

MOST WORSHIPFUL UNION GRAND LODGE

19TH MWGM ACCEPTANCE SPEECH



Jeffery Jones

MOST WORSHIPFUL UNION GRAND LODGE OF FLORIDA 410 BROAD STREET JACKSONVILLE, FL 32202



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AUGUST 1, 2020

For lack of guidance a nation falls, but victory is won through many advisers.

~Proverbs 11:14

First Giving Honor to my Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ. To these Most Worshipful Past Grand Masters. Our 15th MWGM The Honorable Bishop Dr. Michael R. Moore, Posthumously to Our 16th MWGM The Honorable Lee B. Carter, Our 17th MWGM The Honorable Anthony T. Stafford, Our 18th MWGM The Honorable Walter Gulley, Jr., to The Honorable Terrence Jackson. To our visiting MWGM the Honorable Corey Shackelford, Jurisdiction of Georgia. To the Elected Line of Grand Lodge Officers of this great jurisdiction, To all Appointed Grand Lodge officers, Worshipful Masters, Past Masters, Wardens, Brothers All. Good Afternoon.

I stand here today in this space and time humbled by what I feel is a very surreal moment of my life. I stand here duly elected as your 19th Most Worshipful Grand Master of this Most Worshipful Union Grand Lodge; having spent the last 35 years working towards this day. The most recent 11 years of which have been spent laboring in the vineyards of this great Jurisdiction as an elected Grand Lodge officer. I refer to this moment as surreal because just 12 years ago, I could not have confidently imaged that I would be only the 19th Man to serve this Jurisdiction as its Most Worshipful Grand Master since its founding in the 1870.

In 1985, I was raised from a dead level to a living perpendicular; and with the assistance of the brothers I stood on the square in the hallowed halls of then Thomas City Lodge #226 in Wacissa, Florida. Upon my Graduation from College (The Florida A&M University), I returned home to join my now home lodge the Pride of Palm Beach Lodge #447. It was not until 1989 that I had my first opportunity to attend Grand Session. But since that first session I have not missed a Grand Session in 31 years. I have been in awe of this



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organization since the first time I met Grand Master Dr. George Washington III on the 5th floor of 410 Broad Street our Grand East. Dr. Washington was a strong-willed man who radiated with confidence. A man who wielded the authority of his Grand Mastership with unapologetic strength and leadership. Dr. Washington passed in 1992 leaving a legacy and that influences this Jurisdiction to this day.

He was followed by a man his polar opposite. The Honorable Dr. Henry Simmons was a man of Peace, Patience and Humility. Dr. Simmons believed in transparency and fairness. He empathized with the members and held a deep appreciation for the sacrifices made by each of us who love Prince Hall Masonry and the Jurisdiction of Florida. He was one who spoke softly but he spoke with the equal confidence of Dr. Washington. His humility could easily and was often but mistakenly viewed as Passivity. There were many who found this mistake very costly; a mistake resulting in short lived masonic careers. Wise beyond his years, Dr. Simmons too was one that was unapologetic about the authority the Grand Master.

As I stand here today, I stand on the shoulders of Giants.....Giants of Masonic Leadership. And throughout my masonic career, I have had the unique and awesome opportunity to watch firsthand how these true leaders have led men throughout time within the historic halls of the greatest fraternity in the history of mankind. As I look to the future of this jurisdiction, I look within myself to use all that I have learned and taken from each of them. I look to the:

- Strength and Confidence of - The Honorable Dr George Washington III
- I look to the: Humility and Wisdom of - The Honorable Dr. Henry Simmons
- I look to the: Organization and Planning of – The Honorable Bishop Dr Michael R. Moore



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- I look to the: Kindness and Selfless leadership of - The Honorable Lee B. Carter
- I look to the: Intelligence and Charisma of – The Honorable of Anthony T. Stafford
- I look to the: Fair, Firm and Consistency of – The Honorable Walter Gulley, Jr.

I will look to them all, using that which I have gleaned from what can arguably be consider some of the greatest Masonic teachers in all of Prince Hall Masonry. The tools I have developed over the years under their tutelage will help me to bring my vision and plan for this jurisdiction to fruition.

