

---

# The Lyceum

---



---

A Publication of  
The Committee on Masonic Education

---



# Contents

<b>From the Editor-In-Chief.....</b>	<b>3</b>
RW Robert H. Johnson, FILOR	
<b>From the Chairman.....</b>	<b>4</b>
WB Dr. Bernard Davis Jr., Chairman - Masonic Education GL Illinois	
<b>Giving Back.....</b>	<b>5</b>
Committee on Masonic Education, IL	
<b>John Lewis: The Heart of a Mason.....</b>	<b>6</b>
AASR NMJ	
<b>The Midwest Conference of Masonic Education.....</b>	<b>9</b>
Committee on Masonic Education, IL	
<b>A Masonic Answer to Incivility.....</b>	<b>10</b>
Darin A. Lahners, FILOR	
<b>Words to the Wise.....</b>	<b>12</b>
RWB Chad M. Lacek, 33°	
<b>Esotericon 2026.....</b>	<b>14</b>
Committee on Masonic Education	
<b>Prince Hall: Abolitionist, Educator and Freemason.....</b>	<b>15</b>
Grand Lodge of Illinois	
<b>Freemasonry and A Knight of the Seven Kingdoms.....</b>	<b>18</b>
Darin A. Lahners, FILOR	
<b>The Impact of Freemasonry on the Civil Rights Movement.....</b>	<b>23</b>
Committee on Masonic Education, IL	
<b>The Value of Experience.....</b>	<b>25</b>
Rev. Harriet B. Case	
<b>Mr. Civil Rights: Brother Thurgood Marshall.....</b>	<b>27</b>
Grand Lodge of Ohio	
<b>Put It Into Practice / Listen To It.....</b>	<b>30</b>
Committee on Masonic Education	
<b>The Role of Freemasonry in Civility.....</b>	<b>31</b>
RW:. Andre H. Farin Jr., Sr. Grand Warden, RI	
<b>Be Curious, Not Judgmental.....</b>	<b>33</b>
Darin A. Lahners, FILOR	
<b>Masonic Conferences.....</b>	<b>36</b>
Committee on Masonic Education, IL	



Find us Online @  
[www.ilmason.org/masonic-education](http://www.ilmason.org/masonic-education)



Your Publication Staff & Contributors  
Robert H. Johnson - Editor-In-Chief, Darin A. Lahners -  
Editor, Chad Lacek, 33°, Bernard Davis, Chairman

# FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

---

Brethren and Friends,

It is my distinct pleasure to welcome you to this edition of The Lyceum, the official Masonic Education publication of the Grand Lodge of Illinois Ancient Free and Accepted Masons. Here we are, almost spring? 60° one day and 24° the next.

In any case, we can find warmth and good cheer in our lodges across the state and the country. This month's issue is full of great articles reflecting on both the history of Black Freemasonry as well as a focus on Civility. We've got curated and original articles that will not only educate, but it is my hope they also inspire. Freemasonry has long stood for the right things, guided by those core principals of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth.

From famous Civil Rights leaders, to the history of Prince Hall, to the topic of Freemasonry's role within cultural movements within the United States, there's so much to be proud of. Additionally, we're also choosing to showcase the tenet or value of Civility. Many years ago it seems, but it was just around the corner--our Grand Lodge of Illinois made Civility a issue of paramount importance.

While that theme has come and gone, the need for Civility in these times is always there. So, with this in mind, we've curated many articles on this topic ranging from "How to" to Inspirational philosophy. I truly believe this issue has power. Not because there are words on a page, but that those words on the page may move you, and aid you in your own mission of making that man in the mirror just a little bit better than he was yesterday.

May the inspiration find you!

Fraternally yours,  
R.H. Johnson,



Editor-In-Chief  
The Lyceum  
The Grand Lodge of Illinois,  
Committee on Masonic Education



# From the Chairman's Desk

by WB.: Dr. Bernard Davis Jr., Chairman- Masonic Education Committee



In the month of February we celebrate the contributions of Black Americans to History and we are reminded that many of those same people are inseparable from the story of our Craft. The pursuit of

knowledge, the cultivation of character, and the strengthening of brotherly ties have long been pillars within both the Black American experience and the Masonic tradition. The reflections of these achievements this month invites us, as Masons, to reflect upon the enduring labor entrusted to us in the quarries of moral and spiritual improvement.

Our history is marked by men who, despite adversity, held fast to principles that shaped families, communities, and institutions. Prince Hall and the early brethren who labored beside him did not seek prominence; they sought purpose. Their fidelity to duty, their insistence on education, and their unwavering commitment to brotherhood formed the foundation upon which our jurisdiction stands today. Their example calls us to examine the quality of our own work and the legacy we are building for those who will follow.

The strength of our Fraternity has never rested solely in ritual or ceremony, but in the quiet, consistent acts that bind us together. It is found in the Brother who offers counsel without judgment, in the officer who prepares diligently for his station, and in the craftsman who strives to live the teachings he has obligated himself to uphold. These daily expressions of brotherly love and relief are the true measure of our devotion to the Craft.

As we honor the contributions of Black American leaders, scholars, artisans, ministers, organizers, we also reaffirm our responsibility to be builders of men and stewards of truth. The world continues to call for integrity, discipline, and compassion. It calls for men who understand that leadership is service, and that service is a lifelong undertaking.

May this month serve not only as a commemoration of the past, but as a renewed charge to labor with purpose, to strengthen the bonds of our Brotherhood, and to ensure that our work reflects the highest ideals of the Craft. In doing so, we honor those who came before us and prepare the way for those yet to come.

May the Great Architect of the Universe guide our thoughts and govern our actions as we continue the noble work entrusted to our hands.

*Dr. Bernard Davis Jr.*



# GIVING BACK TO OUR MEMBERS IN NEED AND MORE

## Charities

Charity is a core part of our duty as Freemasons. The Grand Lodge of Illinois A. F. & A. M. and Freemasons of our state are proud to support life-changing efforts for the most vulnerable in our communities. Learn more about our charitable initiatives below.



### ILLINOIS MASONIC OUTREACH SERVICES (IMOS)

IMOS allows Illinois Freemasons to fulfill their Masonic path of coming to the aid of a Brother, their spouse, widow, and orphans in times of necessity.



### Illinois Masonic Children's Assistance Program

### ILLINOIS MASONIC CHILDREN'S ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (IMCAP)

IMCAP partners with Illinois Masonic Lodges to provide assistance to children and young adults in our communities.



### ILLINOIS MASONIC STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (IMSAP)

IMSAP is a school-based early intervention approach designed to enhance educators' skills in identifying and assisting at-risk students.



### ILLINOIS MASONIC FAMILY IDENTIFICATION PROGRAM

Every year in the U.S., thousands of children become lost. A few are victims of abduction. The Freemasons of Illinois hold and fund identification workshops for families all around the state to help them find and prevent victims of abduction.



### COINS FOR CHILDREN

Support our mission to provide relief to those most in need.



### ILLINOIS MASONIC ACADEMIC BOWL

This annual scholastic tournament, sponsored by the Freemasons of Illinois, aims to provide positive recognition for academic excellence.

# John Lewis: The Heart of a Mason

Originally Published on ScottishRiteNMJ.Org  
<https://scottishritenmj.org/blog/john-lewis-freemason>



John Lewis was many things. He was a Freemason, a congressman whose career spanned several decades, and a pivotal figure within the Civil Rights Movement.

*"You are a light. You are the light. Never let anyone — any person or any force — dampen, dim or diminish your light ... Release the need to hate, to harbor division, and the enticement of revenge. Release all bitterness. Hold only love, only peace in your heart, knowing that the battle of good to overcome evil is already won."* – John Lewis; [Across That Bridge: A Vision for Change and the Future of America](#).

Brother Lewis fought to change the United States for the better, to ensure all its citizens could safely live a life of dignity and prosperity. His life was dedicated to the service to others and through the years he inspired countless others to commit themselves to relief and justice, truth and love. For his many accomplishments, we are grateful and filled with pride that we may call him "Brother."

## John Lewis' Early Life

Born John Robert Lewis on February 21, 1940, in Troy, Alabama, he was the third of ten children of sharecroppers Willie Mae (née Carter) and Eddie Lewis. Growing up in a

state deeply divided along racial lines, Lewis witnessed firsthand the injustices of racism and segregation from a young age. He first heard Martin Luther King Jr. speak on the radio when he was 15 and quickly started following King's protests, such as the famous Montgomery bus boycott that same year.

In 1957, Lewis left Alabama for Nashville, Tennessee, to attend the American Baptist Theological Seminary and Fisk University, where he earned a B.A. in religion and philosophy. Already inspired by the courageous and peaceful acts of protest by Dr. King and Rosa Parks, John became committed to the civil rights struggle.

## John Lewis and the Civil Rights Movement

While studying in Nashville, Lewis helped organize sit-ins at segregated lunch counters and other public places. These nonviolent protests were ultimately responsible for the desegregation of lunch counters in the city. He then encouraged others to engage in "good trouble, necessary trouble" to implement change. He would become famous for this phrase and repeat it throughout his life. Lewis became one of the original Freedom Riders in 1961, taking a central role in one of the civil rights movement's most pivotal

efforts. These protests, which challenged the segregation of interstate bus lines, gained national attention as the protesters were routinely beaten and arrested by law enforcement. In 1963, Bro. Lewis was central to the momentous March on Washington, known for gathering over 250,000 people at the Lincoln Memorial and Dr. King's famous "*I Have a Dream*" speech.



*John Lewis speaking at a meeting of American Society of Newspaper in 1964. Image: Marion S. Trikosko/Library of Congress.*

Two years later, he would be at the heart of another critical moment in the civil rights movement, the Selma to Montgomery marches. These marches saw protesters walk peacefully along the 54-mile stretch of highway from Selma, Alabama, to the state capital of Montgomery to demonstrate the desire of black citizens to exercise their constitutional right to vote. During the first march on March 7, unarmed, peaceful protesters were met and attacked by state troopers and posemen, a date that would become known as "*Bloody Sunday*."



*Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. locks arms with Rev. Ralph Abernathy, James Foreman, King, Jesse Douglas Sr., and John Lewis as they march to the courthouse in Montgomery, Alabama in 1965. Image: AP Photo*

Although law enforcement's response was a travesty, the marches highlighted the depth of racial injustice, helping to move forward the Voting Rights Act that same year. This law prohibits racial discrimination in voting, a landmark federal legislation of the civil rights movement. Through his efforts in organizing these historic protests, John Lewis was instrumental in bringing about significant change for the black community in the United States.

