



Hugh McCurdy
Sixteenth Grand Master
1892-1895

Sir Knight McCurdy was born in Hamilton, Lanarkshire, Scotland, on December 22, 1829. At the age of eight he came with his parents to the United States and settled at Birmingham, Michigan. He attended the county schools there and later studied law. In 1854 he was admitted to the Bar in Michigan, and moved to Corunna, where he made his home.

As a lawyer he soon built up an active practice. In 1856 he was elected Prosecuting Attorney, in 1860 Judge of the Probate Court, and in 1864 State Senator. In 1865 he helped to organize the First National Bank of Corunna and was its president for a number of years.

He was married twice and had two sons. As a Christmas gift in 1899, he presented the City of Corunna thirty acres of land surrounding his home on the Shiawassee River, known as McCurdy Park. He was a great lover of nature and wished the citizens of his community to share this beautiful park with him.

After a long illness he died at his home in Corunna on July 16, 1908. The funeral services were held at his home on July 19, 1908, under the direction of the Grand Commander of the Knights Templar of Michigan. Representatives of all the Grand Masonic Bodies of Michigan and the Scottish Rite were present.

Sir Knight McCurdy was made a Mason in Birmingham Lodge on August 15, 1850. He was instrumental in organizing Corunna Lodge No. 115 and was its first Worshipful Master. In 1873 he was unanimously elected Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Michigan.

He was exalted in Washington Chapter on February 5, 1864, and soon after became a charter member of Corunna Chapter, serving as its first High Priest. He was elected Grand High Priest in 1871. He was greeted in St. John's Council No. 21 at St. John's Michigan on December 18, 1866. On January 17, 1875, he instituted a Council of Royal

and Select Masters in Corunna and was its first Thrice Illustrious Master. He was elected Grand Master of the Grand Council on January 21, 1879.

In the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, he received the 320 in Detroit Consistory on December 19, 1866, and on November 18, 1873, received the 330. On September 22, 1883, he was crowned an active member of the Supreme Council of the Northern Jurisdiction. He was a member of the Royal Order of Scotland, the Red Cross of Constantine and the Mystic Shrine.

He was created a Knight Templar in Fenton Commandery No. 14 at Fentonville, Michigan, on March 13, 1866. He was elected Grand Commander of the Grand Commandery of Michigan on May 9, 1877. At the Triennial Conclave held in Chicago in 1880, he was elected Grand Senior Warden, and at each succeeding Conclave was advanced, until in 1892 he became Grand Master of the Grand Encampment. In his speech of acceptance, he stated:

"In whatever cause Knight Templarism had its origin, its only reason for existence today is its power to help men. Men are not asking today how far back into the past does your history extend; but how far reaching is your present everyday life? What of your own are you adding to the age in which you live? We cannot afford to live for our own gratification, nor for display of cross, plume, sword or star. By a larger growth in ourselves and a wider influence upon our fellow-man we must emphasize the meaning of our name and the significance of our symbols. I shall endeavor to keep in line with the spirit of this progressive age."

Sir Knight McCurdy was a gracious gentleman, a true and steadfast friend, a patriotic citizen and a Christian Knight.

In his address at the Conclave in Boston in 1895, he expressed his belief in the great future of the Order:

"Surely our Order has not yet reached the fullness of its glory and helpfulness, and its course must continue upward and onward in fellowship and harmony with the age and the lofty principles of Him whom we all acknowledge as our Lord and Master, Immanuel-God with us. This is our watchword. With Him we must be ever moving onward to better things."

Reference: From Dr. Francis J. Scully's...History of the Grand Encampment, Chapter XXIII, Biographies Of The Grand Masters, as published in the Knight Templar Magazine