

CHAPTER 26

MEMBERSHIP, RIGHTS, STATUS, AND DUTIES

MEMBERSHIP

DUAL MEMBERSHIP

Constitutional Provisions

Any upright Mason, on presentation of satisfactory evidence of his having paid all dues against him, and having regularly withdrawn from a Lodge from which he was last a member, may present a petition in writing, which must be vouched for by two members of the Lodge, at a Stated Communication, and which must lie over at least one month for the Brethren to make due inquiry into the character and standing of the petitioner; *provided*, that any Particular Lodge of this Grand Jurisdiction may adopt a By-Law (subject to approval of the Grand Master), permitting a member in good standing of a Particular Lodge of a Grand Jurisdiction with which this Grand Lodge sustains fraternal relations to petition such Particular Lodge for affiliation without dimitting from his home Lodge; in such petition all facts and circumstances upon which such petition is based, and the reasons for the dual membership thereby sought, shall be fully stated; upon the reception of such petition it shall take the usual course with respect to investigation and voting, and be subject to the same requirements as to vouchers, as a regular petition based upon a regular dimit; *provided*, that such petition for dual membership shall not be received from a Mason from a Grand Jurisdiction whose laws prohibit its members from becoming dual members.

If such petition for affiliation be voted upon favorably, such petitioner shall thereupon become a member of such Particular Lodge, vested with all the rights and privileges of membership, and be subject to the discipline of the Lodge, *provided further*, that upon the suspension, or expulsion, of such member by the Lodge of which he was a member prior to applying for dual membership as above provided for, such member shall be automatically suspended or expelled from the Particular Lodge of this Grand Jurisdiction with which he shall have affiliated; *provided further*, that in the event that a member receiving the privileges of dual membership in this Grand Jurisdiction shall take his dimit from his Lodge of original membership, it shall be his duty to place such dimit, and his full membership, in the Particular Lodge in this Grand Jurisdiction in which he shall have received the privileges of dual membership and upon his failure to do so, and satisfactory evidence having been presented to the Particular Lodge of such failure, it shall be the duty of such Particular Lodge to suspend such member from membership; *provided further*, that the Grand Master of this Grand Jurisdiction may draft and promulgate such Regulations as he may find necessary and expedient

for the purpose of carrying the provisions of this Section into effect, which Regulations shall be subject to the approval of the Grand Lodge, and subject to amendment and alteration from time to time, as in the case of other Regulations. (2005) (Art. X, Sec. 15(a))

Any Particular Lodge of this Grand Jurisdiction may adopt a By-Law (subject to approval of the Grand Master) permitting a member in good standing of another Particular Lodge in Florida to petition such Particular Lodge for affiliation without dimitting from his home Lodge, regardless of any action that his home Lodge may or may not have taken with respect to accepting plural members. In such petition all facts and circumstances upon which such petition is based, and the reasons for the plural membership thereby sought, shall be fully stated. Upon the reception of such petition it shall take the usual course with respect to investigation and voting, and be subject to the same requirements as to vouchers, as a regular petition based upon a regular dimit. If such petition for affiliation be voted upon favorably, such petitioner shall thereupon become a member of such Particular Lodge, vested with all the rights and privileges of membership, and be subject to the discipline of the Lodge, except, that such member shall not be eligible to be elected or appointed an Officer in more than one Particular Lodge at one and the same time; and *provided further*, that upon suspension, or expulsion, of such member by any Lodge of which he was a member prior to applying for plural membership as above provided for, such member shall be automatically suspended or expelled from any other Particular Lodge of this Grand Jurisdiction with which he shall have affiliated; *provided further*, that in the event that a member receiving the privileges of plural membership shall take his dimit from his Lodge of original membership, it shall be his duty to place such dimit, and his full membership, in a Particular Lodge in the Grand Jurisdiction in which he shall have received the privileges of plural membership; and upon his failure to do so, and satisfactory evidence having been presented to the Particular Lodge of such failure, it shall be the duty of such Particular Lodge to suspend such member from membership; *provided further*, that the Grand Master of this Grand Jurisdiction may draft and promulgate such Regulations as he may determine, which Regulations shall be subject to the approval of the Grand Lodge, and subject to amendment and alteration from time to time, as in the case of other Regulations. (2004) (Art. X, Sec. 15(b))

Regulations

26.01 Repealed.

26.02 Lodges with provision in their By-Laws for dual membership shall report all changes in status of such dual members at times and on forms provided by the Grand Secretary for such purpose.

26.03 Before signing a petition for membership in a Lodge in a foreign jurisdiction, a member of a Lodge in Florida shall secure his dimit from the Florida Lodge, and he remains a member of the Florida Lodge until he is regularly dimitted. (2001)

26.04 If a Dual Member dimits from his home Lodge and takes regular membership in a Florida Lodge during a year in which his dual membership dues have been paid to the Florida Lodge, the dues paid as a dual member shall be credited on his dues as a regular member.

