



T H E CORNERSTONE M E S S A G E

® "The Official Organ of the M.W. Prince Hall Grand Lodge, F&AM of Alabama."

VOLUME IV, ISSUE IV

OCTOBER 2021

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A Message from the
Grand Treasurer



THE GRAND MASTER'S TRESTLEBOARD



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"We don't know them all, but we owe them all."

Unknown

September 11, 2001, the United States of America was attacked by terrorists in an unimaginable way. Airplanes were flown into the Twin Towers of the New York Trade Center and the Pentagon. Although, this tragedy took place twenty years ago, most of us can recall exactly where we were and what we were doing when we received the devastating news. September 11, 2001, was a day that we will never forget. Twenty years later, this country, as well as, individuals are still affected by the actions of the terrorists. Many people lost their loved ones; leaving orphans, widows, widowers, and grieving parents. Several individuals who were in or near Ground Zero suffer from respiratory ailments, and others, mental health issues. Those who travel by air, still

today, must undergo strict vetting procedures before they are allowed in terminals to board planes.

We should never forget 9/11 and we should always keep our guards up and be ever watchful. Also, we should always remember those who lost their lives and those heroes who helped to save lives, to include the passengers of United Airlines Flight 93. We should always remember those who continue to live with the effects of that day of terror.

September 11, 2001, may have been a day of unforgettable tragedy; however, this great country survived and continues to be the land of the free, the home of the brave. We too, when faced with personal setbacks, trials and tribulations, must prevail and continue to be an inspiration to others. No matter how tough times may get; no matter how rough the storm may be, always remember that the sun will shine tomorrow.

May God bless you, may He bless our Grand Lodge and may He bless the United States of America!

Fraternally,

Corey D. Hawkins, Sr.

Most Worshipful Grand Master

Message from the Editor



RW Herman "Jerome" Glover (50)
Publication Editor

"This program is designed to allow suspended members to reinstate for a more affordable fee."

RECLAMATION DRIVE (TARP)!



To all readers and supporters of this Official Publication of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Alabama entitled *The Cornerstone Message*, Greetings:

Time passes more quickly the older I get. Science tells us that as we age, our mind's ability to process daily tasks becomes use to the daily process and actions. We just know what's going to happen. For some of us, it's the reason we lose interest in childhood cartoons. Yet, in other instances, it's the reason we watch and re-watch our favorite movies speaking the words aloud in sync. Just like the habits of our daily lives, our Masonry is suscep-

tible to fatigue. We know it's there, we know the motions, but the excitement wanes and our interest fizzles. This has been especially true since the pandemic began. Let's be honest, too many of us were half-heartedly interested in our lodges before the pandemic. And, when our communities opened back up, it became too easy for us to let the old schedule slide. Something else occupied our time in a new way that interested us.

We must ask, then, what is the secret of re-energizing our enthusiasm in Freemasonry? There is always something new to find and discover, whether it be a component of ritual or a new dimension to an old friendship. What's there that we don't know?

Undoubtedly, if we keep an open mind, there's always something new to learn and pass on. I hope your enthusiasm is piqued by the possibility of learning something new. I hope you're even more excited by the potential of not only learning something new but revealing that secret to a friend and brother.

As always, I encourage all subordinate lodges to continue to support *The Cornerstone Message* and show all readers of this newsletter what your lodges are doing in 2021 to add to the mission of making sure Prince Hall Masonry is at the forefront in the state of Alabama.

- RW Herman "Jerome" Glover
Publication Editor

Reclamation Drive (TARP)

In an attempt to give suspended Brothers an opportunity to become active again during these tough economic times, our Most Worshipful Grand Master has devised a plan named TARP- Traveling Again Reclamation Program. This program is designed to allow suspended members to reinstate for a more affordable fee.

Members suspended before June, 2002, can reinstate by paying the following:

- \$25.00 reinstatement fee
- \$25.00 taxes
- \$25.00 registration
- \$50.00 assessment (Have two years to pay the remaining \$150.00)
- \$125.00 Total

Members suspended after June, 2002, can reinstate by paying the following:

- \$25.00 reinstatement fee
- \$25.00 taxes
- \$25.00 registration
- \$50.00 assessment (Have two years to pay the remaining \$200.00)
- \$125.00 Total

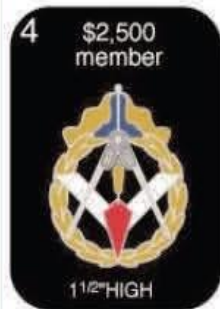
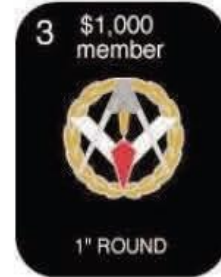
TARP serves a two-fold purpose: (1.) It gives suspended Brothers a more affordable means of reinstating and (2.) It gives dying lodges a final opportunity to salvage their existence by increasing their numbers before being forced to close or merge. Our Grand Master has extended a challenge for the members of this jurisdiction to go out and reclaim our lost Brothers. TARP will be in effect through July 31, 2022.

