

2026 GRAND YORK RITE SESSION



GRAND COUNCIL BUSINESS

MAY 1, 2026

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GRAND COUNCIL OF GEORGIA

2026

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2025-2026 GRAND COUNCIL GRAND LINE

John C. Miller (60) (Jennifer)	MI Grand Master
James R. Harris, Sr. (3) (Gail Ng)	VIDG Master
James D. Arnold (70) (Barbara)	RIGPC of Work
Matthew R. Astin (6) (Sarah)	RE Grand Treasurer
Mark A. Bradley (77) (Gay)	RIG Recorder
Keith Hales (55) (Dianne)	IG Captain of the Guard
Michael L. Hamlin (6) (Barbara)	IGC of the Council
Robert R. Cordle (60) (Brenda)	IG Chaplain
Peter D. Bard (74)	IG Marshal
Richard L. Tanner (19)	IG Steward
John W. Beckum (60) (Kat)	IG Sentinel

MOST ILLUSTRIOUS GRAND MASTER'S ADDRESS

To all Companions of the Great State of Georgia, Most Illustrious Past Grand Masters, and to my family and friends, I would like to thank all of you for allowing me to serve as your Most Illustrious Grand Master for 2025-2026. It has been an honor of a lifetime to serve in this capacity, and it is something that I will remember for the rest of my life.

"Put on the Whole Armor of God"

VISITATION

During this last year, I have visited Blue Lodges, Scottish Rite, York Rite, Yaraab Shrine and Appendant Masonic Bodies, Councils, Chapters, Commanderies, the Valley of Atlanta Scottish Rite. At every event, I was received with open arms and the utmost hospitality. Immediately after installation, I had the opportunity to speak with the Ladies of the Social Order of the Beauceant. It was a great honor to be asked by MIPGM Floyd Edmondson to attend his 50-year Award Ceremony at Summit Council's annual meeting.

I have had the opportunity to visit the following:

Covington 41
HC Rigdon 35
Jesup 70
Washington 6
Walker 24
Calhoun 6
Pickens 55
Walton C. Griffin 36
Rome 15
Winder 77
Jason Burr 13
Canton 3
Sardis 53
Western 29
Summit 19
NT Pirkle 65
Tifton 58
Douglasville 37
Alpharetta 54

Lakewood 10
Waycross Festival
Marietta 74
Smyrna 60
7th Masonic District Convention
State Assembly of the Eastern Star
Rainbow State Assembly
Annual Assembly of the DeMolay
Southwest Georgia Council Convention
7th District Council Convention
9th District Council Convention
AMD State Assembly
Red Cross of Constantine St Assembly
MELD Conference
Royal Order of Scotland
Masonic Week in DC
Grand Council at Grand Lodge
AMD Masonic Week in DC
Greater Atlanta Council Convention
Cobb County Convention
Annual Assembly Order of the Amaranth
Easter Sunrise of DC

DISPENSATIONS

A few dispensations were made this year, including one to move a Council Charter to have a joint Council meeting between Councils.

CMMRF

It was a great year for CMMRF. I would like to take a moment and thank and commend Illustrious Companion Peter Bard for serving as the CMMRF Chairman Committee and the rest of the CMMRF committee for their hard work this past year. Please refer to the CMMRF report for our year end results. I would like to thank all the Companions and Councils who have contributed to CMMRF. It was you who made this year a success. Georgia did an outstanding job this year.

STATE OF THE CRAFT

As I traveled this great state, Companions reminded me and thanked me for having the courage to speak my heart and proclaim, "Put on the Full Armor of God." The state of your craft is alive and work is being done in the quarry. New members are enthusiastic and yearning for more light. As I see the future leaders in this great state of Georgia, I am very pleased. We are blessed with talented young men. It's not the quantity but the quality.

APPOINTMENTS

It was an honor for me to make the following appointments for my year: MIPGM Rusty Cordle as Ill Grand Chaplain, and John Billy Beckum as Ill Grand Sentinel. I would like to thank these companions for serving this year and thank them for being my traveling companions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND APPRECIATION

First, I would like to give my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ all the thanks and glory for giving me health for a great year. My Masonic father Rusty Cordle for having confidence and trust in me. I love you brother!!! PMWGM Jan Giddens for proposing my name and having confidence in me thank you!! I love you, Jan! Next, I want to thank the Companions of the Great State of Georgia for electing me to this line seven years ago. Thank you, G. Everett Cox Council # 60, for your support. Brother Cox, I hope I've made you proud! Thank you to my home lodge, Mableton Lodge No. 171.

