**Lodge Officers: An Overview**

**Introduction**

Masonic Lodges are dependent on their officer’s leadership.

Each position plays an important part for the organization to be successful.

Seven of the officers are part of a "progressive line", also known as "going through the chairs." This line of succession moves up one position at a time from one year to the next.

If no one asks to "step out of line" for any reason, it will take 7 years for a Junior Steward to progress to Worshipful Master.

The progression is as follows: Junior Steward, Senior Steward, Junior Deacon, Senior Deacon, Junior Warden, Senior Warden...and then Worshipful Master.

The duties and names of the officers are taken from very old customs dating back to the medieval guilds.

**Worshipful Master:**

His Jewel is the **Square**, which is a stonemason's tool to ascertain true and correct angles of the cut and smoothed stone...thus his Jewel symbolizes **virtue.**

The Worshipful Master sits in the East of the Lodge room (symbolic of the Rising Sun in the East) and directs all the business of the Lodge. He also presides over ritual and ceremonies.

His position is like a President of any other organization. As Master, his word is final over all actions pertaining to his Lodge.

It is his duty to:

**"Set the Craft to work and give them proper instruction.”**

The Worshipful Master is responsible for everything within his lodge during his year as Master.

He is ultimately responsible for every other lodge officer and their duties, every lodge committee, ritual and degree work, Masonic education, social functions, fundraisers, District and Grand Lodge liaison, Trestle Board communication, etc.

All eyes are upon the Master. If lodge functions go smoothly, it is the Master who takes the credit. If lodge functions go awry, it is the Master who bears the blame.

It is his duty to preside over business meetings, the conferral of degrees, and delegation of duties to all other Lodge Officers.

While Freemasons call the Master, "Worshipful Master", they do not worship him. "Worshipful" is an honorary title which shows respect for his position.

**Senior Warden:**

His Jewel is the **Level.**..symbolizing that all Masons **meet on the level,** without regard to social, political or religious beliefs or status.

The Senior Warden is the second in command within the Lodge.

In the absence of the Worshipful Master, the Senior Warden assumes the Worshipful Master's duties.

The Senior Warden sits in the West (symbolic of the setting sun) and assists the Worshipful Master in opening and closing the Lodge.

The Senior Warden is in charge of the Lodge when it is at labor. His position is similar to a Vice-President.

His ancient duties were to pay the Craft (the members of the guild) their wages and to handle disputes among the workers. Today it is his duty to support the Master and to prepare himself for that office during the following year.

**Junior Warden:**

His Jewel of Office is the **Plumb**,... which is a stonemason's instrument used to raise perpendiculars.

It symbolizes **upright behavior** among Masons.

The Junior Warden is the third in command. The Junior Warden sits in the South (symbolic of the position of the sun at midday) and is responsible for the Brethren while the Lodge is at refreshment.

The Junior Warden, too, may open the lodge if the Master is unable to attend the meeting.

It is the Junior Warden's duty to arrange meals for the lodge, and, typically, the 2 Stewards act as his assistants in this responsibility.

He acts as the youth Group liaison to DeMolay and the Bethel if present.

Symbolically, it is also his duty to make certain that the members do not convert refreshment into intemperance or excess. This is a holdover from earlier days, even though in most U.S. jurisdictions, alcohol is barred from the lodge.

**These are the Primary Officers**

The Master, Senior Warden and Junior Warden make up the finance committee and must generally be present to open the Lodge

**Senior Deacon:**

His Jewel is the **Square and Compass with the Sun in the middle**. The sun signifies that his position is on the lower level, to the right of the Worshipful Master in the east.

He is **messenger for the Worshipful Master**.

The Senior Deacon's principle roles are to welcome and escort both visitors and candidates into the lodge and introduce distinguished visitors.

It is his duty to assist the Worshipful Master and carry orders between the Worshipful Master and the Senior Warden. During degree rituals, he guides the new candidate and conducts him around the lodge room.

During the opening and closing ceremonies, the Senior Deacon displays and secures the three Greater and three lesser lights.

He also carries the ballot box when balloting on candidates.

The Senior Deacon (and the Junior Deacon) both carry long staffs (or rods), because as messengers of the Worshipful Master, the staffs are symbolic of the caduceus (or wand) that the Roman god and messenger Mercury carried. Atop the rods are the jewels of their offices.

**Junior Deacon:**

Like his senior counterpart, the Senior Deacon, the Jewel of his office is the Square and Compass, however the Junior Deacon's **Square and Compass has a moon in the center** (rather than a sun), which signifies that he is **in the West**.

The Junior Deacon's principle roles are to assist the Senior Warden by carrying messages from the Senior Warden in the West to the Junior Warden in the South and to guard the outer door.

It is his duty to always ascertain whether the Tiler is guarding the door and only allowing visitors to enter after they have been properly vouched for.

