

KNIGHTS OF LITHUANIA CONSTITUTION

Table of Contents (English Version)

ARTICLE I.....	1
NAME AND INSIGNIA	1
ARTICLE II	2
PURPOSE	2
ARTICLE III.....	3
ACTIVITIES	3
ARTICLE IV.....	3
RELATIONS WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS	3
ARTICLE V.....	4
MEMBERS	4
ARTICLE VI.....	6
MEMBERSHIP DUES	6
ARTICLE VII	7
DUTIES OF MEMBERS.....	7
ARTICLE VIII.....	8
MEMBERS' RIGHTS	8
ARTICLE IX.....	10
NATIONAL CONVENTION	10
ARTICLE X.....	13
SUPREME COUNCIL.....	13

ARTICLE XI.....	15
SUPREME COUNCIL OFFICERS' DUTIES	15
ARTICLE XII	19
SUPREME COUNCIL STANDING COMMITTEES	19
ARTICLE XIII.....	23
COUNCIL OFFICERS	23
ARTICLE XIV.....	25
COUNCIL ACTIVITY	25
ARTICLE XV	27
DISTRICTS	27
ARTICLE XVI.....	28
ASSETS	28
ARTICLE XVII.....	29
ADMISSION OF MEMBERS	29
MEMBERSHIP OATH.....	29
SUPREME COUNCIL OATH.....	30
DISTRICT OFFICER OATH.....	30
COUNCIL OFFICER OATH.....	31
LIETUVOS VYČIŲ HIMNAS	32

**KNIGHTS OF LITHUANIA
CONSTITUTION**

ARTICLE I

NAME AND INSIGNIA

1. The organization's name is **Knights of Lithuania.**
2. The Knights of Lithuania patron is St. Casimir.
3. The Knights of Lithuania operates under a charter granted by the State of Illinois.
4. The motto of the Knights of Lithuania is "For God and Country".
5. The Knights of Lithuania has its own banner picturing a Lithuanian Knight, an official seal and other emblems depicting a Lithuanian Knight and Cross.

ARTICLE II

PURPOSE

1. The Knights of Lithuania adheres to Catholic philosophy and precepts, furthering among its members a deeper understanding and more zealous practice of the Catholic faith and morals.
2. The Knights of Lithuania urges its members to participate in public affairs at all levels and to exercise their rights of American citizenship at election time. Likewise, it fosters growth in Lithuanian ethnic community awareness and encourages active participation in Lithuanian community affairs.
3. The Knights of Lithuania endeavors to instill in its members an attachment to Lithuania, the land of their ancestors, and a knowledge, appreciation, and love of the Lithuanian language, customs and culture.

ARTICLE III

ACTIVITIES

1. The Knights of Lithuania promotes educational and cultural advancement and activity among its members and all Lithuanians.
2. The Knights of Lithuania encourages sports activities in councils and districts.
3. The Knights of Lithuania offers moral and financial support to Lithuanian institutions.

ARTICLE IV

RELATIONS WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

1. The Knights of Lithuania organization is a member of the Lithuanian American Roman Catholic Federation and of the Lithuanian American Council.
2. The Knights of Lithuania maintains relations with Lithuanian and non-Lithuanian institutions whose aims do not oppose those of the Knights of Lithuania.

ARTICLE V

MEMBERS

1. To be a member of the Knights of Lithuania, one must:
 - a. be a practicing Catholic,
 - b. be of Lithuanian extraction or the spouse of a member in good standing of the Knights of Lithuania, or a Catholic religious serving as Spiritual Advisor of a Council, and
 - c. have taken the prescribed oath of membership, as defined in Article XVII.
2. Organization members are Honorary, regular, associate, junior.
 - a. Honorary membership may be conferred on:
 - i. members for their outstanding accomplishments for the welfare of the organization and its ideals, or
 - ii. outstanding Catholic Lithuanians whose achievements for God and Country have been preeminently outstanding and exemplary of the ideals of the organization.