Support the Temple Renovation

Most

Worshipful Prince
Hall Grand Lodge
of Alabama Temple
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Pins are still
available for new
and existing
members upon
receipt of donation
(s). Collect up to
each level.

Display your
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for the temple
renovation!



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(You may purchase the MWPGL of AL Tags Anytime, You do not have to wait for your renewal Month!)

A Message from the Grand Treasurer

R.W. Dr. James Gray, II

Brothers Beloved

With the dawning of a new year quickly approaching, many brothers, including myself, await, in anticipation, to enjoy the privilege and rights to yet again walk through the hallowed doors of our respective lodges. Sometimes you never realize the impact of something or someone who has impacted your life until that precious jewel can no longer be found or shared. Through masonry, I have found more than I ever imagined possible, I found my brothers.

I am the middle child of three siblings. My mom would jokingly tell me that “I was her best son but that other son, she had to keep her eyes on him.” This made me laugh because I only have two wonderful sisters. I grew up wondering how different my life would be if I had a brother to call upon that could help guide me into manhood. Thankfully my father did this for me. But my heart was still searching. During the summer of 1985, I allowed my fears to subside and trusted my Uncle Clarence Hendrix, Sr. to guide me into the brotherhood of Brown and Singleton Lodge No. 949. As an eighteen-year-old, I had no idea of the magnitude of this decision. Not only did I find brothers, but I also gained mentors.

The Brothers of Brown and Singleton Lodge No. 949 consisted of my family members, church members, and community leaders. There was an old school mentality regarding the question of “Suitable Proficiency”. My many years of travel have given me a greater appreciation for those brothers that cared enough about me to ensure that the answer surrounding proficiency would always be a resounding “Yes!”. Those same brothers knew the importance of a firm foundation and were my first example of true Masonic Pillars. When I desired more light that would take me beyond our four walls, they first questioned my intentions to make sure they were honorable reasons. I knew then, my brothers cared about my well-being. Thirty-Six years later, I have an even greater number of brothers that show me they care by squaring my actions with whispers of wise counsel. For that I am grateful.



*Grand Treasurer
R.W. Dr. James Gray, II*

Brothers, as we prepare to go back into our respective lodges, I ask that we pause for a moment of reflection, renewal, and remembrance. Reflect upon the following: Why you first wanted to become a mason. Who was it who inspired you to start your travels eastward? Do you remember where you were first made a mason? If not, consider going back and searching within your ivory box. Reflect and discover ways you can be of service to your community and fellow man.

Next, I ask that you renew your commitment to our ancient craft by sharing your time, talents, and gifts. Additionally, I ask that you renew acts of brotherly love. Show him you care by exhibiting random acts of kindness, making a phone call to say hello, or simply helping a brother who is in need... IF YOU SEE A NEED, ADDRESS THAT NEED.

Finally, I ask that you remember and celebrate the legacy of those brothers that opened the doors for us and paved the way for our masonic journey. Each of us has at least three brothers that have made a tremendous impact on our lives. Honor them in memory by recalling their contributions to your life and those they touched. Honor them by remembering what is truly behind the emblem we wear.

My beloved brothers, I thank you for allowing me to search for and find what was missing and needed so that I could find within me, my Pot of Incense.


Safe travels and Be Blessed.



From Whence We've Come...

For the next few editions of *The Cornerstone Message*, we will be providing copies of homegoing celebration programs and obituaries of some of our former distinguished members. This gives the reader an opportunity to take a glimpse into the lives of the deceased within the order and outside the order. This series will probably also bring back memories for some. Featured in this edition is Perry O. Ward.

Celebrating the Life
of
PERRY ORLANDO WARD



THURSDAY, AUGUST 20, 2009
12:00 O'CLOCK NOON

First Missionary Baptist Church
3509 BLUE SPRING ROAD
HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA 35810

REVEREND DR. JULIUS R. SCRUGGS, OFFICIATING.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF PERRY ORLANDO WARD

1928–2009

Perry Orlando Ward made his appearance into the world on September 11, 1928. This joyous occasion almost took place in church. Perry's mother was the pianist for the choir and was having choir practice. She made it home just in time for Perry's entrance.

When Perry was six years old, his mother became very ill and passed away. Her last statement to her mother, Mrs. Georgia Fields, was "Please take care of Perry." Mrs. Fields honored her daughter's request and raised Perry in a very caring manner. She made it possible for him to receive an education. During this time, Perry became friends with Isaac Rooks and James A. Jones. Through the years, this friendship grew into a very lasting one.

