



# **Grand Council of Cryptic Masons**

## **State of New York**

**Most Illustrious Stephen A. Rubinstein**

**Grand Master**

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### ***[Morning Address to the Companions]***

Most Worshipful Grand Master, Right Worshipful Deputy Grand Master, Right Illustrious Deputy Grand Master, Right Puissant Deputy Grand Master, Right Puissant Grand Principal Conductor of the Work, Right Puissant Northeast General District Deputy Grand Master, Past Most Illustrious Grand Masters, Grand Officers, Companions All.

I wish to begin by thanking all in this jurisdiction who have had the faith and confidence in me to elect me your Grand Master.

My theme for this year is “HONOR THE PAST – CHALLENGE THE FUTURE”.

In this abbreviated form of my address to be delivered later this afternoon, I will touch on my feelings about “HONORING THE PAST”.

This past year, we lost one of the finest gentlemen I have known while serving this Grand Jurisdiction, Most Illustrious E. William Whittaker. When first elected to the Grand Line, he expressed doubts that I would be able to serve as I progressed up the Line because I lived out of New York. Well, after the first year or two, he indicated that I had passed muster and all was right. After that, we became more than colleagues, friends.

I have always been a great fan of passing down Masonic regalia to those who follow me. As such, I have contributed my Master’s Apron to a late Brother whom I brought into the craft. Also, my Past Master’s jewel (from my Mother Lodge in Massachusetts) has been passed down to young man who has a great future in this fraternity.

But most important to me is the gavel I will use in my position as your Grand Master. In 1955, Worshipful Moses Ferguson took office in Ionic Lodge, No. 486 in Manhattan. He received it from his father, Brother Harry Ferguson who was about to celebrate his 50 years in the Craft. You see, Brother Harry was my Grandfather, and Worshipful Brother Moses was my Uncle. When I first became a Master at that Lodge’s successor, Moe’s widow presented me with that same gavel which I have used to preside over a number of Masonic organizations. Next August, when I step down as your Grand Master, it will finally be retired after over 65 years of use.

In my presentation later this afternoon, I will elaborate on the “CHALLENGE THE FUTURE” portion of my program.

***[Afternoon Address to the Companions and Guests]***

Most Worshipful Grand Master, Right Worshipful Deputy Grand Master, Right Puissant Deputy Grand Master, Right Puissant Grand Principal Conductor of the Work, Right Puissant Northeast Regional General District Deputy Grand Master, Past Most Illustrious Grand Masters, Grand Officers, Companions, Ladies and Guests. Good Afternoon.

I must begin by thanking all of the Companions of this Grand Council for their confidence in electing me your Grand Master for the year 2022-2023, our Bicentennial Year. Your support and concern during the year I have experienced is most appreciative. Lady Nancy and I have to thank each and every one of you who have offered prayers and good wishes. I could not have done it without you and especially not without her wonderful support. Nancy and I have been together now for eight and a half years. And she has been extremely supportive as I have progressed up the Line of this jurisdiction.

As I take the helm of Cryptic Masonry in the State of New York, I have taken a long, hard look of where we've been, where we are now, and where we must try to be in the future. My motto for this year is HONOR THE PAST – CHALLENGE THE FUTURE.

Cryptic Masonry has three of the most beautiful and instructive degrees in all of York Rite Masonry. As MI Richard Fowler stated when he became Grand Master: NOW FOR THE REST OF THE STORY! We have a great story to tell. All Masons should be told it and learn the lessons from it.

I spoke about the theme "HONOR THE PAST" this morning.

