

ADDRESS BY GRAND MASTER

GRAHAM WRIGLEY

Grand Installation November 2019

Distinguished Guests, Ladies, Gentlemen and Brethren

Tēnā koutou, Tēnā koutou, Tēnā koutou - katoa

I welcome you all to Te Whanganui-a-Tara - Wellington – our Capital City. May this weekend be one of immense pleasure for you all. I also particularly welcome those, who for the first time, are attending a Grand Installation.

I do hope that you have enjoyed the ceremony thus far, and that the following festivities create new friendships and opportunities where you can share experiences. This is a truly special event for Freemasons, and one that will stimulate and enrich us all, particularly over the next three years.

In our journey through life we find our own personal heroes. Someone whom we look up to and admire, someone to emulate, or simply someone who guides us through challenging times.

I have two heroes in my life – one a Freemason of 28 years, who never took office or sought the headlines, and the other, not a Freemason, but a person who influenced and guided me for over 35 years. This is a day in which I will acknowledge, reflect and share with you all - my personal heroes. I will talk more about them shortly.

I share this Grand Installation with many Brethren who have been appointed and invested to positions as Officers of Grand Lodge that will work alongside me for the next three years. I congratulate you all and I am sure you share the same trepidation and excitement that I do. Your term of office will be exciting and challenging, but above all, it will be enjoyable, and I wish you all every success. I pledge my support and commitment to ensuring you gain personal enjoyment and satisfaction from your term of office.

As we start our new journey together, it is important to acknowledge and thank those who have now completed their respective terms of office and to acknowledge the contributions they have made. I would like to acknowledge the last three-year term under the leadership of MW Bro Mark Winger. The launch of the ‘Speak up for Freemasonry’ campaign has proven to be successful at all levels. It engaged with our Brethren and opened the doors of our fraternity by empowering Brethren to talk freely and openly about Freemasonry.

This journey will continue, albeit in a refreshed format. MW Bro Mark Winger, your contribution has been huge, and the benefits of your commitment will continue to be seen for many years to come. As Grand Master, you have visited from one end of the country to the other, travelled to all Australian jurisdictions, and represented New Zealand at the United Grand Lodge of England 300-year celebrations in London 2 years ago. You have worked hard to build relationships with our Sister Constitutions and with our wider Masonic family. This has laid a foundation that I can also build upon over the next three years.

The ceremony of Installing a Grand Master is steeped in tradition and I am humbly privileged to be installed before you all today at our 79th Grand Installation. I thank everyone for your

support and attendance today and acknowledge those Brethren who would have liked to attend but have been unable to travel for various reasons.

I would like to particularly thank our Brethren from the West Coast of the South Island who, from the day my appointment was formally announced, were committed to ensuring their part of New Zealand was adequately represented at this magnificent event. Thank you for your commitment and travelling to Wellington. It is great to have you with us today.

Contributing immensely to the success of today, I would like to acknowledge the New Zealand Freemasons Opera Chorus, Chorus Director Michael Vinten with Fiona McCabe as Accompanist, and I add to this my appreciation to W Bro Donald Trott for responding to my personal invitation and his singing of 'This is your Task'.

I also acknowledge the Wellington Brass Band as Heralds, with Dominic Jacquemard as Timpanist.

Plato, once said, *"Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination and life to everything."* How right that has been today. To you all, your contribution to this Grand Installation is truly appreciated and I thank you most sincerely.

Of course, our Australian Grand Masters and their delegations always add lustre to our ceremony. Your attendance this weekend with your respective delegations, completes the circle of masonic friendship which we will always honour and respect. The relationship that we enjoy is unique and unparalleled, and I look forward to attending your Grand Installations during the term of my office. Our thoughts are with you all as your country endures unprecedented devastation and heartbreak from the current raging fires. As a former 'firefighter', I understand the impact that this will have on your communities.

I add to this our Sister Constitutions within New Zealand, and welcome RW Bro Brian Westhead and RW Bro Richard Taylor as District Grand Masters representing the United Grand Lodge of England; Provincial Grand Master RW Bro Andrew McGregor representing the Grand Lodge of Ireland; and Brothers John Aldcroft and Jim Ironside, Right Worshipful District Grand Masters from the Grand Lodge of Scotland. Your attendance today in significant numbers is certainly appreciated, and I look forward to working with you all for the common good of Freemasonry in New Zealand over the years to come.