A dual member in a Florida Lodge may withdraw from membership by requesting a withdrawal certificate. On the annual returns, the Lodge would show the member as having been issued a "Withdrawal Certificate." (1988)

26.04.1 Lodges with a provision in their By-Laws for plural membership shall report all changes in status of plural members at times and on forms provided by the Grand Secretary for such purpose. (2001)

26.04.2 If a plural member dimits from his home Lodge and takes regular membership in a Florida Lodge during the year in which his plural membership dues have been paid to the Florida Lodge, the dues paid as a plural member shall be credited on his dues as a regular member. A plural member in a Florida Lodge may withdraw from membership by requesting a withdrawal certificate. On the Annual Returns, the Lodge would show the member as having been issued a "Withdrawal Certificate." (2001)

Rulings and Decisions

Members of a Lodge in this Grand Jurisdiction are permitted to petition for dual membership in Lodges of another Grand Jurisdiction where such dual membership is permitted. (1947 Proc. 34)

When a dual member takes his dimit from his Lodge of original membership and places it in the Lodge of dual membership, he automatically becomes a full member of the latter Lodge without need of filing a petition or being balloted upon. (1964 Proc. 73)

A Brother whose home Lodge is Providence Lodge No. 711, A. F. & A. M., Chicago, Illinois, was formerly a dual member of Elmer O. Smith Lodge No. 307, F. & A. M., Pinellas Park. He was suspended for non-payment of dues on December 27, 1980. While he paid required back dues, he failed to petition for reinstatement, and on August 17, 1981 became a dual member of Star Lodge No. 78. Because of failure to reinstate and subsequently resigning from or securing permission of Elmer O. Smith Lodge to withdraw from dual membership being contrary to established procedure in this jurisdiction and the Regulations thereof. Dual membership of this Brother in Star Lodge is null and void.

Dual member of Florida Lodge is not eligible for life membership in the Lodge. (1977 Proc. 120)

LIFE MEMBERS

Regulations

26.05 Lodges may incorporate in their By-Laws provisions for life members subject to the following requirements:

- A. Life memberships shall be of three classes:
 - (1) Life membership conferred by the Lodge upon payment of a fixed fee therefore which life membership shall only exempt the recipient from payment of Grand Lodge Annual Revenue.
 - (2) Life membership conferred by the Lodge without payment of fee therefore which exempts recipient from payment of Grand Lodge Annual Revenue, and
 - (3) Life membership conferred by the Lodge which does not exempt the recipient thereof from payment of Grand Lodge Annual Revenue, and
- B. No life membership conferred for payment of fixed fee therefore and which shall exempt the recipient thereof from payment of Grand Lodge Annual Revenue may be conferred for a fee of less than four hundred (\$400.00) dollars, which fee, in whatever amount fixed, shall be deposited or invested as hereinafter set forth.
- C. No life membership which exempts recipient thereof from payment of Grand Lodge Annual Revenue may be conferred by the Lodge without payment of fee therefore except on the condition that the Lodge immediately set aside from its own funds for deposit or investment as hereinafter provided a minimum sum of two hundred (\$200.00) dollars except where the amount already in reserve funds is sufficient to equal two hundred (\$200.00) dollars per life membership at all times.
- D. All funds derived from fees for life memberships and all funds set aside by the Lodge upon conferring life membership without payment of fee therefore shall be invested in bonds of the United States of America or deposited in Savings Accounts in institutions where such savings accounts are insured or in

such other securities or stocks as shall be approved by the Grand Lodge, the interest derived from such deposit or investment to be deposited in the general fund of the Lodge.

- E. Upon the death, expulsion, dimit, or disappearance of a life member as provided in Regulation 26.06, the Lodge may withdraw the deposit provided for such life member or dispose of the government bonds purchased with the proceeds thereof and return said funds to the general funds of the Lodge.
- F. Lodges may confer life memberships which do not exempt the recipient thereof from payment of Grand Lodge Annual Revenue without requiring any payment therefore by the life member or without making any deposit or investment by the Lodge.
- G. Each life member of a Lodge shall be issued a card evidencing such life membership. (2017)
- H. No life membership conferred by a Lodge shall exempt such Lodge from payment of Grand Lodge Annual Revenue.
- I. This Regulation shall be effective on the 1st day of May, A.L. 5956, A.D. 1956, but shall not affect any life membership vested on such date.

26.05.1 Perpetual Memberships are authorized by Particular Lodges subject to the following terms and conditions:

(a) Any member or plural member in good standing and possessing a current dues card in a Particular Lodge of this Grand Jurisdiction may become a perpetual member of his Lodge pursuant to the provisions of this Section. (2003)

(b) The member desiring a Perpetual Membership shall apply to the Secretary of his Lodge for such a membership on forms prescribed by the Grand Lodge and shall tender therewith a minimum sum of twenty (20) times the annual dues of his Lodge at the time of the application, but in no event less than twenty (20) times the minimum dues prescribed in Regulation 24.05, Section 4.01 of the Uniform Code of By-Laws. The Lodge Secretary shall complete his part of the application and shall forward the same, together with the full fee due, to the Grand Secretary. The date of the application shall be the date the Grand Secretary certified he received the application.