### **Onto the Capital**

Over the next twenty years, John carved a career out of serving others. He spent many years as the director of The Voter Education Project, through which he helped register over four million new voters. In 1977, after unsuccessfully running to fill a seat in the House of Representatives, President Carter appointed Lewis to lead ACTION. This federal agency included the Peace Corps and Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA).

In 1981, John began an almost 40-year tenure in elected office when he won a seat on the Atlanta city council with 69 percent of the vote. After serving the city for five years, he was elected to serve Georgia's 5th district in the U.S. House of Representatives. Over the next three decades, Lewis was reelected 16 times, only dropping below 70 percent of the vote once in that span.

Of course, Lewis's political career closely reflected his values as a peaceful civil rights activist. As a staunch liberal, an advocate for gay rights and national health care, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* wrote that he was "*the only former major civil rights leader who extended his fight for human rights and racial*

reconciliation to the halls of Congress."



*John Lewis in the Civil Rights Room in the Nashville Public Library in 2019. Image courtesy of Mark Humphrey/AF*

His vote was always guided by his unshakable morality, leading him to become known as "the conscience of Congress."

For his many accomplishments and years of service to the United States people, Congressman Lewis received numerous awards, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the NAACP's Spingarn Medal, and the sole John F. Kennedy "Profile in Courage Award" for Lifetime Achievement.

### **The Heart of a Mason**

Given Brother Lewis's ardent dedication to promoting justice and equality, it is no surprise that the tenets and teachings of Freemasonry appealed to him. In 1999, Lewis was made a Prince Hall Mason at H. R. Butler Lodge No. 23 in Atlanta by Grand Master Benjamin Barksdale of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge F&AM of Georgia.

Twelve years later, Brother Lewis received the honorary 33° at the United Supreme Council Session in Atlanta. He was a member of the Atlanta Consistory No. 24-A, Orient of Georgia (PHA). Additionally, Ill. Brother Lewis was a Shriner in the Prince Hall-associated Khedive Temple No. 16, and later in Mecca Temple No. 10, in the Ancient Egyptian Ara-

bic Order Nobles of the Mystic Shrine.



*Brother John Lewis' body lying in state in the US Capitol Rotunda.*

Brother Lewis passed to the Celestial Lodge in July 2020 after a battle with pancreatic cancer. Upon his death, he became the first African American lawmaker to lie in state in the rotunda of the U.S. Capitol. His death moved the entire country, and at his funeral, three former presidents were in attendance. He was also honored with a ceremony by the Prince Hall Free and Accepted Masons of Georgia, a moment many Masons across the country and we cherished. Undoubtedly, Brother John Lewis will inspire Americans for generations to come to pursue a life of peace and light.



# 76<sup>th</sup> MIDWEST CONFERENCE ON MASONIC EDUCATION



SCOTTISH RITE CATHEDRAL, 20th AND DOUGLAS STREETS, OMAHA, NEBRASKA

## A PRACTICAL TOOLKIT

## APRIL 24-26, 2026



**SCOTTISH RITE  
MASONIC CENTER,  
OMAHA, NEBRASKA**

**LOCATION**  
202 South 20th Street,  
Omaha, NE 68102

Educating Masonic Educators - Providing practical tools  
for lodges, grand lodges, and other bodies

**REGISTRATION NOW OPEN**

[www.mcme1949.org](http://www.mcme1949.org)

# A Masonic Answer to Incivility

by WB.: Darin A. Lahners, FILOR

From the Meet, Act and Part blog (originally appeared on the Midnight Freemasons Blog)



Following the uproar caused by a certain incident that occurred during the telecast of the Academy Awards ceremony a few years ago, Bro. Alex G. Powers asked the Kansas Freemasonry Facebook Group the following: *“If there is a Masonic conversation to come from the actions observed at the Oscars last night, it makes me think about subduing one’s passions. We are all human and sometimes things make us see red in the moment that may be debatable in all directions by everyone else. As a Mason, is it appropriate to sometimes give in and act out of passion?”*

The responses were varied, including my own answer: *“Is it appropriate to sometimes give in and act out of passion as a Freemason? According to our teachings, no. In practice, Man, I see that happen every day on social media. We’re human right? We’ve all been guilty of “losing our cool” at one time or another. So, we can in retrospect look at this incident and say: “Oh, I’d never do that!” or “He should have whispered wise counsel”, yet I see far worse exchanges on social media among brothers every day. Where’s the outcry or wise counsel when that happens?”*

In my mind, what happened that evening was born out of incivility, and both parties are at fault. Many people are choosing sides and defending one party while deriding the other. What is troubling to me is that violence has become an accepted response to dealing with incivility.

The more I examined this thought, the more I contemplated a presentation I had given at one of Homer Lodge No. 199’s stated meetings, titled: [A Loss of Civility in America: A Masonic Reaction](#). The presentation was born out of a few things:

1. The wonderful work the MWB Russ Charvonia has done with his Masonic Family Civility Project (<https://www.masoniccivility.org/>).
2. The goal of my Royal Arch Chapter, Admiration Chapter No. 282, which was to develop a presentation that could be used by other members of the Chapter to help promote Civility to the members of their home Masonic Lodges.
3. The overall continued lack of civility in today’s society and the need for us to set the example as Freemasons.

The question remains: how can we as Freemasons respond to incivility? In my mind, there are a few major things we can do. First and foremost, we should not be the cause of incivility ourselves. As I mentioned above, I see far worse uncivil exchanges on social media between brethren than what occurred that Sunday evening. While our obligations may discuss specific things we should not do to another Master Mason, namely striking except in defense of his person, family, or property, cheating, wronging, defrauding, and supplanting him in his laudable undertakings, we’re not really enforcing

the penalties of the obligation against those who violate them. So in this case, when we are witnessing incivility, either online or in the real world, what should we do?

I think first and foremost, as Freemasons, we need to be self-aware. This means that we need to make a personal commitment to be more civil. To practice this, we need to be aware of our own actions and how we communicate with others. We also need to be patient. A good way to visualize this would be to think about the circumpunct or the point within the circle. Imagine we are at that point, and the circle is our sphere of influence. If we go outside of the sphere, our influence is going to be small or non-existent. However, within the sphere, our actions and our words will be taken seriously or at face value. We also need to remember to breathe and subdue our passions before reacting in all situations. Square ourselves, circumscribe ourselves to stay within due bounds, and use the trowel to apply the cement of brotherly love even if we are the ones who are being treated uncivilly. Secondly, we need to think the best of others.

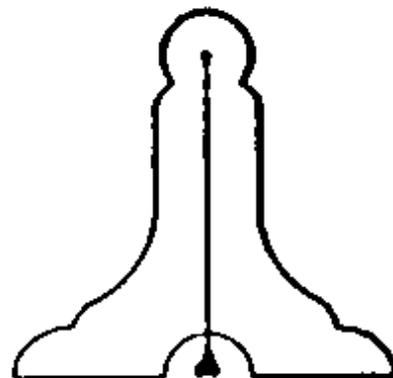
While there may be many people who get off by being an online troll, there's a pretty good chance that if we encounter incivility, it is due to a misunderstanding or lack of awareness of the situation. Many people become uncivil when they feel they have been disrespected, marginalized, or wronged. However, we need to try to remind both parties involved in the incivility that they most likely have more in common than they realize.

All of this depends on the situation. If you witness something online, your response will be different from what it might be in public. You might also be able to gain more insight online by reading the exchange back to where the incivility began. In public, it will depend on if you were there at the beginning of it or if you just happened upon it. Gather as much information as you can about the cause of the

incivility.

The best thing you can do is to calmly engage the parties in civil discourse and remind them of their commonality. If you think it's possible, then you can say something like, *"I remember when my kids got into a similar argument, and redirect with a question like: "Do you have kids?"* E.g., getting them to focus on what they have in common will most likely de-escalate the situation. This should be easy if you encounter some Masonic brothers being uncivil towards each other. Remind them about Brotherly Love, their obligations, and ask them to remember that they should be meeting on the level, acting by the plumb, and parting upon the square. You can tell them it's okay if they disagree, but that it's not okay to be uncivil towards each other. We need to take action!

What else can you do? Educate yourself, especially on viewpoints that are opposite to yours. What this will do is it will allow you to be better prepared to find those commonalities that exist in times of incivility.





by RWB.: Chad M. Lacek, 33°

“*Who is wise?*” This deceptively simple question was recorded 1800 years ago in the Pirkei Avot, translated as Ethics of the Fathers. The answer is equally simple: “*He who learns from every man.*”

It’s the kind of statement that feels obvious when first encountered. Of course, we should learn from others. We all benefit from the experience and knowledge of those around us. Yet like many profound ideas, its simplicity hides its difficulty. Learning from those we admire is easy. Learning from those we respect comes naturally. Learning from those who are accomplished, articulate, or successful requires no special effort.

But the maxim does not say, “*He who learns from the well-educated,*” or “*He who learns from the wealthy.*” It says every man. Can you learn from the addict, the fool, and the beggar? This is the key that unlocks the riddle. Freemasonry places us in a unique position to explore this concept. In Lodge, distinctions that dominate the outside world lose their grip. Occupation, wealth, education, and social standing are replaced with brotherly love and mutual respect. The man who presides over a company may sit beside one who repairs its machinery. A professor may sit beside a student. A young man beginning his career may sit beside one who has already

completed his life’s work.

In any other setting, these men might never interact meaningfully. Yet in Lodge, they meet upon the level. We often think of wisdom as something that flows in one direction. From the experienced to the novice. From the educated to the untrained. From the elder to the youth. There is some truth in that. Experience does teach. Time does refine judgment.

But wisdom is not the same as knowledge. Knowledge accumulates. Wisdom observes. And observation requires humility. It is difficult to learn from someone we secretly believe to be beneath us. Not necessarily beneath us in worth, but beneath us in competence, refinement, or understanding. We may nod politely when such a man speaks, but inwardly we discount what he says. We assume that whatever lesson might be available from him is negligible.

That assumption is the enemy of wisdom. It might take a little digging, a little more effort. Every person has at least one gem, one nugget of wisdom they collected in their life’s journey. It may have been passed down to them by a member of their family, or a chance meeting with a stranger who crossed their path. It may be a lesson they learned them-

selves, the hard way.

When we are instructed to meet upon the level, we are not merely being asked to behave politely. We are invited to adopt a posture of receptivity. The man across from you possesses insights you do not. His life has taught him lessons yours has not. His failures may be more instructive than your successes.

We often imagine learning as a transaction involving words. Someone explains something we did not know, and we become wiser as a result. But the Lodge offers another kind of education, one conducted largely without instruction.