Honorary members are named by the National Convention upon presentation by the honorary membership committee.

- b. Regular members must be at least 16 years of age and be of Lithuanian ancestry.
 - c. An associate member may be a non-Lithuanian Catholic spouse of a member in good standing of the Knights of Lithuania or a non-Lithuanian Catholic religious serving as a Spiritual Advisor of a Council. Upon the death of a spouse of an associate member, the member retains his/her membership status as long as other requirements of the Knights of Lithuania Constitution are upheld.
 - d. Junior members may be those who have not yet reached 18 years of age.
3. There are four membership degrees: First, Second, Third and Fourth. Membership degrees are tendered according to rituals prescribed by the organization and under the supervision of the ritual committee.

ARTICLE VI

MEMBERSHIP DUES

1. Membership dues are set by the National Convention.
2. Dues may be paid annually or by a one payment lifetime fee.
3. The lifetime fee of the spouse of a member who has paid the regular life time fee shall be one half of the lifetime fee.
4. The following members are exempt from dues payment:
 - a. members of religious orders,
 - b. active members of the United States Armed Forces,
 - c. Honorary Members,
 - d. junior members.
5. The following members receive the VYTIS, official organ of the organization:
 - a. full dues paying members (annual or lifetime fee),
 - b. members who are members of religious orders,
 - c. members who are active members of the United States Armed Forces,
 - d. Honorary Members.

6. Dues are payable in January of each year. A member whose dues are not paid by February 15 shall cease to receive VYTIS. A member whose dues are not paid by April 1 shall cease to be a member.
7. Each junior council must pay an annual fee to the Supreme Council. Each junior council receives up to 5 copies of the VYTIS.

ARTICLE VII

DUTIES OF MEMBERS

1. Organization members must acquaint themselves with, and follow, the Knights of Lithuania Constitution.
2. Members must strive to improve their knowledge of the Catholic faith and obey its precepts.
3. Members should promote Lithuanian culture and write about the Lithuanian nation and its affairs in non-Lithuanian publications.

4. Members should be concerned about the organization's reputation and, therefore, should avoid circumstances which may bring it dishonor, and should strive to engage in activities which will bring it honor.
5. Every member should attend council meetings and help to recruit new members.

ARTICLE VIII

MEMBERS' RIGHTS

1. All members are privileged to wear the Organization's emblems.
2. Honorary Members may:
 - a. be delegates to any district or national convention without mandate,
 - b. vote at Supreme Council meetings and at meetings of any district or council,
 - c. be elected to national office and/or to offices in their respective district or council.
5. Regular and associate members may:
 - a. vote at their respective council meetings,
 - b. hold any office in the council.

4. Regular members may:
 - a. be elected delegates to district and national conventions,
 - b. be elected to district office, if in keeping with district bylaws,
 - c. be elected to national office or chair of a national committee, in keeping with Article X of the Knights of Lithuania Constitution.
5. Associate members who hold at least the Second Degree may:
 - a. be elected delegates to district or national conventions,
 - b. hold any office or be head of a committee on the district level, in keeping with the district bylaws.
 - c. be a member, not chair of a committee on the national level.
6. A junior member may vote only in his or her junior council. Junior members may attend council meetings, district meetings and conventions, and National Conventions as non-voting members.

ARTICLE IX

NATIONAL CONVENTION

1. The National Convention is the highest Knights of Lithuania tribunal. It has power to amend the Constitution, elect Supreme Council officers and committees, and make decisions in all matters pertaining to the organization.
2. Delegates to a National Convention may select the site for future conventions up to two years prior to the convention date. The National Convention may be hosted by a Knights of Lithuania council, a group of councils, a district or the Supreme Council.
3. The National Convention date is selected by the host council with the approval of the Supreme Council and announced by the Supreme Council president at least six months in advance.
4. The National Convention committee plans must be approved by the Supreme Council.
5. The National Convention is called to order by the Supreme Council president. The invocation is delivered by the national spiritual director or his proxy. The National

Convention is conducted by a convention-selected presidium, which should consist of at least a chair, two co-chairs, two secretaries, a parliamentarian, and other officers and committees, as deemed necessary.