(c) The application shall be signed by the applicant and have the certification of the Lodge Secretary. The application shall not become effective until the applicant's record has been certified by the Grand Secretary. The application shall contain thereon the computations upon which the Perpetual Membership fee is predicated. If the Grand Secretary determines that the minimum fee tendered by the applicant is in excess of that required, he shall have the power to correct the application and the Lodge Secretary's computations of the fee, accept the application as corrected and refund any excess fee to the applicant through the Particular Lodge Secretary. If the fee tendered is insufficient, the Grand Secretary shall return the application and fee to the constituent Lodge Secretary for correction and resubmittal.

A copy of the completed and accepted Perpetual Membership application and a Certificate of Perpetual Membership shall be furnished to the applicant and his Lodge by the Grand Secretary. These provisions shall be construed so as to permit the Grand Secretary to use computerized records.

(d) After the Perpetual Membership application and fee have been received and accepted by the Grand Secretary, the Perpetual Membership fee shall not be refundable except under circumstances determined by the Grand Secretary to be mistakes of fact rendering the applicant ineligible for Perpetual Membership as of the date of the application.

(e) After the applicant's Perpetual Membership has been accepted by the Grand Secretary, the Perpetual Membership shall be paid over to the Grand Treasurer as required in Article VI, Section 10 of the Constitution. The funds shall be placed collectively in restricted Perpetual Membership accounts. These funds shall be accounted for on an individual Lodge basis, listing the amount a person paid into the fund for both Lodge dues and Grand Lodge per capita and any assessments in effect. The funds shall be accounted for separately, by the Grand Treasurer, from all other Grand Lodge funds. The funds shall be audited annually as required in Article XIV, Section 7.

(f) A perpetual member shall owe no further dues to the Lodge of which he is a perpetual member. A dues card shall be issued by the Grand Secretary who shall denote Perpetual Membership thereon. (Reg. 26.11) (2017)

(g) The Perpetual Membership fee, less any amount required to supplement net income to pay the constituent Lodge the first year's dues and per capita, shall be considered principal and shall never be spent. Net profit or loss from the sale of securities shall mean the profit or loss realized from the sale of securities. Earned Income shall mean interest and dividends received reduced by any net loss realized from the sale of securities. The net profit from the sale of securities plus earned income shall be allocated to a sub-account for each member's account. Net income shall mean earned income plus 60% of the net profit from the sale of securities, less administrative costs. The net income, but not less than five percent (5%) of the fair market value of all assets in the Perpetual Membership Fund shall be paid proportionately annually to each constituent Lodge for each perpetual member at the time of per capita billing. The amount paid shall first be deducted from the sub-account, as to each member, and, if that is insufficient, then from any existing separate "Capital Gains" account. Allocations shall be based on the principal in each member's account, plus the sub-account of each member as of the beginning of each year, all as shall be equitably determined by the Grand Secretary. (2001)

(h) The Grand Secretary shall, at the time of the annual net income distribution, submit a statement to the Lodge for an amount covering the proportionate per capita and assessment in, effect at the time the member joined the plan. The Lodge shall during the member's lifetime and thereafter, pay to the Grand Lodge the amount designated by the Grand Secretary's per capita statement. (2001)

(i) The obtaining of a Perpetual Membership in one Lodge by a dual member shall have no effect on his membership in the other Lodge to which he belongs. Dual Perpetual Memberships are permitted.

(j) A perpetual member may affiliate under Chapter 41 of the Digest of Masonic Law. If the affiliation is within this Grand Jurisdiction the entire Perpetual

Membership he originally paid shall be transferred to the account of the Lodge to which he affiliates. If the affiliation is outside this Grand Jurisdiction the entire Perpetual Membership fee shall remain with the Lodge of which he was a perpetual member.

(k) Any Certificate of Good Standing issued under Regulation 41.13 of the Digest of Masonic Law to a perpetual member shall be endorsed thereon the fact that the holder is a perpetual member and the amount of the Perpetual Membership fee which shall be transferred to the Particular Lodge in Florida with which he affiliates.

(l) If a perpetual member shall be suspended, expelled, or withdraws and is subsequently restored to good standing, or re-affiliates from out of State, his Perpetual Membership shall be deemed to be also restored.

(m) If a Lodge consolidates, surrenders its Charter, or has its Charter arrested, the funds credited to that Lodge in the Perpetual Membership fund shall follow the members according to the relevant Sections of the Constitution and Laws and Uniform Code dealing with consolidations, surrendering and arrests of Charters.

