



The Grand Lodge of Mississippi
Free & Accepted Masons

LODGE OFFICER'S GUIDEBOOK

Published By:

The Education Committee
Grand Lodge of Mississippi, F. & A. M.
2018

Officer Handbook Index

- I. Introduction
- II. The Challenge of Leadership
- III. General Duties & Responsibilities of All Lodge Officers
- IV. The Worshipful Master
- V. The Worshipful Master & The Grand Lodge
- VI. The Worshipful Master & The Lodge
- VII. The Worshipful Master & Grand Lodge Officers
- VIII. The Senior Warden
- IX. The Junior Warden
- X. The Treasurer
- XI. The Secretary
- XII. The Williams Digest of Laws
- XIII. The Senior & Junior Deacons
- XIV. The Steward & Tiler
- XV. The Chaplain
- XVI. Appointments
- XVII. Relief Committee
- XVIII. Complaints & Offenses
- XIX. Auditing Committee
- XX. Committee on Investigation
- XXI. Special Committees
- XXII. Lodge Planning
- XXIII. Suggested Lodge Activities
- XXIV. "Know Your District Deputy Grand Lecturer"
- XXV. Excerpts from Williams Digest of Laws

Introduction

The Grand Lodge of Mississippi, F. & A.M. recognizes that in promoting the customs, traditions, and principles of our fraternity it is necessary to train, develop, and encourage well-educated and well-skilled leaders within its subordinate Lodges. The Lodge Officer's Guidebook has been prepared as a resource for subordinate Lodges in presenting those duties and responsibilities that are felt to be essential in the development of a successful Lodge environment.

It should be noted that there is no official progressive line of advancement within a Lodge. Each eligible Master Mason has the right to vote in Lodge elections, and shall be eligible for any office of the Lodge; however, the office of the Worshipful Master is limited to those who have served as either the Senior Warden or Junior Warden of a Lodge, in this or some friendly jurisdiction. No matter in which station or position a member takes, each officer serves at the will and pleasure of the Worshipful Master, being the foremost position of authority in any Lodge. Some of the duties and responsibilities presented within this guidebook are required by the ancient customs and traditions of our fraternity. Other duties and responsibilities are presented as suggestions only, and should be modified and adapted to fit the needs of each individual Lodge.

The Challenge of Leadership

One of the greatest challenges that confront the average Worshipful Master of today is formulating a program that will maintain the brethren's interest in the Lodge on a high level. No Masonic Lodge can or will run itself. Much of the success in holding the interest of the Lodge membership depends on the Master's abilities.

No Lodge will succeed if it devotes all its meetings to the conferring of degrees. Ritual is necessary, but it is merely a vehicle which conveys to the hearts and minds of men the greatest lessons of our fraternity. There is much more to Freemasonry than just ritual; namely, history, landmarks, regulations, symbols, etc. To many men, fraternalism and companionship mean more than the ritual. These men are so busily engaged in their occupational and civil endeavors that they have neither the time nor inclination to perfect their selves in the Masonic ritual; therefore, these brethren fail to enjoy Lodge meetings where nothing but the conferral of degrees takes place. A Lodge which depends upon ritualistic work as its sole means of Masonic enjoyment will soon learn that it must either perform to empty seats or resort to devices to stimulate attendance. There are too many outside interest that must be confronted. Lodge meetings must be made more interesting and informative in order to be competitive with those outside interest.

The Master should hold regular meetings with his Lodge officers, where he should discuss the challenges and priorities of the Lodge, as well as secure the thinking of those who work with him. Many times, this enables the Master to more easily make a decision. Remember that the Worshipful Master, alone, cannot do everything that needs to be done.

If Freemasonry in Mississippi is to grow and prosper, we must learn from the past, improve the present and prepare for the future. This is the challenge of leadership!

General Duties & Responsibilities of All Lodge Officers

- To perform all duties and responsibilities consistent with the ancient customs, traditions, rules, regulations and usages of the Craft.
- To perform all duties and responsibilities pertinent to the office held or as directed by the Worshipful Master.
- To provide motivation and inspiration to the membership while achieving established goals consistent with the Lodge Mission.
- To attend all Lodge functions. (stated and special communications and special events such as Family night, Friends night, Past Master's Night, Widow's Night, and other Lodge functions)
- To attend the Annual Grand Communication of the Grand Lodge and report on the business thereof.
- To continue one's self study in aspects of educational interest and further develop one's leadership abilities to be used for the good of the Craft.
- To conduct one's self with a high level of decorum, practice proper Masonic etiquette, and exemplify true Masonic spirit.

