



Address
of
THE MOST WORSHIPFUL
RICHARD J. KESSLER
GRAND MASTER
of
MASONS
in the
STATE OF NEW YORK



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Richard T. Schulz
Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge
of Free and Accepted Masons of the State of New York

**ADDRESS OF THE MOST WORSHIPFUL
RICHARD J. KESSLER, Grand Master of Masons in the
State of New York, to the District Deputy Grand Masters
and Grand Lodge Staff Officers for the years 2021-2024 in
the Daniel D. Tompkins Memorial Chapel, Masonic Care
Community at Utica, on Saturday afternoon, June 25, 2022.**

Right Worshipful Deputy Grand Master, Most Worshipful Past Grand Masters, and colleagues of Grand Lodge, Brethren, Ladies and guests: I am honored and privileged to welcome each of you to the annual Investiture Ceremony of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the State of New York at the historic Daniel D. Tompkins Memorial Chapel in Utica, New York. It is great to once again assemble with the various Grand Lodge Corporations and our Symbolic Lodge leadership team. Brethren, these past couple of years due in part to the pandemic have been certainly difficult and filled with unknown roadblocks and setbacks, yet each of you have endured and endeavored to keep Masonry alive and well in the Empire State. Your steadfast commitment and positive outlook have shored up our beloved Fraternity, which has been built on the many successes that you have accomplished during the stewardship of your respective districts and lodges. You have labored long and hard in the quarries of Freemasonry and have already left an indelible mark on your successes for others to build upon. For your due diligence, I thank you.

Brethren, we are social creatures, and we thrive when we are surrounded by family, friends, and our extended Masonic Brotherhood. Once again, our Masonic districts have made their annual pilgrimage to our Campus in Utica. They have rekindled old friendships and developed some new ones.

This is who we are! We are indeed a family bound together by that mystical and beloved tie called Freemasonry. I am very pleased to say that we can once again gather together in person. How truly wonderful it is for Brethren to meet, break-bread, perform our Masonic obligations and share our love for one another! Amen and Amen!

This weekend we laid out the designs for our trestle board for the upcoming two years and beyond. We have laid down the tracks and have empowered you all with the proper tools and utensils, initiative, and guidance to bring excitement, education, camaraderie, and leadership to the lodges in your district. It is my sincere hope that you will leave these solemn ceremonies energized, enthused and motivated. I believed with a new and invigorated Leadership and Educational Services Committee armed with new tools and approaches to motivate our jurisdiction, including the Maxwell Leadership Program, of which I will elaborate later in this address. We my Brothers are headed for renewed greatness. New York is once again leading the way.

Acknowledgments

R.:W.:Steven Adam Rubin, Deputy Grand Master, thank you for your friendship and your support of our initiatives, plans and activities. I thank you for your advice, eagerness to learn and willingness to be part of our team. Our Grand Wardens, R.:W.:Robert L. Hogan, Jr. and R.:W.:Peter C. Stein, you have willingly accepted all calls to perform special jobs, which I have called on you to do. R.:W.:Joseph J. Saglimbene, Grand Treasurer, and R.:W.:Richard T. Schulz, Grand Secretary, you have worked tirelessly for our Craft.

I thank you for all you do for our Fraternity and for our Grand Lodge. The continuity that a Grand Secretary brings to our jurisdiction is what keeps us ever moving forward. Your counsel on many issues has proved invaluable.

I will forever be indebted to the Past Grand Masters for their support, counsel, and encouragement. The collective expertise, and experience of the Past Grand Masters is not only a great resource to draw upon, but they provide a strong continuity of leadership that without question provides a solid footing upon which to build this wonderful legacy called Freemasonry. I both salute and thank you for your service to the Craft.