(n) A Memorial Perpetual Membership may be purchased by any person for a deceased Entered Apprentice Mason, Fellow Craft Mason, or Master Mason of a Florida Lodge by following the same procedures as outlined in this section. The minimum fee shall be \$200.00 (two hundred dollars). The total amount of net income derived therefrom shall be paid annually, seventy-five (75) percent to the Lodge through which the application was processed and twenty-five (25) percent to The Grand Lodge of Florida on the first \$500 (five hundred dollars) of principal. All net income earned on principal over \$500 (five hundred dollars) shall be returned to the Lodge. Net income derived therefrom shall be returned to the Lodge at the time of the per capita billing. (2001)

(o) A Perpetual Membership may be purchased by a 50 year Master Mason who meets the provisions of Article 26.12 (d) by following the same procedures as outlined in this section. The minimum fee shall be \$200.00 (two hundred dollars). The total amount of net income derived therefrom shall be paid annually, seventy-five (75) percent to the Lodge of which he is a member and twenty-five (25) percent to the Grand Lodge on the first \$500.00 (five hundred dollars) of principal. All net income earned on principal over \$500.00 (five hundred dollars) shall be returned to the Lodge at the time of per capita billing. (2001)

(p) A Brother, at any future time, may add any amount to his Perpetual Membership fee through his Lodge Secretary.

(q) Applications for Perpetual Membership shall be on forms prescribed by the Grand Lodge and the Grand Secretary shall provide all forms required for the implementation of this section.

(r) Where perpetual members have not been heard from for more than seven (7) years, the Worshipful Master shall direct the Secretary to report the names of such missing Brethren to the Grand Lodge on the membership report form as being deceased. Their names shall then be transferred to the rolls of deceased Perpetual Membership, but, this action shall have no effect on the amount of money paid the Lodge and Grand Lodge for that perpetual member as set forth in sub-sections (g) and (h).

(s) There shall be no cost to the Constituent Lodge for administration of this program by the Grand Lodge. (1998)

26.05.2 A Perpetual Membership may be purchased by using an installment plan to the Grand Lodge subject to the following terms:

(a) By making an initial payment of \$200.00 accompanied with the appropriate Perpetual Membership Application as prescribed in Regulation 26.05.01, at which time the member will choose the payment schedule he desires - Monthly, Quarterly, Semi-Annually, and Annually.

(b) Net income earned on each account will be credited into each member's account. (2001)

(c) Payment in full must be received within five (5) years from the initial payment. If payment in full is not made within five (5) years the applicant may:

1. Request refund of all payments paid into the account. All earned net income would be returned to the Perpetual Membership fund to be redistributed. (2001)

2. Continue in the plan by establishing a new payment plan only upon the discretion of the Grand Secretary.

(d) If the member dies before payment in full is received the account would revert to a Memorial Perpetual Membership in the member's name.

(e) If the member is suspended, expelled, resigns, or affiliates out of State, all principal paid into the account will be returned upon request of the member. All net income earned would be returned to the Perpetual Membership Fund to be redistributed. If request for refund is not made, net income would accumulate into the account until the full fee is attained. (2001)

(f) If the member transfers or affiliates to a Particular Lodge within the State of Florida, the account would follow the member's membership.

(g) Until Perpetual Membership is paid in full, yearly dues and assessments would have to be paid in a prompt manner at the current annual dues and assessments in effect. (1990)

26.06 In case a Brother who has been a life member of a Particular Lodge, and for whom the Lodge has paid Grand Lodge dues, has been absent from the jurisdiction of the Lodge and has not been heard from for seven years or more, and members of the Lodge have reason to think he is no longer living, the Lodge, by Resolution, may direct that his name be dropped from the list of membership and the Grand Secretary be notified of this action, after which time the Lodge shall not be liable for Grand Lodge dues for such member.

26.07 If a Lodge reinstates a suspended Mason, and at the same meeting that he was reinstated makes him an Emeritus Member, the Lodge must pay the Grand Lodge dues for him for the year in which the action is taken.

26.08 Emeritus Members are such as are exempt from the payment of dues by Article X, Section 13 of the Constitution, and must be reported as such in the Returns. They are not barred of any privilege.

26.09 The terms and conditions under which members of Particular Lodges may be placed upon the Emeritus List under the authority of Article X, Section 13 of the Constitution are as follows: Each year upon proper investigation and written recommendation of its elective Officers, a Lodge may, by majority vote, place upon the Emeritus List and remit dues for such year to those members who from bodily infirmities or misfortune have become unable to pay dues, and in order for the Lodge to be exempt from the payment to the Grand Lodge of the Grand Lodge Annual Revenue on such Emeritus Members, the Worshipful Master and Secretary must certify on the Lodge Return that every Emeritus Member is unable to pay dues in accord with this Regulation. Any Brother who is a resident guest of the Masonic Home under the Life Care Plan and who is not otherwise exempt from dues and per capita shall automatically be placed on the Emeritus List of the Lodge of which he is a member. (2017)

Rulings and Decisions

None but a Lodge's own member can be carried on its roll as an Emeritus Member. (1942 Proc. 49)

Members may not be placed on an Emeritus List unless they are indigent. Placing of Brothers on an Emeritus List is not proper manner to recognize long membership and service to the Lodge. (1941 Proc. 82)

If a member wants to purchase a Perpetual Membership he shall pay twenty (20) times the annual dues of his Lodge that is in effect on December 28th of that year. (1994 Proc. 101)

~~The Rules and Regulations of the Grand Lodge of Florida make no provisions for a Dual Member of a Florida Lodge to be eligible for admission into the Masonic Home or to receive Non-Resident Relief. To be placed on the Emeritus List, a member must be indigent. Therefore, it would be improper to place a Dual Member on the Emeritus List. (1984 Proc. 115) (Repealed 2005 Proc. 284-286)~~

