

The Most Worshipful Grand Lodge
of
Free and Accepted Masons of Florida



GRAND
ORATION

By: R.: W.: Albert M. McDonald
W.: Grand Orator
2010 - 2011

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Most Worshipful Grand Master, Most Worshipful Past Grand Masters, Elected and Appointed Grand Lodge Officers, Ladies, Guests, and my Brethren all:

I would like to start by thanking our Most Worshipful Grand Master, J. Dick Martinez, for the privilege and honor of serving our Fraternity this year as Grand Orator and giving me this opportunity to speak to you today.

This oration is framed into a speech of two parts, the first concerning Memorial Day, the second about our Ancient and Honorable Fraternity.

Would all of our veterans please rise. We thank you for your service to our Country.

Memorial Day...

A day when people change their daily routine and do not go to work or school. It must be a day for a whole country to stop working long enough to remember how and why we got here. A day set aside to honor those Americans who did what they had to do then, so that we can do what we do now. It's all about freedom and the right to choose and worship and vote and be a major part of the government that runs your life. Because we believe so fervently in our democracy, the United States of America has committed billions of dollars and millions of men and women to defend a two hundred plus year old Constitution that works. History may prove me wrong, but, so far, nobody's done it better; and we must remember those men and women who put their lives on hold to slug it out with the Kaiser in World War I, then against Hitler in World War II, and a police action in Korea, and how do you describe Vietnam and we're still there with our men and women in Iraq and Afghanistan. In order to be a soldier, you must be a certain age and in good physical condition. Because being a soldier requires physical capabilities usually reserved for the young, that is where our kids come from. Most of them are between 18 and 22; and it's been that way from day one. If they happen to be born at the wrong time, they will be the right age to put their lives on hold, learn how to be a soldier, and do what has to be done to allow us to be here today...in the land of the free and the home of the brave. We reserve the use of our enormous military power to defend our Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the most important of all human goals...Freedom. It is because of all those who paid the ultimate price that we pause on this Memorial Day to remember the men and women who never came back. The children they never had a chance to have, the legacy they never had a chance to leave. The price of freedom is neither free nor is it dumb. It is costly and it is worth it. Historically, it shows that the human spirit will always rise to the occasion where just being free is in question. There is probably no one in this room who doesn't have a son or daughter, father, or grandfather, neighbor, or friend who went off to war. Through the good and bad and the right and wrong, they carried our flag; and today...we salute them. This amazing human experiment that started in 1776 still seems to work just fine. Of course, there are faults and failures but can you show me any other historical evolution that comes remotely close to what we have achieved? Today we honor and remember those who have made it possible. God Bless the United States of America.

Our Fraternity

We were all first prepared within our hearts to be made a Mason. Therefore, is it not fitting that we have chosen the Masonic Medical Research Laboratory as our Flagship Charity; the foremost leader in cardiac research, where every heartbeat counts and directly serves the good of mankind by their research and findings. We serve the good of mankind by demonstrating our human emotions involved with the heart such as honor, pride, compassion, charity, and brotherly love.

We say that our Fraternity teaches good men to be better. When considering the men who want to be one of us, we should be like the Marines wanting “The Few, The Good, The Proud.” Once they join our ranks we should be like the Army and encourage, inspire, and teach them “To Be All They Can Be.” Our Ritual is what separates us from other associations of men and our installation ceremony reminds us that as our secrets have been faithfully transmitted to us, it is our duty to convey them unimpaired to our latest posterity.

You get out of Freemasonry what you put into it. How often have you heard that statement or repeated it yourself? My Brothers, would you please take a few moments and look around at the Masonic family that has assembled here today and think about the friendships and brotherly love you have experienced because of this great Fraternity. Now I ask you, have we not gotten more from being a Mason than we have given individually? With the positive situations that Freemasonry offers us on a daily basis, can you imagine your life anymore without it? I know I certainly cannot.

How many times have you helped a Brother by answering a question for him or you might be a Lodge or District Instructor or maybe you deliver a Charge or a Lecture at a Degree? Whatever the case may be, that one Brother comes to you and says, “Thank You” while offering his right hand. Is there no better response than “I’m just being a Brother?”

Watch a Brother receive a twenty-five, forty, or fifty year service award or be present when a Brother is Raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason by their father, grandfather, or some other family member. You hear that little quiver in their voice or see that tear in their eyes, you know their heart is filled with pride and emotion.

Look at this group of men to my left who have distinguished themselves as men and Masons. They have previously and will continue to spend countless hours and drive many miles promoting our Fraternity, diffusing Light and imparting Knowledge. What a demanding schedule they must have, but yet they do it because they have the heart of a Mason and a love of this Fraternity.

Our current Elected Grand Lodge Officers have given us a plan with a vision for our Fraternity for years to come. It is up to each one of us to make sure this succeeds by being that Brother in each Particular Lodge that puts the plan into action. We are a band of Brothers who best can work and best agree because Masons Always Rise to the Occasion.

Let us not forget our Ladies and the contribution they make. If it were not for them being right there beside us, we could not do what we do. Each year they support the First Lady’s Project, banding together and forming friendships that will last just as ours do. Whether you attend an Official Visit or a function of some kind, there they are, laughing, kidding each other, and having fun. They have to balance their schedule between family, work, and Masonry just as we do.

My Brothers, you will have observed that I have asked you some questions and made some observations about our great Fraternity. I hope I have caused you to reflect on what this Fraternity means to you and how we can best serve to move this Fraternity forward.

Having this opportunity, I would be remiss if I did not thank those Brothers who have cased me to have a fantastic Masonic journey to date, my brother-in-law, Albert Brennan, Jr., who said I had been a Mason my whole life and just didn't know it, also these Most Worshipful Past Grand Masters: Robert D. Trump, Robert P. Harry, Jr., Joe A. Fleites, and Dale I. Goehrig for allowing me to serve our Fraternity in different capacities. Most of all, I would like to thank my best friend and wife, Eileen, for always supporting me and being right there with me.

May God Bless our service men and women wherever they may be defending our freedom, the greatest Fraternity in the world, and the United States of America. I Thank You.