The Worshipful Master

Each year a worthy and well qualified brother is duly elected and installed to serve a Lodge as its Worshipful Master for the ensuing Masonic year. This office is one of great antiquity, honor, and of equally great responsibility. By his installation, he has been invested with the title "Worshipful," deriving from an archaic definition meaning "to be respected." While in office the Worshipful Master is an active member of the Grand Lodge. In his own Lodge, subject only to higher Masonic authority, he is the absolute ruler. Like a monarch, he alone is entitled to be covered.

The Master of a Lodge is not same in the category of the chairman of a social club, as he is invested with certain special duties and responsibilities. The Worshipful Master is a direct representative of the Grand Master, who takes his authority from the immemorial customs and usages of the fraternity. The Worshipful Master is the complete ruler not subject to the restrictions that may be imposed on an ordinary chairman. He cannot be displaced by ordinary processes nor can one disagree to his rulings. In effect, it would be foolish for a Master to try and force unpalatable decisions on his Lodge where harmony is the prime consideration.

The principal duty of the Worshipful Master is to rule and govern his Lodge; however, his special privileges do not release him from the need for knowing the rules of debate. When fumbling or hesitation with whispered conferences is seen in the East, it is often suspect that the Master is not ruling and directing, but rather being ruled or directed. If it becomes a habit, members will often doubt his fitness to hold the office.

As the Worshipful Master of a Lodge, he is charged with multiple duties and responsibilities with special distinction given to the Lodge over which he presides, the Grand Lodge of Mississippi, under whose authority each Lodge operates and to which is owed allegiance, and to the community in which a Lodge is located.

The Worshipful Master & The Grand Lodge

During the annual installation of officers, Each Master takes upon himself a solemn vow to strictly comply with the Constitutions and Regulations of the Grand Lodge of Mississippi. Each Master also gives his solemn assent to those ancient charges and regulations which point out his duty as the Master of a Lodge.

These duties would be impossible to keep if a Master is not familiar with the laws which he has promised to obey. Accordingly, your first duty to the Grand Lodge is to study *The Williams Digest of Laws, being the Constitutions, Rules and General Laws of the Grand Lodge of Mississippi, Free and Accepted Masons*. Each Master should also familiarize himself with *The Blue Lodge Text-Book* and Annual Proceedings of the Grand Lodge.

A Masters responsibilities to the Grand Lodge fall into two categories: those which devolve upon him as a member of the Grand Lodge, and those which devolve upon him as the presiding officer of a Subordinate Lodge. As a member of the Grand Lodge, it is his duty to attend the Annual Grand Communication. At this communication it is his privilege and duty to vote on all matters coming before the Grand Lodge body, as well as cast his vote in the election of Grand Lodge Officers. In casting a vote, the best interest of the fraternity should always be his guide.

On those matters which have been laid over from a previous communication, or which have been referred to the Lodge for consideration, it is entirely proper that the Master should take the census of his own Lodge and be influenced by this expression of opinion. However, a Master cannot be entirely bound thereby, since the recommendations and discussions heard in the Annual Grand Communication may shine a new light upon the question concerned.

The Worshipful Master & The Lodge

Before a man can be made a Mason, he must first be declared “worthy and well qualified.” In like manner, the same is true of one who aspires to the office of Worshipful Master. A Master must be moral and upright before God, of good repute, strictly obey the moral law, have served the Lodge well, and be a true example of Masonic spirit. He should be a leader of men with respect and confidence enough to direct the Lodge in its activities. The most important duty of each Worshipful Master shall be to preserve the harmony of his Lodge. In the exercise of his judgment he may, if necessary, exclude any visitor, or even a member of his Lodge, from participating in any meeting or from appearing in public with the Lodge. The Master is responsible to the Grand Lodge for any abuse of power, as in all other cases. In addition, a Worshipful Master should:

Provide the Lodge with direction towards established goals consistent with the Lodge Mission.

Be punctual and prepared for all Masonic activities.

Exercise firm but kind control over all Lodge activities.

Follow the Order of Business. (see Blue Lodge Text-Book)

Preside over and conduct all Masonic business in an orderly, courteous, and harmonious manner in strict conformity to the Laws, Regulations and Edicts of the Grand Lodge.

Be well-studied in The Williams Digest of Laws, being the Constitution, Rules and General Laws of the Grand Lodge of Mississippi, Free and Accepted Masons.

Ensure proper and effective communication is made with all Lodge members, family members, Entered Apprentices, Fellowcrafts and candidates regarding appropriate Lodge activities.

Ensure the Lodge members do not lack in Masonic education or proficiency in the adopted ritual; planning and announcing schedules for practice and degree work.

Develop and implement an annual program and budget plan for the Lodge with assistance from Lodge officers and membership.

Ensure all Lodge committees are properly governed and facilitated; appointing and assigning Lodge duties to capable and well-qualified leaders within the lodge.

Be in possession or show definite inclination to possess the adopted work and lectures assigned to the Worshipful Master.

