brethren lived by the foundation of this Fraternity. I then started bringing Beth to functions, and she too always received a warm welcome and was made to feel like she was an important part of the Wisdom Lodge family. We realized that with this family, we could feel as if we was coming home to a place where everyone had genuine concern for each other's welfare, coming home to a place where it was important to lead a life with integrity and honor where one's word is their bond, coming home to a nurturing place to grow and share experiences with this caring family, in short coming home to a blue lodge which is the foundation of this great Fraternity. Over time, through my association with the Lodges of both our old and current district, I saw this theme of an extended family demonstrated through our interaction. I had the pleasure of attending the installation of officers of two of our District Lodges last weekend and the feeling of these Lodges being part of our extended family was evident. Many of you know I was in the United States Air Force and have a strong sense of duty, honor, and country. I saw a sense of duty, integrity, and caring in this Lodge that provided a feeling of coming home to a family that in many ways was similar to the experience as a part of the military family. And as with the military when meeting other members throughout the world, there is an indissoluble chain of sincere affection that ties us together.

- With my profession I have the great fortune of spending time in both England and Australia. In both cases I have had the honor of meeting with brethren of these jurisdictions and there too, found I was welcomed as a member of their extended family, a place where based on an email or phone call (along with a Letter of Introduction from Grand Lodge) I would be picked up by a representative of a Lodge to attend their meeting, and hop in their car never having met them before – something not many people would do in today's society. I believe this demonstrates that this great Masonic Fraternity is a worldwide family sharing a common foundation – a foundation that begins with the Blue Lodge.

- It is my sincere hope that anyone who walks through the doors of this Blue Lodge will be met with a similar experience whether it be one of our brethren or their lady, our widows, visiting brethren and their family and friends, a prospective member, or another visitor. I would like to see our Lodge live by a philosophy that there are no strangers – just friends we have not yet met who will be welcomed as a part of our extended family.

- Last year, Most Worshipful Adamson's theme was Applied Freemasonry, where we were to look at the teachings of the Blue Lodge and ensure we are living by them. This year Most Worshipful Nagel's theme is Coming Home. Coming home to the Blue Lodge, the foundation of

the Fraternity – a Fraternity that would not exist without the Blue Lodge. I believe the two themes cannot be separated. We should strive to work to improve and be a part of our Blue Lodge and at the same time contemplate and endeavor to live by the teachings of the three degrees.

- There are many good Fraternal organizations. However, one of the keys that sets Masonry apart is what is exemplified through the degrees. It is, therefore, important to continually strive for a greater understanding of the teachings of the craft. As part of working toward this, I have set a goal of not less than five Master Mason proficiencies during 2010, will establish a Saturday morning mentoring session once a quarter to better develop all of our younger members, and provide better tools to equip our candidates coaches to assist candidates as they familiarize themselves with the lessons demonstrated when they went through their degrees. Another important aspect of the fraternity is caring for each other. Most Worshipful Nagel has challenged each Lodge in California to reach out to the membership to encourage attendance at the February Stated Meeting creating the largest gathering of Master Masons throughout the jurisdiction and then work to keep the interest of the members so they will want to come home to the blue lodge where their Masonic journey began. At the same time we will establish some other outreach programs – one that will on a on a consistent basis reach out to our members who are unable to attend as well as our widows, ensuring they know the Lodge is there for them, offering our assistance, and ensuring any issues requiring the attention of the Lodge leadership are brought forward. Also, we will engage in a more formal, ongoing outreach program to contact those who either did not complete the degrees or who completed the degrees but never came back – looking to see what we can do to re-spark their interest in the Fraternity.

As other activities to encourage Masonic development, we will encourage participation in the Lodge Management Certification Program for those working their way through the line to better understand the administrative side of the Lodge, in order to understand our Youth Orders better encourage visitation at two functions for each Order through the year with one of the DeMolay visitations occurring in March when they have a jurisdiction wide degree ceremony for both of the DeMolay degrees, and as a more social event we will host form of festive board called a Table Lodge in June.

- These are important activities but as is said in one of the degrees, man was formed for social and active life. As such, the social aspect of the Lodge is also important. We will continue with our traditional activities – our Sweethearts Brunch in February, although this year we will try the Castaways in Burbank as a new venue and the Memorial Day Weekend Spring Fling are a couple examples. We will look both at our own Lodge activities and joint activities with other Lodges. Whether a current officer or not, for those that are able, on Wednesday practice days we will reestablish the ability to meet earlier for fellowship and mentoring. Also, whether as a Wisdom Lodge activity or jointly with another Lodge, we will look at periodic informal weekend activities. One of the 1st will be a joint Super Bowl pot luck with Pasadena Lodge. Other ideas that have been put forth are an evening at the Hollywood Bowl, a summer Dodger Game, visiting the Magic Castle. The options are endless. However, these activities are based on what your interests in so we need to know what you want. You should all feel free to contact me or any officer of the Lodge if there are informal activities you would like to see.

- There are two last topics I would like to address. First, we all know that Masonry has much symbolism. There are three aspects of today's installation that have special symbolic meaning to me that I would like to share. This gavel which was used to open Lodge earlier today and

presented during this ceremony was first presented by my wife Beth to our oldest daughter, Erica, one of our two Past Honored Queens, when she was installed as a Job's Daughter Honored Queen in December, six years ago, a gavel which she used throughout her term. Erica is currently living in the Bay area and could not be with us today. The Masonic Bible presented by Worshipful Stu Wright was first presented to my Grandfather 60 years ago next month when he went through the Degrees of Masonry Ft Bragg Lodge #667 in North Carolina. Lastly, the two reserved chairs in the NE corner are to honor my mom Barbara who was taken from us at far too young an age 21 years ago and my dad Andy who was reunited with my mom only 15 months ago – both of whom I am sure are looking down proud of my association with such an outstanding organization.

- In conclusion, I would like to read one paragraph of the letter I received notifying me of my election to receive the degrees of Freemasonry – a paragraph that many of the brethren read when they received their notification.

“The spirit with which you approach your Masonic experience will determine largely how much it will mean to you. One seeking material reward in some selfish form is likely to derive little benefit. One with “a sincere wish to be serviceable to his fellow creatures,” as expressed in his application – thereby entering with a desire to give of himself in service, sacrifice, and fellowship – will surely reap a hundred-fold”

- I wanted to read this for two reasons. First, many of our guests and possibly the ladies of the brethren may have not seen or heard those words before. And secondly, for some brethren, it may have been a while since they have seen or heard them. These are important words everyone should consider not only when applying for the Degrees of Freemasonry but I would suggest also throughout their Masonic journey as a guide of their participation in this craft. It is my sincere hope that long after this line of officers has been followed by future outstanding men sitting in these chairs, this year will be looked at as one where the Officers of this lodge were guided by this precept – serving the whole Wisdom Lodge family and this great Fraternity with distinction and honor.