

THE TEXAS TEMPLAR

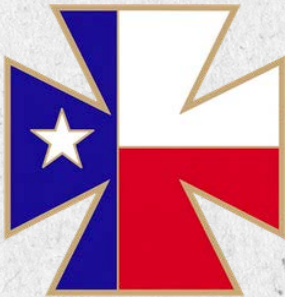
A monthly publication of the Grand Commandery of Texas



Sir Knight
Gary E. Rock, KCT
Right Eminent Grand
Commander of Texas

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Sir Knight
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2026-2027 Grand Officers and their ladies

WOW, JUST WOW! What a spectacular conclave. A special thanks to RE.: Past Grand Commander Jason Lesikar and Lady Katie and their planning committee for all they did to make the weekend fantastic. Thank you so much for the confidence you have placed in me to be your Grand Commander this year, I am completely humbled and honored to be given this responsibility. I am committed to honoring the legacy of service that so many of our Past Grand Commanders have dedicated their lives to building. It is my hope to serve each one of you with that same devotion and distinction.

This moment did not arrive overnight. It was built over fourteen years through friendships forged in fellowship, lessons learned in service, and conversations with Sir Knights who challenged and inspired me along the way. I have heard what matters most to you. I carry that with me, and I do not take it lightly.

With that in mind, our theme this year will center on Texas and the rich history of our Grand Commandery. We have an incredible story to tell, one that spans generations of devoted Sir Knights who gave their time, their talent, and their hearts to this Order. Our motto this year is simply: "**Making History.**" What does that mean? It means we are challenging every Sir Knight in Texas to drive participation, to fill our ranks, and to recreate those amazing photographs from years past where our halls were filled with Sir Knights standing shoulder to shoulder in service to God and our Order. Those images did not happen by accident; they happened because Sir Knights showed up. Let us show up together.

We will also continue to keep Christ and His teachings at the center of everything we do. Remembering that all that we have and all that we do are truly gifts from Him. It is my hope that as others see us through our actions and the way we love one another, they will know we are Christians and will want to join such an amazing group of Brothers in Christ.

I am also excited to announce that the 174th Grand Conclave will be held in **Lubbock, Texas, April 8-11, 2027**. We are working hard to make this an unforgettable weekend for all who attend, and we have a couple of surprises in store, so stay tuned. Mark your calendars and make plans to be there.

It is my sincere hope that all Texas Sir Knights are as enthusiastic for Chivalric Masonry as your Grand Officers are this year. Together, let us make history.