Enforce an atmosphere for proper Lodge behavior and membership expectations.

The Worshipful Master & Grand Lodge Officers

As the principal and presiding officer of a subordinate Lodge, the Worshipful Master has an especial relationship with certain Grand Lodge Officers.

The Most Worshipful Grand Master is the chief executive officer of Masonry in the State of Mississippi. He exercises powers and prerogatives dating from time immemorial. In the recess between Grand Lodge sessions, he wields full executive power of the Grand Lodge, although all of his decisions are subject to approval by the Grand Lodge body at the following Annual Grand Communication. To him a Master must surrender the gavel of authority, not as a mere courtesy, but as an act of homage and fealty. He has the right to preside over any Lodge, and his edicts and directions are received with unquestioning obedience.

The Grand Secretary is the chief operations officer of the Grand Lodge. He is charged with managing the day to day operations of the Grand Lodge, maintaining documents and records, membership statistics, and receiving all resolutions, decisions and recommendations to be presented at the Annual Grand Communication. The Grand Secretary's contact with a Lodge is usually facilitated through the Lodge Secretary. The Grand Secretary serves as a valuable resource on all administrative challenges, and is available during business hours through the Grand Lodge Office in Meridian.

The Grand Lecturer is the official Custodian of the Work in Mississippi. He is charged with ensuring the adopted work and lectures are taught in throughout the State of Mississippi. He is represented in every Masonic district through a District Deputy Grand Lecturer, who is commissioned with the responsibility of observing, teaching and reporting on the status of the adopted work and lectures within his assigned Lodges. A Lodge should always feel free to contact their District Deputy Grand Lecturer on any ritualistic questions, notifying and inviting him to Lodge rehearsals, and developing a cordial and personal relationship with him.

The Senior Warden

The Senior Warden, in most Lodges, has progressed one step closer to the Oriental Chair, and by this time realized that he is assuming even greater responsibilities in preparing himself for the Master's station. It is the duty of the Senior Warden to render great assistance to the Worshipful Master in the discharge of his duties. The Senior Warden should be the exponent of harmony, and it is his moral duty to insure that harmony prevails among the brethren. Whenever he finds existing differences, he should do his utmost to reconcile them. If he should fail in resolving the brethren's differences, he should report the facts to the Worshipful Master, who should take such action as may be deemed necessary. In his own life, the Senior Warden must reflect the principles of the fraternity.

Having been duly elected and installed as the second principal officer of authority, the Senior Warden cannot be unmindful of what is expected of him during his year of service. The Senior Warden should be preparing the Lodge program that he desires to place before the Lodge during his upcoming year as the Worshipful Master. Far too many brethren assume the Oriental Chair without having given any thought to what they expect to do for the Lodge during their term. If no planning has been done as Senior Warden he will not contribute anything to Masonry, and it would be better had he not advanced. If more advanced planning is done, there will be less left undone. Furthermore, the Senior Warden should:

Assist the Worshipful Master in providing direction towards established goals consistent with the Lodge Mission.

Serve as the senior principal officer at all stated communications, special communications, or activities of the Lodge in the absence of the Worshipful Master.

Be punctual and prepared for all Masonic activities.

Assist the Worshipful Master in developing an annual program and budget plan for the Lodge.

Be well-studied in The Williams Digest of Laws, being the Constitution, Rules and General Laws of the Grand Lodge of Mississippi, Free and Accepted Masons.

Be in possession or show definite inclination the adopted work and lectures assigned to the Senior Warden.

Assist the Worshipful Master in enforcing and atmosphere for proper Lodge behavior and membership expectations.

The Junior Warden

The Junior Warden is the third principal officer of authority of a Lodge. He is governed by the same rules and regulations as the Senior Warden. In the absence of the Worshipful Master and Senior Warden, he should succeed to the duties of the Master. The Junior Warden is charged with the superintendent of the Craft "during the time of refreshment," otherwise meaning, the time during which the Lodge is at recess. A liberal interpretation of his duties admonishes him to look after the general welfare of the Craft. The Junior Warden should caution the brethren against infractions of both the Masonic and moral code, and in the case of flagrant and repeated violations, prefer charges whether ordered to do so by the lodge or not.

The Junior Warden should be familiar with The Williams Digest of Laws, and begin serious study of its contents. No lodge officer can properly fill his station or place without a working knowledge of the Masonic code of laws. Furthermore, the Junior Warden should:

Assist the Worshipful Master in providing direction towards established goals consistent with the Lodge Mission.

Serve as the senior principal officer at all stated communications, special communications, or activities of the lodge in the absence of the Worshipful Master and Senior Warden.

Be punctual and prepared for all Masonic activities.

Assist the Worshipful Master in developing an annual program and budget plan for the Lodge.

