

The Hoosier Templar

A publication of the Grand Commandery, KT, of Indiana



August, 2022

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Phillip Whisner,

PGC Ronald Tungett has died

BENTON HARBOR, Mich. — Sir Knight Ronald "Ron" Tungett, 82, Benton Harbor, died July 19, 2022 at Hanson Hospice Center in Stevensville. Tungett served as Grand Commander of the Grand Commandery of Indiana, Knights Templar, 1982-83.

Ron was born Dec. 4, 1939, in Kansas City, Mo., to Leslie and Ruth (Whittaker) Tungett.

He graduated from Northeast High School in Kansas City.

Ron served his country in the U.S. Navy from Aug. 21, 1961 to Aug. 20, 1967.

On Feb. 23, 1963, he married Patricia Slough in San Diego.

Ron worked as an I.T. manager for multiple businesses in Indiana and Michigan. Ron earned his Eagle Scout rank as a young man and served many years as a Scout Master in Indiana and Michigan. He also was an active member of Stevensville United Methodist Church.

Tungett held many offices in the various branches of the Masonic Fraternity in both Indiana and Illinois, and had been coroneted a 33rd Degree Scottish Rite Mason in the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction.

Ron is survived by his wife, Patricia Tungett; daughter, Diane (Michael) Chupp; son, Timothy (Robbin) Tungett; grandchildren: Nathan Chupp, Cory (Olivia) Chupp and Julian Tungett; and a brother, Frank Tungett.

Ron was preceded by his parents; and siblings: Sharon Loomis and Leslie Tungett Jr.

His body was cremated. Arrangements were made through Starks & Menchinger Funeral Home.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Knights Templar Eye Foundation, Inc., P.O. Box 271118, Flower Mound, TX 75027-1118; or the Wounded Warrior Project, P.O. Box 758516, Topeka, KS 66675-8516.



TUNGETT

A Templar Wedding and Preserving Masonic Facilities

By SK Edward L. Sebring KCT, KTCH, GPE
Editor

That headline sounds quite similar to the title of Stephen King's short story, Rita Hayworth and Shawshank Redemption, which became the basis for the award-winning movie, Shawshank Redemption. While this column has to do with Masonic facilities in Indiana rather than with a penitentiary in Maine, we all romantically hope that a marriage is a life sentence.

In the March, 2019, edition of what was then the Indiana Supplement to the *Knight Templar Magazine*, I wrote of the Knight Templar wedding of Sir Knight Joseph and Lady Tracy Sparks. Sparks is currently Grand Captain General of the Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Indiana. Grand Commander Phil Whisner gave Sparks responsibility for this month's Grand Officer column. Thus, Sparks and I had several conversations about what he could do. Knowing about his Knight Templar wedding, I suggested that topic, because it was one he knew well, and I had never heard of another. But although that 2019 story contained a lot of "what," there was little "why." And I love "why." In the meantime, I had seen short mentions of Crawfordsville's Masonic Cornerstone in the *Indiana Freemason*, but really didn't know much of that story.

You probably know about the name change of the Indiana Masonic Home to Compass Park, but you probably haven't heard about The Masonic Cornerstone in Crawfordsville. Each change is an attempt to preserve Masonic facilities in a changing world. By expanding the number of people in the market for the services each provides by offering them to the general public beyond the members of Freemasonry, those in charge hope to spread the cost of operation and improvement across many more people.

Joe Sparks, a union pipefitter, lives south of Crawfordsville, but works 12 hours a day maintaining the Evonik chemicals plant in Lafayette. But despite those hours, if he falls in love with something, he becomes totally involved. Thus, it should be no surprise that he, 1, married Lady Tracy, 2, in a Knight Templar service, in 3, a Masonic Temple.

"It all begins with Masonry" Sparks said. "After I became a Master Mason in 2009, in Montgomery Lodge No. 50. I wanted to join the officer line, and I served as Worshipful Master in 2012, and again in 2013. I was seeking more light and sought a petition to join York Rite. I started my York Rite journey in 2015 but, due to work, was not able to be knighted until 2016, in Crawfordsville Commandery No. 25."

Sparks became Eminent Commander in 2019. He soon became a Deputy Battalion Commander, then was appointed Grand Warder and has progressed up the line.