To all of my District Deputy Grand Masters and Grand Lodge Staff Officers, you have worked diligently to promote and implement the programs of Grand Lodge. Further, you have worked tirelessly to make our Districts and Lodges the best they can be. Although your tenure has been short, having accepted your respective office at our Annual Communication this past May, you have hit the road running bringing my message to the Lodges on your official visitations, as well as promoting our education courses, and supporting all of the activities, which you do in your Districts. To these special Brothers we all owe a deep debt of gratitude. My Brothers, thank you for all you do for our Grand Lodge, your Districts, and Lodges.

Our Grand Lecturer, R.:W.:Richard C. Friedman, in tandem with the Custodians of the Work, the Ritual Renaissance Project Committee and the team of Assistant Grand Lecturers has worked hard to teach and explain the importance of our Masonic Ritual. These Brothers continue to offer help to our Lodges to present our incoming Brethren with the excellence they deserve when taking our three degrees.

Thank you my Brothers for the hard and important work that you do. Please give a great shout out to our Great Friend, R.:W.:Friedman. He has persevered where others may have taken a well-deserved rest. With a new functioning kidney – Watch Out! Can I hear Gung-Ho!!

The absolute success of our jurisdiction would be incomplete, if I did not acknowledge with great fondness and gratitude the commitment, devotion and trustworthiness freely given to the Craft by our Three Precious Jewels, namely the Trustees of the Masonic Hall and Home, the Directors of the Masonic Medical Research Institute, and the Trustees of the Chancellor Robert R Livingston Masonic Library.

TRUSTEES OF THE MASONIC HALL & HOME

The Trustees of the Masonic Hall and Home do an outstanding job of caring for our guests on the campus of the Masonic Care Community in Utica, New York. They ensure the proper operation of our entire Masonic Care Community. Without hesitation, they ensure that we always keep the promise we have made to our members. The Trustees also maintain and continue to upgrade and maintain our New Rochelle Campus as well as that of our beautiful headquarters, the Masonic Hall on West 23rd Street in New York City. They abide by a simple mantra:

“Promises Made... Promises Kept.”

The Trustees not only manage and maintain the real property of our Fraternity, but they are an important part of our efforts to help support our youth. Each summer the Trustees operate Camp Turk at Round Lake which is in the upper Adirondacks.

They have sessions for male and female campers. This year we have added a Co-Ed session which we are confident will be an overwhelming success. In addition, the Trustees have provided Educational assistance grants to the children and grandchildren of our members. These grants allow the recipients to take care of the many incidental expenses that are part of their education. Because they are grants and not scholarships, they have much more leeway as to how they may use it.

The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance, improvement, and financing of our entire healthcare operation. All levels of care are provided at our Utica Campus including, Assisted Living, full-time nursing and multiple rehabilitation protocols. This is a Masonic Care Community that we can all be proud of. I want to thank them all for helping us honor our obligation to provide for not only our Masonic Family, but also the community.

Lastly, I would be remiss, if I did not also acknowledge that our Trustees have done a yeoman's job in providing a loving touch to the care of one of our Nation's historic landmarks, the DeWint House and Brother George Washington's Headquarters at Tappan, New York. Thank you for a job well done.

Will all of the Trustees of our Masonic Hall & Home please rise.

GRAND HONORS

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DIRECTORS OF THE MASONIC MEDICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Since 1958 the Masonic Medical Research Institute (MMRI), formerly known as the Masonic Medical Research Laboratory has been involved in the extremely valuable study of various diseases. Diseases whose destruction reign that ravage otherwise healthy individuals. The world renown MMRI is supported not only the members of our Fraternity but through many sister jurisdictions. They also earn countless independent grants that allow them to pursue the cause, treatment, and sometimes even a cure for these debilitating diseases.

