



Mark Norris was born at Ypsilanti, Michigan, on July 28, 1857. He received his education in the public schools of Ypsilanti and the military school of DeVaux College at Suspension Bridge, New York. He entered the University of Michigan in 1875 and graduated with the degree of Ph.D. in 1879. After studying law for a year in his father's office, he entered the Law School of the University of Michigan and graduated in 1882 with the degree of LL.B.

In April, 1882, he was admitted to the Bar in Michigan and began practice at Grand Rapids, Michigan, where he resided the rest of his life. He engaged in general law practice, and built up an extensive business, finally establishing the firm of Norris, McPherson, Harrington and Waer. He was Past President of the Grand Rapids Bar Association and the State Bar of Michigan.

He was active in all civic affairs. He was a school trustee and a member of the City Board of Education of Grand Rapids from 1906 to 1921.

On September 3, 1885, he married Cornelia Abbott, who was Supervisor of Art in the public schools. She died in 1913. Two daughters and a son were born to them.

He was the founder of the Masonic Country Club and an early member of the Kent Country Club and the Peninsular Club. He travelled widely both for his own pleasure and in the interests of the Knights Templar, visiting Malta, Istanbul, and the Holy Land, as well as England, France, Germany and Hawaii.

Shortly before he was to preside at the Grand Encampment in 1940 he became ill and was unable to attend. However, he recovered and was able to resume his legal and fraternal activities to some extent, until his death which occurred on May 31, 1943.

The funeral was conducted in the Asylum of Do Molai Commandery at the Masonic Temple in Grand Rapids, and was attended by many of the officers of the Grand Encampment. Burial was in the family lot at Ypsilanti.

Sir Knight Norris was raised in York Lodge No. 410 on January 19, 1900, and was Master of the Lodge in 1904.

On February 13, 1902, he was exalted in Columbia Chapter No. 132 and greeted in Tyre Council No. 10 in 1905.

In the Scottish Rite he received the 32o in December, 1900, and was crowned 330 Honorary at Boston on September 17, 1907. He was Commander-in-Chief of DeWitt Clinton Consistory at Grand Rapids from 1915 to 1918, and Thrice Potent Master of Moriah Lodge of Perfection from 1925 to 1927.

He was a Past Sovereign of St. Vincent's Conclave, Red Cross of Constantine. For a time he was Trustee of the Michigan Masonic Home at Alona. He was also a Past President of the Masonic Temple Association.

He was knighted in DeMolay Commandery No. 5 at Grand Rapids on December 5, 1902, and was Eminent Commander in 1907. In 1917, he was elected Grand Commander of the Grand Commandery of Michigan.

At the Triennial Conclave of 1923 he was appointed Grand Standard Bearer and in 1937 was elected Grand Master.

Sir Knight Norris was a loyal citizen, a devoted friend, a lover of nature, a brilliant lawyer and an outstanding Mason. He was held in universal esteem and his passing left a lonely place in Templary. He was proud of his membership in the Order of the Temple and in his address stated:

Every organization such as ours should be known in the community where it exists, as a focus for work, for Christianity and civilization, not only among its members, but among the members of the community where it exists."

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, January 1995 Edition, page 16, and the May 1995 Edition, page 16

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[Top](#)