6. Once elected, the National Convention presidium assumes leadership of the convention and the organization until a new Supreme Council is elected and installed.
7. Council and district delegates must present to the National Convention an official mandate with signatures of their president, secretary, and if possible, spiritual advisor.
8. The number of National Convention delegates allowed a council depends on the number of fully paid members in the council, as determined by the financial secretary of the Supreme Council on April 1. Each council shall be allowed one delegate for the first five members, and one delegate for each additional ten members.
9. A district may be represented by not more than two delegates.

10. The Supreme Council spiritual advisor, officers, district presidents and standing committee chairs may vote as delegates at the National Convention.
11. No delegate can represent more than one council, district, or the Supreme Council. Each delegate has but one vote.
12. A National Convention may grant guests permission to address the assembly.
13. All resolutions dealing with changes or amendments to the constitution must be submitted to the Supreme Council at least three months before the National Convention and published in VYTIS at least one month before the National Convention. Such resolutions may be introduced by councils, districts, and the Supreme Council.
14. Changes of the constitution require the votes of two-thirds of the convention delegates.
15. A resolution which affects or changes any fundamental principle on which the Knights of Lithuania organization was founded, in order to be presented to the National Convention for action, must first have the

approval of at least two-thirds of the active councils, then be submitted to the Supreme Council in writing prior to the opening session of the National Convention at which such resolution is to be presented. The term "fundamental principle" as used here, shall include: a) change of motto; b) change of name of the organization; c) granting of membership to non-Lithuanians; d) granting of membership to non-Catholics; e) affiliation or merger with another organization.

16. The national spiritual advisor or his designee shall administer the oath of office to newly elected Supreme Council members and committee chairs.

ARTICLE X

SUPREME COUNCIL

1. The Supreme Council shall consist of a spiritual advisor; officers, namely, president, three vice-presidents, recording secretary, treasurer, financial secretary, two trustees; standing committee chairs; district presidents; VYTIS editor; VYTIS business manager; legal advisor.

2. The spiritual advisor is appointed by the Lithuanian Priests' League, upon recommendation of the National Convention or the Supreme Council. The officers are elected by the National Convention. Not more than two members of any council at one time can serve as Supreme Council officers. The standing committee chairs are elected at the National Convention except as noted in Article XII. The district presidents are elected by their respective districts. The VYTIS editor, VYTIS business manager and the legal advisor are appointed by the Supreme Council and are non-voting members of the Supreme Council.

3. A member who is not present at the National Convention may be elected to Supreme Council office or a standing committee only if he or she has presented a written notification of his or her candidacy for a particular position to the Supreme Council before the elections begin.
4. A Supreme Council officer is elected for a one year term and can succeed himself or herself for only two additional successive years.

5. The president and the first vice-president must be at least Third Degree members.
6. The Supreme Council, on finding one of its members remiss in his/her duties, may discharge him/her from office by a two thirds majority vote. When a vacancy in the office of President occurs, the First Vice President becomes president to complete the term. When a vacancy in an office or chair other than President occurs for any reason, the Supreme Council may appoint a replacement to complete the term.
7. The Supreme Council has no authority to introduce changes which are contrary to the constitution without a unanimous vote, and these changes are subject to approval or rejection by the National Convention.
8. The fiscal year of the Supreme Council ends on June 30.

ARTICLE XI

SUPREME COUNCIL OFFICERS' DUTIES

1. The Supreme Council **spiritual advisor** shall be concerned with the religious development of the members and shall contribute religious articles to **VYTIS**. He

opens and concludes with prayer the National Conventions and Supreme Council meetings. He administers the oath of office to the Supreme Council officers and standing committee chairs.