In the meantime, it had been decided the way to provide for funding for preservation and improvement of the Crawfordsville Masonic Temple was to invite members of the public to use its facilities as an events venue, create a foundation to accept ownership with a 16-member board, only four of which are Masons, and then obtain a 501(C)3 organizational status from the Internal Revenue Service. The latter makes it eligible to apply for grants and other types of outside funding. Given that new status and a prominent location on a downtown Crawfordsville corner, the structure is now known as the Crawfordsville Masonic Cornerstone.

"It's still a Masonic Temple, but the Masonic organizations pay rent to the foundation to use the Temple," Sparks said. "Our ultimate goal is to restore and upgrade the building."

Back in 2019, SK Joe and Lady Tracy were planning their wedding and needed a venue. But, as always, price was a consideration.

"The Crawfordsville Temple is a beautiful temple, and, at that time members could use it for free, but only once, and that would save us money," Sparks said. "My wife has always been very supportive of my Masonic endeavor and understands the importance of the fraternity to me. Plus it helped promote the Temple by using it as our wedding venue."

SK Steven Kromann, who was then Grand Photographer, gave the couple the idea of a Templar wedding.

"We liked the uniqueness," Sparks said. "It was new, but it also was something involving the fraternity."

It took place in the temple's ballroom/dining room, and about 70 people attended. Dozens of Sir Knights appeared in full uniform, including SK Terry Kehrer, Grand Commander of the Grand Commandery of Indiana, and SK Duane Vaught, Grand Master of the Grand Encampment Knights Templar of the United States of America.

SK Randal Ellington, a Grand Prelate Emeritus and currently the Deputy Grand Commander of Indiana, officiated.

The Knights formed double lines from the hallway into the room, with Lady Tracy waiting in that hallway while Ellington made Sparks kneel and take an extra vow upon himself,

“One of the things my wife really enjoyed was that Randy had me kneel and take an oath to ‘signify that you are worthy of taking Lady Tracy’s hand.’” Sparks said.

Lady Tracy was then passed under an arch of steel, escorted through the lines by GM Vaught and followed by GC Kehrer.

Lady Tracy’s sons, then age 25 and 21, met her at the head of the lines and escorted her to the altar, giving the bride away, Sparks said.

And thus, SK Joseph and Lady Tracy became husband and wife, in a Temple ballroom surrounded by many Sir Knights in uniform, a venue in which many more couples – Masonic or not – may join together in the future, in a building hopefully financially preserved indefinitely by the changes made, of which I learned when I asked SK Joe Sparks to tell me about his wedding.

Grand Prelate’s Monthly Message

Hot-Hot-Hot

SK Archie R Smallwood KCT, PGC

Grand Prelate

Sir Knights as we go into the month of August, we have some left-over business and that is the weather. It is Hot-Hot-Hot now and was also in July. We should recall that not only our predecessors those valiant Knight Templar of old with full uniform and sword kept to their vows even in the Hot weather, as you may recall our Savior and Captain of our Salvation, Jesus Christ walked many, many miles over those roads which were hot. We complain of the hot weather and rightfully so because it is hot even today, however let us take refuge in the thought that we are not alone. Those who had gone before us walked and suffered the hot weather as well as held to their vows of helping others even when it meant some discomfort to ourselves. You have seen in these last couple of months the energy that our Grand Commandery here in Indiana have had by traveling to various parts of the state to many Commanderies to support them with their presents and assist them whenever needed. Let us all take a lesson from those who serve Knights Templar each of the Commanderies around the state or in the Grand Line as they let their light shine for Knight Templar.

A book I like to refer to you may know or not called *Jesus Calling* by Sarah Young says it well and I would like to share it with you for thought:

WAIT WITH ME FOR A WHILE. I have much to tell you. You are walking along the path I have chosen for you. It is both a privileged and a perilous way: Experiencing My glorious Presence and heralding that reality to others. Sometimes you feel presumptuous to be carrying out such an assignment.

Do not worry about what other people think of you. The work I am doing in you is hidden at first. But eventually blossoms will burst forth, and abundant fruit will be borne. Stay on the path of Life with Me. Trust Me wholeheartedly, letting My Spirit fill you with Joy and Peace.

O Lord, God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth below—you who keep your covenant of love with your servants who continue wholeheartedly in your way—KINGS 8:23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law. —GALATIANS 5:22-23