The Junior Deacon also prepares candidates during ritual and escorts them into the lodge room.

**Senior and Junior Stewards:**

Their Jewel is the Cornucopia, which is an exact duplicate of the Junior Steward's Cornucopia. Thissignifies the **"Horn of Plenty"**. It is a goat horn filled with the fresh fruits and vegetables to denote the "**fruits of your labors**" and represents **a job well done**.

The Senior Steward is tasked to study the Junior Deacon's position and fill in for the Junior Deacon when absent.

The Junior Steward is tasked to understudy the Senior Steward position and fill in for the Senior Steward in his absence.

During degrees the Stewards assist the Junior Deacon in preparing candidates.

Both the Senior and Junior Stewards typically handle kitchen duties for the Lodge.

**Other Positions**

The following officers are not part of the progressive line.

Many times these brothers have already progressed through all the chairs.

 Treasurers and Secretaries often serve their lodge in their respective positions for many years.

Continuity in these positions is vital to a well-run and efficient lodge.  Training takes time and if these officer positions changed each year, financial and accounting chaos would occur.

**Treasurer:**

His Jewel is a **Pair of Crossed Keys**, signifying he is the **Collector and Distributor of all Lodge Monies**as he holds the keys to the cashbox**.**

The Treasurer of a Masonic Lodge is the Chief Financial Officer of the Lodge. He sits to the right of the Master and behind the Senior Deacon.

The Treasurer is responsible for all financial transactions. He receives all money, pays all debts by order of the Worshipful Master with the consent of the lodge and renders a report when requested.

The treasurer does not need an accounting degree, however experience with bookkeeping and accounting helps.

**Secretary:**

His Jewel is the **Crossed Quill Pens**. The Secretary is the Lodge's **Recorder**.

The Secretary's Lodge Officer Duties require a high degree of experience, Masonic knowledge, diplomacy and, above all, detailed paperwork skills. The Lodge Secretary is the backbone of any Masonic Lodge and he holds a position of great responsibility. He sits to the left of the Master.

His duties require him to handle all correspondence to the members, minutes of Lodge meetings, petitions of new candidates, continuous lodge member count, and many other administrative duties. From his member list, he sends out the annual dues notices and receives dues payments.

The Secretary's Lodge Officer duties are many, not the least of which is that he must be well versed in the Masonic Code for his jurisdiction and his Lodge By-Laws. He keeps the list of Lodge members and helps the Master organize his meetings.

A very experienced member usually resides in this chair...many times he is a Past Master of the Lodge. While it is not a prerequisite, due to the number of hours that this position requires, most (not all) Lodge Secretaries are retired and therefore able to devote the many hours required which are necessary to this position.

**Tiler:**

His Jewel is the **Sword**, by which he symbolically **refuses entrance to anyone who is uninitiated in the Craft.** The sword has no scabbard, as it is his symbolic duty to always have his sword drawn, ready for the defense of his post.

The Tiler sits outside the closed door of the lodge room, armed with a sword.

The Tiler's duties is to ensure that only those who are duly qualified are allowed to enter the Lodge Room. He guards against cowans and eavesdroppers. During the Middle Ages, a cowan was a man who built stone walls of poor quality. He was an uninitiated or non-apprenticed stonemason.

While the Tiler is sometimes called upon to assist in the preparation of candidates, his chief duty is to (symbolically) keep unskilled workmen from overhearing the conversation within the Lodge Room.

After the lodge members are inside the Lodge Room, the door closes and it is the Tiler's duty to decide whether late arrivals may enter. It is also his duty to make sure that each visitor is "properly clothed", which means they must be wearing their Masonic apron.

To be fully and properly dressed before entrance into the Lodge Room, the visitor must be wearing their apron over the top (or on the outside) of their suit coat (never under their coat) and the apron strings must be fully tied before the Tiler will allow the visitor entrance.

**Chaplain:**

His Jewel is an **opened book, symbolizing the Volume of Sacred Law**(the Christian Bible, Hebrew Torah or Tanach, the Muslim Qur'an, the Hindu Vedas or other Holy Books).

The Chaplain of a Masonic Lodge is an appointed officer of the Lodge.  He sits to the left of the Master.

The Chaplain is the spiritual leader of the Lodge.  While he may or may not be a real-world Minister, Priest, Rabbi or Imam,... in the lodge, the Chaplain is responsible for non-denominational prayers at both the opening and closing of meetings, during degree ritual ceremonies and before meals.   Most Chaplains have no religious training and prayers are non-denominational.

**Counselor:**

The Counselor’s principal goal to teach the fundamentals of Freemasonry to each candidate.

He will also provide continuing Masonic education to all members at Lodge meetings.

Further he provides oversight to the mentors, he should not be the mentor to all candidates.

**Conclusion**