2. The **president** enforces observance of the constitution; convokes conventions and opens them; calls Supreme Council meetings and presides over them; supervises the organization's books and funds; keeps in his/her custody the treasurer's bond; signs various orders and documents; prepares the Supreme Council annual report for the convention, summarizing the reports (except financial) of all the officers and standing committee chairs.
3. The **first vice-president** is the special assistant to the president, assisting the president in organizing and implementing special projects and events. The **second vice-president** directs the membership drive, strives to strengthen existing councils and organize new ones. The **third vice-president** is in charge of the juniors, works to expand their activities and organize new junior councils.

4. The **recording secretary** records the minutes of the Supreme Council meetings, sending a copy thereof to each Supreme Council member and Honorary Member; invites Supreme Council members, and Honorary Members to board meetings; handles correspondence on organization matters.
5. The **financial secretary** receives and records all membership dues; transmits all money received to the Supreme Council treasurer; through VYTIS and by letters, reminds the councils and members of their financial standing; notifies each council of the number of National Convention delegates to which they are entitled; prepares a summary report of the membership standing for the National Convention. The Financial Secretary must have knowledge of using a computer and access to one, as the organization membership records are computerized.
6. The **treasurer** supervises the organization's finances; pays all bills approved by the convention of the Supreme Council and signed by the president and secretary; records in the books all income and expenditures; receipts all money received.

7. The **trustees** audit the treasurer's books and the books of all other national funds of the Knights of Lithuania and its ancillary organizations at least once a year, preferably before the convention, verify the funds and submit their findings to the convention. They also ascertain the location and condition of other organization property, such as convention minutes books, financial secretary's records and office equipment, archives, libraries, banner, seal, etc. and report on these things to the convention.
8. The appointed members of the Supreme Council are the **VYTIS** editor, **VYTIS** business manager and the legal advisor.
 - a. The **editor** edits the magazine **VYTIS**, in accordance with the directions of the convention and the Supreme Council.
 - b. The **legal advisor** advises and assists in the organization's legal matters.
 - c. The **VYTIS** business manager handles the mailing, subscriptions, advertisements and other business matters of the **VYTIS**.
9. The Supreme Council authorizes complementary subscriptions to **VYTIS**. The Supreme Council president shall

designate a member who will maintain the **VYTIS** mailing list, which includes members, subscribers and complementary subscriptions.

10. All out-going Supreme Council members shall hand over all necessary records and materials pertaining to their successors within thirty days. The outgoing Supreme Council members will provide instructions and guidance, so that the new members can execute their duties efficiently.

ARTICLE XII

SUPREME COUNCIL STANDING COMMITTEES

1. The Supreme Council standing committee chairs are elected at the National Convention for a one-year term, except as noted elsewhere in Article XII.
2. The Supreme Council **Ritual Committee** consists of one Fourth Degree member from each district. They are elected at a National Convention, for a three-year term on a rotating basis of not less than two per year, but no more than three. The committee selects its own Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer annually.

The Ritual Committee determines the form and the rules for all degrees and the ceremony, after consultation with the Supreme Council and approval of the National Convention. All decisions within the committee must be unanimous for approval of Fourth Degree or for presentation of change of rules from the committee. All other decisions of the committee will require a majority vote of the committee members.

3. The **Honorary Membership Committee** consists of at least 5 elected Honorary Members, including one from each district where possible. One member of the committee is elected each year for a five-year term. This is a rotating committee, hence the committee member with longest seniority assumes the chair's position. The committee itself selects a committee secretary.

The committee investigates and weighs the qualifications of candidates for Honorary Membership. The committee presents candidates for elevation to Honorary Membership to the National Convention.

4. The **Lithuanian Affairs Committee** defends and champions the name and rights of Lithuania and the Lithuanian people in non-Lithuanian communities and government circles and keeps the membership informed.
5. The **Lithuanian Culture Committee** works to preserve and propagate Lithuanian culture by providing brochures, articles, recordings and other appropriate means and cooperates with other groups which are concerned with Lithuanian culture. The Committee will also promote the Lithuanian language through instructional articles in **VYTIS** and other means, assist the Supreme Council and the membership with translations into and from Lithuanian, and in general provide information about the Lithuanian language.
6. The **Scholarship Committee** assists qualified and needy members seeking a higher education by scholarship grants. The committee consists of one representative member from each District in the organization. Committee members must be college graduates with at least a bachelor's degree. The membership of the scholarship committee will increase only with the addition of a new District to the

Knights of Lithuania organization. The term of office upon election is for three years. If a person is elected to fill a vacancy caused by resignation or death, then the term of office of the newly elected member will be the unexpired term of the previous committee member.