Begin a serious study of The Williams Digest of Laws, being the Constitution, Rules and General Laws of the Grand Lodge of Mississippi, Free and Accepted Masons.

Be in possession or show definite inclination to possess the adopted work and lectures assigned to the Junior Warden.

Assist the Worshipful Master in enforcing and atmosphere for proper lodge behavior and membership expectations.

The Treasurer

The Treasurer should serve as the “watch dog” of the funds of the Lodge. It is his duty to receive all money from the hands of the Secretary and pay them out on proper authority in accordance with the By-Laws of the Lodge. He is also charged with keeping an accurate record of all funds turned over to him and deposited within the Lodge’s accounts; being certain that his deposits agree with the amounts received from the Secretary. It is suggested that the Treasurer should render to the membership periodic reports on the finances of the Lodge. Furthermore, the Treasurer should:

Assist the Worshipful Master in providing direction towards established goals consistent with the Lodge Mission.

Be punctual and prepared for all Masonic activities.

Assist the Worshipful Master in developing an annual program and budget plan for the Lodge.

Be in possession or show definite inclination to possess the adopted work and lectures assigned to the Treasurer.

Serve as an accountant of the Lodge finances in cooperation with the Senior Warden and Lodge Finance Committee. The Treasurer cannot serve on the auditing committee.

Assist the Worshipful Master in enforcing and atmosphere for proper Lodge behavior and membership expectations.

The Secretary

The Secretary is the recording and corresponding officer of any Lodge. The Secretary plays an integral role in the success of any Lodge and too much care cannot be exercised in his selection. A Lodge may get along with a poor or weak Worshipful Master; however, an inefficient Secretary soon brings confusion and disaster. Each Lodge should select a most qualified member for this important and sensitive position.

A Secretary should be courteous and tactful. He should make careful study of the best interest of the Lodge and be always ready to serve the Craft. A Secretary should train himself to obey the will and pleasure of the Worshipful Master and brethren. The Secretary should always remember that the Worshipful Master is charged with the responsibility of the Lodge, and let his best endeavors be to serve as Apprentice Masons did in former times with freedom, fervency and zeal.

There have been several instances in which a Lodge Secretary has subjected their Lodge to criticism through non-compliance of Grand Lodge regulations regarding the submission of annual reports on time; by not answering correspondence promptly and by not keeping the lodge records so that others can understand them. The records of any Lodge belong to the membership and each member is entitled to see them, if he so desires.

Every Secretary should take pride in his work so that in fulfilling the duties assigned to him, he enhances the reputation of his Lodge, especially in the eyes of the Grand Lodge and Grand Master. The Secretary is a most important cog in the machinery of a Masonic Lodge and the proper performance of his duties will contribute to its success. Furthermore, the Secretary should:

Assist the Worshipful Master in providing direction towards established goals consistent with the Lodge Mission.

Be punctual and prepared for all Masonic activities.

Assist the Worshipful Master in developing an annual program and budget plan for the Lodge.

Be in possession or show definite inclination to possess the adopted work and lecturers assigned to the Secretary.

Make out all reports required by the Lodge, keeping a record of delinquencies, suspensions and expulsions and presenting them for Lodge action. Fill up diplomas when directed by the Lodge, or other paperwork as requested by the membership, keeping a register of the same.

Report to the Grand Secretary all changes in the date and hour of meeting; reporting promptly to the Grand Secretary all changes in the office of the Worshipful Master and office of Secretary, giving addresses in each case.

Receive all monies due the lodge, pay them over to the Treasurer and taking his receipt for the same, including, providing sufficient documentation and records for review. The Secretary cannot serve on the auditing committee.

Assist the Worshipful Master in enforcing and atmosphere for proper lodge behavior and membership expectations.

The Williams Digest of Laws

SEC. 19- 15.9. Minutes, rules relating to. The minutes of a meeting must be read and corrected before closing, and cannot be changed at a subsequent meeting; but if any important matter should be omitted, or any clerical error discovered, the omission may be supplied, and the error corrected, by a Resolution at a subsequent Stated Communication embracing the matter as corrected. **By-Laws Sec 17 (1871-105).**