Perry and Ike, attended Alabama A. & M. University, registering in the same classes, and receiving their Bachelor of Science degrees. Perry's education was interrupted by a call to serve his country in the United States Army. After serving that time, Perry returned home to be with his wife and entered Alabama State University where he received his Master's degree. Whenever the two universities he had attended played each other in football, Perry didn't know which one to cheer for. He immediately solved the dilemma by going from side to side and cheering for the team that scored the last touchdown.

In later years, Perry was a teacher in the Huntsville City Schools System for several years. He received a promotion as Director of Pupil Services in the Central Office of the Huntsville City Schools System. This began his efforts to make sure that Afro-American children attended school. He was the perfect choice for this job and carried out many strategies to make his program become successful.

With all the work and responsibilities, Perry never forgot his church. He joined the First Missionary Baptist Church at a very early age and worked on many groups. He was a member of the Junior Usher Board, the Senior Usher Board, ordained a Deacon, and served on the Trustee Board. Perry also loved to sing. He directed the Brotherhood Chorus. Their engagements were many. The crowning joy was singing at the National Baptist Convention. You may say, "they turned the place out."

Perry enjoyed his life and his accomplishments were numerous.

He leaves to mourn his passing, his exit from this world into a better world: a devoted wife, Mamie Pendleton Ward; brother-in-law, Columbus Pendleton (*wife, Catherine Pendleton*); other relatives, Dr. & Mrs. Leroy Gradford, Mrs. Jessie Pendleton, Mr. & Mrs. Michael Conley, Mr. Jarred Conley, Mr. & Mrs. Roger Wood, Mr. & Mrs. James Wilson, Ms. Karen Conley, Mr. & Mrs. William Pendleton, Ms. Cathy Pendleton, Mr. & Mrs. Christopher Pendleton, Mr. & Mrs. Christopher Maldonado, and Mr. & Mrs. Randy Pendleton.

ORDER OF SERVICE

PRELUDE

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SELECTION Brother Johnny McAlpine
"THE BLOOD"

SCRIPTURE READINGS:

OLD TESTAMENT Reverend G.W. Lindsey

NEW TESTAMENT

PRAYER Reverend Earla S. Lockhart

TRIBUTES:

CHURCH Deacon Judge Posey

FRIEND Mr. Andrew Fuller

FAMILY Mrs. Patricia C. Wilson

GRAND MASTER Dr. William O. Jones

GRAND WORTHY PATRON Dr. Bernard Williams

SELECTION Brother Huey Thompson
"PRECIOUS LORD"

EULOGY Reverend Dr. Julius R. Scruggs

SELECTION Brother Leo Turner
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The First Missionary Baptist Church Missionary Society:
Circles 1, 2, & 3 • Snodgrass/Parker Circle • Day Spring Circle • Omega Court #1 Heroines of Jericho, PHA

ACTIVE FLOWER BEARERS

Order of Golden Circle • Al Zhar Court #181 • Ester Assembly #160

HONORARY PALLBEARERS

Athletic Boosters Club • R.E. Nelms Independent Elks Lodge #977
Consistory and The 33rd Degree Club • Brotherhood Organization

ACTIVE PALLBEARERS

Trustees and Deacon Board First Missionary Baptist Church
Xi Omicron Chapter, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.



INTERMENT

Glenwood Cemetery

AN EXPRESSION OF THANKS

We have been blessed with a wonderful circle of friends who surrounded us during our period of bereavement. Your thoughtfulness, your gentle words of caring, love, and other expressions of kindness tremendously helped us during this difficult time. May God continue His richest blessings on you.

— The Ward Family



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MIDDLE CHAMBER

Z E O N P I V X X W R N V V O Z D Q M S X
 M V I Q V R A D S A M F C L S Z Y D C C L
 J I R I O N I C U R A A B M E S G A I W I
 S T C P K Z I P E C G K G L T P S N R P L
 P A W I N D I N G H Q Z E I A V D A O K Y
 E R W S J P L W I I Z W O B N T U I D E W
 C E V T X N W A Q T J Q M S A U J H W F O
 U P D E Y C U G R E F K E K R S T T X P R
 L O H P V R W E N C C O T N G E D N U E K
 A A F S J H T S B T E J R U E J G I C C Y
 T O C O L U M N S U L Z Y I M F Q R X B P
 I S C I E N C E S R E H T D O O J O B M U
 V K W S E E I N G E S P E E P K D C W O F
 E C C S U Q T P R F T S R A L L I P B A K
 B U Z R J U S L E A I A T W R Y R V V R U
 Z B S I S L D E J W A K P O J I L M F A S
 S I M A L D L I E S L T V D V A N F U Y W
 X T D T L I T E R R E S T R I A L G A R I
 E S E S N L P O B V Q E Z N W Y X L N U M
 B M N G Q A B D S E B O L G G S G Y K C A
 U W P H S E N S E S X G F R X I G F L O E

