

The Grand York Rite Bodies of Freemasonry of Florida

The Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons • The Grand Council of Royal and Select Masons • The Grand Commandery of Knights Templar

JOINT (SINGLE) RESOLUTION FORM

Date 1/21/22

Originating Body(s) Grand Chapter - Committee on Work

City/State/Zip Largo, Florida 33771

Officer(s) Charles R. Jordan, DDGHP, Chairman

TO: Grand Chapter Grand Council _____ Grand Commandery _____

Regulation to be amended (Article, Section, Page, Paragraph, Line, etc.)

Grand Chapter Constitution - Appendix D

Grand Council _____

Grand Commandery _____

LANGUAGE TO BE AMENDED (deleted, changed, etc.)

Revisions to the Past Masters Degree section for clarity.

Identification of amended Article, Section, Page, Paragraph, Line, etc.

(continued on reverse)

Grand Chapter Appendix D - Section 3

Grand Council _____

Grand Commandery _____

NEW LANGUAGE

See attached.

(continued on reverse)

Received by Grand Secretary/Recorder

(Date) 1-28-22

Circulated by Grand Secretary/Recorder

(Date) _____

Presented to Grand Chapter

(Date) _____

Result _____

Presented to Grand Council

(Date) _____

Result _____

Presented to Grand Commandery

(Date) _____

Result _____

Marshal then passes from the N end of the semi-circle to the S end, then to the S.D. and Candidate, asking _____.

2.1.4 Obligation Reminders

LEARN correct Due Guard and Sign.

LEARN the true Grip.

At Obligation, Companions shall form two lines, one on either side of the Altar, from E to W.

2.2 Robes

When this degree is conferred in robes, the R.W.M. does not, at any time, remove his crown during prayers, Obligation, Traditional Law or Charges.

If this Degree is not conferred in robes, when the time arises for The Traditional Law, the R.W.M. removes his hat. Whether or not the Degree is conferred in robes, the R.W.M. goes to the Altar and reads the Law from a small Bible. The R.W.M. always stays E of the Altar and the Great Lights are never disturbed.

2.3 Large Classes

2.3.1 Classes Composed of Less Than Six

In classes of under six, all Candidates shall participate in all floor work and all shall kneel at Altar for Obligation.

2.3.2 Classes Composed of Six or More

In classes of over five, one Candidate may be used for the whole class, balance of class to be seated, preferably on the NE side line. Except that all Candidates must be received and all Candidates must receive the Obligation at the Altar.

In classes of over five, only one Candidate needs to have Cable-Tow.

At Obligation, in classes of over five, place one Candidate at the Altar kneeling, balance in even lines from N to S, standing with right hand over heart.

There should be adequate Bibles available for the SD and assistants to use after the Obligation.

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3. PAST MASTERS DEGREE

3.1 General Decorum

In conferring this degree, there should be no levity or horse play. All work should be performed in a very solemn manner.

3.2 Floor Work

SD (after preparing candidate, enters without alarm, placing candidate in west facing east). (Past Master Candidate uses Master Masons Apron).

Each Candidate MUST be inducted into the Oriental Chair, including the receiving of the jewel, crown, and gavel. (Seat the Candidate one time). However, it is not necessary for the R.W.M. to give his explanations to each, only to the last one.

After induction into the chair, Candidates should be placed on the NE side of the Lodge. Last Candidate should receive jewel, crown and gavel with R.W.M. giving explanation through line 5, page 51. Then, taking Candidates by the hand, passes other Candidates, asking them to join hands, and leads them W of the Altar and leaving them, (preferably in a semi-circle) goes to E side of the Altar, where he begins with line 6, page 51.

3.3 Obligation Reminder

At the Obligation, lines will be formed by the Companions on either side of the Altar, from the E to W.

3.4 Ritual Modification

Insert the following ritual into the General Grand Ritual; page 47, after Rubric, between lines 2 and 3 prior to presenting the candidate before the altar in the west.