Digest and Judicial Decisions

1. The law requires that the minutes of all meetings, both stated and special, shall be written in the minute book and read before the Lodge is closed. The Secretary presents the minutes to the Master for his signature immediately after reading for correction. **(Digest 1958-65)**
2. The Secretary is required to make a fair record of things proper to be written, and before the Lodge closes, to read the minutes of called, as well as stated, meetings for correction. If any error or omission is discovered, then is the time for correction, while the facts are fresh in the minds of those present. After the minutes are corrected and the Lodge closed, the minutes cannot be changed by any power whatever. Nether erasure or addition can be made. The minutes of each Lodge meeting are separate from, and independent of, any future meeting. If anything is proved to be wrong, the remedy is to adopt a Resolution specifying the omission or error at a subsequent Stated Communication, but the minutes cannot be altered. **(1855-102; 1858-86; 1868-42; 1870-52; 1871-60; 1872-65; 1880-76; 1884-56; 1892-59)**
3. A Lodge should not use any form of loose-leaf minute book. The intention of the law is that the minutes shall be a permanent record that cannot be changed without such change being evident. This requirement cannot be met with any form of loose-leaf minute book. **(Digest 1958-65)**
4. A Lodge may, and should, use a loose-leaf Historical Ledger. Each member should have an individual page (or card) on which is recorded his Masonic history. All pages (or cards) should be arranged alphabetically. When the status of a member changes, the leaves (or cards) should be arranged at once accordingly. **(Digest 1958-65)**
5. The minute book should be kept in the Lodge room. **(1979-37, 38)**

The Senior & Junior Deacons

The Senior and Junior Deacons, with such assistance as may be necessary, are both entrusted with the introduction of visitors. It is also the duty of the Deacons to attend on the Master and Wardens, and to act as their proxies in the active duties of the Lodge, such as the reception of candidates into the different degrees of Masonry and in the immediate practice of our rites. The Master and Senior Warden-elect shall appoint their respective Deacons. Furthermore, the Deacons should:

Assist the Worshipful Master in providing direction towards established goals consistent with the Lodge Mission.

Be punctual and prepared for all Masonic activities.

Assist the Worshipful Master in developing an annual program and budget plan for the Lodge.

Assist the Worshipful Master in enforcing and atmosphere for proper lodge behavior and membership expectations.

The Senior Deacon should:

Receive and introduce all guests of the Lodge and ensure they feel welcomed and comfortable.

Be in possession or show definite inclination to possess the adopted work and lectures assigned to the Senior Deacon.

The Junior Deacon should:

Receive all candidates of the Lodge to ensure they feel welcomed and comfortable.

Be in possession or show definite inclination to possess the adopted work and lectures assigned to the Junior Deacon.

Assist in ensuring all Masonic regalia is properly stored and cared for.

The Steward & Tiler

In this jurisdiction, the offices of Steward and Tiler are usually filled by one brother. As the Steward, his responsibility is to see that the tables are properly furnished at refreshment and that every brother is suitably provided for, as well as assist the deacons and other officers in the performance of their duties. The Steward is also charged with the upkeep of the Lodge room and furniture, keeping them in neat and good order.

As the Tiler, he is charged with the duty of summoning the membership of the Lodge to attend all special meetings at the will and pleasure of the Worshipful Master. It is the duty of the Tiler to ensure the security of the lodge, and in doing so, to keep off all cowans and eavesdroppers, see that none pass or re-pass except such as are duly qualified and have permission of the Worshipful Master. The position of the Tiler serves as a constant admonition to us to set a guard at the door of our lips, to post a sentinel at the avenue of our actions; thereby excluding every unqualified and unworthy thought, word and deed; and preserving consciences void of offence toward God and toward man. Furthermore, the Tiler should:

Assist the Worshipful Master in providing direction towards established goals consistent with the Lodge Mission.

Be punctual and prepared for all Masonic activities.

Summon the members to attend all special meetings of the Lodge.

Provide, or see provided, all refreshments ordered by the Lodge and ensure all members are suitably provided for.

Ensure the security of the Lodge and the members present.

See proper maintenance of all Masonic related materials and regalia.

Be in possession or definite inclination to possess the adopted work and lectures assigned to the Tiler.

Assist the Worshipful Master in enforcing and atmosphere for proper lodge behavior and membership expectations.

The Chaplain

The Chaplain is a sacred position within the lodge, appointed at the will and pleasure of the Worshipful Master. The Chaplain is installed as the spiritual leader of the lodge. Freemasonry has never been, is not now, nor will it ever be, a religion. Neither should its members ever accept the Lodge as a substitute for the Church. However, the principle tenets of our institution are based upon the teaching found in the Great Light in Masonry, the Holy Bible; and, as religious men, we recognize our need for Divine guidance. He may be asked to lead the lodge in its devotions when requested by the Worshipful Master. Furthermore, the Chaplain should:

Assist the Worshipful Master in providing direction towards established goals consistent with the Lodge Mission.

Be punctual and prepared for all Masonic activities.

Serve to the spiritual needs of the Lodge and its membership.

Assist the Worshipful Master in enforcing and atmosphere for proper lodge behavior and membership expectations.