architecture

globes

seeing

celestial

hearing

senses

columns

ionic

speculative

corinthian

lilywork

stairs

cubits

operative

steps

doric

pillars

terrestrial

feeling

pomegranates

wages

geometry

sciences

winding

A Blast from the Past

Lewis Adams Lodge No. 67

Picture taken in 1970

Aubrey O. Page

Pedro Pointer

L. W. Patton, Sr.

William E. Bibb

Harold Webb

Edward E. Albergottie

Dr. Grady Taylor

Mitchell Minnifield

Willie R. Stephens

Elbert Kimbrough

James M. Hopkins

Earnest Richards

Harvey Echols

Joseph Harkness

Lucius Hayden

Howard Carter, Jr.

Lorenious McDonald

Matthew Richardson

Payton Williams, W.M.



When Is Open Enrollment for 2022?

The 2022 Open Enrollment Period (OEP) begins November 1, 2021, and ends January 15, 2022, in most states.

Coverage begins January 1. If you have a Special Enrollment Period, coverage will begin the first day of the month after you sign up. For example, if you sign up on February 15, your coverage will be effective March 1. Some states with their own ACA exchanges have different date ranges for the 2021 Special Enrollment Period and the 2022 Open Enrollment Period.



I Missed My State's Open Enrollment Deadline.

Can I Still Get Healthcare Coverage?

If you missed the enrollment deadline in your state, it is still possible that you can qualify for a Special Enrollment Period (SEP) that will allow you to apply for health insurance. You can qualify for an SEP if you have experienced a qualifying life event. Qualifying life events can include:

- The loss of health insurance through a job.
- Household changes such as marriage, divorce, a death in the family, or having a baby.
- A change in your home address.

You have 60 days to enroll in a plan, if you qualify for an SEP. But, if you miss that 60-day window, you will have to wait until OEP to enroll in an individual health insurance policy for 2022.

If you missed the 2021 Open Enrollment Period in your state and you do not qualify for an SEP, you can apply for a short-term health insurance plan. Short-term health insurance coverage can be purchased outside of OEP for up to 364 days, and you can reapply for short-term coverage for up to 36 months in most states. Short-term health insurance plans might be a good, temporary fit for healthy people, as they will not cover pre-existing conditions like Affordable Care Act (ACA) plans.

If you do not qualify for an SEP and decide not to apply for a short-term health plan, you will have to wait until Open Enrollment 2022 begins in fall 2021.

Source: healthmarkets.com

\$ Dollars and Sense \$

RETIREMENT

Managing Health Care Costs in Retirement

You have probably heard the expression, “If you haven’t got your health, you haven’t got anything.” Unfortunately, in a world of sky-rocketing medical costs and low investment returns, many retirees are beginning to think, “If I haven’t got my health, I won’t be left with anything.”

It’s been getting harder to prepare for retirement, and changes in health care costs are a big reason for the sudden difficulty. However, while some medical expenses are inescapable, it is possible for individuals to fund a healthy retirement if they are willing to prepare and investigate costs.

Growing Costs of Health Care

There is little hope health care costs will recede anytime in the near future. Every year, the costs for everything from prescription drugs to hospital stays faithfully rise. No one is certain when the medical industry will make changes that might bring about a reduction or leveling of prices.

Rising health care costs should be a major concern for those preparing for retirement. Across the board, medical expenses are growing much faster than inflation. Retirees face the worst of it: age-related health issues increase the portion of their budget that goes to health costs and, with lifespans

increasing, their years of care are mounting as well.

Though costs vary widely between individuals, it is estimated that the majority of today’s retiring couples will face between \$100,000 and \$250,000 in medical expenses during retirement. Many Americans are not prepared for this huge financial commitment and need to take steps to either increase savings or make them stretch far enough to cover all medical needs.

Funding a healthy retirement takes preparation—it’s important to investigate health plan options and costs to find a plan that is right for your needs and budget.

Having a Strategy

Health care in retirement is all about realistic preparation and knowing personal needs. The most important step is for a person to be aware of what their preexisting conditions will mean during retirement.

A person in excellent health at age 65 will incur much lower costs than someone will with heart disease or diabetes, but is also much more likely to eventually need more years of long-term care.

People also need to consider their approach to diagnosis and treatment. One person might prefer to visit doctors when they feel unwell for more than a day, another might wait for a problem to persist for a month before reporting it. The former will have higher regular payments, but the latter runs the risk of having major expenses from a condition that was allowed to worsen.