The basis for determining the 5% return to the Lodges shall be the fully appreciated value of the Perpetual Membership Fund. (2000 Proc. 98)

The terminology "twenty (20) times the annual dues of his Lodge at the time of application" shall be the amount as stated in the By-Laws effective the day the Grand Master signed the By-Law Amendment due on or before December 28th for the ensuing year. In making this Ruling and Decision I refer to the fact that dues are payable in advance on or before December 28th of each year so the rate referred to for dues would be the amount due on December 28th of the year the By-Law Amendment is signed by the Grand Master. (2014 Proc. 123)

The term "annual dues" with reference to the purchase of a Perpetual Membership is defined as the total amount of dues owed to the Lodge PLUS the Grand Lodge per-capita assessment. If only the Lodge portion of the annual dues were considered in purchasing a Perpetual Membership a short fall to the income distributed to the Lodge would be created (2016 Proc. 120-121)

HONORARY MEMBERS

Regulations

26.10 The Grand Lodge will not object to a Particular Lodge conferring honorary membership upon a distinguished and revered Mason, which must be by unanimous ball ballot at a Stated Communication of the Lodge, after having been

proposed, by Resolution, at some prior Stated Communication. Such honorary membership imposes no duties or responsibilities, and confers no rights or privileges, except the right of visitation and speaking from the floor. Honorary membership may be revoked by a majority vote at a Stated Communication. If the vote on a Resolution for honorary membership is dark, said Resolution becomes null and void, and the process must begin again (same as 25.06). (2013)

26.10.1 The Grand Lodge will not object to a Particular Lodge conferring an Honorary Perpetual Membership on a distinguished and revered living or deceased Mason of this or another Grand Jurisdiction recognized by the Grand Lodge of Florida, which must be by unanimous ball ballot at a Stated Communication. An Honorary Perpetual Membership may be revoked by a majority vote at a Stated Communication in which case all funds credited to his account shall be transferred to The Masonic Home Endowment Fund.

The minimum fee for an Honorary Perpetual Membership shall be two hundred dollars (\$200.00) and must conform to Regulation 26.05.1(n). The total amount of net income derived therefrom shall be paid annually, seventy-five (75) percent to the Lodge through which the application was processed and twenty-five (25) percent to The Grand Lodge of Florida on the first \$500 (five hundred dollars) of principal. All net income earned on principal over \$500 (five hundred dollars) shall be returned to the Lodge. Net income derived therefrom shall be returned to the Lodge at the time of the per capita billing. (2001)

26.10.2 Each Particular Lodge shall have an account within the Perpetual Membership Fund titled the "Perpetual Friend Account." The minimum donation that may be made to this account in the name of a single person or entity is \$200.00. The Grand Secretary shall issue a suitable certificate for each person or entity so donating. (1999)

The total amount of net income derived from this account shall be paid annually, seventy-five (75) percent to the Lodge and twenty-five (25) percent to The Grand Lodge of Florida on the first \$500 (five hundred dollars) of principal. All net income earned on principal over \$500 (five hundred dollars) shall be returned to the Lodge. Net income derived therefrom shall be returned to the Lodge at the time of per capita billing. (2001)

26.10.3 All monies paid for an Honorary Perpetual Membership of a Brother in a Particular Lodge may be credited toward the purchase by that Brother of a Perpetual Membership in that Particular Lodge. (2003)

Rulings and Decisions

Any assessments authorized by the Lodge's By-Laws are binding upon a Perpetual Member and that enforcement for collection and/or penalty for non-payment of special assessment is the same as for basic dues. (2002 Proc. 101)

Honorary Perpetual Memberships require two separate actions: (1) the ballot for Honorary Membership and (2) the purchase of Perpetual Membership, which does not require a ballot. (2008 Proc. 106)

A suspended Mason is referred to in the Digest of the Masonic Law of Florida as a suspended Brother or Mason and it is not the intention of the Perpetual Membership Friend Account to honor Masons, rather to honor non-Masonic friends. To honor a Mason that has been suspended from our Fraternity would be contrary to the Ancient Charges of Freemasonry. Therefore, no suspended Brother or Mason may become a Perpetual Friend. (2023 Proc _____)

CARDS AND CERTIFICATES OF MEMBERSHIP**Regulations**

26.11 In order to comply with the requirements of Jurisdictions, requiring documentary evidence as a prerequisite for examination of visitors, in addition to tests already prescribed, this Grand Lodge shall furnish to the Particular Lodges or the member of a Particular Lodge a card receipt for dues, to be issued under the Seal of the Lodge or a printed facsimile or graphic of the Seal of the Lodge and the Grand Lodge, having upon the reverse a Certificate attested by the signature or a printed signature of the Grand Secretary under the authority of the Grand Lodge that the Lodge issuing the card is a regular Lodge holding a Charter from The Grand Lodge of Florida. The wording and issuance of the card receipts to be under Rules prescribed by the Grand Secretary, with approval of the Grand Master. The cost to the Lodges shall be the amount prescribed by the Corporate Board. (2017)

