



The Ashlar



December 2022

Kempsville Lodge No. 196, A.F.&A.M.
www.kempsvillelodge.org

Volume 67-12

Brother Richard Walter Mears



In keeping with “The Lifesavers” theme for 2022, the Worshipful Master has requested each issue of The Ashlar to feature an article honoring a deceased member of our Lodge who has preserved life in addition to being a distinguished community member.

“Distinguished” could mean anything from notable military service, an esteemed political career, or virtually any other qualifying instance elevating that member to recognition on a local, statewide, and/or national scale.

For this month’s article, we feature Brother Richard Walter Mears. Mears was born on May 12, 1910 in Wachapreague, VA, to Theodore & Annie Mears. At an early age, he moved in with an uncle in Norfolk, VA, before attending and graduating from Randolph-Macon Academy in Bedford, VA in 1928. Shortly thereafter, he returned to Norfolk, where he would eventually own the Kaiser-Frazer Distributorship there. While in Norfolk, he met and married his wife, Mildred Frances Bell, with whom he had two children.

By the 1940s, Mears had moved to the Kempsville area of Princess Anne County, VA (now the City of Virginia Beach), where he would open a used car dealership in the 1950s. This dealership was located at the eastern corner of the intersection of Princess Anne Rd and Bonney Road (now S Witchduck Road). An enterprising man, Mears was also heavily involved in farming and homebuilding in the Kempsville area. In addition to his many business ventures, Brother Mears served as a Deputy Sheriff for Princess Anne County, and would also serve in the same capacity for the City of Virginia Beach following the consolidation of the two jurisdictions in 1963. Mears supplemented his civil service by serving as chairman of the local selective service board.

During the times in which he was not working, Mears enjoyed entertaining his family and friends with duck hunting trips in Knotts Island, NC, rabbit hunting on his farm near the Virginia Beach courthouse, or (when the weather was unsuitable for hunting) a simple game of cards.

Mears was a well-regarded figure in the Kempsville area, and was an active member of the Kempsville Ruritan Club and Kempsville Baptist Church. His charitable and generous deeds throughout his life are still remembered by present and former Kempsville area residents many decades later.

Mears was initiated, passed, and raised in 1947 and 1948 in Owens Lodge No. 164. He affiliated with Kempsville Lodge No. 196 as a charter member in 1955, and was an active Mason for over 16 years. He passed away on October 26, 1964 at age 54 and was survived by his wife, children, and grandchildren. His son, Bro. Richard Walter Mears, Jr., has been a member of our Lodge for over 60 years.

Although Mears was undoubtedly an accomplished and dutiful man, his inclusion in this series originates not from his private sector endeavors, nor his civil service career. Mears’ separation from his relatives in Wachapreague at such an early stage of his life emboldened his appreciation for family, and would guide him later in life as a husband, father, grandfather, uncle, and brother-in-law. His survivors universally

Continued on page 3

From The East



At the onset of this year, Freemasonry in Virginia was taking cautiously optimistic steps away from the understandably restrictive safeguards commonplace during the COVID-19 pandemic. As challenging as this was, our Lodge was still able to garner and implement many events, new members, and programs, all of which served to support our Brothers, community, and Craft. Training resumed its normal schedule, sustaining our familiar calendar of events.

I am proud to say that our training nights, degree work, and stated meetings were once again well-attended by both our own Brothers, as well as those from across the 56th Masonic District. It is my opinion that this feat could not have been so well accomplished without the masterful tenure of Right Worshipful Bob Stanek as the 2022 District Deputy Grand Master. In an almost comical fashion, our revamped traveling gavel seemed to follow him as he traversed the District.

2022 has been a significant year for me in both my Masonic and professional lives- I retired this year after over forty years of service in the US Coast Guard. My theme for this year was titled "Freemasonry, The Lifesavers," and was symbolized by an orange life ring surrounding the emblem of our Craft. This medley of iconography was intended to convey a message of hope and safety, as both institutions, Freemasonry and the Coast Guard, whether directly or indirectly, save lives without the vain motivators of fanfare or finance. Masonry, in its great campaign to take good men and make them better, instills qualities within its votaries that shield and defend them from all of the vices and superfluities of life, thereby better enabling them to withstand the trials and afflictions that they are destined to endure.

