



Maine Masonic College Inauguration

October 15, 2005

From their first entrance to a Masonic Hall, a person cannot fail to be impressed with the emphasis Freemasonry places on symbolism. Whether as a ten year old entering a cavernous building with a grandfather or as a thirty year old attending a 'Fellowship Night' to learn more about this sometimes mysterious organization, it is clear that there are symbols everywhere. So too did the symbolism of the Maine Masonic College's Inauguration location – at a community-based University with a strong adult outreach program active and growing – project symbolically the undertaking begun this day. Attendees arrived in the gloomy weather after having driven through often drenching rain but that symbolism seemed to reflect the challenges of the nay-sayers rather than the future of the College. As windswept rain pelted the windows on the seventh floor of the University of Southern Maine library, all were in high spirits and it was readily apparent that the Grand Lodge of Maine was embarking on a new, bold initiative to reconnect the principles of Freemasonry to our members and to the community at large. It was indeed a bright day in Masonic history!

A string trio from the Portland Symphony Orchestra provided a beautiful prelude to the morning activities. At 10:00am the Grand Master of Masons in Maine, Most Worshipful Brother Claire Tusch, called the meeting to order. A prayer was offered by Grand Chaplain RW Norman Rust and the podium guests were introduced including the Chairman-elect of the Board of Regents of the Maine Masonic College, George Macdougall, the guest speaker, Dr. Joseph S. Wood, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs of the University of Southern Maine, the keynote speaker MW Wayne T. Adams, PGM of the Grand Lodge of Maine, and Dr. & RW Charles Plummer, Regent, as well as the Grand Chaplain.

Bro. Adams' presentation was one of inspiration. He spoke of the rich heritage of Freemasonry interwoven with the history of learning. He explained to guests how the system of learning developed in Freemasonry challenged its initiates to greater heights than they might have otherwise imagined. It was a stimulating charge!

Bro. Plummer then read the goals and objectives of the College, making specific note of the standards by which the College will operate, to wit: those of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. Based on their objective criteria, the efforts of our undertaking will be judged.

The time had then arrived to officially charter the Maine Masonic College. The Grand Master noted his great personal pleasure at the speed with which the endeavor had come to fruition. He then read the official charter from the Grand Lodge of Maine and presented it to the Chairman-Elect, RW George Macdougall. The Grand Master then caused the Regents to take an obligation to serve honorably. The officers of the Board were presented to the podium where they were introduced and each was presented with a copen-blue stole to symbolize their office.

The chamber trio played a soothing interlude written by our Masonic Brother, Wolfgang Mozart leading us to the Guest Speaker, Dr. Wood. With slides from his personal life experiences and travels, he spoke of the integration of various societies into our communities using the Vietnam immigrants as examples. As a geographer, Dr. Wood brought a unique perspective to the changing social scene.

The Grand Master then reassumed the podium to thank those who have been so much a part of the activities of the day and to introduce honored guests. He recognized the Chairman of the Inaugural

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Committee, Past Grand Master Walter Macdougall and his Lady Judy who made the unique officers' stoles as well as the USM representative who made it possible for us to use their excellent facilities, Ms. Yolanda Theumssen. Also present from the Scottish Rite in Lexington was Bro. Richard Curtis, FPS, the Editor of the Northern Light Magazine. Additionally, the Presidents of the University of Southern Maine and the University of New England sent regrets but asked to be kept abreast of MMC activities in the future.

Bro. Walter Webber, Sovereign Grand Commander of the Northern Jurisdiction of the Scottish Rite Bodies was welcomed to the podium where he brought the best wishes of the 235,000 Scottish Rite members. He spoke extemporaneously but compellingly about the challenge of becoming more integrated with our communities through this educational endeavor.

The proceedings were then closed with an inspiring prayer by MMC Regent Wilbur F. Loveitt following which most of the attendees proceeded to the North Deering Congregational Church where Rev. Bro. Mark Ruston had arranged a sumptuous meal of homemade fish chowder served by members of the congregation, most of whom were also members of the Craft. Tables were decorated with placemats prepared with the Masonic columns, S&C emblem, and the name/date of our event. Centerpieces with candles were decorated with actual antique square and compasses brought in for this occasion by Bro. Gustavson thus reinforcing the remarkable symbolism of the day. The meal was exceptionally good and many present enjoyed a second large helping of chowder.

At approximately 2:00pm, guests departed for their respective destinations. All in all, it was a very unique day and the Maine Masonic College extends thanks to all who made it so!

Respectfully submitted,

Edward L. King

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Secretary, Board of Regents
Maine Masonic College