26.12 (a) A Master Mason member in good standing in a Florida Lodge upon whom the Master Mason Degree was conferred in a Florida Lodge or in a Lodge of a Grand Jurisdiction recognized by The Grand Lodge of Florida in a calendar year fifty (50) or more years prior to the current calendar year, and whose Masonic Service (herein "Good Time") equals an aggregate of fifty (50) or more years in good standing, shall be entitled to receive and there shall be presented to him an appropriate pin and certificate in recognition of such fact, which pin and certificate shall be presented with appropriate ceremony which, if conducted in Lodge Communication shall include Grand Honors. Good Time shall be calculated as the actual number of days, beginning from the member's Master Mason conferral date, up to the current calendar date, minus any period(s) of days that member was suspended for non-payment of dues (NPD), Masonic discipline (UMC), or expulsion. Further, any period(s) of days that member was on Emeritus status shall not be deducted from Good Time calculation; any period(s) of days that member was under an Unaffiliated Dimit status shall not be deducted from Good Time calculation, *provided*, that such Dimit not exceed the prescribed one year period (Chapter 41 Ruling & Decisions, 1943 Proc. 48). (2016)

(b) A Master Mason member in good standing in a Florida Lodge upon whom the Master Mason Degree was conferred fifty-five (55), sixty (60), sixty-five (65) or more years prior to the current calendar year under conditions set forth in (a) above shall be given such recognition as the Grand Master may deem appropriate and other and further recognition may likewise be given and accorded a member that received the Master Mason Degree seventy-five (75) or more years prior to the current calendar year. (1990)

(c) If a Florida Lodge receives request through the Office of the Grand Secretary to present a pin, certificate, or similar award to a member from another Grand Jurisdiction for service or membership of fifty (50) years or more or in commemoration of an event that transpired fifty (50) years or more prior to the presentation the presentation shall be accompanied by Grand Honors unless such other Grand Jurisdiction shall specifically direct or request to the contrary.

(d) Any Master Mason member of a Florida Lodge who receives the recognition provided for in (a) or (b) above and who has been a member in good standing for a period of twenty-five (25) years or more in a Florida Lodge or Lodges shall thereafter be exempt from payment of Lodge dues and assessments and his Lodge shall be exempt from payment of Grand Lodge dues, assessments, and revenues on account of his membership.

(e) A Master Mason member of a Florida Lodge upon whom was conferred the Master Mason Degree twenty-five (25) or more years prior to the current calendar year, Masonic Service or Good Time as provided in 26.12(a), equals an aggregate of twenty-five (25) or more years in good standing, and who shall be entitled to and there shall be presented to him with appropriate ceremony a pin and certificate in recognition of such fact. (2016)

A Master Mason member of a Florida Lodge upon whom was conferred the Master Mason Degree forty (40) or more years prior to the current calendar year, and whose Masonic Service or Good Time as provided for in 26.12(a), equals an aggregate of forty (40) or more years in good standing, and who shall be entitled to and there shall be presented to him with appropriate ceremony a pin and certificate in recognition of such fact. (2016)

(f) The Grand Secretary shall make and keep such records as may be necessary to determine when a member is eligible to receive recognition as above provided and shall without necessity request therefore transmit to the Lodge involved all necessary pins, certificates, and other materials necessary to fully effectuate the intent of this Regulation.

In addition to the above materials, the Grand Secretary shall send proper notice to a Lodge when a member thereof is to be exempt from dues and the Lodge from payment of Grand Lodge dues, as assessments and revenues. (1984)

Rulings and Decisions

Where a Brother dimits from a Lodge and within one year affiliates with another Lodge and pays dues for each Masonic Year for twenty-five years and is otherwise qualified, the Brother is entitled to a Twenty-Five Year Certificate and Pin, and where a Brother dimits from a Lodge and within one year affiliates with another Lodge and pays dues for each Masonic Year for fifty years and is otherwise qualified, the Brother is entitled to a Fifty-Year Certificate and Pin. (1972 Proc. 393)

Awards for 25 and 50 year memberships may be presented in public meeting or at any other appropriate time and place. (1975 Proc. 68)

DUTIES

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Regulations

26.13 Freemasonry professes to promote virtue, with which vice, of whatever shape or magnitude, is antagonistic. It is, therefore, incumbent upon every true Mason to conform and take counsel with his Brethren concerning any and all matters properly involving fraternal discipline.

26.14 It is the duty of every Mason, at all times and under all circumstances, to demean himself as an upright man and Mason, not only that he may continually enjoy the satisfaction of a good conscience, but that the world at large may perceive, in the conduct of every member, living and conclusive evidence of the purity and good effect of the Ancient Fraternity, whereby a good and wholesome influence may be exerted upon society at large.

26.15 In the Lodge every Brother should observe the utmost fraternal decorum, perform with zeal, fidelity, and cheerfulness every legitimate duty, and not retire from the Communication, whether at labor, recess, or refreshment, without proper permission.