Now, let me get to some of the specifics as we CHALLENGE THE FUTURE:

MEMBERSHIP – As I have noted in my Deputy Grand Master's Report, this is the major challenge we all have at every level of our Fraternity. I do not have the answer to this problem, but I am willing to try any and all proposed solutions. To that end, I am tasking our District Deputies to establish a group of Ambassadors to assist the Symbolic Lodges in their Districts. We must help to strengthen the Lodges which ultimately will provide candidates for further light in York Rite Masonry. We present the Ish Sodi Award for membership. This year only one Companion has qualified. As you are all aware, it takes 5 first line signatures on petitions to join a Council to qualify. I CHALLENGE each and every one of you to qualify for the Award. I would be honored and overjoyed to present a number of them next year at our 200th Assembly, and run out of our supply of medals!

RITUAL: As I previously noted, we have some of the most beautiful and meaningful ritual in all of Masonry. Many of our Councils have the ability to open and close without resorting to the "book". I CHALLENGE each Council to strive to be able to do this by the end of this Cryptic Year. I CHALLENGE each Assistant Grand Lecturer to work, with those Councils that are struggling with their ritual and help them towards proficiency.

I would like to personally thank R.:I.: Stuart Card for agreeing to serve one more year as our Grand Lecturer. We made a deal: he would serve this year if he was allowed to train his successor. To that end, I have appointed V.:I.: Frank Fancher as Deputy Grand Lecturer, and recommend that my successor, R.:I.: Donald Kunego select him as the Grand Lecturer for 2023-2024.

CHARITY: This past year, we lost M.:l.: E. William Whittaker who was the glue that held our Charity Corporation together. In this jurisdiction, we make contributions to the Parkinson Foundation, the Children's Tumor Foundation, the three youth groups (the future of this Fraternity), and CMMRF of General Grand Council

BUT, to be able to continue these contributions, we need each and every Cryptic Mason in this jurisdiction to go a little deeper into their pocket to support the Corporation. I understand that we are all constantly bombarded with requests to make charitable donations, but this is truly good one. 100% of your contribution goes directly to our Charities.

As you all know, in addition to regular contributions, each of you can qualify for the Solomon Arch Society. This entails making a pledge to contribute \$100 per year for ten years (of course it can be paid off faster if one desires). The Society presents a jewel to each member. I CHALLENGE each of you who are not already a member to join and wear the jewel proudly.

As I approached my year in the East, I created a group I called the "Mystic Four", a group I could bounce ideas off of and get their reactions. They usually had some push back, and I truly appreciate their efforts and ideas, some of which will be implemented this year.

I would like to thank M.:l.: Richard Fowler, M.:l.: David Raymond, M.:l.: Frank Karwoski and R.:l.: Harvey Eysman, our Judge Advocate for their participation in this process

The two major areas we worked on were our Grand Representative structure and adopting an Arch system of management.

Following up on M.:l.: John Gallant's recommendation, I intend to work towards a Grand Representative structure, where we will only have Grand Representatives to the six New England States and New Jersey. A large number of jurisdictions have abandoned their Grand Representative structure, for two reasons: many individuals do not travel to the annual sessions, and the information previously reported by Grand Representatives can now be accessed electronically.

In place of these appointments, I am recommending that Grand Council create an award similar to the Distinguished Service Award of Grand Lodge. In this way, we can honor those individuals who have served this Grand Council.

As far as an Arch Structure is concerned, this would do away with District Deputies and in their place, the Grand Line Officers would absorb their function. A number of issues have been raised with this concept, and I plan to resolve them this year with proposed legislation next year to make this happen.

Okay, this has been a long presentation, I now CHALLENGE myself to the following:

1. Deliver shorter speeches!
2. Hold a listening session in every District to include non-Cryptic Masons, as well as non-Masons.
3. Attend Council meetings where I AM INVITED.
4. Work for YOU to continue to make New York one of the premiere Cryptic Jurisdictions in the world.

G-D Bless this Grand Council, the United States and our service people in harm's way, and G-D Bless you all!

Thank you!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen A. Rubinstein". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

SAR/jag

Most Ill. Stephen A. Rubinstein  
Grand Master  
Grand Council of Cryptic Masons of the State of New York