Appointments

In the selection of appointed officers and Lodge committees, the Worshipful Master should only appoint those brethren whom he feels are best qualified and most loyal to him in his position and the fraternity. The appointment of personal friends should be avoided unless those individuals are well qualified for the appointment of which they are being considered. In cases of appointed officer positions, individuals should exhibit the type of dedication needed to someday govern the Lodge from the Master's station. The Worshipful Master should have the courage to remove from office any appointed officer or committeeman who does not fulfill his obligations to the position, nor attend Lodge meetings as he should. If a brother is not performing his duties, he should be admonished as to exactly what is expected; and if there continues to be no improvement, the appointed brother should be replaced for the good of the fraternity. In this manner the Lodge can maintain a strong line of officers and continue its growth.

Relief Committee

It shall be duty of the Worshipful Master to appoint, at each regular meeting, a committee of three to serve until the next regular meeting or until their successors are appointed. Their duty is to ascertain who are sick and who are destitute within the jurisdiction of their Lodge, report cases of destitution to the Master of the Lodge, and appoint a suitable number of brethren to visit and nurse the sick. It shall be the duty of the brethren selected to discharge this duty unless excused for reasonable cause.

The Grand Lodge Foundation is charged with the governance and administration of the Grand Lodge Relief Program. Applications may be obtained from the Grand Lodge website or from the Grand Lodge Secretary. To be eligible for assistance the member applying for relief must not have been suspended for non-payment of dues during the past five years prior to the date of the application. Other information is explained in the application.

It is the policy of the Grand Lodge Foundation to review each application and approve an amount equal to that amount contributed by the subordinate Lodge, not to exceed \$1,000 in regards to needs. The check is made out to the member or family member and mailed by the Secretary of the Lodge for delivery.

Complaints & Offenses

Immediately following the annual installation of officers, the Worshipful Master has the duty to appoint a committee of three discreet members to serve as the Committee on Complaints and Offenses. Their duty shall be to take notice and report on all offenses by Masons, whether members of the Lodge or sojourners. The report may either come under their observation of a Masonic offense or that of which they may have been informed by any person or through any source. Without delay, they are to fairly and impartially investigate the same and if they deem that the welfare of Masonry or in the protection of the weak and defenseless demands such action, to report any misconduct to the Master of the Lodge.

Their report may or may not be accompanied by charges and specification as they shall think best. They are not to bring the good name of the Mason under disrepute unless there is well-founded ground for believing that he has conducted himself as to require the Lodge to discipline him. On the other hand, they are to be zealous in protecting the good name of the Craft, and see that it is unstained and untarnished by the misconduct of those who are unworthy of being countenanced by Masons.

Auditing Committee

It is the duty of the Worshipful Master, at the stated meeting for the election of officers, to appoint a committee to examine and audit the books and accounts of the Treasurer and Secretary. The committee shall make its report, including a statement as to the condition of the Lodge treasury, on or before St. John's Day (December 27), and prior to the installation of the officers-elect. Neither the Treasurer nor Secretary is eligible to serve on the auditing committee. Look for more information regarding Lodge Audits from the Grand Lodge Education Committee.

Committee on Investigation

One of the most important duties of a Mason is to take his assignment on an Investigation Committee seriously. The Committee on Investigation should inquire into everything effecting the qualifications of a candidate. Is he of sound mind and members? Does he come under the tongue of good report? What about his character and family life? Remember that the typical Freemason is a responsible member of his community; busily engaged with his domestic, social, vocational and civic obligations. Will the candidate measure up? Do not neglect the questions and include the family in the discussion. Look for more information regarding Committees on Investigations from the Grand Lodge Education Committee.

Special Committees

Each Lodge committee is vital to the functioning of a successful Lodge, and operates at the will and pleasure of the Worshipful Master. The Worshipful Master is invested with the authority to create and/or dissolve special committees, assigned with the task to perform and report on some necessary functions the Lodge. Below are some suggestions for special Lodge committees to assist in the performance of certain important Lodge functions.

Lodge By-Laws Committee. This special committee is typically composed of three well-studied Master Masons chosen carefully by the Worshipful Master to review and report on the Lodge By-Laws. Each subordinate Lodge shall adopt the set of Lodge By-Laws as found in The Williams Digest, filling in the blanks to suit their own convenience, but they are prohibited from altering them in any other respect.

Finance Committee. This special committee is typically composed of three to five well-educated Master Masons selected by the Worshipful Master to assist in the management of the lodge's income, expenses, investments, fundraising and budgeting. Due to the nature of the ancient customs and traditions of the fraternity, it is suggested that the Senior Warden and Treasurer should both serve on this committee with the approval of the Worshipful Master. The Finance Committee should formulate and implement the Lodge's annual budget, as well as work with lodge investments and fundraising campaigns. This committee should accept the responsibility of making personal contact to each member that has not paid his current year's dues. Look for more information on finances, budgeting and fundraising from the Grand Lodge Education Committee.

