

Scottish Rite The University of Freemasonry



The progressive teachings of the Scottish Rite make it the "University of Freemasonry."

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"Masonry is a progressive science. As we advance in knowledge, our obligations to ourselves and to our Brethren correspondingly increase...."

From a working of
the Fellowcraft Degree

Even before the Candidate knocks at the door of Masonry for the first time seeking admission into a Lodge, he is told that he is about to embark on a system of moral instruction. He is reminded early that Masonry signifies a vast body of knowledge, teachings, traditions, and principles concerning nature, the universe, and man. He is told that Masonry is a science and philosophy taught by symbols and allegories and that many of its precepts and examples have been practiced since antiquity. In fact, Masonry is education in its truest form—development of the individual for life.

As he approaches the Masonic altar, the Fellowcraft is told the central idea of Freemasonry, that it is *"a progressive science, attainable only by degrees."* The Masonic Degrees enable the individual to accumulate and accept the information he receives in relation to his own worldview of truth, the operation of law, and how these things are applied in his work, home, and life.

Knowledge is progressive. We become more effective by successive

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stages. But it is only when we remain devoted to our own continuous improvement that we learn to judge soundly and act correctly with facts as they relate to our own life and conduct. Through our own effort, then, we learn to know what is true and false, proper or improper. We come to understand the best ends and best means for us to achieve those ends. Thus we become wiser and more apt to be the kind of example that leads others to look upon us with respect and admiration. That is the nature of Masonic Degrees.

When the Grand Lodge of England introduced the Hiram legend into Masonry with the Master Mason Degree, Masonry became truly a progressive institution. It was no longer an elementary school of moral instruction. It became a world-affirming, symbolic center that gave us a hero and a quest to find the unity of the individual and the group, the bond of man to his Creator.

Simply stated, the Blue Lodge Degrees laid the foundation for the Scottish Rite to expand on the Blue Lodge mission. The early ritual writers of Masonry never intended for the Blue Lodge to be the pinnacle of Masonic teachings. They would never have ended the lessons of the Craft Degrees by introducing something that is lost, thus creating the



Oil painting by Robert H. White, 32°

The 19° (regalia above) teaches the Scottish Rite Mason to "serve truth, honor, and charity by the elimination of error, falsehood, and intolerance."

beginning of a new, unexplained quest. The Masonic thinkers of the early 18th century knew the Hiram legend went far beyond what is unveiled in the ritual of the Third Degree. They expected men to pursue more light, knowledge, in Masonry.

The premier Grand Lodge simply introduced the Hiram legend and its symbols. It gave us the allegory and ceremonial form. The foundation was laid so that the whole of Masonry could then be built. It laid the cornerstone for Masonry to expand itself and build the man. If this were not



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so, other Rites and Degrees would never have been created.

The Blue Lodge, then, promotes brotherly love and relief, and it explores our outward relationship with our fellows and our society. It teaches the responsibility of making a difference in the lives of others. It introduces us to the opposites we encounter, the opposing elements we must work to balance. It starts us on our journey toward truth.

But truth is a matter of the heart as well as the mind and is found in the allegory behind our rituals. Here the tie is made between the Blue Lodge Degrees and the Degrees of the Scottish Rite. The Craft Degrees prepare us for wisdom. The Degrees of the Scottish Rite transfer our outward relationship with the world and others into ourselves. It is the acquiring of the wisdom we seek as Master Masons. But to become wise, we have to know ourselves. The Scottish Rite gives us the tools for this self-knowledge and self-realization.

The Scottish Rite's role in Masonry, then, is to show men where to look and what to look for in their journey to self-awareness, personal insight,

and individual enlightenment. As such, the Rite is critically important to continuing each Brother's Masonic education. The Scottish Rite is indeed the university course in Masonry. It explores philosophy, history, comparative religion, situational ethics, and the ultimate truths that guide our lives. It was created to complete what the Craft system began. It is the *University of Freemasonry*. 

William B. Brunk
was raised a Master Mason in Hiram Lodge No. 40, Raleigh, N.C., in 1980, served his Lodge as Master in 1986, and was elected Grand Master of North Carolina in 1994. A member of the Valley of Raleigh since 1984, Illustrrious Brunk was recognized for his many



services to the Rite by being invested with the K.:C.:C.:H.: in 1989, coroneted a 33° in 1993, appointed Deputy of N.C., and then elected S.:G.:I.:G.: at the 1999 Biennial Session. An active member of many Masonic Bodies, including the York Rite, Shrine, Royal Order of Jesters, Eastern Star, Red Cross of Constantine, and Royal Order of Scotland, Ill.: Brunk specializes in orthodontics in Raleigh and served as president of the North Carolina Association of Orthodontics in 1994. In recognition of his lifelong civic contributions, two Governors of North Carolina, James B Hunt in 1993 and James G. Martin in 1992, presented him the Outstanding Individual Volunteer Service Award.