The work of the Directors of the Masonic Medical Research Institute is inspiring as they help not only our members but all mankind. They are working on cures and strategies to ease the devastating effects of those afflicted. The list of areas of study are vast; but let me list just a few: Heart, Lupus, SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome), Alzheimer, and Autism. I am extremely happy to announce that they are on the cusp of entering the study of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, its causes and eventual treatment protocols. I am most proud that they have entered into a partnership with The Battle Within Foundation on this research. Consider joining the newly formed 1958 Club. It will allow you to support our Institute by pledging \$19.58 per month to help fund its mission

Will all the Directors of our Masonic Medical Research Institute please rise.

GRAND HONORS

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TRUSTEES OF THE CHANCELLOR ROBERT R LIVINGSTON MASONIC LIBRARY

Lastly, but certainly not the least, our Livingston Masonic Library Trustees continue their responsibility toward the education of our members and the preservation of our history for future generations. You are indeed special men and Masons. Our library has made great strides under the direction of our Library Director, Brother Alexander Vastola, and Librarian, Mr. Joseph Patzner. The Trustees of the Livingston Masonic Library under the astute leadership of their President, R.W. Stephen S. King have formed a perfect partnership with the Library Staff and the membership propelling us into the 21st century.

Our Masonic Library is located on the 14th floor of the Masonic Hall in New York City. I encourage each of you to plan to make a visit and witness a small sampling of our world renowned Masonic collection. Currently our satellite library at the Masonic Care Community on our stunning Utica Campus is closed due to many overdue and much needed construction projects. During this period of construction, all of our materials and works of art are temporarily and securely safeguarded at various Masonic facilities throughout the state. Please inquire as to how you can become a member of our new and improved library reading programs. On behalf of all of our Brethren, I thank you for preserving our heritage.

Will our Library Director and Librarian together with the Trustees of our Masonic Library please rise.

GRAND HONORS

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Brethren, I am happy to report that your entire Grand Lodge Team is working tirelessly to strengthen and improve our jurisdiction. The initiatives that I announced in my message in October 2021 are being addressed and are well on their way to bearing fruit. Part of my task is to not only attract good men of character and intentions, but to also strengthen our Fraternity by providing them with a nurturing environment needed to assist their growth as an individual person and as a positive influence in the community. It is also my goal to continue to build a stronger and more responsive Craft. The true bricks of our jurisdiction are our membership and the mortar is the services that they are provided within and without the Lodge. This will be accomplished with strong education, leadership, spirituality, motivation, and strong ritualistic programs that address the needs and wants of our Brothers. Many positive strides have already been made to date, with much more to follow.

Membership

The lifeblood of any organization is its membership. Freemasonry is no different. Our members are our strongest asset and we must continue to encourage them and never take them for granted. Neglect and apathy are the two biggest scourges that can devastate our numbers and the Fraternity.

The “good news” is that Freemasonry is undergoing a resurgence in our communities. I believe that much of this was due to the unprecedented combinations of circumstances that the pandemic created. New York Masons did not sit on their haunches and wait out the storm. On the contrary we took advantage of a very dire calamity and turned it into a positive experience. Through zoom meetings and other electronic means we discovered that there was an overwhelming thirst for diverse programs and educational opportunities to grow and enhance the skill sets of our ranks. At the same time, we found that many men with new found downtime discovered Freemasonry for the very first time. We paid attention and we listened! As a result we pivoted our emphasis and are in the midst of providing the services we need to grow in both strength and numbers.

MASONIC YOUTH GROUPS

The Grand Lodge of New York and all the related, Concordant, and Appended Bodies are a huge benefactors of our youth groups. We continue to support them with financial assistance, volunteerism, and guidance. Although money is very necessary for these groups to operate, they need our physical presence at their events and meetings. Without qualified advisors, these groups would not be able to stay viable and provide the necessary nurturing environment for each to grow to their greatest potential. The current leadership team is as follows:

The Organization of Triangles, Inc.

Miss Adriana Ramirez, New York State Representative

International Order of Rainbow for Girls

Miss Sydney Dennerlein, Grand Worthy Advisor

New York Order of DeMolay
Brother Brian Ramos, New York State Master Councilor

Allow me to introduce Miss Sydney Dennerlein, the Grand Worthy Advisor of the International Order of Rainbow for Girls, who will speak on behalf of our Masonic Youth Groups.