S.D. recites -- My Brothers: The Past Master s Degree, unlike all other degrees of Freemasonry, sheds no light upon itself. It was formerly conferred only on Masters of Lodges, to instruct them in the duties they owed the Lodges over which they were called to preside, and likewise the duties of the Brethren to the Chair; but we, as Royal Arch Masons, confer this degree, not only as a preliminary step, but also for the more important purpose of guarding us against a breach of our Masonic Obligations. The conferring, at this time, of a degree which has no historical connection with the other Capitular degrees is an apparent anomaly, which, however, is indebted for its existence to the following circumstances:

Originally, when Royal Arch Masonry was under the government of Symbolic Lodges, in which the Royal Arch Degree was then always conferred,

it was a regulation that no one could receive it unless he had previously presided as the Master of that or some other Lodge, and this restriction was made because the Royal Arch was deemed too important a degree to be conferred only on Master Masons. But, by confining the Royal Arch to those only who had been elected as the presiding officer of their Lodges, the extension of the degree would have been materially circumscribed, and its usefulness greatly impaired and the Grand Master often granted, upon due petition, his dispensation to permit certain Master Masons to (although not elected to preside over their Lodge) Pass The Chair, which was a technical term, intended to designate a brief ceremony, in which the candidate was invested with the mysteries of a Past Master, and, like him, entitled to advance in Masonry as far as the Royal Arch, or the perfection and consummation of the third degree. When, however, the control of the Royal Arch was taken from the Symbolic Lodges and entrusted to a distinct organization--that, namely of Chapters--the regulation continued to be observed, for it was doubtful to many if it could legally be abolished, and as the law still requires that the August degree of Royal Arch shall be restricted to Past Masters, our candidates are required to Pass The Chair simply as a preparation and qualification towards being invested with the solemn instructions of the Royal Arch.

Your receiving this degree confers upon you no official rank outside of the Chapter. The honors and peculiar privileges belonging to the Chair of Symbolic Lodges are confined exclusively to those who have been duly elected to preside over and govern such Lodges, and who have been called Actual Past Masters, whereas, those who receive the degree in the Chapter are termed Virtual Past Masters, for, although they are invested with the secrets of the degree, yet they are not entitled to the rights and prerogatives of Actual Past Masters.

The brief explanation is made in order that you may understand why this degree is being conferred upon you, and you permitted to preside as Master in the Chair.

S.D. (Continues) Advance on the step of an EA, give the due guard and penal sign, advance on the step of a FC, give the due guard and penal sign, advance on the step of a MM, give the due guard and penal sign, advance on the step of a Mk M, give the due guard and penal sign, advance (SD continues with line 4, page 47 of the Ritual). (SD should inspect each step, due guard and sign, and correct if necessary).

S.D. (At command of R.W.M., page 49, line 34, conducts Candidates toward the East, but on the South side of the Lodge, having Candidates in a line from East to West, and facing East.)

R.W.M. It is proper, at this time, that you be instructed how to use the gavel. One rap (demonstrates), calls the Lodge to attention, abates all discussion in process at that time, restores order during confusion and moderates' decorum. Two raps (demonstrates) calls up the Craft for devotions, to honor dignitaries and such other usages as prescribed by Masonic Law. (Craft arises). One rap at this time seats the Craft. SD conducts Candidate to the R.W.M. (R.W.M. continues with ~~line 35, page 49~~ jewel investiture on page 49 of the ritual). He should remove his Jewel, by removing his hat with right hand and Jewel with left, then investing candidate--only a regulation Master's Jewel should be used).

R.W.M. (Continues with Ritual ~~to line 2, page 50, and presents through presentation of the~~ Gavel on page 50. At this time there should be confusion, this confusion should consist only of shuffling of feet.) After confusion, R.W.M. continues with---

You have witnessed the force contained in the Master's Gavel. You have also observed how confusion can be controlled by the Master when a Lodge is convened.

When the Master first used the Gavel in opening the Lodge, he was saying, in effect, by Virtue of the Authority in me vested--by election and installation--I now take possession of this Lodge and this possession remains with me during my tenure of office.

Complete obedience to the Gavel is one of the ancient customs of our Order. Rarely, if ever, is it questioned, and when it is--that Brother stands in a position of being requested to leave the Lodge room. His refusal to respond makes him liable to Un-Masonic Conduct and Trial. When that brother was raised to the Sublime Degree, he assumed its obligations and responsibilities--which he never relinquished as long as he is a Mason.

A Master, in his Lodge, has complete jurisdiction. He may refuse a motion, declare a Brother out of order, limit debate or permit it, declare a Lodge at recess, and many other things, all with the Gavel.

No Master may pay a higher tribute to a Brother than to hand him the Gavel, as we have entrusted to you. The fundamental duty of a Master is the peace and harmony of the Lodge. His success depends upon how he uses the Gavel. How important it is, then, that he use this great power sparingly and with a hand of justice to all Brothers.

~~R.W.M.~~—The Gavel is the symbol of Authority. This symbolism began in the E.A. degree. It is one of two simple instruments, the twenty-four-inch gauge and common gavel. However, the Speculative Mason is taught not to smooth and polish the marble for the Builder's use, but to cleanse and purify his heart from every vice and imperfection that would render it unfit for a place in the Spiritual Temple of his body.