I would be especially remiss if I did not thank my loving wife, Jennifer, for her support and reminding me that I need to get out of the way and let God be God. Our faith, love, hard work, and dedication to Jesus has brought us through 38 years of marriage! I love you sweetheart from the bottom of my heart. I could not have done this without you. And of course, Buddy, our dog for teaching me the love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ. If you don't know the story, just ask.

Past Grand Commander Bobby Joe Townsend for signing many of my petitions and who was a member of Mableton Lodge No. 171. PEGC Townsend, I hope we made you proud.

A big thank you to MIPGM Floyd Edmondson, MWPGM Edgar Land, MWPGM Ben Polston and these great leaders are the reasons why I am here today. To MWGM Mark Bradley, your leadership and organizational skills are the best on the planet, thank you for your gentle and firm guiding hand. You make Tampa proud my Friend. You, sir, are the example for the rest of us to follow.

To all my companions, my mentors, my leaders, my crusaders, and to my friends: thank you for being so much a part of my life.

Remember to *"Put of the Whole Armor of God."* I love you all.

John C. Miller, Most Illustrious Grand Master

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE MOST ILLUSTRIOUS GRAND MASTER'S ADDRESS

"Put on the whole Armor of God"

To the Very Illustrious Deputy Grand Master, Grand Council Officers, Most Illustrious Past Grand Master's and Companions of the Most Illustrious Grand Council of Royal and Select Masters of Georgia. The Committee on the Most Illustrious Grand Master's Address is honored to make the following report:

We join with our Most Illustrious Grand Master in welcoming all guests and members to the two hundred Annual Assembly of the Grand Council of Georgia. We pray that this Grand Assembly will be enjoyed by all present.

We acknowledge the travels of our Most Illustrious Grand Master this year, and we appreciate the distinguished way he has represented our Grand Council and the Royal and Select Masters of Georgia in his journeys.

We acknowledge the dispensations and decisions that our Most Illustrious Grand Master has had to make this year and applaud his leadership in all issues.

We join the Most Illustrious Grand Master to thank the Grand Officers of this Grand Council for their support and service. We complement our Most Illustrious Grand Master on his appointment of the two "appointed" Grand Officers...Most Illustrious Companion Robert R. Cordle, Right Illustrious Reverend Grand Chaplain, and Illustrious Companion John W. Beckum, Illustrious Grand Sentinel. These two great companions have added

much to our Grand Council this year. We join the Most Illustrious Grand Master in his appreciation and acknowledgment of the unity the Grand Council Officers, our Grand Council is in good hands for many years to come.

We commend the Most Illustrious Grand Master in seeking advice and guidance from those who have traveled this way before, the Most Illustrious Past Grand Masters. We especially acknowledge Illustrious Companion Jan Giddens, for having faith in Most Illustrious Companion Miller and nominating him for the office of Illustrious Grand Steward and starting him on this journey.

We appreciate the support First Lady Jennifer has given to our Most Illustrious Grand Master. We are sure she has made his journey more memorable.

We appreciate the support our Most Illustrious Grand Master has provided to the CMMRF program. Through his support and the efforts of Peter Bard and all the committee, we continue to be strong and leading supporters of this great work.

We wish to join the Most Illustrious Grand Master in thanking the Grand Secretary, Most Illustrious Companion Mark Bradley and Marla Horton for their service, their hard work should never go unnoticed, their efforts make it easy for the rest of us.

Now as our Most Illustrious Grand Master, John C. Miller, lays down the gavel of the Grand Council, we are assured that his service to our great fraternity is not ended. Soon the time will come for him to rise again to deeds of even more exalted usefulness.