Social Media

Society is more divided and polarized than at any time over the past one hundred years. Social media platforms provide many avenues for all to post their views unencumbered by truth, morality, or the negative impact it will inflict. Freemasonry cannot be participants in this inflammatory activity. In an attempt to rein in those brothers that might be tempted. Our current policy has been updated and a hard and soft copy has been made available to every secretary.

- If you speak about Masonry, you must identify your affiliation to Freemasonry and make it clear that you are speaking for yourself.
- Respect the intellectual property rights, such as trademarks, copyrights and symbols of Freemasonry.
- No official communications from Grand Lodge are to be posted on any social media platform.
- Never engage in communication that could reasonably be viewed as intimidating, malicious, threatening, or obscene.
- Never post on social media any of the signs, symbols, or tokens used by our Fraternity.
- Use good judgment when posting, or commenting online. Be respectful of the cultures, beliefs, and opinions of others.
- Assume that every email that you send will be seen by people other than the intended recipient.

- Audio or visual recordings of Masonic Ritual or esoteric work are not permitted. Further, never post any part of a Tiled Communication or show the position of the Square and Compasses on an Open Bible.

There is a need for Freemasonry in the world today, but if we don't live according to our Obligations, we will just be a part of the problem. Remember, my Brothers, the teachings found within the Charge of a Master Mason, "Make others know always that a gentleman stands before them."

Web Site

Our new website is scheduled to be introduced during the summer. I am sorry for the delay in the debut of our new site, but many factors had to be addressed before the unveiling. As mentioned before, we are a multi-million dollar organization and need all of our contact with the profane world to know exactly who we are and what we stand for. Our website will be the keystone to our connection with the world. The website must reflect all that we are and why we are a worthwhile organization where men of status can accurately research our order and look up to us as a worthy and dignified example to emulate.

Our messaging must be concise, consistent and timely. This new website is being built with an eye toward developing a solid platform that will allow us to project our message. The message we will project will be clear and relevant. Our new branding scheme will answer many of the public's questions and allow those who are truly interested in joining our Craft to embark upon their journey toward the Light.

Leadership & Education

The Leadership and Educational Services Committee (L&E) will be key to our future success. There continues to be a boundless thirst for information throughout the jurisdiction. The direction of the Leadership and Educational Services Committee will be focused on concentrating the many of the basic administrative and leadership qualities that are woefully absent in many of our Lodges. The new directive is aimed at presenting as well as constantly reinforcing the concepts and principles essential, not only for the organization's future, but toward improving the individual brother's own personal development.

As mentioned at our Grand Lodge's Annual Communication this past May, the overall mission was found to be too wieldy and overwhelming for any one single Brother to administer alone. Therefore a troika of three chairmen, while working as a cohesive unit, will concentrate on the three main disciplines needed to move our entire Craft forward: R.:W.:Daniel J. Di Natale; administrator, R.:W.:Earnest L. Hudson, Jr.; leadership, and R.:W.:Robert Drzewucki; education. They will be working in concert with each other, but their assignments are based on their inherent skills, interests, and expertise.

After analyzing our training philosophy, it was obvious that it was not adequately serving our jurisdiction. Two major factors were negatively impacting our efforts. First was that many of our District Leaders and Advisors were coming from backgrounds that did not provide leadership skills. But more importantly, our training did not go far enough. We were not reaching the brothers in their respective

Lodges. So with the help of the Trustees of the Masonic Hall and Home we initiated our first installment for the Maxwell Leadership Program. Maxwell is a “Train the Trainer” initiative that will reach into our individual Lodges.