Consider the Brother who never speaks of charity yet is always present when help is needed. Or the Brother whose ritual work is imperfect, but whose sincerity is unmistakable. He may remind us that effort matters more than eloquence. The talkative Brother may teach us patience. The stubborn one may teach us perseverance. The disagreeable one may reveal our own flaws more clearly than any mirror.

In this way, every man becomes a teacher, whether he intends to or not. This doesn't mean that every opinion is valid, or that every piece of advice should be followed. Wisdom does not require agreement. It requires an attentive ear and an open mind. We learn from the skilled how to improve. We learn from the careless what to avoid. We learn from the kind how to soften. We learn from the harsh how to endure. Even folly can instruct, if we are willing to observe it honestly.

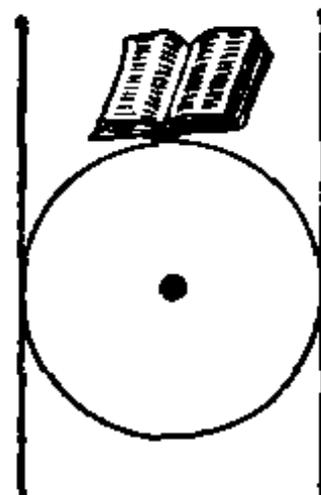
The obstacle is rarely the absence of lessons; it is our reluctance to receive them. Pride, impatience, and familiarity conspire to close our ears. We assume we already know what the other man has to offer. We listen only long enough to confirm our expectations. To live according to the maxim of the Pirkei Avot is to resist that impulse. It is to enter each conversation, each interaction, with the quiet question, "*What might this man teach me?*"

Freemasonry provides us with the environment in which this question can be asked frequently. No-

where else do we encounter such a variety of men under conditions designed to emphasize our shared humanity. If wisdom truly belongs to the man who learns from every other, then the Lodge is a school without equal. The question then becomes, are we its students?

This requires a shift in identity. Not merely seeing ourselves as participants, officers, or members...but as learners. The Apprentice, after all, is not meant to outgrow the habit of learning. Advancement through the degrees does not signal completion of our education. The wise man is not the one who has heard the most lectures, read the most books, or delivered the most speeches. He is the one who has cultivated the habit of observation and the humility to recognize value wherever it appears.

Here is an invitation for us to listen more carefully, to observe more patiently, and to regard every person as our teacher. If we do, we may find that wisdom is closer than we thought. It is not confined to the pedestal or the podium. It sits beside us at dinner, across from us in Lodge, and surrounds us in our daily life. The maxim states that the wise man learns from every person he meets. Are you willing to be wise?



# ESOTERICON 2026

The Premier Esoteric Conference



Saturday, June 20, 2026

Manasseh Lodge No. 182, Manassas, VA  
In-Person & Virtual Attendance Available

[www.esotericon.net](http://www.esotericon.net)

Tickets Available Now

# Prince Hall: Abolitionist, Educator, and Freemason

Published August 9th, 2024 from ILMASON.Org

Freemasonry has always been a fraternity that celebrates diversity, bringing together men from all walks of life, united by shared goals and values. Brother Prince Hall's story is a vivid reminder of this principle. His establishment of the first African American Masonic lodge and his tireless efforts in advocating for the rights and education of African Americans highlight the inclusive spirit that is at the core of our fraternity.

For over 150 years, Prince Hall Freemasonry has been a critical part of the Masonic community in Illinois and is the oldest, continually active, African American fraternal organization in the state. In exploring the life and achievements of Brother Hall, we celebrate not only his remarkable contributions but also the timeless principles that Freemasonry represents. His story serves as a powerful example of how the fraternity can be a force for social justice and community building.

By honoring Brother Hall, we recognize the enduring importance of his contributions which strengthened our brotherhood and helped ensure that every Mason, regardless of background, is welcomed and valued.

## **From Enslavement to the Revolution**

Brother Prince Hall was born around 1735, and although details of his early life remain somewhat obscure, we know that he was enslaved by a Boston tanner named William Hall. Despite the harsh realities of his early years, Brother Hall exhibited remarkable resilience and a keen intellect, traits that would



define his future endeavors. This early experience undoubtedly shaped his fervent commitment to the causes of freedom and equality.

As a boy, Brother Hall learned to work leather under William Hall, but by 1770 he was a free, literate man. It is unclear whether he taught himself to read and write or if he had assistance. Around this time, he joined the Congregational Church and married an enslaved woman named Sarah Ritchie, who soon sadly passed. He then married Flora Gibbs of Gloucester and worked in Boston where he owned a leather shop.

In April 1777, he created five leather drumheads for an artillery regiment and joined the Continental Army. He encouraged enslaved and freed Black men to serve in the American colonial military because he believed it would help them attain freedom once the new nation was formed. Brother Hall took a leadership role in his community, petitioning the legislature of Massachusetts to end slavery and the slave trade.

### **The Dawn of Prince Hall Freemasonry**



*Prince Hall Master Mason Apron, 1915, courtesy of Scottish Rite Masonic Museum & Library.*

Drawn to Freemasonry's values, Brother Hall tried to join St. John's Lodge in Boston in the early 1770s but was denied membership because of his race. Brother Hall and fourteen other African Americans who had also been rejected by established Boston lodges

turned to a British military lodge operating in Boston, Lodge No. 441, in their quest to become Freemasons. Initiated by the lodge in 1775, Hall and his brothers met as members of the British lodge until the end of the Revolutionary War.

Having served during the Revolutionary War, many African Americans expected but did not receive racial equality when the war ended. Intending to improve the lives of fellow African Americans, Brother Hall collaborated with others to propose legislation for equal rights. He also hosted community events, such as educational forums and theatre events, to improve the lives of Black people. In 1784, nearly a decade after becoming a Master Mason, Prince Hall, and the other Black members of the British lodge, formally petitioned the Grand Lodge of England to charter a new lodge on American soil. Their request was granted, allowing them to create the first African American lodge, African Lodge No. 459.

This new lodge quickly grew, and Worshipful Master Prince Hall was appointed a Provincial Grand Master in 1791. This subsequently led to the creation of the first Black Provincial Grand Lodge and within a few years, Brother Hall organized lodges in Philadelphia and Rhode Island, both of which were designated to work under the charter of African Lodge No. 459.

The new Prince Hall Freemasonry fraternity quickly spread. The pursuit of truth and self-improvement helped give rise to a community committed to service to others and standing against slavery and white supremacy. Prince Hall Freemasonry became a cornerstone of African American society, promoting education, leadership, and social justice that was integral to the abolitionist and civil rights movement of the 19th century.

### **Abolitionism and Death**

Understanding how critical education was in helping him advance his own life, Brother Hall devoted much of his energy to promoting equal educational opportunities for the Black community. He petitioned the city of Boston to establish schools for Black children and even started a school program for Black youth

out of his home. Brother Hall gave public speeches on the plight of the Black community and, for a time, was involved in the Back-to-Africa movement. When Brother Prince Hall passed away in 1807, African American Masons endowed their fraternity with his name to distinguish it from the lodges that first excluded them. Brother Hall is buried in Copp's Hill Burying Ground in Boston along with other notable Bostonians from the colonial era. A nearby tribute monument in his name was erected on Copp's Hill next to his grave marker.

### **The Legacy of Prince Hall Freemasonry**

For nearly 250 years, Prince Hall Freemasonry has been an empowering force for the Black community. After the Civil War, Prince Hall Masons established community institutions and benefits for freed families that were instrumental in the civil rights movement.

Prince Hall Freemasonry remains the largest and oldest African American fraternity in the world. At least 5,000 lodges can trace their lineage to the original African Lodge No. 459 established by Prince Hall. Thousands of communities across Illinois have benefited from Prince Hall Freemasonry going back to the middle of the 19th century. There are over 300,000 members in the United States alone and many notable figures from the Black community have also been Prince Hall Masons, including Brothers John Lewis, Sugar Ray Robinson, Jesse Jackson, Thurgood Marshall, Al Green, Booker T. Washington, and many more.

Freemasonry is a fraternity designed to make good men better through service to mankind. Today, Prince Hall Freemasonry is a vibrant and essential part of the Masonic fraternity, embodying the principles of brotherhood, equality, and truth. As we remember Brother Prince Hall, we honor a man whose vision and determination continue to inspire Masons everywhere. His contributions to Freemasonry and the broader fight for civil rights are a testament to the enduring power of unity and the relentless pursuit of justice. Brother Hall's legacy is not only a vital part of our history but also a guiding light for our future.

### **NOTABLE PRINCE HALL MASONS**

Bro. Robert Sengstacke Abbott  
Oriental Lodge No. 68, IL  
Founder & Publisher of The Chicago Defender

Bro. Ezra D. Alexander  
Central Lodge No. 1, IN  
Founding member of Kappa Alpha Psi

Bro. Raymond Pace Alexander  
St. Albans Lodge No. 35, PA  
Influential Pennsylvania Judge

Bro. Jimmie Allen  
Kirjathjearim Lodge No. 104, TN  
Country Music Star

Bro. Eugene Charlie Allen  
Ionic Lodge No. 17, DC  
Head White House Butler for 34 years  
serving eight (8) Presidents

Bro. Richard Allen  
African Lodge No. 459, PA  
Founder and first Bishop of the A.M.E. Church

Bro. Gerald Alston  
Samson Lodge No. 66, NJ  
Lead singer, The Manhattans

Bro. Dennis W. (Wayne) Archer  
Geometry Lodge No. 49, MI  
Former Mayor, Detroit

Bro. Ernie Banks  
Fidelity Lodge No. 103, IL  
MLB Hall of Famer

Bro. William "Count" Basie  
Wisdom Lodge No. 102, IL  
Orchestra leader/composer

The list is endless! For more check out:  
[ILPrinceHall.Com](http://ILPrinceHall.Com) and [PHAOhio.Org](http://PHAOhio.Org)

# Freemasonry and A Knight of the Seven Kingdoms

by WB.: Darin A. Lahners, FILOR  
*Originally Published on the Meet Act and Part Blog*



## Minor Spoilers Ahead!

If you walk into a room full of fifty Freemasons and ask each of them to define what Freemasonry is, you will most likely get fifty different answers. Sure, we have our platitudes: “*Making Good Men Better*”, but one of the main reasons we struggle with membership, especially with younger potential members, is the inability to explain what the benefits of Freemasonry are succinctly.

Freemasonry often fails to capitalize on societal trends due to a lack of imagination. Freemasonry has had an unwillingness to try to tie pop culture trends to what our Fraternity could offer a younger man. It has failed time and time again to take an aggressive approach to look at pop culture franchises like Star Wars, Indiana Jones, Brendan Fraser’s Mummy movies, National Treasure, Harry Potter, to see how synergies could be created

to market Freemasonry to a broader audience of younger men based upon Masonic Themes within these franchises.