Often forgotten, an important part of an overall health care plan (not limited to retirees) is creating an official health care directive. Usually in the form of a living will, people can layout rules for care in the event they are incapacitated and have little hope of recovery. Alternatively, people can grant power of attorney for medical treatment to a relative or trusted friend. Either document can reduce unnecessary medical costs at the end of life and, more importantly, grant survivors peace of mind about proper treatment when the unthinkable happens.

Savings Strategies

There are a number of ways for retirees to reduce medical costs. The most effective method is simply to get as healthy as possible. Retirees who enter retirement in good health will not only incur fewer initial costs, but will be better able to enjoy themselves during retirement.

As stated earlier, a retiree's personal approach to seeking medical care influences expenses, many of which can be unnecessary if the wrong health insurance is used. This is most noticeable when Health Savings Accounts (HSAs) are ignored. HSAs allow a person to save money for medical costs in a tax-free account, but they are only available with high-deductible plans.

For a retiree who feels the need to visit his or her doctor frequently, it is better to use a low-deductible plan that will reach its limit quickly and put most of the costs on the insurer. However, if a retiree rarely goes to the doctor and has little chance of reaching his or her deductible, chances are good that an HSA will provide both premium savings and tax reduction (this is especially true early in retirement.)

Medicare

Medicare can be one of the most influential ways to reduce health insurance costs in retirement. It is government health insurance available to retirees (typically at age 65) that is considerably cheaper than self-funded coverage. The Medicare program is available to retirees in three major parts:

- Part A: Hospital insurance that covers emergency care and hospice
- Part B: General health insurance that covers outpatient services, laboratory tests, mental health and regular doctor services
- Part D: Prescription drug insurance that helps pay for medication

People will often be told to begin Medicare coverage as soon as possible because of the low rates available and the penalties that could be incurred by delaying enrollment. (Both Medicare Part A and B carry penalties for those who do not enroll during three months preceding or following the month of their 65th birthday.) However, if an individual is still receiving insurance through his or her employer or a spouse's employer, immediate enrollment may not be the most efficient solution.

For the vast majority of people enrollment in Part A of Medicare does not cost a monthly premium. Though immediate enrollment in a free program seems like the obvious course of action, some employers will cancel matched contributions to an HSA plan when an individual starts any part of Medicare. However, since the penalty for delaying enrollment in Part A only affects the small portion of people who have to pay the premium, HSA plan members may wish to wait until retirement to use Medicare.

Because Part B requires premium payments, individuals who already have quality health insurance through an employer may not want to deal with the extra expense of having double coverage. Part B allows individuals to delay enrollment without penalty if they are enrolled in employer or group health plans (COBRA and retiree coverage do not count as employer health plans). Individuals who pay for their own insurance will usually find that immediate enrollment in Part B to be the best choice.

If Medicare is used at the same time as a company health plan, it can become unclear which insurer provides primary coverage. It is essential that employees who intend to work past age 65 talk with their HR repre-

sentatives and determine all the effects of Medicare enrollment. Only when existing coverage is understood can an individual find ways to lower costs.

Long-term Care

Long-term care (LTC) programs, whether home care, assisted living or nursing care, are extremely expensive. On average LTC creates a bigger drag on retirement funds than anything else does. Though not every retiree ends up needing LTC, its general use increases exponentially as retirees get older.

As costs and lifespans continue to increase, more and more insurance companies are dropping their LTC programs (though several still offer them.) LTC insurance plans are typically expensive and must be purchased while retirees are still in good health. Even though the insurance may go unused for many years, retirees will have to adjust their spending plans immediately to accommodate the high annual premiums. Making a generic plan for future LTC is as significant as any other part of retirement planning.

There are many factors to preparing for health care costs during retirement, and no two plans are going to be the same. It is important to research as many different

insurance options as possible and find coverage that fits both your needs and your budget. If you have questions about health care strategies for your retirement, contact Prudential to review the expenses your plan is built to handle and the adjustments that can still be made.

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*Contributor – RW Gregory Clark
Convention Coordinator/Corporate Liaison
and Financial Planner*

In The Spotlight

Each quarter the MWPHGL of Alabama will place one of our worthy brothers In The Spotlight. The worthy brother placed In The Spotlight this quarter is:

Brother Artis J. McCampbell

Brother Artis J. McCampbell (also known as A. J.) is a member of the Alabama House of Representatives (Democratic Party), representing District 71, composed of Greene, Marengo, Sumter, and Tuscaloosa Counties. He assumed office in 2006. His current term ends on November 9, 2022.

Representative McCampbell grew up in rural Greene County, Alabama. He graduated from Eutaw High School in 1971 and got a B.A. in Political Science from the University of Alabama in 1976. He began his career in law enforcement in 1975 with the City of Tuscaloosa as a patrolman. Two years later he was promoted to an investigator. In 1979, Representative McCampbell moved back to Greene County and became a Juvenile Probation Officer and in 1985 accepted a job as an investigator with the District Attorney's office of the 17th Judicial Circuit. In 1990, he began a career in insurance sales with State Farm Insurance.