Fraternally Submitted: William F. Shepard, Chairman; Hugh F. Watson;
and John Henry Johnson

REPORT OF THE JURISPRUDENCE COMMITTEE

To the Most Illustrious Grand Master, Officers and Companions of the Most Illustrious Grand Council of Royal and Select Masters for the State of Georgia:

We your Committee on Jurisprudence report that no bill was submitted to the Committee to amend the Constitution Section of the Grand Council Code of Georgia.

We are pleased to report that all decisions rendered by the Most Illustrious Grand Master and all dispensation issued from the office of the Grand Recorder in his behalf were in strict accordance with Royal and Select Masters Masonic Code of Georgia.

One Resolutions was submitted for consideration at this annual Grand Assembly.

The Jurisprudence Committee finds the Resolution in proper form and not in conflict with any section of the Code.

We your committee wishes to thank the Most Illustrious Grand Master for the opportunity to serve in this capacity.

Fraternally Submitted: William F. Shepard, Chairman; C. Danny Wofford;
and F. Andrew Lane, Jr.

REPORT OF BILLS, RESOLUTIONS, AND EDICTS COMMITTEE

To the Most Illustrious Grand Master, Grand Officers, and Members of the Grand Council of Royal and Select Masters of the State of Georgia:

Your committee on Bills, Resolutions and Edicts wishes to make the following report:

No Bills have been submitted to alter or amend the 2025 Grand Council Code.

Your Committee has reviewed one Resolution issued by the Most Illustrious Grand Master: Issued March 5, 2026 to arrest the charter of A. W. Goodin Council No. 28 at Valdosta. This was a necessary action and your Committee recommends its adoption.

Your Committee has reviewed two Edicts issued by the Most Illustrious Grand Master and recommend they be adopted:

Edict No. 1 issued May 12, 2025 to require a candidate for the degrees to be accompanied by at least one Recommender unless the degrees are conferred in the candidate's home council.

Edict No. 2 issued May 12, 2025 to allow District Grand Deputies to present Years of Service Awards to include FIFTY YEARS and higher awards.

If Approved, these Two Edicts will be added to the 2025 Grand Council Code in their appropriate Sections.

Respectfully Submitted: Joe E. Turner, Chairman

REPORT OF CHARTER, BY-LAWS & DISPENSATIONS COMMITTEE

To the Most Illustrious Grand Master, Grand Officers, and Members of the Grand Council of Royal and Select Masters of the State of Georgia:

Your committee on Charters, By-Laws and Dispensations wishes to make the following report:

Your Committee does not seem to have ever received a signed approval copy of the Bylaws of Silver Shoals Council No. 84 that was chartered in 2023.

Your Committee has received a rewrite of the bylaws of Lakewood Council No. 10, Western Council No. 29, Waycross Council No. 30, Douglasville Council No. 37 and Tifton Council No. 58.

Your Committee recommends approval as submitted.

Your Committee is aware of ByLaw changes for Fort Benning Council No. 73 that were submitted to the Grand Recorder's Office in October and returned by him as not in proper format. These changes need to be submitted in format soon if you are using those changes.

Your Committee received a rewrite of the bylaws of N. T. Pirkle Council No. 65. Your Committee is working with the Council to get the necessary corrections done.

Your Committee has received a rewrite of the bylaws of Brasstown Council No. 79. Your Committee returned them for multiple corrections on January 25, 2026 and has heard nothing further.

This committee has reviewed all dispensations issued by the Most Illustrious Grand Master and they are of a routine nature and meet with our approval. Almost all were to receive and ballot at a regular assembly or meet on a different night.

Your Committee notes with sadness that Hugh L. Smith Council No. 7 at Albany was consolidated with Tifton Council No. 58 at Tifton on June 4, 2025. We also note that Piedmont Council No. 56 at Cedartown was consolidated with Rome Council No. 15 at Rome on November 11, 2025

Your Committee notes with sadness that the Charter of A.W. Goodin Council No. 28 at Valdosta was arrested for cause on March 5, 2026 and the current members issued demits that they may affiliate with a council of their choosing.

This Committee has received no requests for new Council charters.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY: Grand Council of Georgia 200 YEARS formed May 2, 1826 in Louisville, Georgia. Waycross Council No. 30 and Sardis Council 53, 70 years, Hiram Council No 62 40 years. On a sad note, the charters of SIXTEEN Councils were declared forfeited on April 27, 1926, 100, years ago!. Cryptic Masonry was not a high priority.