I am humbled that December has arrived so quickly, as serving as the 2022 Worshipful Master of Kempsville Masonic Lodge No. 196 has been nothing short of the most rewarding Masonic experience of my life. I could not have asked for a better collection of officers, all of whom were exemplary in their undertakings. Although I am saddened to leave their ranks, I am comforted with the knowledge that the Lodge will continue to enjoy their outstanding leadership in the coming years. As they continue their travels, I will forever cherish the experiences, memories, and stories

that I have gathered in my journey to and from the East.

Brother John Settle, III, Worshipful Master

From The West



As I get ready to embark on this perilous journey toward that oriental chair, I realize that there are daily challenges. I need the help of the brethren to make this a successful lodge. Training attendance has seemed to fall off because of COVID and the frequency of training. We have three new members for second reading in December that will need coaches. Bind Anew is the Theme for my year where you return to fulfilling your obligation to Kempsville by participating in training, mentoring, coaching, and giving lectures, and giving honors to a Brother who was called to the Celestial Lodge. I would like the Brethren to advise the Junior Warden of the lectures that they can give, the parts that they know and are currently working on learning. For example I know how to coach and obligate all three degrees, I know King Soloman, Hiram – King of Tyre, Seafaring Man, all Ruffian, working on 1st Fellowcraft and know Fellowcraft Lecture. I intend to learn Master Mason lecture and funeral service next. Please help your lodge by "Binding Anew" !

Brother Pat Blankenship, Senior Warden

From The South



Why so many Secrets? Masonry has for years been a source of speculation for so many outside of the craft. "What do they do inside that building with no windows?" Where do they get the goats from? They worship the devil, they are part of a vast conspiracy for world domination , and so many other wild claims. People fear what they do not know or understand. As you have all heard, Masonry is not a secret society, we are a society of secrets. Our rituals are sacred and cherished within the walls of our lodges. Our fraternity is unique in that part of our obligation is to always remain silent. Even when under verbal attack by those unknowing our craft. Instinct says "set the record straight!" Masonically we will forever remain silent to the speculators. As such our signs and tokens allow us to acknowledge and communicate with each other when in public. Cherish them my brethren as we cherish each other! It has been my honor to sit in the South this year and again I wish to express deep appreciation

for the outpouring of love and support from my brethren, the Worshipful Master and also special thanks to Worshipful Rob Lockwood who was always there to ensure the South was guarded! Have a Merry Christmas and Happy New year!

Brother Doug Dunn, Junior Warden

Trestle Board

- December 13 Annual Stated Communication
Lodge 6PM, Dinner 7PM
- December 19 District Blood Drive
Lynnhaven Lodge No 220, 2-7PM
- January 10 Stated Communication
Dinner 6PM, Lodge 7PM
- January 28 Lodge Breakfast, 8-10AM

Masonic Birthdays for December

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Timothy R. Berkhimer '02 | Jessie R. Ritchie '92 |
| Dominick DiColandrea '10 | James R. Smith '94 |
| Lincoln Figueroa '01 | David H. Weast '87 |
| Timothy M. Maguire '01 | Ricky T. West '83 |

To Our Masonic Widows

Happy Birthday to our special ladies in December:

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------------|
| Carolyn Harrison | December 1 st |
| Peggy McGuire | December 10 th |
| June Wilder | December 10 th |
| Priscella Adkins | December 14 th |
| Loretta Cedola | December 21 st |
| Sherry Green | December 21 st |
| Betty Meyer | December 31 st |

If any of our ladies are in need of assistance from the Lodge, please don't hesitate to contact Right Worshipful Bill Knowles or the Secretary.

From the Secretary

Brethren, Annual Lodge dues are now payable for 2023. Please remit your dues, either electronically on the Grand Lodge website, or by mail to the Secretary. Dues are payable in January each year to be current for the calendar year - please take note.

Right Worshipful Bob Stanek, Secretary

Brother Richard Walter Mears (cont'd from page 1)

concur on his quality as an outspoken family man, and lament his passing at such an early age.

These commendations towards Mears are certainly similar to ones that others may express toward their own fathers. As such, Mears' incorporation as the final installment in this series serves to showcase their indisputable importance. To this end, fathers, whether by blood, marriage, or choice, and regardless of their worldly accomplishments, are the guardians and mentors of our lives—they are The Lifesavers.

