



John Lawton Crofts, Sr.
42nd Grand Master
1967-1970

Past Grand Master John Lawton Crofts, Sr., the son of Stuart W. (1876-1925) and Frances (Lawton) Crofts (1883-1949), was born on June 23, 1909, in Neenah, Wisconsin. His father was a Spanish-American War veteran, serving in Company A, 50th Iowa Infantry. At an early age John and his family moved to the Los Angeles, California, area. After securing a B.A. in economics from the University of California, Sir Knight Crofts was engaged in public accounting and was later active in production control, product design, sales promotion, financial and general management for the Thomas D. Murphy Co., a large calendar artwork printing firm started in 1888, and located in Red Oak, Iowa. He was acting as Secretary-Treasurer at the time of his retirement.

He married Frances Marian Cochrane (1906-2007), a native of Red Oak, Iowa, in 1933, and they had one son, John, Jr. In the early years of their marriage, she and her husband owned one of the first Airstream trailers and traveled throughout the United States and Canada. Later, they relocated to Nokomis, Florida, in the 1950s.

As an active Methodist layman, Sir Knight Crofts served as chairman of the Commission on Stewardship and Finance several terms in the Venice-Nokomis Methodist Church. He was also active with many social organizations, including the Venice-Nokomis Rotary Club. His wife, Frances, valued her time as a teacher at a kindergarten in Nokomis. Sir Knight Crofts'™ Masonic career began in Red Oak, Iowa, where he was Past Master of Red Oak Lodge No. 162; a member of the Finance Committee of the Grand Lodge of Iowa; a member of Montgomery Chapter No. 57, RAM; Past Master of Hiram Council No. 30, R&SM; and Past Commander of Bruce Commandery No. 34, KT. In 1951-1952 he served as Right Eminent Grand Commander of the Grand Commandery of

Iowa.

Later, upon moving to Florida, he was a member of Venice Lodge No. 301; Sarasota Chapter No. 35, RAM; Bradenton Council No. 9, R&SM. He was a member of the Scottish Rite, the Shrine; HRAKTP; Red Cross of Constantine; Royal Order of Scotland; and was awarded the DeMolay Cross of Honor and Legion of Honor and was an Active Member at large, International Supreme Council of DeMolay.

In the Grand Encampment, he served as a R.E. Department Commander for the North Central Dept. (1952-1955); Chairman of the Committee on Policy and General Purposes (1955-1958); Grand Jr. Warden, 1958; Grand Generalissimo (1961-1964); Deputy Grand Master (1964-1967); and Grand Master (1967-1970).

Sir Knight Crofts died on February 28, 2000, and was interred in Venice Memorial Gardens, Florida.

--Submitted by George Marshall, Jr., PGC, KCT, Chairman, Grand Encampment Knights Templar History Committee, 2012-2015

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