Lodge Education Committee. This special committee should be composed of three to five Past Masters who are well informed about history of Freemasonry, what Masonry is, how you become a Mason and what Masonry does. The size of the committee should depend on the membership of the Lodge. Members who are knowledgeable and informed that are not Past Masters may also be considered for a position on this committee. The responsibilities of the Lodge Education Committee should include: presenting a program on some Masonic subjects of interest at stated communications, special communications and special events of the Lodge; ensuring members proficiency in all aspects of the adopted work and lectures; meeting with new members and candidates to see them informed on Masonic history and traditions; review available resources from the Grand Lodge Education Committee and see the Lodge furnished with proper resources for membership use.

Membership Satisfaction Committee. This special committee should be composed of three to five Master Masons. The Membership Satisfaction Committee should work closely with all the brethren to ensure a positive experience, and communicate membership experiences, expectations, concerns and comments to the Worshipful Master. The Membership Satisfaction Committee may address Lodge challenges such as unproductive meetings, personal conflicts, membership issues, and fraternal culture using lodge questionnaires or other means. This committee should accept the responsibility of contacting suspended members for reinstatement. Look for more information on ensuring membership satisfaction from the Grand Lodge Education Committee.

Lodge Involvement Committee. This special committee should be composed of three to five Master Masons. The Membership Involvement Committee should work to develop opportunities for membership and family fellowship, as well as opportunities for outreach, public relations and community service. Look for more information regarding a Lodge's involvement from the Grand Lodge Education Committee.

Property and Maintenance. This special committee should be composed of three to five Master Masons, who are charged with ensuring the security of Lodge property and maintenance of the Lodge. It should also be the responsibility of this committee to ensure that all regalia, Lodge materials and other property of the Lodge is kept secure and in good repair, in cooperation with the Lodge Steward.

Lodge Planning Committee. This special committee should be composed of the Worshipful Master, Lodge officers, committee chairmen or other members as the Worshipful Master may deem appropriate. The Lodge Planning Committee should work to develop an active and engaging annual Lodge program that will inspire, motivate and encourage the membership towards success. Included in this guidebook is a basic outline and ideas to assist Lodge Planning Committees in their endeavors. Look for more information regarding Lodge planning from the Grand Lodge Education Committee.

Lodge Planning

A well-planned annual program is integral to the overall success of a Lodge. Every Worshipful Master wishes to achieve a meaningful year for his Lodge and should take the responsibility and all opportunities to ensure his Lodge's success through effective planning. Effective planning for a Lodge must begin before a brother assents to the office of Worshipful Master, and be supported by all the officers and members of the lodge.

The Worshipful Master has the largest sense of duty since he is responsible for the successful programming of a Lodge during his term in office. All other officers have the duty to support the Worshipful Master and provide assistance as may be required in the achievement of Lodge goals and objectives. The following elements should always be considered when discussing effective Lodge planning:

1. Conduct an evaluation of the membership's wants, needs, strengths and weaknesses. It is important to know what the Lodge members would like or dislike in an annual program and what roles they may want to play in the operation and governance of a Lodge program. The feedback received from the membership evaluation should be an important aspect in preparing any annual program.
2. Based on the collective data from the membership survey, the annual plan should detail the Lodge Mission and Vision, or the Lodge's purpose and specific picture of future success. The Mission and Vision should be developed whereby it inspires, encourages, and motivates the Lodge members in the attainment of the future goals. The data should also detail which activities the members would find engaging and appropriate. It is important to consider all stated communications, known special communications, Grand Lodge activities, family calendar activities, district activities, community events, holidays, fairs, festivals and other dates which may conflict with a Lodge member's obligation of attendance.
3. Once the Lodge's activities have been selected, the Lodge Planning Committee should begin scheduling events in accordance with the Lodge calendar. The Planning Committee may choose to either develop a 6-month program plan or an annual program plan. The dates of scheduled activities can make the difference between success and failure.
4. Once the calendar of events has been developed, the Lodge Planning Committee should analyze the program and determine if it is well balanced and offers a variety of activities for the membership and their families.
5. After the program analysis, develop or review and evaluate your Lodge's budget. Compare the Lodge's income with the estimated expense of each event. Consider less expensive methods or fundraising campaigns to offset the cost of estimated expenses.
6. Once the program has been prepared, the Worshipful Master-elect should consider which suitable members who would be best to serve as Lodge officers or committee members with regards to program implementation. The Worshipful Master-elect should finally present the plan before the entire membership for review, approval and implementation.