Sincerely,

Gary E. Rock
Grand Commander

2026-2027 GRAND OFFICERS



Gary Rock
Grand Commander



Ralph Royall
Deputy Grand Commander



Ricky Cox
Grand Generalissimo



Tommy Chapman
Grand Captain General



Chris Little
Grand Senior Warden



Gabriel Jagush
Grand Junior Warden



Nikolaus Fehrenbach
Grand Prelate



Hunter Schappaugh
Grand Treasurer



Ronnie Wilson, PGC
Grand Recorder



Hardy Nevill
Grand Standard Bearer



Michael Malone
Grand Sword Bearer



Edward Peebles
Grand Warder



James Kirkpatrick
Grand Sentinel

2026 GRAND COMMANDERY RECAP



BUSINESS RESULTS & HONOREES

PASSED
RESOLUTION 1
 Relocating San Angelo No. 28

PASSED
RESOLUTION 2
 Triennial Conclave Cmte tasks

PASSED
RESOLUTION 3
 Drill team locations by county

PASSED
RESOLUTION 4
 Relocating Melrose No. 109

W
RESOLUTION 5
 Creation of the Business Administration Cmte

PASSED
RESOLUTION 6
 Creation of Civil Law Cmte

PASSED
RECOMMENDATION 1
 Commandery Relocation

PASSED
RECOMMENDATION 2
 Commandery Merger

PASSED
RECOMMENDATION 3
 Creation of an E-Class Drill Team



Companion of the Temple
 Mrs. Denise Souza
 Mrs. Kimberley Rock

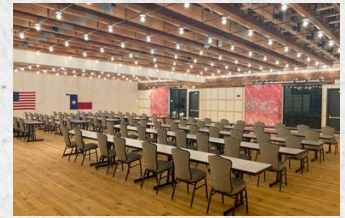
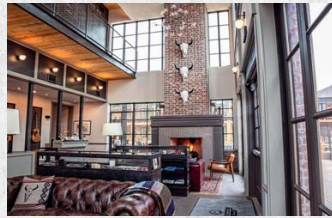


Knight Commander of the Temple
 SK Jim Rumsey, KCT
 SK Jackie Matthews, KCT

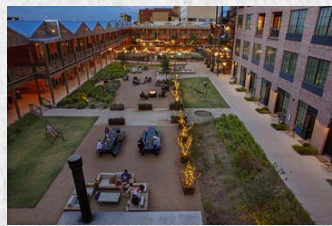


Knight Templar Cross of Honor
 SK Onnie Weaver, KTCH
 SK Hobie Henderson, KTCH

SAVE THE DATE - 174TH GRAND ANNUAL CONCLAVE



Mark your calendars for **April 8-11, 2027** for the 174th Grand Annual Conclave which will be held at the Cotton Court Hotel in **Lubbock, TX!**
Located at **1610 Broadway St, Lubbock, TX 79401**



MEET YOUR NEW EMINENT GRAND SENTINEL SK JAMES D. KIRKPATRICK

Sir Knight James Kirkpatrick was knighted in Arlington Commandery No. 107 on February 17, 2001. He affiliated with APOAS Commandery No. 1314 on February 28, 2025. He is a Past Commander of Arlington where he received the Excalibur Award on May 13, 2013. He is a recipient of the KYGCH with one quadrant from his year of service as Most Illustrious Grand Master of the Grand Council of Royal and Select Masters of Texas in 2019. He was elected as Eminent Grand Sentinel at the 174th Grand Conclave, and is in line to be the Grand Commander in the 2035-2036 year, tradition prevailing.



BULLETINS & GENERAL ORDERS

BULLETIN No. 1 >>
Contact Info

GENERAL ORDER No. 1 >>
Districts, Schools, & Clerical info

GENERAL ORDER No. 2 >>
Membership Cards & Grand Officer Info

GENERAL ORDER No. 3 >>
Texas Holding Cmdry

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PRELATE'S APARTMENT



A MESSAGE FROM THE EMINENT GRAND PRELATE SK NIKOLAUS FEHRENBACH, KTCH

A new year has begun for the Grand Commandery of Texas. The new officers have been elected and installed. The Grand Conclave has concluded, and the officers have returned home to guide us through the new year. Although the changes may be subtle, this is a new beginning and a new chapter in the history of the Grand Commandery of Texas.

Life is full of endings and beginnings. God uses transition to reshape our hearts and redirect our purpose. The Gospel of Matthew shows Jesus inviting ordinary people into new identities, new priorities, and a new mission.

Jesus called fishermen and a tax collector with the same words: “follow me.” That summons didn’t merely change their jobs it redefined who they were. Thus, Matthew was called from being a tax collector to a disciple of Christ. New beginnings in Christ mean our past no longer has the final word. Our identity is now anchored in our relationship with Jesus, not in former failures, professions or labels.

Being elected or appointed to a Grand Commandery office is certainly a much smaller transition than that of Matthew, Peter or John, but it is still a new beginning and a change. Let us begin this change with a reorientation of priorities. “Seek first the kingdom of God” (Matthew 6:33). New beginnings require internal housekeeping: what we treasure, how we spend time, where we invest our energy. As Christian Masons, as we reprioritize our time to fulfil the duties of our office, let us ever remember that our first duty is to God.