While some may accuse me of cheapening Freemasonry by suggesting this, nowhere am I advocating for the West Gate to be thrown open. That’s already been done out of desperation for membership. No, I would argue the opposite. The niche pop culture fan is the perfect Masonic candidate. Someone who spends time learning everything there is to know about a fictional franchise is bound to spend that amount of time learning everything there is to know about Freemasonry. We need more passionate and knowledgeable Freemasons.

The line that is often quoted, which says: “*it is not in the power of any man or body of men*”

*to make innovation in the body of Masonry*”, gets thrown out whenever new ideas are brought forth. Even though we all belong to appendant bodies or orders, which are innovations in the body of Masonry. What is not noted, when this particular line is quoted, is that Preston made his own innovation to the line by dropping:”...without the consent of the Annual Grand Lodge” from the end of it. My point being, Masonry is innovated upon all the time.

Which leads me back to my beginning paragraph. How to define what Freemasonry is. In the medieval Stone Mason guilds, the knowledge the Master Masons possessed was tangible. The Master Masons showed the Apprentices how to perform their job, much like an apprentice might learn how to do a trade today. Ultimately, Speculative Freemasonry is an organization that grew out of this tradition, which has at its root a similar concept, and should be what is shared with younger potential members: the transmittal of esoteric knowledge from the older generation to the younger generation, and the reciprocal mentorship included in this process.

In our speculative lodges, the Master Masons help the Entered Apprentices learn their catechisms to advance from one degree to the next, but they shouldn't stop being Mentors when those Entered Apprentices become Fellowcraft, and later Master Masons themselves. Oftentimes, Mentoring is reciprocal. Meaning that while the Mentor teaches the Mentee, the Mentee often also teaches the Mentor.

Mentorship is a universal framework for moral and practical growth. In George R. R. Martin's The Hedge Knight (and HBO's A Knight of the Seven Kingdoms), the relationship between Ser Duncan the Tall (Dunk) and Egg (the incognito Prince Aegon) offers an illustration of a reciprocal mentor/mentee relationship that is forged through humility, courage, and a mutual transformation via reciprocal mentoring.

At the beginning of *The Hedge Knight* (and HBO's *A Knight of the Seven Kingdoms*), both Dunk and Egg are rough ashlar. Dunk instructs Egg by example in the ways of squiring; Egg teaches Dunk much needed Noble etiquette for him to be able to navigate the tournament at Ashford. While Freemasonry offers a formal, degree-based curriculum administered in a lodge, Dunk and Egg navigate an improvised, experiential, and often perilous curriculum in the open world. The Masonic path is ritualized, peer-supervised, and intentionally symbolic; the hedge knight's path is pragmatic, peril-tested, and based in reality. Comparatively, these two models of mentorship highlight the complementary strengths of formal moral formation and lived ethical apprenticeship.

Their mentorship begins outside any institution. Egg chooses Dunk because he discerns a rare integrity behind the hedge knight's rough manners. Dunk's acceptance is reluctant, born less from rank than from conscience.

We learn of a parallel between Egg and Dunk, although there is no mention of this in the short story. In the television series, Episode Five: In the Name of the Mother, a flashback shows how Dunk chose to follow Ser Arlan of Pennytree for similar reasons, eventually becoming his squire. The relationship begins with a mutual decision of two parties, not unlike Freemasonry, but less bureaucratic. There is no petition, lodge vote, or catechism. There is just a boy's insistence and a man's uneasy willingness to be responsible for another soul.

Entry into Freemasonry, by contrast, is an act of bureaucracy. It involves a petition and ballot, not personal selection alone. A candidate must be freeborn and of good report, well recommended, believe in a higher power, investigated, and then the petition must be accepted unanimously (in most jurisdictions) by ballot of the lodge. Mentorship is embedded in structure: Current officers, Past Masters, and assigned mentors guide the can-

didate's progress. The Mentor/Mentee relationship is legitimate because the brethren confer it; the new Entered Apprentice is initiated, with the lodge collectively vouching that he is "*worthy and well qualified*." Both relationships insist on the worthiness of individuals in the relationship. While Freemasonry tests worthiness through a bureaucratic application and acceptance process, which culminates in a solemn obligation, Dunk and Egg test it through immediate acts of courage and kindness. Dunk cannot teach heraldry or letters well; Egg helps teach him these. Dunk can teach Egg how to be a squire, having been one himself.

Dunk's instruction is embodied in the vows one swears to upon becoming a Knight, even though we do not see Dunk being Knighted by Ser Arlan (because Dunk wasn't Knighted by Ser Arlan). The words are only known due to Ser Lyonne Baratheon knighting Ser Raymun Fossoway: "*In the name of the Warrior, I charge you to be brave. In the name of the Father, I charge you to be just. In the name of the Mother, I charge you to defend the young and innocent. In the name of the Maid, I charge you to protect all women.....*" His lessons to Egg arise from real-world experiences like those encountered at the tournament at Ashford, where they witness hunger, injustice, and Dunk has his confrontation with corrupt power. Dunk's mistakes become cautionary tales; his courage in the face of such adversity becomes the lesson.

Masonic instruction is ritualized and symbolic, enacted in the initiatory degrees (Entered Apprentice, Fellowcraft, Master Mason), each with their own set of ritual, obligations, working tools, lectures, and charges to the candidate. The lodge is a classroom, and catechisms are then required to be learned and memorized by the candidate for each degree throughout the process. The knowledge is progressive; the memory work is coached; the symbols are decrypted by mentors and made personal by the reflection of the candidate.

While Dunk's instructions to Egg are taught in "*real life*" situations, which can be and often are chaotic and learned on the job, under intense life-or-death pressure. Freemasonry's instructions are taught in

a world of "*simulation*", teaching the same virtues through allegory within a sacred space that leaves the profane world outside of its doors. Both approaches inculcate the Cardinal virtues of prudence, fortitude, temperance, and justice; while Freemasonry introduces these through the use of the lecture and the allusions to the points of entrance in the Entered Apprentice degree, Dunk and Egg discover them in their travels in their daily life.

The code of chivalry that Dunk strives to follow maps onto the cardinal virtues: courage in defense of the weak (Justice), honor in keeping one's word (Fortitude), mercy in victory (Temperance), humility about status (Prudence), even when it will potentially cost him his life or limbs. When Dunk comes to the defense of Tanselle and strikes Prince Aerion Targaryen, he does it both out of a sense of honor and due to a loss of self-governance.

Dunk sees an object of his affection being tortured, her fingers broken, and he acts without thought. Justice overrules Prudence. Fortitude overrules Temperance. Dunk teaches Egg that a knight's title means little without the deeds to square it. Egg saves Dunk's life by revealing himself as Prince Aegon Targaryen, even at the risk of their blossoming relationship dissolving, as Egg had kept this a secret from Dunk. Freemasonry's three tenets have parallels to Dunk's view of Chivalry as well.

- Brotherly Love: universal benevolence grounded in the recognition of shared parentage of G-d, and brotherhood of man.
- Relief: practical charity for the distressed, enacted with discretion.
- Truth: moral and intellectual honesty; the square dealing of one's actions with principle.

Dunk's compassion for smallfolk and his willingness to stand between those who would use violence to oppress and the victims of the violence is Relief in action. His plain dealing with all, smallfolk and nobility alike, is Truth lived without hypocrisy. His sincere affection for Egg, coupled with respect for strangers, embodies Brotherly Love. Freemasonry carefully

names these virtues, places them under allegory, and charges the initiate to practice them. Dunk enacts them first and names them later, if at all. Actions speak louder than words for Ser Duncan.

Supplemented by the Four Cardinal Virtues (prudence, temperance, fortitude, justice), Freemasonry expects a Mason to internalize ethics so thoroughly that they govern conduct outside the lodge. This is something that I personally try to live by, and something that I call out in my articles when I see it not being lived. While Ser Duncan the Tall realizes that being a Knight means that he must exemplify the knightly virtues for all his life, he can't stop being a knight for Egg or for himself; Freemasons must also realize that just because we leave the lodge room, it doesn't mean that we stop being Freemasons. This is an especially important lesson for those of us who are mentors, that we must be a living example that needs to be set for those whom we are mentoring.

In Masonic symbolism, the Rough Ashlar is the unhewn stone—the self in need of working. Dunk, uneducated and unsure of himself, is a noble roughness: strong, useful, but unpolished. His life is the ongoing labor of paring off his vices and superfluities (naïveté, impulsiveness, and self-doubt), using the “*common gavel*” of knightly virtues as discipline. Egg, on the other hand, is a different kind of roughness. Egg is socially privileged yet morally unformed.

Under Dunk's hammering-by-example, Egg learns to subordinate status to service, temper passion with prudence, and weigh decisions on the Square of virtue. The result is the continuing journey towards that perfect ashlar, to be one day placed in the temple not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. While Freemasonry teaches that the working tools have different philosophical meanings, it is up to us, who are mentors, to show their proper application in daily life to those we are mentoring, much like Dunk has taught Egg.

Dunk's willingness to stake his life for a powerless victim is an ordeal that externalizes his inner oath: a knight defends the weak. The fact that others stake their lives for Dunk and fight beside him as champions for his trial of seven shows what is illustrated

above. That Dunk's virtue, his plain dealing with smallfolk and nobles alike, exemplifies that he is a true knight, even if he sleeps in the hedges. The combat for the trial is brutal, lethal, and costly, with several lives lost as part of it.

Freemasonry binds the initiate by solemn obligations that give structure and weight to Freemasonry's moral intentions. The penalties for violation of these oaths are symbolic, even though they would mean death if taken literally. The trial is internal and lifelong for every Freemason. There is no quick trial of seven for the Freemason. The battle is waged every second of every day, for the rest of the Freemason's life. Dunk's oath is tested under existential pressure; the Masons' oath is tested daily in ordinary life. Both determine that, as 1 John 2:5 states: *'But whoso keepeth His Word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him.'*

Viewed together, we can see that in both cases, Dunk and Egg – Master Mason and Entered Apprentice/Fellowcraft, the mentorship is reciprocal. The teacher becomes humbler, the learner becomes braver. Freemasonry starts with a formal education in the initiatory degrees, giving the candidates tools for moral reasoning in allegorical forms, asking the Mentors to help them decipher them. The Mentors, in turn, encourage them to try them in the profane world, giving the Mentee more practical advice. The mentee can help guide the Mentors through issues they might be having navigating the profane world themselves, in my case, usually in helping my brothers with technology. When not being a Mentee, I am a Mentor. I am helping my younger brothers navigate their life's struggles, giving them insight from when I had to encounter similar circumstances. The point is that I learn from their life experience, and they learn from mine, and sometimes I am older, sometimes I am younger. Sometimes I am being mentored, sometimes I am the mentor.

