



IOWA SUPPLEMENT

W Charles Smithson
Grand Commander

Greg Kenkel
Supplement Editor

kt.iayorkrite.org

Greetings Sir Knights:

Hopefully your start to 2020 is going well. The holidays are always a good time for us to step back, recharge our batteries, and get ready for fresh challenges and opportunities. I first want to thank those of you who reached out to me about recent articles. Glad to know that people read them and that on occasion the articles trigger something of value.

This article will reflect on Masonic pride and Masonic secrecy. Recently I was called into a meeting and informed of an issue. The comment was made that I was only the sixth person who knew it and that we needed to keep it a secret for as long as possible. Then one person said “well you are a Mason so that shouldn’t be an issue.” Everyone in the room including myself laughed at that. I then responded with something to the effect of it even outweighing attorney-client privilege and we all laughed again.

Each night I like to contemplate what took place during the day to make sure I got everything accomplished. I also spend this time to determine what went well that day and what opportunities presented themselves to help me do things better in the future. It is time well spent and I encourage all of you to do it.

Anyway, as I replayed that meeting again in my mind I spent some time thinking about the comments involving Masonry. At the outset, I want to make clear that although we all laughed about things - I never took any of it as being demeaning or condescending (and I can be overly sensitive to such things I admit).

I found it interesting that the other people in the room all knew I was a Mason. Outside of Masonic functions I don’t wear jewelry or other trappings of Masonry. That is absolutely not a criticism of

any of you who do, and frankly I encourage it. For me, I have enough problems coordinating my clothes without adding that additional layer. But if you can do it, go for it.

So obviously the others had found out my involvement and had discussed it amongst themselves outside of my presence. This is not problematic, simply interesting to me. Reminds me again that we are not a “secret society.” Rather, we are a “society with secrets.” Meaning that we do not hide our existence but we do keep things secret. Our buildings are not hidden for example. While we do not utilize the Internet and social media very well, we nonetheless advertise ourselves and our members using those avenues.

I also took pride in the fact that they knew that rather than tease me about attorney-client privilege, the reference to the fact that Masons are capable of secrets was what was said (again my previous caveat of not feeling like any of it was said in a demeaning manner). Personally, I like the fact we have secrets. I like the fact we can tell people there are things we are prohibited from disclosing as Masons. We need to take more pride in the fact. As an aside, I know that our ritual can be found on the Internet. That still doesn’t mean we should like that fact or not care when our ritual is known by profanes.

I guess to summarize all of this - take pride that others know you as a Mason. Take pride in the fact we are a “society with secrets” and that we are recognized as such. However, keep those things secret. Don’t disclose things just because “well it is all out there on the Internet anyway” or because some cable channel with a high number in front of it has some “documentary” that promises to “explain the secrets of Freemasonry.” We are better than that and our traditions deserve better than that. Take pride that you can keep a secret. Believe me, that is quickly becoming a lost art in our society.

God bless each of you and I look forward to seeing you and spending time with you in 2020.