

Message for December Bulletin

Brethren, thank you for your vote of confidence in electing me to the office of Grand Master. It is a great honor for me; it is a great honor for my lodge. In return, I pledge to all of you that I will do my absolute best to fulfill the duties of the office with respect, with courtesy, and with dignity.

I am proud to be a Freemason. I am proud to represent such an absolutely wonderful group of men, who have historically contributed, and continue to contribute to this day, so very much to their brethren, to their community, and to their fellowmen. This brotherhood truly exhibits the tenets of brotherly love, relief, and truth.

We persist in our mission of educating ourselves and our brethren in morality, history, jurisprudence, and leadership, while demonstrating charity and tolerance. We do this through exemplifying our beautiful ritual, by mentoring new brothers, through educational programs, and through individual study. And soon we will have access to structured leadership training programs which will help new wardens and masters improve their ability to lead their lodges through the trials of the early 21st century.

Because we study our long history, we recognize that change has always been one of our significant strengths. In the 18th century, our fraternity was a force for change. Freemasons contributed to the age of enlightenment and the development of modern science. We greatly influenced the definition and formation of the government of the United States of America. In the 19th century, our bonds of friendship and brotherly love helped heal the wounds of the Civil War and hastened the exploration and opening of the American West. And in the 20th century we provided a haven of fellowship for a country burdened with two active World Wars as well as a tense Cold War and numerous other conflicts.

The task before us now is to adopt changes, appropriate changes, to allow us to remain a relevant force in the 21st century. But we must do that without abandoning our core values, without forgetting those basic principles that give us our character and which have supported us for hundreds of years. Those principles include our identity as a fraternity dedicated to the betterment of ourselves through education, and to the service of God through the practice of morality and charity.

And keeping a positive attitude is the key to our success. The truth of that statement was voiced by the several testimonies given at Grand. Lodges that had been nearly dormant for ten or fifteen years, are now vibrant, active, and busy making new Masons. What is the difference? The difference is attitude, a positive attitude that includes a commitment to success, a commitment to the future, and a commitment to holding activities that interest and retain current members and attract new members. And that, brethren, is a positive attitude that will serve us well for the next 100 years.

Our theme for this year is "Iowa Freemasonry--Engineer our Future". We have important decisions to make over the next five to ten years, decisions which will largely determine our future. The use of a disciplined Masonic change management process, based on the processes that design engineers use to create new products and that manufacturing engineers use to control production lines, will help ensure that we make good decisions, and make appropriate changes. Appropriate change will strengthen our fraternity while maintaining our identity—who we are, what we do, and what we stand for. Please keep a strong positive attitude. Please contribute your assistance as we collectively work to renew and invigorate the lodges of Iowa.