In Ser Duncan's relationship with Egg, it is similar. Ser Duncan is teaching Egg how to be a squire, while Egg is teaching Ser Duncan how to navigate the upper echelons of Society. It is Egg who helps secure some of Ser Duncan's champions for him; it is Egg who saves Ser Duncan from certain immediate

death at the hand of his brother after beating him for hurting Tanselle. While reciprocally, this is more action-based, more skill-based, it is still reciprocal. Without Egg, Dunk could not live up to his full potential. Without Dunk, Egg could never become the kind King he is destined to become.

What Ser Duncan teaches by the clang of arms and armament on the grounds of the tournament at Ashford, Freemasonry teaches by the quiet dignity of Masonic labor in our personal quarries. To build a life of integrity, we need both a lodge and a road—both the temple within and the trial without. And if mentorship aims to raise not just apprentices but builders—of selves, of communities, of just societies, then the hedge knight and the Craft agree: take up your working tools, choose your companions wisely, and labor with brotherly love until roughness yields to truth.



# THE IMPACT OF FREEMASONRY ON THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Committee on Masonic Education

Freemasonry, an ancient fraternal organization, has long been involved in promoting values such as equality, justice, and brotherhood. Although Freemasonry is not typically associated with political movements, its influence on the Civil Rights Movement in the United States during the mid-20th century was profound. One of the most significant contributions came from Prince Hall Freemasonry, a branch that has historically served African Americans and played an active role in the fight for civil rights.

## PRINCE HALL FREEMASONRY: A LEGACY OF INCLUSION

Prince Hall Freemasonry was founded in the 18th century by Prince Hall, an African American who, along with a group of other African men, was initiated into Freemasonry in 1775. At the time, African Americans were excluded from mainstream Masonic lodges due to racial segregation. Undeterred, Hall sought to establish his own lodge, which would later become part of a broader movement to provide African Americans with a space to organize, network, and advance their interests.

The values instilled by Freemasonry — including equality, liberty, and fraternity — resonated deeply with the African American community, particularly in the years leading up to and during the Civil Rights Movement. In an era where systemic racism and discrimination were rampant, Freemasonry's emphasis on equality and the brotherhood of all men became a rallying cry for social and political change.

## MASONIC LODGES AS SAFE SPACES FOR ORGANIZING

During the Civil Rights Movement, African American Masonic lodges served as important gathering places for activists. They were spaces where individuals could discuss strategies, plan protests, and engage in advocacy without fear of reprisal. The secretive nature of Masonic meetings provided a level of protection, allowing leaders of the movement to speak freely about issues that were often dangerous to address in public.

These lodges also created an atmosphere of solidarity, offering moral support and a sense of community to activists who were facing violence and intimidation. Prominent figures in the Civil Rights Movement, including Martin Luther King Jr., were often influenced or supported by Masons in their fight for justice and equality. Masonic lodges played a crucial role in facilitating communication between grassroots organizations and national leaders, helping to build the strong network of support that was needed to bring about change.

## PROMINENT AFRICAN AMERICAN FREEMASONS AND THEIR ROLE IN THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Many key figures in the Civil Rights Movement were members of Prince Hall Freemasonry or other Masonic organizations. Their membership provided them with not only moral support but also a platform for influencing public opinion. Some of the most influential African American leaders who were involved in Freemasonry include:

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.: While not officially a member of a Prince Hall lodge, King's father, Martin Luther King Sr., was an active member of the Ma-

sonic order. King Sr. was deeply involved in both the religious and social justice aspects of the movement, drawing upon the teachings of Freemasonry to guide his actions.

A. Philip Randolph: A prominent labor leader and civil rights activist, Randolph was a strong advocate for racial equality. As a member of the Prince Hall Freemasons, he used his influence to address issues of economic justice and civil rights.

Thurgood Marshall: The first African American Supreme Court Justice, Marshall was a champion for civil rights and an influential member of the Prince Hall Masonic fraternity. His legal work, including his victory in the landmark case *Brown v. Board of Education*, was foundational to the desegregation efforts of the Civil Rights Movement.

These leaders, along with countless other Masons, used their positions within the organization to advance civil rights legislation, challenge segregation, and fight for equality before the law. The moral teachings of Freemasonry provided a strong ethical foundation for their work, reinforcing the idea that all people, regardless of race, deserve equal treatment.

#### THE SYMBOLISM OF THE SQUARE AND COMPASS

The Square and Compass, the most recognizable symbol of Freemasonry, also held significance during the Civil Rights Movement. The Square represents moral rectitude, while the Compass stands for the boundaries of behavior. For African American Masons, these symbols came to represent the moral imperative to fight against injustice and to uphold the principles of equality and fairness in society.

As the Civil Rights Movement gained momentum, the values symbolized by the Square and Compass inspired many African American leaders to continue their efforts despite the personal risks they faced. These symbols provided not just guidance but also a source of strength and unity, linking the struggle for civil rights with the universal principles of Freema-

sonry.

#### CHALLENGES AND CONTROVERSIES

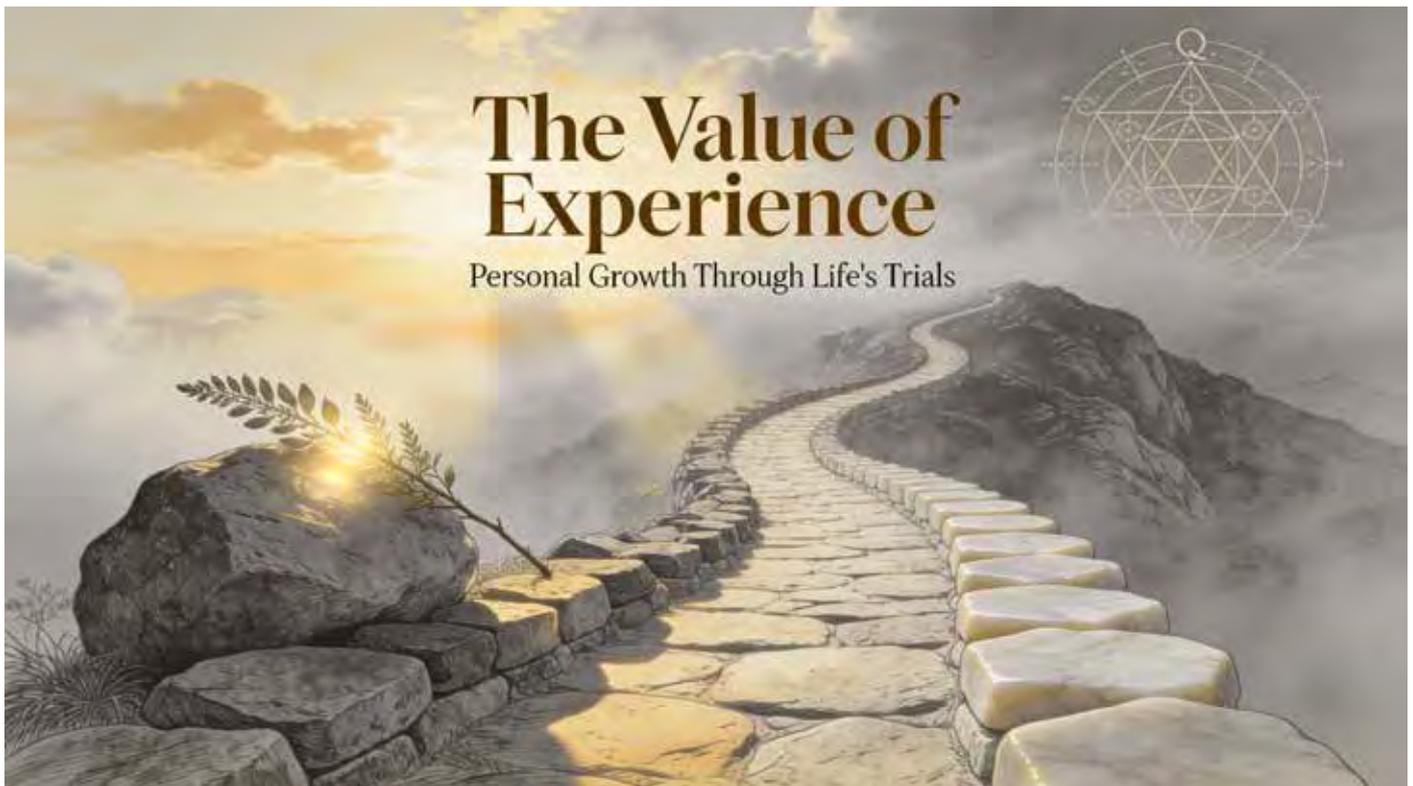
Despite the positive influence of Freemasonry on the Civil Rights Movement, there were also challenges and controversies. The segregation of lodges in some parts of the country remained a significant issue, and some Masonic groups struggled to fully embrace African American members. However, Prince Hall Freemasonry stood out as a beacon of hope and empowerment for African Americans, offering a space where they could not only engage in self-improvement but also work toward the larger goal of racial equality.

#### CONCLUSION

The impact of Freemasonry on the Civil Rights Movement was profound and multifaceted. Prince Hall Freemasonry provided African Americans with a platform for organizing, a network of solidarity, and a moral foundation rooted in the principles of equality and justice. Many of the most significant leaders in the Civil Rights Movement were influenced by Masonic values, and Masonic lodges played an essential role in the fight against segregation and racial inequality.

Through their commitment to brotherhood and equality, Freemasons helped to pave the way for the societal changes that would eventually lead to the desegregation of schools, public facilities, and other institutions. Today, the legacy of Freemasonry continues to be celebrated as a vital force in the ongoing struggle for civil rights and social justice.





