

W.:M.: Installation Speech
January 17, 2015

Distinguished Guests, family, friends, guests and Brothers all:

Thank you for joining us today for our 2015 Installation of officers at St. Petersburg Lodge No. 139 Free and Accepted Masons.

I would first like to thank my Spouse, Craig Gatrel, for his love and support in helping me to become a better man and Mason. There have been many evenings that Craig has taken on extra duties around our home to allow me to be down at the Lodge for our meetings, working with Brothers on their catechisms, attending committee meetings, meeting with petitioners or off on some other Masonic adventure. After 29 years together, he still puts up with me.

I would next like to thank my Brothers at St. Petersburg Lodge No. 139 for giving me the honor and the opportunity to serve them as the Worshipful Master of our Lodge for 2015. I love you my Brothers and will always try to do my best to earn your continued respect and support.

Next, I would like to thank our distinguished Installing Officers for their time and dedication to our Craft and our Lodge:

R.:W.: Alan Rosenthal - Past Deputy District Grand Master
2011,

R.:W.: James Clouser - Past Deputy District Grand Master 2011,

R.:W.: Earl Ray - Past Deputy District Grand Master 2012,

W.: Bob Davidson Organist St. Petersburg Lodge No. 139 and Grand Musician for the Grand Lodge of Florida

and the York Rite Honor Guard.

I would next like to thank Brothers Jon Anderson and Valentino Pine, members of our Technology committee, for the design and production of the Installation program. What a wonderful job these Brothers did on this project. Thank you Brothers!

Next, I would like to thank an individual that has been of great support to our Lodge over the past years, and unfortunately she cannot be with us today, as she and Charlie are attending the Shrine East-West game down the street: That person is Irene Clinker of the Eureka Chapter #5 of the Order of the Eastern Star. Irene has devoted hours upon hours of her time throughout the last year to make sure that we had fantastic dinners prior to our meetings and degrees. We know that her thoughts are with us this afternoon as she cheers on the football players and the children at the Shriner's Hospitals for Children.

I would also like to thank the families and friends of all of our newly installed officers, members of our Lodge in attendance and guests, in their encouragement and support of our efforts within our Lodge and outside in our community.

Lastly, I would like to thank our newly Junior Past Master, W:. Tom Quay for his love of the fraternity and love of our Lodge in providing his countless hours of service and dedication to the Craft.

Message:

About four months ago, I was talking with one of our newer members and he remarked that before joining our Lodge, he had passed by many times, as he worked in the Downtown area, and he thought that our building was abandoned. There were no lights on, the front door was covered, the marquees beside the doors were also covered. There were no signs of life about the building.

His comments made me ask myself: How are we presenting ourselves to our community? Does anyone know that we are here? Do we really matter?

Well, we do matter! And we, as a Lodge and a Fraternity, must make changes to “business-as-usual” in order to survive in the future. This year, with the support of my Brethren, we intend to turn the lights back on! Not just the physical lights under the canopy out front, but also the light within each of us. The light of pride in who we are and the services that we provide to our community.

To assist in turning on the lights, our technology committee has been hard at work creating a world-class web presence telling the history of St. Petersburg Lodge No. 139 and acting as communications vehicle to keep the members informed of

events and activities in one central location. This web site is linked to social media such as Facebook and others to drive traffic to the website so that Masons from all over the world and interested individuals in the general public are introduced to our Lodge and Freemasonry in General.

We must also expand our visibility in the community by becoming more involved with Masonic and local charities, become involved in community service projects and take an active role in visiting and assisting the residents of the Masonic Home of Florida.

Our technology committee is already hard at work changing our Lodge communications infrastructure. Where the telephone was the communications vehicle of the 20th Century, the internet is that of the 21st century. Our plans are to have the majority of the first and second floors of this building outfitted with wifi access by the end of the first quarter.

In addition to improving our technology tools and communications strategy, there are other areas of our operations that we must evaluate to determine how to proceed. These areas include administration of our internal processes, facilities management and communications, to name a few.

We must challenge ourselves to look to the future and to what we can be - and refrain from holding too tightly to the past as the way things “have always been.” It will take all of us to work together to accomplish our goals with cooperation, determination and a positive attitude. Our past is the

foundation of what we are today. We must build on that foundation for the future of both our Lodge and our fraternity.

Thank you.