Change is not only personal renewal but community formation. The officers cannot be successful without the help of all Sir Knights. I ask that all of you embrace the new Grand Commandery year and take practical steps to make small changes.

Any time you are taking on new responsibilities are making changes in your lives, the first thing you should do is accept Jesus in your life daily. Practice simple spiritual rhythms: say a prayer, read Scripture, meditate in silence. Always make time in you schedule to rededicate yourself to God. It might be reading scripture before bed, a simple prayer in the morning, or blessing before a meal. By simply taking a minute each day to recognize God’s presence it helps us to stay centered. By acknowledging God, we also remember to thank him for the gifts we receive each day.

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UPCOMING EVENT



2026 ASCENSION SERVICE

ST. MATTHEW'S CATHEDRAL
5100 ROSS AVENUE
DALLAS, TEXAS 75206

MAY 17TH

JOIN OUR GRAND COMMANDER AS WE CELEBRATE THE RISEN SAVIOR ON ASCENSION SUNDAY AT THE CHURCH THAT BISHOP ALEXANDER C. GARRETT NAMED IN 1875.

GATHER: 8:30 AM
SERVICE: 9:00 AM

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FEATURED HISTORY



A SUBMISSION FROM THE **RICHARD E. SCHLAUDROFF** ENTITLED: “A QUINTESSENTIAL TEXAS TEMPLAR”

In 1840, a young man, 18 years old and on the verge, followed his family to the Texas prairie. Clinton McKamy Winkler, born in North Carolina to a farming family, moved to Indiana in 1835 and thence to Texas. Later in life, he would tell the editor of the Dallas Herald newspaper that he had stood on the ground where they were now standing when there was not a breath of civilization in northern Texas. Indeed, the young man that walked that ground could not have known what an important role he was to play in shaping the future of his adopted home.

The family settled in the southern part of Robertson County. At the time, Robertson County extended from just north of today's City of Bryan northward into today's Dallas and Tarrant counties. The sparse population of Robertson County settlers concentrated on the relatively safe ground wedged between the Brazos and Navasota Rivers, but the safety of their homes required constant vigilance. Young Winkler, no doubt flushed with a young man's sense of adventure, spent a good part of his earliest years in Texas on horseback, crisscrossing north central Texas trying to contain the marauding bands of natives that seemed to be an ever-present menace to new settlers. In May 1841, he joined Captain Eli Chandler's Robertson Minute Men against a concentration at Pecan Creek, and when that ninety-day service was complete, joined Captain Thomas I. Smith's ranging company in August on a seek and destroy mission in today's Johnson County.

Returning to the stability of the homestead, Winkler soon found that his educational talents, received from his schoolteacher mother, were in demand. He was hired as assistant county clerk in Franklin, the seat of Robertson County, and in 1843 was hired as district clerk pro tempore of the 3d Judicial District under Judge R. E. B. Baylor. Undoubtedly under Judge Baylor's influence, Winkler began to read law with Charles H. Raymond, “the most renowned lawyer in central Texas” by several accounts. Judge Baylor admitted Winkler to the bar in April 1845, and in the next month the young lawyer was elected secretary of the county gathering that voted to instruct the legislature to approve annexation to the United States.

In short order, as the new state legislature began dividing Robertson into a number of smaller counties, C. M. Winkler moved north to establish his new law practice. He settled in a tiny farming community some 45 miles south of Dallas, and in 1847 was elected to represent the new Navarro County in the Texas Legislature. At least partially under Congressman Winkler's influence, José Antonio Navarro, then sitting as a Texas Senator, was given the honor of naming the seat of his namesake county. Navarro named it in honor of his father's birthplace, Corsica, and so Winkler's new home achieved a name and became the political and economic center of Navarro County. Winkler worked tirelessly to benefit his constituents, including working with John Neely Bryan in Dallas and others in plans to develop the Trinity River as a navigable waterway.