Most Excellent First Grand Principal, ME Comp Graham Redman of the Supreme Grand Royal Arch Chapter, I also welcome you and your delegation, and look forward to working with you, as we share so many common members together.

Ladies, guests, friends and Brethren, I thank you all for your attendance today. Your presence makes us immensely proud.

Let me now return to my personal heroes, and the opportunity I now have before me, to speak about the values, experience and life skills they gave me, the impact that this had on my life, and how this will drive me as your new Grand Master over the next three years.

With 28 years a Freemason, initiated in Cairo during the Second World War, my first hero was a man who never raised his voice, always gave sound advice, and taught me that success 'at any cost' was not the measure, but rather 'having a go and doing the best that you could' was a more important value.

He taught me that respect for others was more important than personal gain, that friends were for life, and to always follow your heart. He instilled a confidence in me to achieve beyond my wildest dreams by simply being myself.

He also taught me that nothing is achieved without hard work, and that labour - spelt its own success. My only disappointment was, that we never sat in a Lodge together, and that he is not here today because, sadly, my father passed away when I was only 21, and I was not yet then a Freemason.

His values and ethics were not apparent to me in my early years, but as I followed my heart, I could feel his hand continuing to guide me. He was a remarkable man, who created the mould of my dreams, and laid my individual foundation stone squarely at my own feet.

My second hero should have been a Freemason. His values were outstanding because he taught me about the combined strength of working together as one. The power and achievements that came from a collective thrust always gave better results than a single person trying to row their own boat. Having a common goal with good leadership and a strong vision for the future was the best formula for a collective success.

He also taught me the value of respect within dynamic and agile organisations, and to focus across the width of structures – not just what is above you, and what is below. To use width and depth of an organisation always gives better results.

Doing the right thing; engaging with people; leading and empowering rather than directing - and using the collective good could turn organisations into sustainable models that were successful, respected, future proofed, growing and understood. Understanding the reason for being – why we are here, ‘who is it all about’ and ‘relevance’ are the fundamental tenants of organisations that service their communities.

This hero entered my life when I was only 18 and guided my Fire Service career for 32 years. Brian Armstrong was my first fire chief boss when I was a volunteer firefighter in a small Taranaki community. Many years later, he was the National Fire Commissioner when I was appointed into executive ranks and later became the Chief Fire Commander here in Wellington.

So, what is the relevance of my two heroes to Freemasonry? How will this influence my term as Grand Master over the next three years?

As a unified organisation where we all strive do our very best; focus on the vision and strategic direction; and work together as one – then there are gains here for us to reap a mountain of rewards. The collective good is better than what can be achieved by each of us as individuals.

As Grand Master, my role is to lead, facilitate, empower and encourage by emulating those traits instilled to me by my two heroes. Both made me the man I am today, and I continue to admire the contribution they made to society, because they understood life, the importance of respect, commitment, and the power of unity through success and hard work.

Everything that they taught me will be the hallmark of my term as your Grand Master. The thrust will be working as one to a common goal and striving for success using the power of our strategic direction and the immense collective talent that we have up down and across Freemasons New Zealand.

I cannot do this alone, but I can lead, motivate and empower. I can steer us all towards success through hard work and commitment, and I do know that we can gain more by building on our past successes.

The big question is – how will we do this?

‘Speak up for Freemasonry’ will continue to be our foundation. This campaign has universal support within the Craft and has struck at our very core. We must talk openly about Freemasonry and what we are all about. We must guard the traditional landmarks, but we must also feel comfortable talking to people about Freemasonry. In the world of today, our members of tomorrow want to know more – so we need to know how to tell our story in a way that is in tune with their ears.

Masonic knowledge is an essential ingredient to our success, and I want us to strengthen our understanding of Freemasonry.

To achieve this, I will be adding two more parts to the ‘Speak up’ campaign. As we continue to ‘speak up’ we need to also ‘step up’ and take personal ownership by engaging more in the activities of our respective Lodges and within the District.