The Maxwell Leadership Program is an intensive and holistic approach to leadership using tried and true methods developed successfully by Dr. John C. Maxwell, an internationally respected American Pastor, motivational speaker, leadership expert, coach and author, having sold in excess of 25-Million books on the subject. Today, Dr. Maxwell continues to hold the coveted bestselling author position with the New York Times, Wall Street Journal and Business Week.

Dr. John Maxwell has addressed the subject of the role of leadership as an invited keynote speaker before several august bodies, including the National Football League, the United States Military Academy at West Point, and the United Nations. Currently, he serves on the Board of Trustees of the Indiana Wesleyan University and his Maxwell Team is helping train leaders in more than 80 countries.

In his own words, Dr. Maxwell has said “*Leadership is NOT about Titles, Positions or Flowcharts. It is about one Life influencing Another.*”

The Maxwell Leadership Program will allow us, the Masonic Fraternity, to build from the bottom up.

This weekend the core curriculum centered on the:

- North Star Portal - what it is, its significance, how to use and administer it and the importance of keeping the portal current

- Hiram Online Learning Program
- The new and improved Masonic University of New York (MUNY)
- The importance and need for virtual learning
- Introduction to the Maxwell Leadership Program

The Maxwell Leadership program is grounded in values-based leadership principles. They have been growing leaders for nearly four decades throughout the world. Their use of practical leadership skills are used by everyday people, major corporations, and national governments alike. Our initial core of leadership coaches has successfully completed their training. They are developing and refining the way we train our leaders. The next group of Train the Trainers is scheduled to graduate from the program in August. The leadership program will be offered through a structured roll out of Train the Trainer symposiums.

Our new MUNY Program is offering a vast array of disciplines. Educational modules encompassing basic fundamental business practices, as well as focusing on the esoteric, our history, Masonic Ritual, and your personal growth will lay the foundation for our educational programs. Courses will be held virtually, regionally and on a local basis.

We have now determined our direction of success. We must now educate and inspire our Brethren. The course we have chosen will lay the foundation for future generations. Our destiny is in our hands and together we will reap success. Remember that we stand on the shoulders of those who laid the foundation from which we can grow. Prepare your shoulders to be the foundation for those who will follow us.

Masonic Brotherhood Fund

The Masonic Brotherhood Fund is the Charity arm of the Fraternity and has helped to raise money to help many Brothers and families in need. At this time I would like to thank you all for your generous support. The purpose is to assist our Masonic families with those unforeseen and sometime catastrophic tragedies that can destroy a family unit. In a perfect world, it is our genuine hope that no one needs to be a receptor of our donations, but history teaches us that unexpected and stressful situations arise suddenly and without due warning. It is for this reason that we must build upon our resources for those rainy days ahead.

The Battle Within

I cannot adequately thank all of you who have contributed to this most worthwhile cause. As previously mention, since the Vietnam Era, our military has suffered unimaginable losses among our veterans upon their return from their service. The Battle Within Foundation was established in 2018 to remember those we lost and to remember their sacrifice. Many heroes die on the battlefield. For others, the battlefield follows them home. The Mission of the Foundation is two-fold: To honor all our heroes, no matter on what battlefield they fall, and to work on strategies to find and develop treatment and counseling to alleviate this insidious “22 A Day” reality we find ourselves in. To better understand the cause and effect of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, the Battle Within Foundation announced a first round \$25,000 donation to the MMRI. This initial contribution will be used to enable the expansion of their neurocognitive disorder research. The funds garnered to make this donation were generated by your generous and selfless support.

By using the expanding connections in the veteran's community of the Battle Within along with the fundraising expertise of the MMRI, an agreement was made to raise \$250,000. The quarter million dollar level is significant because it is the entry point for funding a brand new cognitive research program. This will also open the door for government funding. I cannot express how proud and excited I am that New York Masonry along with our Masonic Medical Research Institute is taking the lead on a much overdo and needed program. In closing I want you to think about the word "disorder" and substitute it with "disability". I believe this simple philosophical and grammatical change removes the stigma associated with PTSD.