Suggested Lodge Activities

Public Installation of Officers & St. John's Day Banquet
Sweetheart Banquet
Special Degree Team Work
Widow's Night
Past Master's Night
Joint events with neighboring Lodges or related Masonic bodies
Patriotic/ Public Speaker
Family & Friends Special Thanksgiving Program
Christmas Party
Membership Education Night
Masonic Sunday – attend a religious service as a fraternal body, Sunday before Easter or Christmas
Father and Son Night
Friend/ Interest Night
BBQ/ Pig Roast
Movie Night
Family Picnic
Bowling Night
Canned Food Drive
Garage Sales
Bake Sales
Donations or Special Events for a Special Named Charity
Dinner & A Show
Bi-Monthly Breakfast
Community Clean-Up
Masonic Quiz Show
Golf/ Golf Tournament
Hospital/ Home Visits
History Tours
Game Night
Military/ Service Member Appreciation
Public Education Support
Sponsor Athletic Teams for Youth and Adults
Lodge Newsletter
Lodge Social Media or Website Page

KNOW YOUR DISTRICT DEPUTY GRAND LECTURER

*Adapted from a writing by Bro. Watt Carter, Past Grand Master
Grand Lecturer (1954 – 1994)*

The qualifications of a District Deputy Grand Lecturer are very exacting. He must be a Master Mason that is or has been Master of a Mississippi Lodge. He must be in possession of or show definite inclination to possess the adopted ritualistic work. The adopted work is that which is determined to be by the Grand Lecturer and Board of Custodians and ultimately approved by the Grand Lodge. He must be well regarded in his community and be generally acceptable to the Lodges he is to serve. He should be familiar with the regulations that govern Lodges, and be able to counsel judiciously with Lodge Officers and individual brothers. He should be courteous to everyone, attentive to all needs, and above all possess a high quality of leadership. His personal behavior should be commendable and his moral conduct without question. He should be punctual in all commitments, reliable in his instruction and dependable when his services are needed.

There are 29 districts in Mississippi; likewise there are 29 deputies, each having approximately 10 lodges; however, this varies somewhat as some are assigned more and some less than 10, but the average is 10.

The main purpose and function of the DDGL is to teach the adopted work and to encourage the Lodges in his care to credibly do the work in each of the 3 degrees. His training depends a great deal on his own efforts. He has to spend considerable time with well-informed Masons and repeat the wording many, many times until he is confident he knows the work. He must memorize from the textbook that which pertains to the degrees and avail himself the opportunity to do the work on the candidates, thereby proving his capability.

The Deputy is to encourage good property care, prudence in finances, adherence to Masonic Law, and study the laws as are inculcated in The William's Digest. There is but one Deputy for each district. He, having met or assumed to have the capability to meet the criteria mentioned above, is appointed by the Grand Lecturer under the auspices of the Grand Lodge.

Iterant lecturers are prohibited and for good reason. The commissioned Deputy is required to attend well organized schools on an annual basis where his work is carefully observed by the Grand Lecturer and members of the Board of Custodians. This practice has proved extremely worthwhile and has resulted in uniformity of the work throughout the state.

The Lodges should utilize the Deputy for instruction in all phases of the work, but never be dependent on him for doing degree work. The Grand Lodge pays for one day's service and it is strongly suggested that a full day be arranged in order for the Lodge to get the full benefit of this important and valuable service. Every Lodge, regardless of size and location, is in reach of a competent instructor and a willing helper in the District Deputy Grand Lecturer. Initiative and effort on the part of a Lodge, large or small, and the utilization of the District Deputy along with taking advantage of composite knowledge within the Lodge in frequent and systematic practice sessions, will enable every Lodge to do its own work with credit and pride.

It is necessary and urgent, regardless of present proficiency or history of your good work that your Lodge keep in close touch with your Deputy and use him to the fullest extent possible.

Excerpts From Williams Digest of Laws:

Unanimous Ballot:

For Three Degrees
For Membership, including Dual and Plural
Restoration from Expulsion
To re-take Ballot – Request for Dispensation
Honorary Membership
Petition for E.A. or F.C. for Advancement

2/3 Majority Ballot:

Petition Withdrawn
Indefinite Suspension
Expulsion 2/3 members present
Consolidation of Lodges
Substitution of Lesser Penalty
Guilty or Innocent on Charges

Majority Ballot:

Definite Suspension
Dismiss Charges
To Change Location of Lodge
Sponsor DeMolay or Rainbow
Reprimand
Recommendations for Dispensation of New Lodge
Elected Representative to Grand Lodge
Surrender of Charter
Election of Officers
In All Cases Except in Balloting or as Otherwise Provided
Amend By-Laws
Restoration for Suspended NPD (3 years or longer)

No Vote:

Demit Issued
Certificate of Good Standing
Certificate of Dismissal
Petition for Exemptions
Proficiency

Quorum:

5 for all purposes except Degrees or Funerals, one of whom must be Master or Warden
3 may close – 1 must be Master or Warden

Annual Grand Communication held 2nd Full Thursday – Saturday in March