The committee elects its own chair and secretary-treasurer annually. The committee determines the standards and conditions for eligibility to scholarship grants, distributes the awards, and manages other matters connected with this activity. Both the chair and secretary-treasurer are authorized to request and issue funds on behalf of the national scholarship committee.

7. The **Public Relations Committee** publicizes the activities of the Knights of Lithuania on a nation-wide basis and handles the National Convention publicity in cooperation with the host council.
8. The **Archives Committee** maintains the Knights of Lithuania documents, bound **VYTIS** issues, photos, seals, and other historical information of the organization.

9. The heads of the following **ancillary organizations** of the Knights of Lithuania have the status of chair of standing committee of the Supreme Council:
 - a. **Knights of Lithuania Foundation, Inc.**, an endowment fund whose proceeds are used to foster the religious, charitable and educational purposes of the Knights of Lithuania,
 - b. **St. Casimir Guild, Inc.**, which supports the Lithuanian Pontifical College of St. Casimir in Rome,
 - c. **Aid to Lithuania, Inc.**, which provides charitable and educational assistance to Lithuania through donations of members and friends.
10. The National Convention may create additional standing and ad-hoc committees as needed.

ARTICLE XIII

COUNCIL OFFICERS

1. In those councils associated with a Catholic parish, the **Spiritual Advisor** is the parish pastor or his appointed assistant. If a council is not associated with a parish, the **Spiritual Advisor** may be a Roman Catholic priest or ordained deacon, with the approval

of the National Spiritual Advisor. He serves the council members in fulfilling their religious duties and cooperates with the Supreme Council Spiritual Advisor in spiritual and religious programs. He acts as arbitrator in the case of misunderstandings. He supervises the work of the council's spiritual committee.

2. The **president** calls the council meetings and presides over them. He/she keeps the council seal, signs documents and supervises committee and council activities.
3. The **vice-president** substitutes for the president when necessary, and assumes other responsibilities as determined by the president.
4. The **recording secretary** records the minutes of the council meetings and sends notices to council members.
5. The **financial secretary** handles membership applications, submits to the financial secretary of the Supreme Council the names of new, suspended and dropped members and punctually forwards all membership dues.

6. The **treasurer** keeps records of all receipts and expenditures; manages all the council's finances.
7. Other officers and committees are established when deemed necessary by the council.

ARTICLE XIV
COUNCIL ACTIVITY

1. An active council shall:
 - a. have at least five (5) members,
 - b. have at least a president and secretary, and
 - c. hold at least four (4) meetings per year.
2. Meetings are conducted in the following order:
 - a. prayer,
 - b. roll call
 - c. reading of minutes,
 - d. admission of new members,
 - e. officers reports,
 - f. committee reports,
 - g. unfinished business,
 - h. new business,
 - i. prayer.

3. Councils may arrange socials, plays, concerts, expositions and games. Councils may establish a library and organize sports activities.
4. Council officers must find a suitable place where all council groups may hold their meetings.
5. Councils should attempt to organize junior Knights' councils, in accordance with the junior Knights' bylaws.
6. Councils should support their parish affairs.
7. In organizing a new council in a parish, it is necessary to consult the parish priest.
8. Councils are required to observe the national feast day of St. Casimir, the patron saint of Lithuania and the Knights of Lithuania, March 4.
9. Through their activities and by their support, local councils implement the decisions of the National Convention and assist the Supreme Council financially in executing the programs of the Knights of Lithuania.
10. Proxies may not be utilized at membership meetings.