McCampbell ran for re-election to the Alabama House of Representatives to represent District 71. He won in the general election on November 6, 2018.

McCampbell currently serves on the following committees:

- Transportation Committee
- Water Policy and Management Joint Legislative Committee
- Transportation, Utilities and Infrastructure Committee
- Tuscaloosa County Legislation Committee
- Agriculture and Forestry Committee

Married to the former Diana England, Representative McCampbell is the father of two daughters, Erica D. Hargrove and Calida Joy McCampbell. In his spare time, he enjoys bowling, reading, singing, and playing golf.

Brother McCampbell is a member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., Paragon Lodge No. 26, and a 33° Mason of Abraham Consistory No. 257. He is also a 2019 inductee of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge Hall of Fame. He can oftentimes be seen grilling at lodge functions.



Bro. Artis J. McCampbell

Military Affairs

September 11, 2001, A Day of Reflection

As we look back over the past 20 years, our country and our Military have fought back to build a more strong and secure nation as a result of that terrible day in our history, September 11, 2001. It has been 20 years since that day when millions of Americans witnessed the terrorist attacks on the New York Trade Center twin towers and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. Another aircraft with passengers crashed in the field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania. Through the valiant efforts of those on board that flight, they fought back against the terrorist hijackers and saved countless lives while giving theirs.



As we reflect as brothers of the MWP HGL of Alabama, many who are veterans and have served our country faithfully, and as you reflect personally, let us not forget how each of us felt that day. Remember those who died, who woke up that morning not knowing what lay ahead. Remember the strength that brought our country together, the bond we shared in recovering from that day. With each passing year, the events of that day pass further into history. It's up to each of us to keep the memory alive.

On behalf of the MWP HGL of Alabama, thanks to every one of you who have served this great nation, and to those of you who raised your right hand to protect and defend our great nation in the last 20 years. Thank You for your Service.

Keeping our MWPHGL of Alabama Veterans Informed

Gov. Ivey Signs Proclamation to Highlight September as Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

In keeping with the National Suicide Prevention Awareness, Governor Ivey has signed a proclamation highlighting September as Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, and the Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs (ADVA) is working to continue raising awareness on how servicemembers, veterans, and families can protect themselves and loved ones from this complex health issue.

A continuing stigma with mental illness is a tragic reality for veterans, with approximately 17 veterans dying by suicide per day. In Alabama, the veteran suicide rate is even higher than the national veteran average and significantly higher than the civilian average. Recently released data shows nearly 18% of those who died by suicide in Alabama are veterans. Male veterans die by suicide at a rate of 1.3 times the number of male civilian counterparts. This crisis led to the creation of Alabama's Challenge, an initiative targeted to inform service members, veterans, and families of resources to ultimately prevent suicide. During September and further into the fall, Alabama's Challenge plans to release new PSAs for TV and radio and other informational materials that will help service members, veterans, and families who may be facing a crisis.

Alabama G.I. Dependent Scholarship Program Expands

The Alabama G.I. Dependent Scholarship Program now allows more inclusivity by including programs for students with intellectual disabilities. Governor Ivey recently signed House Bill 554, the bill sponsored by State Rep. Kerry Rich, which extends the Alabama G.I. Dependent Scholarship Program to include comprehensive transition and postsecondary programs (CTPs) for students with intellectual disabilities. Previously, the scholarship program was only permitted to pay for college-level classes.

The scholarship program, which is administered by the Alabama Department of Veteran Affairs (ADVA), will help cover the costs of the student's tuition, required textbooks, and instructional fees for classes included in the CTP, regardless of whether it is a college-level class. Only programs at public four-year institutions in Alabama are authorized under the new law community colleges, private schools, and out-of-state schools are not included. A CTP is a postsecondary degree, certificate, or non-degree program sponsored by a college that is approved by the U.S. Department of Education and is designed to support students with intellectual disabilities as they continue to receive instruction in academic, career, and independent living to prepare for gainful employment. The EAGLES program at Auburn University and PASSAGE USA at the University of South Alabama are examples of Alabama CTPs.

Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Jon Tester, D-Mont., similarly praised the news.

"VA Secretary McDonough has made clear he is committed to working with Congress on a comprehensive toxic exposure framework that is timely, grounded in science, transparent, and responsive to the needs of every man and woman impacted by the effects of toxic exposure," he said in a statement. "I encourage every eligible veteran to apply for their earned benefits as quickly as possible."

Veterans can visit www.va.alabama.gov for more information.