# The Value of Experience

Personal Growth Through Life's Trials

by Rev. Harriet B. Case

From *Adytum News Notes* ~ January - March 1964

*Editors Note: Brethren, this month's Lyceum theme of civility finds a profound complement in Rev. Harriet B. Case's "The Value of Experience," originally published in the January–March 1964 issue of Adytum News Notes. As wife of Paul Foster Case—a prolific Masonic scholar, occultist, and founder of Builders of the Adytum (B.O.T.A.) in 1922—Rev. Case contributed to an organization blending Qabalistic, Hermetic, and Rosicrucian teachings with practical mysticism.*

*Her essay that follows urges transforming life's trials into stepping-stones through unprejudiced acceptance, rejecting victimhood or blame—hallmarks of true civility that foster self-accountability and brotherly harmony in our lodges. This aligns seamlessly with our civility-focused articles, reminding us that Masonic growth demands gracious responses over evasion or defensiveness.*

*As for her husband, Paul Foster Case, he was initiated into Freemasonry in 1926 and before this, he was a part of Alpha et Omega (a Golden Dawn offshoot)*

*in 1918. Paul shaped B.O.T.A. as a mystery school emphasizing inner alchemy, much like our Craft's moral progression. Rev. Case's words, drawn from this lineage, offer timeless wisdom for Illinois Masons navigating discord with poise. So, in the words of Garth Marengi, "Enjoy. Well...I say, enjoy."*

It has been our premise that the happenings and conditions of our present life have resulted from actions and studies performed and expressed in other lives. We have always claimed that experience was the great teacher, that through our varied experiences we make Soul growth and build character. It is how we react to experiences that matters, whether we make stepping-stones or stumbling blocks out of those experiences which our life path brings us.

The value of experience lies in the ability of the person to accept facts without prejudice or addicted to opinions, and to have the capacity to accept instruction with an open mind. So many of us seem to have perfected, through ages of evasion, a technique

which impels us to avoid, or refuse to face squarely, that which is uncomfortable or unpleasant. We are reluctant to admit that we could be wrong then, and tend to blame others or “*fate*” for our misfortunes. The more a person comes to think of himself as a “*victim*” of circumstances, or of “*dark forces*.” Working against him, the less he is able to see the truth concerning himself or the situation in which he finds himself. To feel that he is a “*victim*” seems to explain everything, but of course, it solves nothing. For can he learn what is really significant if he has decided that he is being unjustly treated by his associates or by life in general? It is only a step from being victimized to being martyred, and for many—in their ignorance—how soul-satisfying that is!

We believe that there is a plan and pattern in the Mind of God for the evolution of life and consciousness on this planet, collectively and individually, and, in fact, we cannot afford for a moment to go contrary to the currents of space and the Will of the Infinite. The purpose of those contacts, which we call “*experience*,” is to reveal the larger plan for the human race. Even though the Divine Nature has been misinterpreted theologically, the essential need for the concept of a sovereign intelligence, which regulates and plans, is not diminished. One can really grow when one believes that growth is possible, and thus gain knowledge, wisdom and inspiration by cooperating with the necessary program.

And another thing to remember is that any pressures—social, religious, conventional—which limit our ability to think for ourselves, ultimately weaken us and prevent us from cooperating on a higher and more progressive level of conduct. Man grows more rapidly when free from tensions, and analysis has indicated that wherever the emotions are deeply prejudiced, there is marked intensity, resulting in tension and a closed mind.

Each of us could be happier and more cheerful under the responsibilities which we bear if we recognized each burden or trial as an opportunity for self-improvement, and we should no longer wail, “*Why has this happened to me?*” but instead realize that the happening was inevitable because of our own per-

sonality pattern. Our attitudes are magnets that draw to themselves that which is of like nature. Resentment draws resentment. Fear enlarges fear.

A very wise author speaking of the importance of having a solid sense of humor said, “*If we were not so serious in our egocentricities and did not have such an inordinate respect for your own ignorance, life would be easier.*”

We are not in this world merely to suffer. Such a concept of the universal plan is unthinkable. Although it is true that the process of growth is often painful, it is due to man’s resistance to change and obedience to the laws of nature.

When analyzed critically, the cause of the pain is in the individual and not in the event or circumstance. We can all grow pleasantly, lovingly, and happily, but to do so, we must free ourselves from pride, hypersensitiveness, and the impulse to return ill for ill.

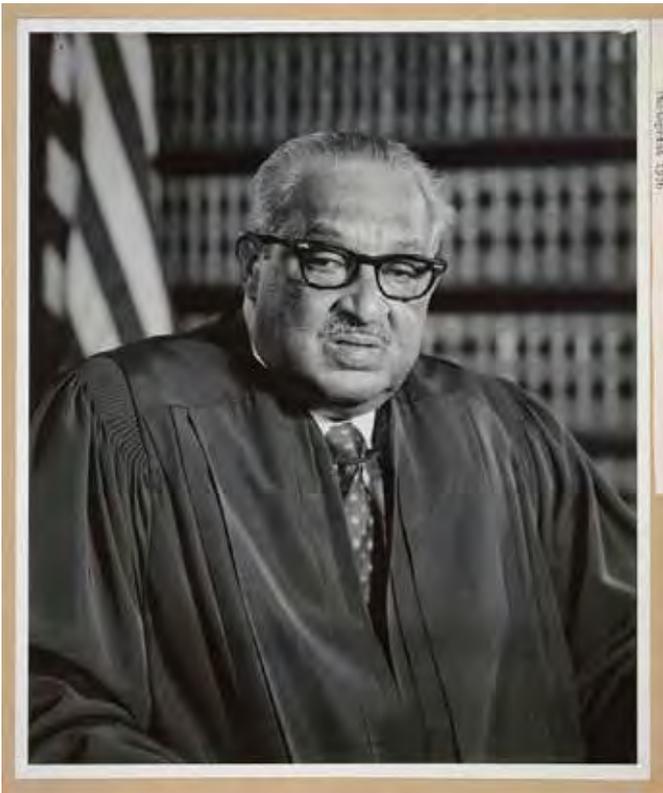
Also, we need to have an abiding faith in the perfection of the Divine Plan, which will one day manifest its full beauty, glory, and perfection as more and more units of the ONE become consciously aware of who and what they really are.

“*According to the experts, the 3 most difficult words to pronounce are ‘I was mistaken.’*” ~ H. C. Diefenbach  
Shalom ~ Peace



# MR. CIVIL RIGHTS: BROTHER THURGOOD MARSHALL

Reprinted from the Grand Lodge of Ohio's Website  
<https://www.freemason.com/thurgood-marshall-freemason/>



If ever there was a man who represented the core tenets of Freemasonry – Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth – it was Thurgood Marshall. Marshall is famous for being the first African American justice of the Supreme Court, but his legacy and influence on our culture are so much greater than that. Brother Marshall had an astute legal mind and ardently voiced his support for civil rights and the policies needed to achieve them. The America he was born into was quite different from the one he left behind, and to say he had a small role in our nation's growth and progress would be to sell him short.

He was an attorney of much renown, a Supreme

Court justice of 24-years, an activist, and a Prince Hall Freemason, belonging to Coal Creek Lodge #88 in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Here we journey through the inspirational life, career, and legacy of Thurgood Marshall.

## Childhood

Thoroughgood Marshall was born on June 2, 1908, in Baltimore, Maryland. His father, William Marshall, was a railroad porter, and his mother, Norma, was a teacher. Young Marshall was named after his great-grandfather, but the unusual name invited taunting from his friends. At only age 6, to avoid the teasing, young Marshall changed his name to Thurgood.

Thurgood's parents were passionate about the United States Constitution and instilled in him an appreciation for the legal system when he was just a boy. As a child, his father took him to watch court cases to learn the art of debate. The family would later debate the cases and other current events around the dinner table, allowing Thurgood to hone the skills that would make him a prolific lawyer later in life. He said his father taught him to be a lawyer by *“teaching me to argue, by challenging my logic on every point,[and] by making me prove every statement I made.”*

Despite the effort of his parents to shield him from the harsh realities being black in the early 1900s, Marshall experienced racial discrimination throughout his youth. At this time, the city of Baltimore had a death rate for African Americans that was twice as high as that of Caucasians. His personal experiences,

such as being unable to use all-white restrooms and attending a segregated all-black school, shaped his passion for civil rights. In grade school, Thurgood was a talented student who placed in the advanced classes. He graduated high school a year early in 1925 and went on to attend Lincoln University, a historically black college in Pennsylvania.

### **The fight for civil rights**

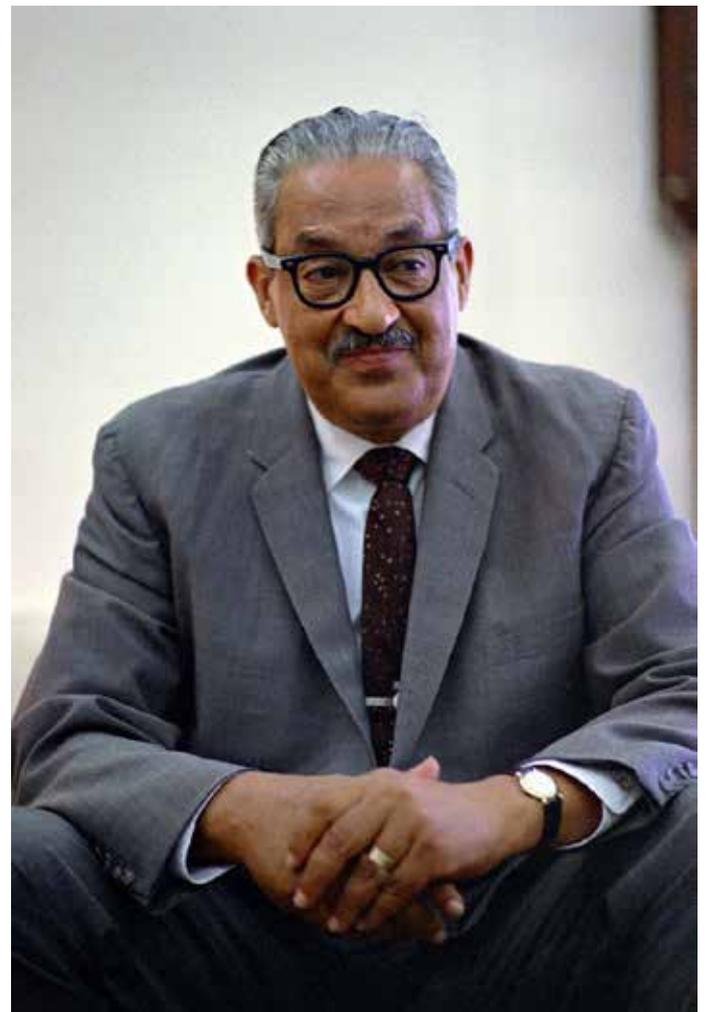
After Thurgood graduated, he applied to the University of Maryland School of Law but was rejected because he was black. Instead, he attended law school at Howard University, graduating first in his class in 1933. Once he earned his degree, Harvard University offered him a postgraduate scholarship, but he declined, opting instead to open a private practice in Baltimore. Notably, several clients approached Thurgood for help despite not being able to pay. In the true spirit of a Freemason, he turned none away and did what he could.