ARTICLE XV

DISTRICTS

1. Neighboring councils of one state or several states may unite into a district, with the approval of the Supreme Council.
2. Districts shall hold at least two meetings or conventions per year.
3. District officers are chosen at the district's September or October meeting or convention by the councils' appointed delegates.
4. District officers' duties are set by the district convention and shall conform with those of the Supreme Council.
5. District activities give support to its councils, the **VYTIS** and the Supreme Council. Districts should give high priority to the establishment and maintenance of new regular and junior councils.

ARTICLE XVI

ASSETS

1. The Knights of Lithuania real assets are buildings and land owned by the Supreme Council, district and councils.
2. The Knights of Lithuania liquid assets consist of membership dues, contributions and bequests. The Supreme Council may select a corporate institution to handle, invest and maintain the organization's funds provided, however, that such institutions must be regulated by the Federal Reserve Board or Securities and Exchange Commission or must provide adequate and sufficient insurance as determined by the Supreme Council for all accounts maintained by the organization with such institutions.
3. Other assets of the Knights of Lithuania include printed material and office equipment purchased by the Knights of Lithuania for use by its national officers and standing committees.
4. Upon liquidation of a council or a district, its assets are to be transferred to the Knights of Lithuania national treasury or

one or more of the ancillary organizations of the Knights of Lithuania.

ARTICLE XVII

ADMISSION OF MEMBERS

When a prospective member has become familiar with the Knights of Lithuania constitution and has been accepted for membership by the council, he/she takes the following oath, administered at a council meeting, according to established ritual.

MEMBERSHIP OATH

I _____ having read and studied the constitution of the Knights of Lithuania, in the name of God, St. Casimir and all the other saints, willingly join this organization and pledge myself to be faithful to and abide by its rules. I also pledge myself, ever and everywhere, courageously to uphold my religion, the constitution of the United States of America and the needs of my Lithuanian people.

SUPREME COUNCIL OATH

In the name of God, St. Casimir, and all the other Saints and in the presence of the convention participants, I formally vow as a member of the Knights of Lithuania Supreme Council to faithfully uphold the Knights of Lithuania constitution, to lead the organization in keeping with the principles of our Catholic faith and our Lithuanian ancestry, and to foster among the Knights of Lithuania members strength of body and soul and a firm commitment to their American citizenship. God help me in these goals.

DISTRICT OFFICER OATH

In the name of God, St. Casimir, and all the other Saints and in the presence of the District Meeting participants, I formally vow as a member of the Knights of Lithuania _____ District Executive Board to faithfully uphold the Knights of Lithuania constitution, to lead the organization in keeping with the principles of our Catholic faith and our Lithuanian ancestry, and to foster among the Knights of Lithuania members strength of body and soul and a firm commitment to their American citizenship. God help me in these goals.

COUNCIL OFFICER OATH

In the name of God, St. Casimir, and all the other Saints and in the presence of the participants of the Council _____ meeting, I formally vow as an officer of Knights of Lithuania Council _____ to faithfully uphold the Knights of Lithuania constitution, to lead the organization in keeping with the principles of our Catholic faith and our Lithuanian ancestry, and to foster among the Knights of Lithuania members strength of body and soul and a firm commitment to their American citizenship. God help me in these goals.

LIETUVOS VYČIŲ HIMNAS

Nuženk Galybe iš dangaus,
Sustiprink jauną Vyčių dvasią,
Mes už teisybę stosim drąsiai.
Tėvynę ginti kuo narsiau.
Štai plevėsuoja vėliava
Ką kalba jos žymė?

Ei, Vyčiai, gyvenam Tautai ir Bažnyčiai,
Mūsų širdyse Lietuva,
mintys, darbai, karšta malda.
Ei Vyčiai, gyvenam Tautai ir Bažnyčiai!

Žodžiai – M. Gustaičio,
Revised by Faustas Strolia and
approved at the 2000 National
Convention of the Knights of
Lithuania
Muzika – A. Aleksio