Source: Fall 2021 Issue of the Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs Newsletter

*Contributor – RW Carlton Jones
Committee on Military and Veteran Affairs*

Sporting and Outdoors



On August 14, 2021, Grand Master Hawkins caught these two black bullhead catfish at a private pond in Leeds, AL using nightcrawlers. Both weighed 7 lbs. each.



REGION 4

News and Events from Region 4

Abraham Lodge No. 267 Serving in Its Community

On July 14, 2021, and on August 11, 2021, the members of Abraham Lodge No. 267 assisted Whynotus.live in its effort to vaccinate the community. Whynotus.live is a campaign led by Abraham Lodge Brother Richard Williams whose program collaborates closely with city, community, and faith-based organizations to ensure program success and vaccine access expansion. Whynotus.live believes community-based workforces and collaborative infrastructure built today can be the cornerstone of more resilient and responsive health systems tomorrow. The Brothers of Abraham Lodge were responsible for assisting the elderly, distributing food and drinks, setting up tents, building signs, and greeting people with a smile. The Brothers of Abraham Lodge No. 267 are constantly reminded of how important it is to serve and spread brotherly love throughout the city of Montgomery. The lodge is always looking for ways to make a difference in the lives of those who are less fortunate throughout the community.

Contributor – PM Roderick Caswell (No. 267)



Hamilton Lodge No. 365

Serving in Its Community

At the beginning of August 2021, Hamilton Lodge No. 365 surprised the kids at the Chisholm Community Center in Montgomery, AL with pizza, juice, and chips as they participated in activities geared at fostering friendship, teamwork, and learning. The Chisholm Community Center is a large center, located adjacent to the Montgomery Zoo. The complex features a large playing field, playground, large parking area, and a baseball/softball complex. After-school programs are offered for children, in addition to a full-day program during the summer.

On August 23rd, the members of Hamilton Lodge No. 365 donated shoes, clothing, and various useful items to the Caring Center of First Baptist Church on Perry Street in Montgomery, AL. The Caring Center strives to provide services to individuals in need of spiritual, physical, and/or emotional support. Each week The Caring Center provides food, clothing, household items, furniture, and financial assistance to those in need.

In September, the Brothers of Hamilton Lodge came together to lend a hand to help clean up, beautify, and get the campus of Chisholm Elementary School in Montgomery, AL, ready for fall. Sometimes it takes sweat equity over material donations to make a difference. Like our Operative Brethren, who perform manual labor and receive wages that would contribute to their physical welfare, the Brothers of Hamilton Lodge receive the intrinsic wages of community improvement, satisfaction in a job well done, and forging those bonds that are not easily broken.

At the end of August, the Brothers of Hamilton Lodge donated paper, pencils, snacks, and other items to the Montgomery YMCA's Good Times Center After School Program. Kids participating in Before and After School Care learn valuable social and scholastic skills in a safe, fun, and supervised environment. The Y's Before and After School Care program offers a constructive balance of counselor-led activities and free time for child exploration. Daily theme activities include arts and crafts, science/math, nutrition/wellness, presentation, and literacy. There is always time for homework, a healthy snack for kids, and outside time on the playground.

Additionally, in September 2021, the Brothers of Hamilton Lodge donated hand sanitizer to the faculty of Edgar D. Nixon Elementary school for distribution to each classroom to ensure the children can sanitize their hands cutting down on sicknesses and absenteeism. Raising awareness about the importance of handwashing and sanitizing at this stage in their development will make it a part of their regular routines for life.

Finally, in September 2021, Brothers of Hamilton Lodge No. 365 donated pampers, baby wipes, and other items to the Feed the Lamb Child Development Center in Montgomery, AL. The center offers a virtual learning program, child development services, school transportation, and other services geared at advancing children and preparing them for their future.



Contributor – Bro. Marion Avery Dortch, Jr. (No. 365)

REGION 6

News and Events from Region 6

Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) Celebration with PGSW Robert Langford, Sr.

The Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) Chapter 1067, Huntsville, Alabama, held their First Annual Family and Awards Celebration Picnic, on Saturday, July 10, 2021, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The event was held at the home of Linda Green, a supporter of the VVA chapter since it was founded in 2012. Charlie Miller serves as chapter President, Robert (Bobby) Langford, Sr., is 1st Vice President, John Mays—2nd Vice President, Jay Maxwell—Secretary, Barbara Langford serves as Recording Secretary, Neal Nayman—Treasurer and James Henderson -