Soon, the young man affiliated with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). In 1935, still his first year as an attorney, Marshall represented the NAACP in the pivotal law school discrimination suit *Murray v. Pearson*. This lawsuit brought by the local NAACP challenged the University of Maryland Law School over its segregation policy, accusing the school of violating the Fourteenth Amendment's guarantee of equal protection of the laws by denying an African American applicant admission to its law school solely on the basis of race. Marshall and NAACP won the lawsuit, paving the way for his battle to end racial segregation in America.

He soon brought lawsuits that integrated other state universities and in 1936 he became the NAACP's chief legal counsel, challenging the board to pursue cases that would strike at the heart of segregation. In 1938, Marshall took the helm of the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund (LDEF), arguing for pivotal cases such as *Sweatt v. Painter* and *McLaurin v. Oklahoma Board of Regents of Higher Education*. Thurgood won these cases, which were instrumental in starting to dismantle Jim Crow laws in higher education. Ultimately, Marshall argued one of the

most critical cases in our nation's history in *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954. Winning this case in the Supreme Court resulted in the declaration that segregating public schools is unconstitutional.

In 1957, LDEF, led by Marshall, became an entirely separate entity from the NAACP with its own leadership and board of directors and has remained a separate organization to this day. As a lead legal architect of the civil rights movement, Marshall constantly traveled to small scorching courtrooms throughout the south. At one point, he oversaw as many as 450 simultaneous cases. Among other major victories, he successfully challenged a whites-only primary election in Texas in addition to a case in which the Supreme Court declared that restrictive covenants that barred blacks from buying or renting homes could not be enforced in state courts.



**Court of Appeals and tenure as Solicitor General**  
His success in the courtroom and his passionate,

tireless fight to ensure all citizens' civil rights caught the attention of President John F. Kennedy, who appointed him to the U.S. Court of Appeals in 1961, although ten southern senators delayed Marshall's confirmation for more than eight months. On September 11, 1962, and after five hours of floor debate, the Senate confirmed Marshall by a 56–14 vote.

He spent the next three years on the Court of Appeals, authored 98 majority opinions, none of which were reversed by the Supreme Court, as well as 8 concurrences and 12 dissents. In 1965, he was made Solicitor General by President (and fellow Freemason) Lyndon B. Johnson. In this role, Thurgood became responsible for arguing Supreme Court cases on behalf of the United States government.

Marshall's appointment as Solicitor General was generally considered a precursor to his position on the Supreme Court appointment. Nevertheless, Thurgood was as effective in this role as ever, winning fourteen of the nineteen Supreme Court cases he argued. Of his time as Solicitor General Marshall later said it was, "*the most effective job*" and, "*maybe the best*" job he ever had.

### **The highest court in the land**

In 1967, Johnson appointed Brother Marshall to the U.S. Supreme Court, where he served for 24 years until his retirement in 1991. President Johnson said nominating Marshall was, "the right thing to do, the right time to do it, the right man and the right place." Ever the liberal mind, Justice Marshall spent his many years on the court fighting for societal and political progress. He staunchly supported upholding individual rights, expanding civil rights, and limiting the scope of criminal punishment.

Although Marshall held significant influence over the court in his early years as a justice, the court eventually shifted towards conservatism. In the later years of his tenure, Marshall remained as strong in his convictions as ever but his influence waned. He was reluctant to retire despite being politically isolated and entering his eighties, notably repeating, "*I was appointed to a life term, and I intend to serve*

*it.*" Eventually, bad health forced his hand, and the justice retired from the court in 1991 and was succeeded by Associate Justice Clarence Thomas.

### **Freemasonry and legacy**

Although many of the details of his time as a Freemason are limited, we do know that Brother Thurgood Marshall was a member of Coal Creek Lodge No. 88 of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Oklahoma. He was director and counselor of the Prince Hall Grand Master's Conference and was a 33° AASR Prince Hall.



Marshall argued a record-breaking 32 cases before the Supreme Court, winning 29 of them throughout his career. He represented and won more cases before the high court than any other person. Throughout his term as Supreme Court justice, Thurgood remained a zealous supporter for individual and civil rights guided by his policies and decisions. Through his accomplishments in the courtroom – both as a lawyer and a judge – he shaped the course of our nation through challenging social policies and upholding laws protecting minorities.

Brother Marshall passed away from heart failure in 1993, at the age of 84. He laid in repose in the Great Hall of the United States Supreme Court so his admirers and colleagues could pay their respects and was later buried in Arlington National Cemetery. As his flag-draped casket laid in state, he became just the second justice to receive this honor. He left behind his wife, Cecilia, and their two sons, Thurgood and John.





## OUR HISTORY

Formed as a charity of Illinois Freemasonry, the Illinois Masonic Student Assistance Program (IMSAP) has been dedicated to a school based early intervention approach to identify and assist at risk students.

IMSAP now impacts thousands of students throughout the state of Illinois through its multiple programs and initiatives.

## HOW TO HELP

We always welcome and encourage any assistance. Whether through your monetary contributions or by reaching out to your district to bring IMSAP to your local schools, you can be a part of the change we work to instill in our youth. Be a part of an incredible impact on our students and their futures.

## CONTACT

IMSAP Coordinator  
217-529-8900 ext. 219   
[imsapeilmason.org](http://imsapeilmason.org)

3731 Wabash Avenue  
Springfield, IL 62711-6261  
[www.imsap.org](http://www.imsap.org)

IMSAP is an Illinois Freemasonry Charity



# ILLINOIS FREEMASONRY



PUT IT INTO PRACTICE:  
[WWW.MLS2026.COM](http://WWW.MLS2026.COM)



## THE MASONIC LEGACY SOCIETY

LISTEN TO IT



EPISODE: 0374  
DECORUM AND ETIQUETTE  
[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/TMR374](https://tinyurl.com/TMR374)



EPISODE: 0413  
BEING CIVILIZED

[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/WCY413](https://tinyurl.com/WCY413)

# The Role of Freemasonry in Civility



by RW Andre H. Faria, Jr., Senior Grand Warden,  
Grand Lodge of Rhode Island

One can imagine – and this story is probably more fact than fiction – that two strangers are in line at a coffee shop. At one point, they both notice the barista behind the counter fumble and almost drop a cup of coffee.

Of course, comments began to be exchanged by the two men about how disastrous it would have been if the cup had fallen on the counter and spilled and the resulting after affects of such a possible event. I imagine that this would cause each of them to chuckle and they begin exchanging pleasantries. Jokes fly back and forth and after a few minutes, it's almost as if they have known each other for a long time and have been friends forever.

Then something all too familiar happens to the two men; a random customer enters the coffee shop, but with a large hat on his head displaying the name of his favorite political candidate. One of the two men comments on how the man should remove that hat because it's offensive and begins pointing out what he feels to be all the alleged shortcomings of this candidate. Well, the other man upon hearing this commentary from the man who he thought was his new friend, began sensing his own blood pressure rising and starts slowly at first and then with more passion defends the candidate on the man's hat.

Well, sadly, it's not too hard to imagine that the two men, who minutes earlier were strangers who had become friendly with each other, both left the coffee shop, going their separate ways never again to share a conversation about anything because one random person dared to walk in public with a name on his hat!

## Freemasonry and the Civility Mosaic

It's no wonder that Freemasonry in all its wisdom has determined that discussion about politics is not allowed in the lodge. But that has not prevented these and other volatile topics to emerge in other places where Freemasons gather, both in person and virtually.

The M.:W. Past Grand Master of California, Brother Russ Charvonja, in his book The Civility Mosaic, shares that in his search for the definition of the word “civility,” what he encountered was not a definition, but rather the words “see incivility.” In other words, to define what civility is, one had to understand what it was not. I found that interesting. Have we all become so attached to our own way of thinking that we cannot understand that our way is not the only way? Are we tempted to believe that our way is right, and any other way is wrong? And if we were to dig a little deeper, dare we admit that our own self-identity or sense of self-worth is in some way intricately tied up with what we believe to be the truth? While the relativity (or not) of truth is an interesting topic in and of itself, we can leave that for another time. The reality is that trying to understand what we each believe and perceive to be true will sometimes be disparate. At times, I think it's amazing that we can even agree upon anything at all! Unfortunately, differing opinions have somehow caused us to be polarized and the more passionate one is about a particular topic, the greater the canyon grows between another with a differing point of view.

## Five Steps to Cultivate Civility

M.:W. Charvonja believes that five steps are necessary in order for civility to begin to take root in our lives and in society as a whole:

- The first step is to acknowledge that we may have differences – and that this is OK. Just because someone thinks differently than we do does not necessarily make them our enemy.
- The second step - and this takes courage and grit – is to really try and understand why someone else believes what they believe and thinks what they think.
- The third step is to genuinely tolerate someone else, even if you don't agree with them (M.:W.: Charvonnia believes that it is at this point that a person begins the path to enlightenment.)
- The fourth step is to recognize that the goal is not to change another person, but rather to live with them and live with their perspectives.
- The fifth step is to appreciate the unique qualities in someone else so as to improve their situation, and he believes that this is true enlightenment.

### **We Have the Tools to Make a Difference**

He believes that we as Freemasons have the unique opportunity to become beacons of civility in our world. We have the tools that are needed to live civilly in our society and to teach our society how to be civil.

