

MOST WORSHIPFUL PRINCE HALL GRAND LODGE
of
FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS of the STATE of SOUTH CAROLINA



Victor C. Major, 33°
27th Most Worshipful Grand Master

"Bridging the gap of the Past, with an eye on our Future, while protecting our Brand"

Lynwood F. Givens, 33°
R.W. Deputy Grand Master

Wayne Davis, 33°
R.W. Senior Grand Warden

James Davis, 33°
R.W. Junior Grand Warden

Paul Brawley, 33°
R.W. Grand Treasurer

Thomas W. Holmes, Jr., 33°
R.W. Grand Secretary

Fred Herriott, 33°
R.W. Grand Tyler

Lavern Witherspoon, 33°
R.W. Grand Chaplain

Ben Carr, 33°
R.W. Grand Trustee, Chair

Christopher Major, 33°
R.W. Grand Trustee

Leo H. Murphy, 33°
R.W. Grand Trustee

Frank Richardson, 33°
R.W. Grand Trustee

Leroy Williams, 33°
R.W. Grand Trustee

Silas J. Williams, 33°
R.W. Grand Trustee

Tyrone Harper, 33°
R.W. Grand Trustee, Emeritus

McDuffie Bartelle, 32°
R.W. Grand Secretary, Emeritus

PAST GRAND MASTERS

Rev. Charles W. Davenport, 33°
Lonnie Hosey, 33°
Alonzo Haynes, 33°
Nathaniel I. Durant, Jr., 33°
Curtis W. Mansel, Sr., 33°
Lewis H. Nelson, Jr.
E. Spencer Scott, I, 33°

APPOINTED OFFICERS

Cedric June, 32°
Worshipful Asst. Grand Sec.

Edwin D. Givens, 33°
Worshipful Grand Legal Adv.

Cezar E. McKnight, 33°
Worshipful Grand Legal
Political Advisor

May 26, 2023

To all Elected, and Appointed Grand Lodge Officers, Past and Present Masters, Wardens, and Master Masons owing allegiance to This Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Free & Accepted Masons of South Carolina (MWPHGLSC).

RE: 2023 Conference of Grand Masters Update

Greetings!

I hope that this communication finds you all in good health, and that your families and communities are continuously prospering from the blessings of God. I am honored to serve as the 27th Most Worshipful Grand Master of MWPHGLSC, and I will continue to remain diligent and transparent on all issues that affect our Grand Lodge.

On May 19th, 2023, at the Conference of Grand Masters (COGM) in New Orleans, LA, 42 of 49 Most Worshipful Grand Masters voted to ostracize Most Worshipful Grand Master Ralph Slaughter and the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Free & Accepted Masons of Louisiana (MWPHGLLA) from the COGM, due to encroachment of Prince Hall Grand Lodge territories (Alabama, Florida, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas.). The MWPHGLLA has placed Symbolic Lodges in several Prince Hall Grand Lodge Jurisdictions including the reinstating of suspended and expelled Masons.

This problem was identified as a part of **The Sanctity of Prince Hall Masonic Jurisdictions** during the COGM. The forerunner to the problem at hand states, *"This practice of placing Symbolic Lodges in other Jurisdictions, contradicts and violates the customs, practices, and traditions of Prince Hall Masonry, which authorizes only one (1) Prince Hall Grand Lodge occupies and operates within a jurisdiction's established and identified territory. The only exception(s) to these customs, practices and traditions are military territories."*

Article III, Section 2, of the COGM Constitution states, *"The Conference of Grand Masters has the full power to determine its membership and composition. Changes to the membership and composition require a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Executive Committee together with all sitting Grand Masters present."* 42 of the 49 seated Grand Masters voted to ostracize Most Worshipful Grand Master Ralph Slaughter and the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Louisiana from the COGM. This includes the Eastern Stars.

Article II, Section 4, of the COGM Constitution states, *"While the Conference of Grand Masters has no legislative authority, it may recommend procedures that each jurisdiction will be encouraged to adopt. Under no circumstances will the Conference of Grand Masters interfere with the governance or operations of a jurisdiction unless such involvement is requested in writing by the jurisdiction."* The COGM provided the following solution to MWPHGLLA as a part of **The Sanctity of Prince Hall Masonic Jurisdiction:**

1. The established lodges by the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Louisiana in encroached Grand Lodge territories must be disorganized/terminated in an expeditious manner.
2. The Conference of Grand Masters adopts the following definition of fraternal relations:
“Fraternal relations is the mutual exchange and sharing of masonic intercourse between two established and recognized Prince Hall Grand Lodges, whereby the ceremonial events, ritualistic works and territorial boundaries are not disrespected, ignored nor violated.”
3. The Ceremonial Events of the respective member jurisdictions of the Conference of Grand Masters may be more inclusive, however, the basic Ceremonial Events include Prince Hall (Americanism) Day and St. John’s (the Baptist/the Evangelist) Day.
4. The Ritualistic Works may vary in the performance of works; however, the basic ritualistic works consist of initiations, passings, raisings, suitable proficiency, masonic rites and Past Master’s Degrees.
5. The recognition and respect for territorial boundaries protects the sanctity of Prince Hall Masonic Jurisdictions. Within the continental United States, state boundaries normally establish the jurisdictional boundaries for/of a jurisdiction. Any violation of these boundaries constitutes unmasonic decorum and conduct.
Any Most Worshipful Grand Master guilty of this grievous act shall be immediately summoned by the Executive Committee of the Conference of Grand Masters by a panel of no less than twenty-five (25) Most Worshipful Grand Masters within thirty (30) days of identification of the grievous act.
6. In the event there is a conflict and/or disagreement amongst/between two Most Worshipful Grand Lodges, fraternal relations are suspended. The suspension of fraternal relations means masonic intercourse amongst/between the membership of the masonic jurisdictions are suspended, only. There is NO disregard or ignorance concerning territorial boundaries. Territorial boundaries are always recognized and respected.
7. The Conference of Grand Masters and the members of the Conference of Grand Masters do not apply or recognize the term ‘fraternal recognition.’

Article VI, Section 2, of the COGM Constitution states, *“Membership to the Conference of Grand Masters is jurisdictional and not individual.”* Therefore, the Jurisdiction of Louisiana is also ostracized until the above requirements for readmittance are completed.

In addition brothers, let us remember the 16th and 17th Landmarks:

16th - *No lodge can interfere in the business or labor of another Lodge.* This landmark references respect, courtesy, and kindness of one lodge or Grand Lodge to another.

17th – *Every free man is amendable to the laws and regulations of the Masonic jurisdiction in which he resides.* This landmark references the fact that no one (including Grand Masters) is above the laws of Masonic jurisdictions.

It is due to God’s grace, and our ancient customs that we have been able to stand thus far. We as Master Masons should not support nor affiliate in any manner, whether symbolic or concordantly, with Masons who have no regard for these ancient customs. Brothers, if we are not careful to **Protect our Brand** and hold steadfast to our obligations as Master Masons, then we all are subject to descend to lower levels. This year, the MWPHGLSC is embarking on 155 years of brotherhood, and it is important that we are all in Charleston, SC on December 14th – 17th, 2023 to celebrate this occasion. I believe in this Grand Lodge and I believe that we will be glorious.

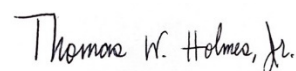
“Truth Never Damages a Cause That is Just” ~ Mahatma Ghandi

Fraternally,

Attest:



Victor C. Major
Most Worshipful Grand Master



Thomas W. Holmes, Jr.
Right Worshipful Grand Secretary