He also decided to join the Freemasons. The decision probably arose from several influences. A number of Masons had moved to Corsicana, but we cannot rule out the likelihood that the draw to Masonry arose at least in part from Winkler's mentor, Judge Baylor, who had joined the Fraternity in 1845. At any rate, Corsicana Lodge No. 104. was chartered in due course, and Brother Winkler rose to become its Senior Warden. A clash of personalities in 1854 led to the arrest of the charter, but in a few months the remnants of Lodge No. 104 became Lodge No. 174. Brother Winkler served as master of that lodge three times. He also helped form Corsicana Chapter No. 41, Royal Arch Masons, serving as its High Priest in 1859. He joined Wheelock Commandery No. 5 shortly after it was chartered in 1856, and along the way, served as a grand officer in the Grand Lodge of Texas, a member of its Committee on Work, and grand offices in the Grand Royal Arch Chapter and Grand Commandery.

It is curious that Sir Knight Winkler did not transfer his membership in Wheelock Commandery to the much closer Dallas Commandery No. 6, which was chartered in 1857, but he did not. Indeed, he remained a Wheelock Templar until that commandery's demise and thereafter joined Ivanhoe Commandery No. 8 in Bryan when it was chartered in 1870. These decisions give us a small window into his personality. By this point, Brother Winkler had a wife and three children and a prosperous law practice in Corsicana, but of course he had another family. His mother and siblings lived in and around Wheelock in southern

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FEATURED HISTORY - CONT.

Robertson County. Clinton's younger brother Thomas was also a member of Wheelock Commandery. Six times a year, then, or as often as his other duties would allow, Sir Knight Winkler mounted his horse and rode the 100 or so miles to attend commandery meetings and to visit his family.

When war broke out in 1861, Winkler formed the Navarro Rifles and recruited 103 like-minded men. In due course, the Rifles were incorporated into the Confederate States Army and became Company I, Fourth Texas Infantry, in John Bell Hood's Division. The Fourth Texas joined Lee's Army of Northern Virginia and saw action in every major battle to the duration of the war, including Chickamauga and Chattanooga in the Western Theater. Captain Winkler led his men with distinction. He was twice wounded: at Gaines' Mill and more severely at Gettysburg. In July 1863, he was promoted to Major, and to Lieutenant Colonel in April 1864, remaining an officer of the line throughout. Rejoining the army's resistance against Grant's relentless march to Richmond, the vagaries of battle forced Winkler twice to take command of the regiment and once of the entire brigade. Finally, in October 1864, after the commander of Hood's Brigade, General John Gregg, was killed in action, Winkler, still a Lieutenant Colonel, was made permanent brigade commander. On April 12, 1865, as a result of Lee's decision to surrender to Grant, Winkler surrendered his men to Federal forces at Appomattox Court House, Virginia, and was paroled to return home. Of the vaunted brigade, just 15 officers and 153 men remained.

Colonel Winkler returned to Corsicana to resume his life. In 1866, he ran for judge of the 13th Judicial District against Robert S. Gould. He was declared the winner, received his certificate of election, his commission as judge, and began carrying out his duties. A few days later, a recount of the votes showed that Gould had actually won the election. Judge Winkler stepped down from the bench without delay or complaint. A friend remarked to the local newspaper: "***It was enough for him to know, and he knew it by instinct, that the true title to the office did not consist in the certificate of election nor in the commission, but existed in the people ...***" He returned to his law practice and continued to work in political, social, and Masonic arenas and to aid in whatever way he could the veterans of Hood's Brigade. He served as Grand Master of Masons in Texas in 1871. In 1872, he was appointed chairman of the Executive Committee of the Texas Democratic Party, served another term in the state Legislature in 1873 and 1874, and in 1876 was elected as one of three justices to sit on the new Texas Court of Appeals established by the 1876 Constitution. He remained at this post for the rest of his life. He helped organize Bertrand du Guesclin Commandery No. 14 in Corsicana, chartered in 1877, and served as its Commander in 1881.