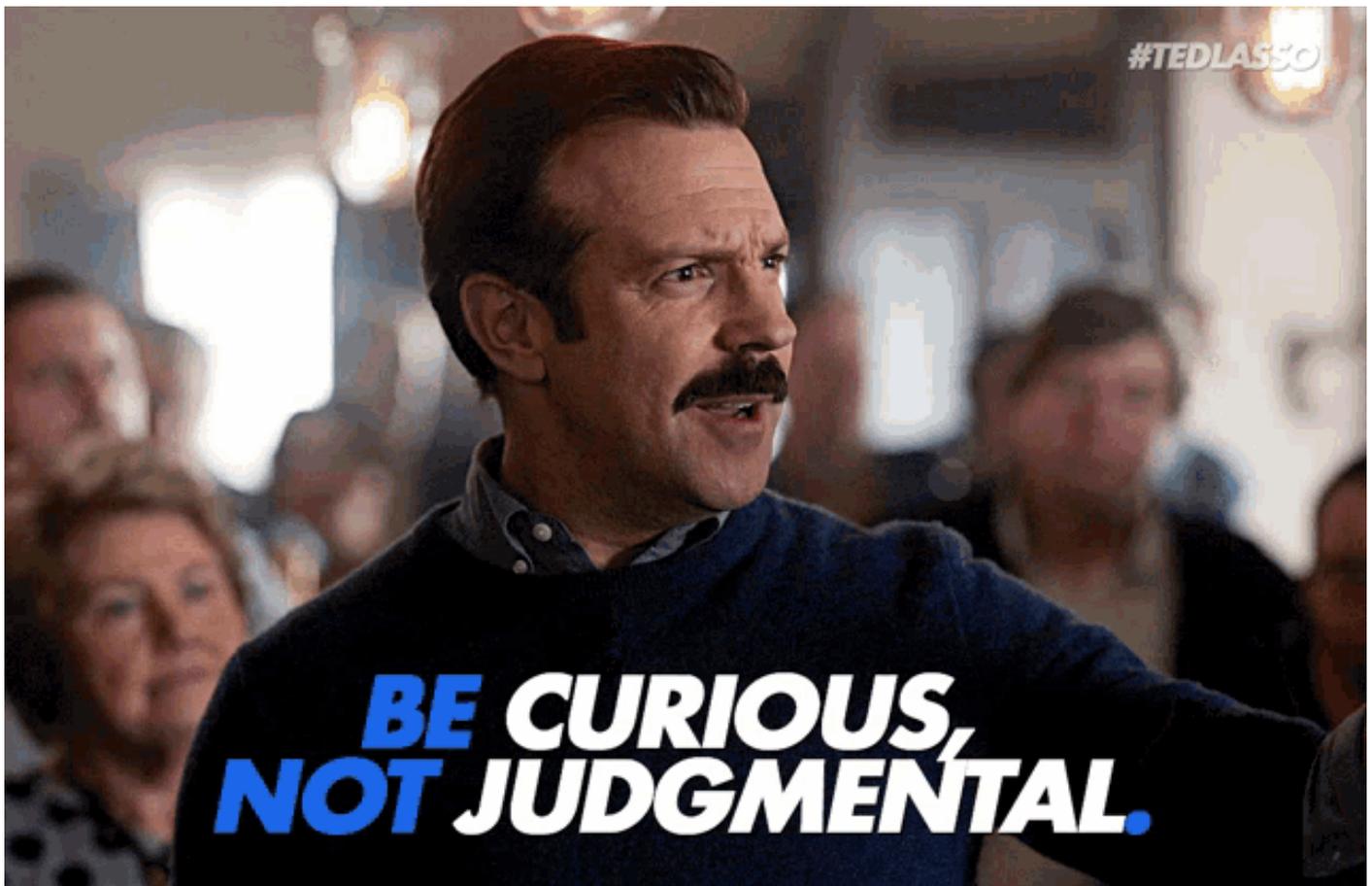
The Entered Apprentice learns about the cardinal virtues of Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence and Justice. He also learns in that same degree that our most exalted tenets are Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth. If a Freemason truly embodies these virtues, then civility becomes as easy as the air we breathe, and a brother effortlessly becomes an example to others, no matter his station in life – anywhere on the planet.

Civility requires dialogue and mutual respect. Civility requires us to constantly be aware of, master and combat Freemasonry's Public Enemy No. 1: The male ego. In a world that supplies each of us our own personal soapbox through the use of social media and other venues, we would do well to step down from these places of virtual altitude. Instead, we could learn much from both virtually and figuratively, putting our arm around our brother or sister and just simply walk with them, really listen to them, and even though you may not agree with them about everything, never remove your arm from their shoulder.

(The Freemasons of Rhode Island have three certified Masonic Civility Ambassadors: R.:W.: Jack Anderson, R.:W.: Gilbert J. Fontes, Jr. and R.:W.: Andre H. Faria, Jr.)

Andre H. Faria, Jr.  
R.:W.:Senior Grand Warden





by WB.: Darin A. Lahners, FILOR

I am a fan of the Emmy award-winning Apple + TV show, Ted Lasso. The title character, Ted Lasso (Jason Sudeikis), is a former Division II College Football coach hired to coach a Premier League Football team, AFC Richmond. Ted moves along with his trusty sidekick, Coach Beard from Wichita, Kansas, to Richmond upon Thames, London. Initially, he is hired by Rebecca Welton (Hannah Waddingham), who is the former owner's ex-wife. She hires Ted, thinking that it will help ruin the team to get revenge upon her ex-husband, Rupert Mannion (Anthony Head), as she believes it is the only thing he loved. However, she is slowly brought around by Ted's coaching and personality.

Ted is the personification of positivity, and his personality is infectious with this trait. You can't help but cheer for him. There is a scene in Season 1, Episode 8, in the Episode "*The Diamond Dogs*" which is, in my opinion, one of the most moving scenes I have

watched in a very long time. The message it delivers is extremely powerful. The scene is structured around Ted, who is playing darts against the entitled, wealthy, arrogant ex-owner of AFC Richmond, Rupert, in the local pub (The Crown and Anchor) in Richmond Upon Thames. Ted and Rebecca went to the Crown and Anchor expecting to meet with some of the co-owners of the Club of AFC Richmond, The Milk Sisters. Instead, they find out that Rupert has bought them out and has become a co-owner of the club. Rupert not only does this but announces that he is engaged. All of this he does to humiliate and torture his ex-wife, Rebecca.

Rupert and Ted make a wager. If Rupert wins, he can fill out the line-up card for the last two matches. If Ted wins, Rupert can't come near the owner's box. As the scene unfolds, the men are engaged in conversation, and Rupert is beating Ted.

Rupert:  
*Shall I be giving you the lineup card now, Ted?  
I shall be putting Obisanya  
back on defense where he belongs.*

Jeremy (Fan of the club that frequents The Crown and Anchor):  
*That's exactly what I said, didn't I?*

Rupert:  
*Now, now, it's not all Ted's fault.  
My ex-wife's the one who brought  
the hillbilly to our shores.  
I know she's always been a bit randy,  
but I never thought she would f\* over an entire team.*

Ted Lasso:  
*Hey!  
Better manners when I'm holding a dart.  
Please. Mae. What do I need to win?*

Mae (Owner of the Crown and Anchor):  
*Two triple 20s and a bull's-eye.  
Good luck.*

Ted Lasso:  
*You know, Rupert, guys have  
underestimated me my entire life.  
And for years, I never understood why.  
It used to really bother me.  
But then one day, I was driving my little boy to school  
and I saw this quote by Walt Whitman  
and it was painted on the wall there. It said, "Be curious,  
not judgmental." I like that.*

\*(Ted throws his first dart and hits a Triple 20)\*

*So I get back in my car and I'm driving to work, and  
all of a sudden it hits me. All them fellas that used to  
belittle me, not a single one of them were curious. They  
thought they had everything all figured out.*

*So they judged everything, and they judged everyone.  
And I realized that they're underestimating me...who  
I was had nothing to do with it. 'Cause if they were  
curious, they would've asked questions. You know?*

Questions like, "Have you played a lot of darts, Ted?"

\*(Ted throws his second dart and hits another Triple 20)\*

*To which I would've answered, "Yes, sir. Every Sunday  
afternoon at a sports bar with my father, from age ten  
till I was 16, when he passed away."*

*Barbecue sauce.*

\*(Ted throws his final dart, hitting the bullseye, winning the game and the bet)\*

You can view the scene here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3S16b-x5mRA>

What resonates for me in that scene is that I believe it perfectly encapsulates key ideas of Freemasonry. The first idea that resonates is Ted's humility in the scene. It's not easy to have someone insult you, especially in Ted's case, where it's being done by someone who is powerful and smug. Ted's ability to subdue his passions is something that every Freemason learns in their first degree. Ted calmly retells the tale about how he improved himself due to a Walt Whitman quote he read, much like we are taught to improve ourselves in Masonry.

The second idea that the scene conveys is the act of choosing to be curious over being judgmental. As we are taught in the first degree to use the common gavel to divest our hearts and consciences of the vices and superfluities of life, we are directing ourselves to use it to help us form our rough ashlar into a perfect one. This means that we must always work on ourselves. Ted's humility and optimism come from his choosing to improve himself, much like we must choose to improve ourselves by using the common gavel. In watching the show, you will see that Ted is someone who actively tries to be a better person because that's the choice he makes daily. He chooses to be curious, he chooses to be empathetic, he chooses to forgive, and he chooses to uplift those around him.

The last idea that the scene conveys is twofold. The first part of this last idea about being curious and not

judgmental applies to those people around us that we interact with, but also how we should interact with the world around us. If you read the Lyceum, you have read article after article about Freemasonry. All the authors here have explored it; however, I don't know that any of us have ever distilled it down to be as simple as the Walt Whitman quote. Freemasonry is about being Curious and not Judgmental. The core idea behind our tenet of Brotherly Love expresses the idea of being curious and not judgmental about other people. Furthermore, the lessons of the Middle Chamber of our Fellowcraft degree tell us to take this same approach with our learning via the Seven Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Curiosity is the key to learning. This applies to learning about people as well as about the world. Curious learners are engaged learners. This means that they are going to remember and retain information better than someone who is not curious. When it comes to people, if we are curious, not only are we able to really learn about them, but we are also connecting with them. Our interpersonal relationships will grow when we are curious about another person, and we will be able to find common points of reference or interest between us.

When we are curious, we open ourselves up to and become more observant about other experiences, ideas, and possibilities. How many of us feel that we really know the other brothers in their lodge? You might know about them, but have we taken the time to be curious enough to really get to know them? We can apply this philosophy not only to your lodge members but to others as well. How many of you spend time and energy on social media arguing with others who don't agree with your views? Do you take the time to ask them why they believe what they believe? If you take the time to be curious, you might find that you have more in common with them than you realize.

The more we are curious and learn about something, the more we open ourselves up to different ideas and points of view. The more we question, the more we will learn about another Masonic Tenet, Truth. As we seek to gain light, we must choose to be curious.

In being curious and not judgmental, we must learn from others, not judge them. We must take what we learn about others and our world and use it to change our Masonic experience. We need to stop worrying so much about the past and rather embrace the possibilities of the future. So, let's start practicing this in our lodges and our everyday lives. Let's start being curious and see what happens. What do we have to lose?



# Masonic Conferences

**Masonic Week** – February 3-8, 2026, Crystal City, VA

[www.MCME1949.org](http://www.MCME1949.org)



**Midwest Conference on Masonic Education** – April 24-26 - 2026, Omaha, NE,

[www.MCME1949.org](http://www.MCME1949.org)



**Esotericon** - June 20th, 2026, Manassas, VA at Manasseh Lodge



**Yes! Masonic Con Chicago will be back in September of 2026.**



For more visit, [MasonicConferences.com](http://MasonicConferences.com)

**If your lodge or organization is having an Educational Event (not related to instruction or charities), please let us know. Email the details to: [Admin@wcypodcast.com](mailto:Admin@wcypodcast.com)**

**Please give us at least a month notice so that we can ensure it is added.**





סחטש טר כנן...  
שססנכנז, שסטזססכנז  
כזזזזזזזזזזזז



The Lyceum