Chaplain. Chapter 1067 is the largest VVA chapter in the state of Alabama (600 plus members) and the 7th largest VVA chapter in the United States. Among the members of chapter 1067 are the five Miller Brothers (James, John, Thomas, Willie, and Leo) of Decatur, Alabama. The celebration picnic was a time of fellowship and recognition of those who have made the chapter what it is today. Those receiving honors were James Harris (VVA member), Sammie Bone (VVA member), David Locklayer (VVA member), Skip Vaughn (Editor, Redstone Rocket), Robert (Bobby) Langford, Sr., (VVA member and Alabama State Veteran of the Year for 2020), Honor Legacy Group (Supporter), Linda Green (Supporter), American Legion Post 229 (Madison, Alabama), American Legion Post 237 (Huntsville, Alabama), and Keller Williams Realty (Supporter). Warren Harmon, immediate Past President of VVA Chapter 1067, served as the Master of Ceremonies. Entertainment was provided by the Huntsville Community Drum Line Stick Masters (Angela Wilson Walker, Executive Director and Founder) and David Dunlap (tap dancing and singing). For more information on VVA Chapter 1067 please visit their webpage, www.vietvethsv.org.

Contributor - R.W. H. Jerome Glover (No. 50)

Obituaries

Brothers Called Home by the Grand Architect

Brother Vera (Ricky) Ricardo Oates departed this life on Friday, September 17th, 2021 with his family at his bedside. Ricky was born on February 25th, 1961 to William McKinley and Addie Mae Warren Oates of Barton, Alabama.

He was united in holy matrimony to Crystal Althea Rutland-Oates on June 12, 1985. They were married for 36 years. Born to this union were two children, Janeczka Rakia Oates and Justin Ricardo Oates.

Bro. Oates graduated from Cherokee Vocational High School in 1979. He was a three sport athlete playing basketball, baseball and running track for the Tribe. During his high school career, he led the basketball team to the regional playoffs for three consecutive years averaging 23 points, 12 rebounds and 4 blocked shots. During his junior and senior seasons, Bro. Oates was first team All-State, Prep All-American and played in the All-Star Game in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. He was chosen the MVP of the All-Star Game and won the first dunk contest held in conjunction with the game against the famous, Charles Barkley. He was also selected the Times Daily Player of the year in 1977-78 and 1978-79. Following high school, he was signed to a basketball scholarship by Calhoun Community College averaging 20 points and 12 rebounds while receiving All-American honors. After two years with the Warkawks, he signed with the University of Alabama in Huntsville helping to lead them to the NAIA National Championships in Kansas City, Missouri.



***Bro. Vera "Ricky" Ricardo Oates
Feb. 25, 1961 – Sept. 17, 2021***

After graduating with Bachelor of Science in Management from the University of Alabama in Huntsville in 1984, Bro. Oates flourished his career in the car industry as a car salesman, sales manager, finance manager and general sales manager at various dealerships for over 30 years. His career ended a few years ago when he was diagnosed with Multiple Myeloma Cancer.

His wife, children, granddaughter and friends lovingly called him Honey, Daddy, Dad, Papa, Big Rick, Rico and Big Daddy. Bro. Oates was a devoted father and grandfather. His entire life was centered on his wife, children, and granddaughter. He was always there to provide support and advice to anyone in need, always offering an encouraging word. Bro. Oates was a member of Morning Star Lodge No. 50 where he contributed to numerous charitable events. His favorite hobbies were hunting, fishing, and spending time with family, especially his granddaughter.

Bro. Oates preceded in death by his mother and father, William McKinley and Addie Mae Warren Oates, his brothers, Vennis (Buffalo) Minoso Oates, Warren Geise Oates and William (Bill) McKinley Oates, Jr.

Left to cherish his loving memories are: wife, Crystal Althea Rutland Oates; one daughter, Janeczka Rakia Oates, Madison, AL; one son, Justin Ricardo Oates, New Market, AL; one granddaughter, Zoey Maria Oates, New Market, AL; three brothers, Clifford Bolden (Gwendolyn) Oates, Sam Benedict Oates and Shawn Darryl Oates. In addition, there are a host of family and friends that he cared for dearly.

Article Submission Guidelines

The Cornerstone Message accepts submissions of articles, flyers, and information of events of general interest to Prince Hall Masons throughout the state of Alabama. The *Cornerstone Message* is published quarterly in the months of April, July, October, and January. Submission of articles and photographs are to be forwarded to the publication's editor via email (hjeromeglover@yahoo.com). Please include a point of contact and telephone number with each article submission. Articles and photographs become property of the publication and the right is reserved to edit and use the articles and photographs as deemed necessary. **Deadline for submissions for the next issue of *The Cornerstone Message* is 5 January 2022.** These articles should include events from **October 2021 - December 2021**. Articles are to be submitted with a minimum of one paragraph written in third person using Microsoft Word (Times New Roman 11) and photographs should be of good quality JPEG format and captioned. No more than two articles per lodge can be submitted for each edition. Permission to reprint original articles appearing in *The Cornerstone Message* is granted to all recognized Masonic publications.

THE CORNERSTONE MESSAGE



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