Although this is the conclusion of this series, your input is still appreciated! If you're aware of a deceased member of our Lodge who may fit "The Lifesaver" criteria, please email johnrs4@vt.edu.

From our Past DDGM

It was an honor and pleasure to serve our Craft as the District Deputy Grand Master for the 56th District for 2021-2022. My term ended on November 12, 2022, when Right Worshipful Jerry Anderson (Lynnhaven Lodge No. 220) was installed for 2022-2023 at the Grand Annual Communication in Richmond. I join a select few of 10 Past Masters of our lodge to have served as District Deputy Grand Master since 1955, and I am honored to be counted among them. I will continue to serve our lodge as your Secretary (always remembering that fine example set by our first Secretary of 50-years, Right Worshipful Bill "The Handsome One" Pierce).

Thanking all for the many fraternal courtesies afforded me as your DDGM last year.

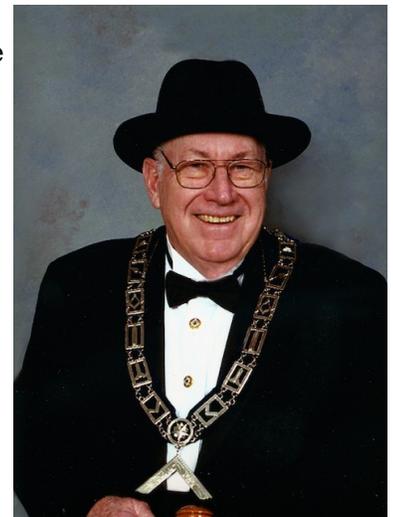
Right Worshipful Bob Stanek

Right Worshipful Roger Cort

On November 7th, the members of Kempsville Lodge gathered to pay their respects and say goodbye to Right Worshipful Roger Cort, who entered the Celestial Lodge on October 31, 2022.

Roger served as Kempsville's 53rd Worshipful Master in 2007, District Deputy Grand Master in 2011, and Grand Tiler in 2014. I had the

pleasure of serving with Roger throughout his Masonic journey and I can honestly say that his



companionship will be remembered as a highlight of my own Masonic travels.

I'm sure our Past Masters will agree, one of the most important, yet difficult, duties of the Worshipful Master is interacting with the family of a deceased member. One's age, life experiences, and empathy all play a part in determining how well we perform this important role. We lost 12 members during his year as Worshipful Master and there was no one that I would have rather had representing our Lodge or Freemasonry than Roger. His empathy for the family during their time of loss was without equal. Roger clearly understood this one simple premise—no matter how difficult these visits may be for you, that discomfort pales in comparison to what the family is going through. That's something all of us, and especially those currently traveling to the East, should take to heart.

If he were still alive, Right Worshipful Bill Pierce would no doubt have offered this simple yet perfect description of Roger: "He was a good 'ol bear." Nothing more needs to be said.

Well, maybe just one more thing.

We'll miss you, Roger.

A Fellow Past Master



Have a Merry Masonic Christmas

Lodge Officers

Worshipful Master	John Settle, III	675-9695
Senior Warden	Pat Blankenship	406-6166
Junior Warden	Doug Dunn	781-389-6557
Treasurer	Chris Anders	635-7617
Secretary	Bob Stanek	619-7646
Senior Deacon	Michael Turner	581-4239
Junior Deacon	Keith Ingraham	613-5474
Senior Steward	Todd Moissett	604-3085
Junior Steward	Scott Sherman	597-1150
Chaplain	James Boone	515-0131
Musician	R. Scott Foxwell	536-1659
Marshal	Dickie Cooper	971-7347
Tiler	Dennis Dimaggio	582-3320
Instructor of Work	Tom McGowan	497-3881
Education Officer	William Rawson	724-4867
MAHOVA Ambassador	Ray Connard	630-5797
Blood Coordinator	Michael Blankenship	438-2862
Youth Advisor	Eddie Foley	581-8144

The Ashlar
Kempville Lodge #196 AF&AM
4869 Princess Anne Road
Virginia Beach, VA 23462

NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
NORFOLK, VA
PERMIT NO. 508