26.16 It is truly Masonic, and highly commendable, for Brethren, between whom estranging differences exist, to refer their differences to a committee of Brethren for settlement, each agreeing to abide the award, and for which purpose charges pending may be withdrawn.

26.17 It is the duty of every Master Mason to become proficient in the work and lectures of the Three Degrees in Freemasonry as soon as possible after being Raised, and it is urgently recommended that the Masters of Particular Lodges endeavor to promote this end.

26.18 None but members of the Lodge have a right to a ballot, and no member present can be excused from balloting on any question before the Lodge, except by a vote of the Lodge, upon good cause shown; nor can a member be permitted to retire from the Lodge to avoid casting his ballot.

26.19 Signing the By-Laws is not necessary, but every member of the Lodge should sign the roll of members with his own hand.

26.20 Solicitation of business or political support for self or other person or persons at a Lodge meeting or on any other Masonic occasion is prohibited. A Particular Lodge, however, may sell advertising space in a Masonic bulletin to members of said Lodge providing that such advertising does not pertain to the sale of alcoholic beverages or violate the principle of Masonic teachings. Said advertising space shall be sold at a uniform rate, shall not exceed the size of an ordinary business card and the accumulated advertising space shall not exceed fifty percent (50%) of the total bulletin space. (1984)

EMERITUS MEMBERS**Constitutional Provisions**

No Lodge in this Jurisdiction shall confer the Three Degrees of Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft, and Master Mason, for a less sum than one hundred dollars, of which a minimum fee of fifty dollars shall be required for Initiation in addition to the fee for a criminal background investigation must accompany the petition or be paid electronically to any processing company selected and approved by the Grand Lodge. The fee received for Initiation shall be returned to the petitioner if rejected, however, the fee received for the criminal background investigation shall be retained by the Lodge, the Grand Lodge, or any processing company selected and approved by the Grand Lodge. The fee for Passing or Raising must be paid to the Secretary before the Degree is conferred; *provided*, that any Lodge may remit monthly or annual dues to members of the Lodge, who from bodily infirmities or misfortune, have become unable to pay them. (2018) (Art. X, Sec. 13)

26.21 No Mason or Masons subject to the jurisdiction of The Grand Lodge of Florida shall, by written or printed critical or controversial communications of any kind, circularize the Officers and members of any Particular Lodge in this Grand Jurisdiction.

It is the intent, spirit, and purpose of this Regulation to prevent the dissemination and circulation of critical and controversial communications between or concerning Masons in this Grand Jurisdiction. It is not the intent, spirit, or purpose to prohibit or interfere with official communications by Officers and members of the Grand Lodge, and by Officers and members of Particular Lodges, and by District Masonic Officers, necessarily carried on between Grand Communications for the orderly and regular conduct of the affairs of Masonry in this Grand Jurisdiction, and such communications are specifically exempted from the provisions of this Regulation. Likewise, non-controversial Masonic bulletins and publications are specifically exempted.

Between Annual Grand Communications of the Grand Lodge, the enforcement of this Regulation is placed in the hands of the Grand Master and he shall have the power to issue such admonitions, reprimands, Executive Orders, and Edicts, as he may be advised, necessary to carry out the spirit, intent, and purpose of this Regulation. All of his acts and doings in the enforcement and administration of this Regulation shall be reported at the next Annual Grand Communication of the Grand Lodge with his report for review by the Grand Lodge.

Rulings and Decisions

It is contrary to Masonic Law and practice for a member to attempt to sell Masonic Bibles or solicit business at any Lodge meeting or on any Masonic occasion. (1954 Proc. 62)

It is mandatory for each Lodge to have a "Roll of Members" book and every member of the Lodge should sign the roll of members in his own hand. This book and requirement should not be confused with a "Visitors and Membership" book which should be signed by members and visitors alike prior to attending Lodge. (1983 Proc. 115)

STATUS
REMOVAL TO ANOTHER JURISDICTION

Regulations

26.22 Permanent removal from the jurisdiction vacates any office, but does not forfeit membership.

RIGHTS
MASONIC CHARITY
MEMBERS AND THEIR WIDOWS AND ORPHANS

Constitutional Provisions

On the death of a Master Mason in good standing in his Lodge, leaving a widow and orphan, or a widow, or an orphan, or orphans, it is the duty of the Secretary of the Lodge to grant to such widow and orphans, or to the widow or to the orphan or orphans of such deceased Master Mason, a Certificate of the fact under the Seal of the Lodge; and on the presentation of such Certificate to the Grand Secretary, it shall be his duty to grant to the said widow and orphans an appropriate Grand Lodge Certificate of Respect without charge or fee. (Art. X, Sec. 26)

Regulations

26.23 Worthy widows and orphans of Master Masons who died in good standing are entitled to certificates provided for in the Constitution. Widows of worthy Master Masons who died in good standing are also entitled to an official widow's pin, certificate, and wallet card, all of which shall be available through the Grand Secretary's Office.

26.24 The widow of a Master Mason, who marries a non-Mason, loses by such marriage any claim for Masonic relief in the capacity of a widow of a Master Mason.