It's mission in part is to provide Veterans with an opportunity to develop restorative lifestyle changes by giving them a healing environment, a community built upon unconditional positive regard and respect, with effective tools and training that can save and improve lives, restore families and put a stop to the generational cycle of Post Traumatic Stress "Disability", resulting from experiencing first-hand the horrors of war.

Your donations both through the Masonic Brotherhood Fund and directly payable to the Battle Within Foundation are extraordinary and are allowing the growth and breadth of the Foundation's mission. During this St. John's Weekend at the Masonic Care Community in Utica, NY, a Memorial for our Special Heroes, our Veterans will be dedicated. The Memorial will be prominently displayed at the Battle Within Wing of the Masonic Care Community. Please join us in Utica as we recognize and celebrate our Military and our Veterans.

Our Vision

It is the Vision of this Grand Lodge to successfully move our Fraternity into the 21st Century and beyond and to establish a Fraternity grounded in education, spiritual development, and Fraternal bonding.

Core Values

Some of the leadership qualities that we will be stressing throughout the next couple of years are:

- **ACCOUNTABILITY:** Probably the most important accountability we need to work on is one's own self-accountability. We need to hold ourselves to the same standards that we hold others to. We also need to be responsible to others. This will allow us to step up our game and exceed our expectations.
- **WORK ETHIC:** In order to accomplish our mission we must be willing to persevere and work diligently; always remembering that there is no easy path. Achievement of our goals will be accomplished through hard work, dedication and adhering to ethical principles.
- **SUCCESSION:** The first lesson that we must be cognizant of is that no one is irreplaceable. Job one is to ensure that everything we are promoting and emphasizing has to be passed on. Our legacy will depend on how successful we are in getting the whole membership to adopt this new leadership philosophy. If we are irreplaceable, there is no successor. We need to pass the baton. Remember that great leaders are always successful. Our legacy, our mission, our success depends on it.

- **PERSISTENCE:** Is the acknowledgement that what is worth achieving is worth the effort to obtain your goal. The pathway to success is never a straight path; rather it is filled with pitfalls, detours and disappointment. We need to be persistent in our methods and philosophy to enable us to establish and maintain an aura of dynamic leadership.
- **RESILIENCE:** In knowing that we will rarely get things right the first time, but that we must not be distracted by setbacks. Instead we must be steadfast in our resolve that the goal we are attempting to achieve is worth all of the labor and hard work. A quote that I sometimes use is that “What is easily gained is lightly esteemed.”

These bullet points are just a sampling of the leadership values that will be stressed throughout my term. The educational strategies employed by the Leadership and Educational Services Committee will assist you in becoming a success in your personal life as well as within our Fraternity. These are lifetime skills. Please freely share these teachings with everyone you know. Enhanced educational and leadership programs will strengthen us from within while projecting a successful persona to the outside world.

In closing, I want to thank each of you for all you have done and will continue to do on the behalf of Freemasonry. Please remember that this is YOUR Grand Lodge. The elected and appointed officers are here to serve you. Please do not hesitate to contact any of us with your thoughts, concerns, questions and requests. Together we can accomplish anything.

Keep in your mind Brethren, the Masonic Fraternity was not born yesterday. The first Grand Lodge was formed in 1717 in England. Subsequently, our Grand Lodge of New York was formed in 1781.

We have just passed the 240th mark for Masonry in New York and we are still very much alive and vibrant. Why are we still here? The answer is not by happenstance, it is because we have, we respect and we live according to our unique and time tested values and principles.

The world needs Freemasonry today more than ever. Let's be Humanity's saving grace.

Masons Make a Difference!!

God Bless each and every one of you. God Bless our Great Masonic Fraternity and God Bless the United States of America.

Sincerely and Fraternaly,


M.:W.:Richard J. Kessler
Grand Master




R.:W.:Richard T. Schulz
Grand Secretary