Clinton McKamy Winkler died in Austin on May 13, 1882, after a brief illness. His body was returned by train to Corsicana, accompanied by justices and staff of the Court of Appeals and an honor guard from Colorado Commandery No. 4. At Hearne, the honor guard was handed off and escorted to Corsicana by the Sir Knights of Bertrand du Guesclin Commandery. His funeral was attended by the famous and the not-so-famous: lawyers, former soldiers of the Fourth Texas Infantry, citizens from across Navarro County, and of course leading Masons. The Dallas Daily News described the graveside service: "While the Masons were marching around the grave depositing their sprigs of evergreen, and the funeral ode was being sung, the knights templar formed the 'arch of steel' with their swords over the coffin, presenting altogether one of the grandest and most impressive scenes ever witnessed."

Two weeks later, the Galveston Daily News published the text of a eulogy for Justice Winkler delivered before the Court of Appeals on behalf of the Texas bar by the Attorney General of Texas, J. H. McLeary. The text fills a full two and a half columns of newsprint. Part of it reads: ***He followed the fortunes of a cause now lost through all the ebbs and flows of war, in the sunshine of victory and in the gloom of defeat; now storming the heights of Gettysburg, now turning back the charger of his chieftain at the Wilderness; but ever treading in the narrow path of a soldier's duty till the stars and bars went down forever on the field of Appomattox. Then he returned to the walks of peace.... His name is written in letters as indelible as they are honorable on the judicial history of our State.***

Clinton Winkler – family man, lawyer, warrior, jurist, Mason – was above all things a man of character. A lifelong Methodist, he was devoted to God. He dedicated his life to practicing truth and duty. He lived what it means to be a Mason and a Knight Templar. The 18-year-old that first set foot on Texas soil, had he known it, would certainly have been proud of what he was to become and what he helped Texas become. In 1879, the new town of Winkler in Navarro County was named in his honor, and in 1887, the Texas Legislature established Winkler County.

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CONTINUED TEXAS PROGRAMS

Permanent Endowment Fund

The [Permanent Endowment Fund](#) provides a long-term resource that supports the goals and efforts of the Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Texas. Your financial assistance of \$250 for a starter badge will help further the success of this Grand Jurisdiction. For any additional \$150, a Diamond will be added to your badge.

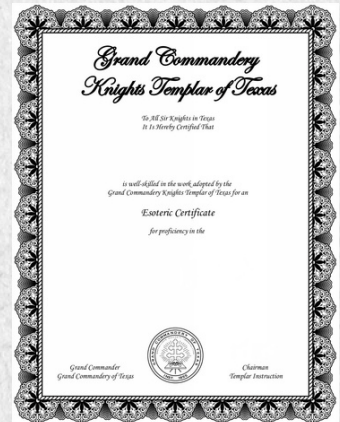
If the full badge with all diamonds is acquired at the single endowment of \$3,250, your badge comes adorned with red enamel and 20 diamonds. Your badge can be proudly worn on your Class A uniform above your left chest!



Esoteric Certificate Examinations

Please remember that the Grand Commandery of Texas has formally adopted the esoteric certificate program into law. As exam dates are made available, a listing will be provided.

You can also reach out to a your District Committeeman to schedule an examination if one has not been scheduled in your area. Click [here](#) for more information on the procedures and requirements for earning a certificate.



Member Citation Cord Awards

Any Sir Knight who has been the first line signer for a total of three petitioners, who are either knighted or restored to membership since January 1, 2016, is eligible to receive the Member Citation Cord Award. There are various levels represented by different colors, to show your quantity of recruitment or restoration. Those being restored to membership must have been off the active roll for a period of one year or more in order to qualify in the count. The total is cumulative with no time boundaries. When [awarded](#) with a cord, it is to be worn on your left shoulder.