Unity and combining our collective strengths to achieve results is fundamental to our success, so I want to add yet a further step and to ask you to also ‘show up’. Be visible nationally and in our respective communities and let everyone know that we exist and that we are a part of our community fabric.

Let people see us for who we are and what our fraternity is. Be proud to be known as a Freemason. Be proud of our image and bring our community into our environment.

We have nothing to hide and so much to give. I did not know that my father was a Freemason until the day he died! Far too late, but he was from a different period. Yet he lived and breathed the philosophies of Freemasonry daily.

To achieve these additional steps, we will set aside some funding for the years ahead, to be administered by the Divisional Grand Masters and to be used for the sole purpose of improving our visibility in the community.

Whilst our charitable District and Lodge projects will continue to be encouraged with support from The Freemasons Charity, this additional funding is not charity money and will be solely used around ‘stepping up’ and ‘showing up’.

Access to the fund will be based on merit as the Divisional Grand Masters may determine, but could be used to support structured Open Days, Freemason signage for towns, or the enhancement of branding on buildings. My only criteria are that it must fall within the scope of the Strategic Plan; must enhance Freemasonry; and must help us visibly connect with the community.

We have a great story to tell the people of Aotearoa New Zealand. Our charitable activities nationally, through The Freemasons Charity, are second to none. Our University Scholarships are making a difference to the leaders of tomorrow. For over 42 years these annual presentations have attracted a wide range of scholars, many of whom have gone on to succeed on the world stage.

Our substantial funding to support leading edge Brain Research at the University of Auckland and Paediatric Research at the University of Otago in Dunedin are all flagships for us as Freemasons, and they make a huge difference to the lives of so many people.

Last year we provided major funding to the Malaghan Institute here in Wellington to support their leading-edge cancer research for the CAR T-Cell project that will bring affordable cancer therapies to everyday Kiwis. Just a few weeks ago, the Malaghan Institute received approval to commence clinical trials. This will make a huge difference to those who have exhausted all other avenues of treatment. This is ground-breaking research for which we are proud to be a part of.

Our Lodges, proudly working within their Districts, with local Masonic Charitable trusts and with support from The Freemasons Charity, delivered over 70+ community projects last year, ranging from life-saving defibrillators, life-skill training, Coastguard rescue boats, supporting projects such as Camp Purple and Camp Quality, Life-flight trusts, KidsCan, our Ambulance Services, Hospitals, youth development with the 'Powering Potential' project through the Royal Society, and Community care groups – to name but a few.

It has been estimated that the charitable activities of Freemasons, in Aotearoa New Zealand exceed \$10m annually. These projects will continue to grow as we confidently 'Speak up', 'Step up' and 'Show up' Freemasonry to our respective communities.

As has been the thrust in the past, The Freemasons Charity are once again allocating \$5,000 per District to be added to local projects that have a focus on need and sustainability within the community. This must be a defined project that engages with the Lodge Brethren and supports need in the community.

As Freemasons New Zealand, our Strategic Direction has been set for the next 5 years. It is simple and meaningful. Resource material has been provided for Lodges to develop their own action plans that will be particular to each Lodge and community. It is not complicated, and simply requires a commitment to 'do the best that we can' and to practice those virtues that we all profess to admire.

My goal over the next three years is to facilitate the enhancement of individual Masonic knowledge – not just our traditional ritual in the Lodge room – but within our wider connections and philosophies.

This is to ensure that we 'Speak up' confidently to families and friends, and that Freemasonry is understood.

That we all 'Step up' and engage within our Lodges and commit to doing the best that we possibly can to grow our Lodge. That we participate as Freemasons out of the Lodge room with projects and engage socially with our families.

And finally, that we 'Show up' by visibly creating a presence in our communities, that enhances respect, attracts men of good standing and indelibly promotes the goodness in all that we do.

Collectively, and by all working together as a team, let us all lay our foundation stones for everyone to see in a united and powerful manner, that will be with us from generation to generation.

My commitment today is to speak up, step up and show up for you all - as our brethren in Freemasons New Zealand. The future is ours – the past is our strength.

Thank you.

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