26.25 When a Mason is undergoing punishment under sentences of legal tribunal, his Lodge may contribute pecuniarily to his relief, if it is so decided after a careful examination into the facts. The decision of a legal tribunal is not, in itself, sufficient evidence of unworthiness, but it should prompt the Lodge to make a careful and searching investigation.

26.26 No Masonic rights, privileges, or benefits can be extended to anyone while under sentence of suspension or expulsion.

Rulings and Decisions

A suspended Brother of a Lodge cannot be admitted to the Masonic Home in St. Petersburg. (1948 Proc. 52)

Based on the historical and judicial findings recognized as authorities in Freemasonry when it comes to established law with deep roots in Masonic tradition, usages, and customs from the 1800's, that an expelled Mason shall not, under any circumstances, be allowed to be present, participate, or engage in any Masonic public or private event. As expulsion is equal to a Masonic death. (2023 Proc. _____)

A Brother otherwise eligible for Masonic relief does not lose right to such Masonic relief merely because he transfers his membership from one Florida Lodge to another Florida Lodge, provided he does not remain unaffiliated for such time that he fails to pay dues each year. (1959 Proc. 61, 164)

A Mason's eligibility for Masonic relief is determined under the Law, Rules and Regulations of this Grand Jurisdiction in force and effect at the time of his affiliation or the beginning of his membership. A Brother 64 years of age at the time of his affiliation in 1947 is eligible for Masonic relief since the Regulations limiting relief by age limits was not adopted and did not become effective until May 1, 1952. (1959 Proc. 61, 164)

MISCELLANEOUS

Regulations

26.27 A member of a Lodge may have his name changed upon its records by furnishing the Secretary two (2) certified copies of a court order whereby he was given authority to make such change of his name. The Secretary shall retain one (1) copy for the Lodge files and forward a copy to the Grand Secretary with required membership change of status information. (1985)

26.28 The Grand Master or the Grand Lodge may accept the resignation or withdrawal from Freemasonry of any member of a Particular Lodge of this Grand Jurisdiction without leave of reinstatement. The Grand Secretary shall search the records of the Brother who wishes to resign and inform the Grand Master of his findings. Copies of resignations that are Penal related or that are made when unmasonic Conduct charges are pending shall be furnished to the Chairman of the Penal Affairs Panel. Acceptance of the resignation shall terminate Masonic Membership but shall not release such former member from the obligation of secrecy. "Without leave of reinstatement" means the former member forfeits all right and privilege to petition for reinstatement but does not prevent petition by a Particular Lodge for his reinstatement upon such terms and conditions as shall be or may be determined by the Grand Lodge.

(a) A period of two years must have elapsed from the date the resignation became effective before a request for restoration will be considered by a Lodge.

(b) The Petitioner would have to file his request and state his reasons desiring reinstatement in writing to the Secretary of his Lodge and certify that he has complied with his "obligation of secrecy" during the period that his resignation became effective to the date of his request.

(c) After due notice to the membership of the Lodge at a Stated Meeting, the Secretary would read the request, a motion shall be made and seconded to proceed with the request or not to proceed with the request. A vote to proceed with the request would require a unanimous vote of those present, by either Ball or Written Ballot. If the vote is not to proceed with the request, the former member may appeal to the Grand Master who, in his discretion, may issue a Grand Lodge Certificate. (1989)

(d) If the Lodge votes to proceed with the request, the Worshipful Master over the Seal of the Lodge and signed by the Secretary shall write the Grand Master for his permission to proceed. No action in respect to reinstatement shall be taken by a Particular Lodge without express written permission and consent of the Grand Lodge or its authority.

(e) If the Grand Master approves the request of the Lodge by Dispensation, the Lodge may receive the petition for reinstatement. After the petition is received by the Lodge it will lay over for thirty (30) days during which time the membership must have due notice. If such petition is rejected, it cannot be put to a vote again until after one year from the date of such rejection.

(f) If the Lodge voted to accept the petitioner back into membership, the Grand Master may give his approval at this time and the petitioner would be restored to membership in the Lodge. Should the Grand Master refuse the request to receive the petition or refuse to restore the membership after the Lodge's approval, the Lodge may appeal to the Grand Lodge.

(g) When a Brother has resigned from Freemasonry, it will take the unanimous consent of the Lodge and the consent of the Grand Master before he may be restored to membership in the Lodge. (1985)

References

As to Dues and Assessments, see Chapter 27
As to Rights of Visitation, see Chapter 40
As to Funerals, see Regs. 38.32 - 38.42
As to Rights and Duties in Balloting, see Chapter 35
As to Rights to Dimit, see Chapter 41
As to Rights of Members of Defunct Lodges, see Chapter 43
As to Membership in Other Orders, see Chapter 4
As to Restoration of Full Civil Rights, see Reg. 31.03

Rulings and Decisions

Member of Lodge desiring to have his name changed on Masonic records must furnish court order evidencing legal change of name. (1967 Proc. 75, 211)

Just as a candidate for Freemasonry must be a man, so it follows that to remain a Mason, he must not become a woman or portray himself as a woman. This portrayal may be by gender change, name change, identification, attire, or accouterment. (2008 Proc. 106)