That said, my primary focus for this jurisdiction over the next 5 years should you the Brothers find favor in my leadership; will be the growth of its membership. In 1985 when I first joined the ranks of Prince Hall Masonry, the Jurisdiction of Florida proudly stood 10,000 men strong with close to an equal number of women. Our numbers have dropped dramatically over the years, fluctuating from year to year between 2300 and 2700 men. Our lady's numbers falling even short of that. Yet the demands upon masonry and the necessity for strong organizational leadership within our communities has significantly increased. Our young boys and little girls need good examples of strong, intelligent, and professional men & women to look up to.

While we are not a political organization with a political agenda. Make no mistake organization like ours have the ability to have major impact on the political decisions being made within our communities that affect us all. But a voice of a mere 2500 Brother and an even a smaller number of Sisters fades in the wind of state that houses nearly 21 million residents. The good news is 4 million of those voices are represented within our communities and is almost equally divided among Black males and Black females. Many of them



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professional, intelligent, strong people with a belief in God. It is my goal to expose them to who we are and what we do. One of key components of this membership plan to increase our numbers will be to expose the Good Men and Women within our communities to our organization. Mandated community programs supported by every lodge within the Jurisdiction that puts Prince Hall Masonry in the public eye is paramount to the program's success

A concerted effort focused around a structured membership program with deliberate intent to increase our quantity in number but insistent on the quality and standards of membership is how we will make this happen.

I feel confident that we can increase our numbers by an additional 3000 – 4000 men; without sacrificing the quality of our ranks. The plan is already proven itself to work and is shown great promise, and is actively working in at least one lodge within this Jurisdiction now. With 120 lodges working together using the same program, this goal is well within reach and easily attainable.

I am also a firm believer that if you expect the help of others, you must first show yourself willing to give help to others. The Most Worshipful Union Grand Lodge foundation in my opinion is one of the greatest tools we have at our disposal to help uplift our communities and bring Prince Hall Masonry to the forefront of the minds of those who think like us. But we can't expect others to support our foundation if we ourselves the members of this Most Worshipful Union Grand Lodge are not equally willing to support it. I will look to the members to set the example for others to help us build a well-funded foundation that is actively working to better the communities where we live; through the support of our youth and those less fortunate than ourselves.

Through the drive of Grand Master Walter Gulley, Jr and the resolve of our membership, we now find ourselves mortgage free for the first time in almost two decades. This financial blessing puts us into an unfamiliar position for



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this jurisdiction. We now have an untapped financial resource. While we could easily begin to live on this resource, I don't believe this to be the smart play, nor do I believe you do either. We have a unique opportunity to use this resource in ways that may aid us in creating financial growth as well as residual income for the purpose of building some financial wealth in this great jurisdiction.

However, It is no secret that as we transition the leadership of this organization, we find the world under siege by a Pandemic of epic proportion. Worldwide more than 650 million souls have been lost to this dreaded COVID-19 disease, over 150,000 of them in the US alone. Additionally, the United States is in the midst of the greatest fight for social change in this country since the Civil Rights movement of the 1960's. With all of this happening in the world, As Men and Women of discipline and resolve, I strongly feel the Lord is with us and therefore, we cannot and shall not allow ourselves to be deterred. We must stay on mission; we must press forward.

As we move into this new masonic year, I will move with eager anticipation of what is possible. I am prayerful that our Jurisdiction will move in unison. We will work together with enthusiasm, positive minds, and with deliberate intention to succeed in all that we do. If I were to set an expectation for the jurisdiction as well as identify an expectation of my own, I would tell you to expect Structured Leadership from me, I'll only ask you in return to be committed members of this great organization.

As I close, I leave you all with this last thought from the Holy Writ. And I pray that you will always keep it in mind as we move forward to bring this plan into fruition.

I appeal to you, brothers (and Sisters), to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them. For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their



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own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naïve.

~[Romans 16:17-18](#)

Together Brother (and Sisters) we can move this Jurisdiction to higher heights if we just trust in each other and trust in the Lord,

May God Bless you and Keep you is my Prayer,

I AM

Jeffery Gerard Jones
19th Most Worshipful Grand Master
Most Worshipful Union Grand Lodge
Most Ancient and Honorable Fraternity
Free & Accepted Masons of Florida,
Belize Central America, and it's Jurisdiction, Inc. PHA

GOD SAVE THE CRAFT!!!!