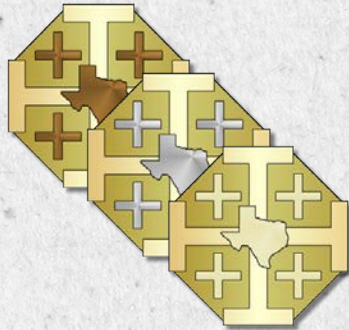


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CONTINUED TEXAS PROGRAMS



Texas Holy Land Pilgrimage Foundation

The [Texas Holy Land Pilgrimage Foundation](#) (THLPF) was established in 2024 to send clergy to the Holy Land. The foundation's first year has been an incredible success, and with your support, we can continue strong! There are several ways you can contribute. Badges are awarded to donors who give \$250 (Bronze), \$500 (Silver), and \$1,000 (Gold). There are also neckties available for lower level donations. If you're interested, please reach out to a board member. Your badge can be proudly worn on your Class A uniform above your left chest!



A.P.O.A.S. Commandery

A.P.O.A.S. Commandery is a traveling, history-focused, and educational Commandery that offers Sir Knights a unique and engaging experience rooted in Templar tradition and history. By taking meetings on the road, it brings Masonic history to life in a dynamic and memorable way across Texas. Membership is open to all Sir Knights in good standing. Each gathering is designed to offer not just business, but a meaningful and immersive experience tailored to the growth and enjoyment of its members.

RECORDER'S DESK



A MESSAGE FROM THE EMINENT GRAND RECORDER SK RONNIE WILSON, PGC, KCT

Hello Sir Knights,

Thank you all for the honor of serving you and your commanderies again as your Grand Recorder. I am very thankful to have your continued confidence.

As always, if you have any questions or need additional guidance, please never hesitate to contact me at texasgrandrecorder@gmail.com! I will be happy to help you in any way I can!

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KNIGHT TEMPLAR EYE FOUNDATION



Our Grand Commander is a big supporter of the Knight Templar Eye Foundation, Inc. He encourages everyone to explore the various donation programs the KTEF offer.

The Knight Templar Eye Foundation, Inc. has a number of donation programs most with associated recognition programs. One of their primary contribution programs is the [Grand Master's Club](#). These are contributions of \$1,000 which can be accumulated over time. These accumulations are known as the Grand Commander's Club (\$100 each until \$1,000 is reached). Currently Grand Master's Club donors receive a plaque and a lapel pin.

In 2017 the Foundation introduced a new award, The Crusader's Cross, to thank our individual Sir Knights. The Jewel comes in 5 levels, \$1,000, \$2,000, \$3,000, \$4,000 and \$5,000 or above. The \$1,000 level has the single, larger cross in the center. Each additional \$1,000 is identified with an additional small cross in a quadrant until at \$5,000 or above all four quadrants are occupied to complete the emblem known as the Crusader's Cross. There are 25 total variations. Recipients of The Crusader's Cross may wear it on the right side of the class "A" uniform.



EDITOR'S NOTE

SK MICHAEL COTE II, EDITOR



Sir Knights,

It is hard to believe we are entering into our fourth continuous volume of "The Texas Templar." I am privileged to spearhead this project in this editorial role, and I am especially thankful to Right Eminent Rock for his trust and continued confidence. Serving alongside such dedicated Sir Knights has been a great privilege, and I look forward to continuing our mission together grounded in faith, duty, and service.



I mention this time-to-time, but I am often reminded of Brother Winston Churchill's words: "***To each, there comes in their lifetime a special moment when they are figuratively tapped on the shoulder and offered the chance to do a very special thing, unique to them and fit for their talents.***" To be part of something used by many is an opportunity I do not take lightly. To show my appreciation, I am continuing my "Contributor Pin" as a small token of recognition for those who help me in creating this publication. This pin will be personally handed out by me as a thank you to those who help me with this project! It is my hope we can jointly continue this project for all!