Respectfully Submitted: Joe E. Turner, Chairman; Stephen C. Higgins; and T. Matthew Sanford

REPORT OF CODE REVISION COMMITTEE

To the Most Illustrious Grand Master, Grand Officers, and Members of the Grand Council of Royal and Select Masters of the State of Georgia:

Your committee on Code Revision wishes to make the following report:

The May 2, 2025, Royal and Select Masters Code is available from the Grand Recorder's office.

The 2025 code is placed on the Grand York Rite website as a PDF file and SHOULD BE updated annually after each Grand Assembly session so that a current copy is always available for use by any member.

The Code will be reprinted every third year with all amendments and changes.

I will be presenting several code changes at the 2027 Grand Assembly to fix a couple of conflicts in the Code.

Respectfully Submitted: Joe E. Turner, Chairman; Ryan C. Nealey;
and William T. White

REPORT OF FRATERNAL CORRESPONDENT

To the Most Illustrious Grand Master, Grand Officers, and Members of the Grand Council of Royal and Select Masters of the State of Georgia:

Your Foreign Correspondent wishes to make the following report:

No out of state or foreign proceedings have been received for review. I do not know if any Grand Jurisdictions even send proceedings to other states anymore.

I do receive the General Grand Council Newsletters and a couple of state council newsletters and I note with interest activities going on in other states.

No requests for recognition from other Grand Councils have been received to my knowledge.

Respectfully Submitted: Joe E. Turner, Chairman

2026-2027 GRAND COUNCIL GRAND LINE

James R. Harris, Sr. (3) (Gail Ng)	MI Grand Master
James D. Arnold (70) (Barbara)	VIDG Master
Keith Hales (55) (Dianne)	RIGPC of Work
Matthew R. Astin (6) (Sarah)	RIG Treasurer
Mark A. Bradley (77) (Gay)	RIG Recorder
Michael L. Hamlin (6) (Barbara)	IG Captain of the Guard
Peter D. Bard (74)	IGC of the Council
James W. Bard (74)	IG Chaplain
Richard L. Tanner (19)	IG Marshal
	IG Steward
Stephen C. Higgins (3) (Kay)	IG Sentinel

2026-27 COUNCIL DISTRICT GRAND DEPUTIES

Chair Mitch Tripp (26)
District. 1: Brandon Jones (70)
District. 2/3: Howard L Maddox (58)
District. 4: Robert M Grant (62/73)
District 4: Baron L. Conklin (73)
District 5: Robert Soderstrom (33)
District 5: Anthony C. Williams (13)
District 6: Samuel K Lowder (10)

District 7: Jerry M Hardigree (36)
District 7: Phillip J. Spake (37)
District 7: Lyle Thomas Chadwick (74)
District 8: Craig S Faulkner (25)
District 8: Jeffrey Anderson (41)
District 9: David M. Wellman (3)
District 9: William Garrison (48)
District 9: Michael Ray Sosbee (40)
District 9: Danny Russell (19)
District 10: Michael W Shaefer (78)
District 11: J. Rusty Bennett 30
District 12: Sherman D. Rankin (35)

2026-2027 GRAND COUNCIL COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

Custodians of the Work: North: Tyler W. Pledger and Peter Bard

South: Matthew Sanford and Joey E. Jackson

Assistant Custodian: Mike Etheridge

MIGM Address: William F. Shepard, Chair; Mark A. Bradley; Robert R. Cordle

Finance: Jack J. Bell, Chair; Mark A. Bradley; Howard Maddox

Memorial: Donald C. Combs, Beau M. Davis, James W. Bard

Jurisprudence: William F. Shepard, Chair; C. Danny Wofford; Daniel C. Ricketts

Charters/By-Laws/Dispensations: Joe E. Turner, Chair; Stephen C. Higgins;
Matthew Sanford

Foreign Correspondent: Joe E. Turner

Credentials: Matthew R. Astin, Chair; David Simmons; Tommy Kimbrell;

Dennis C. Simpson; Mark A. Bradley

Auditing: Mike Taylor; Lloyd R. Lane; James D. Arnold

CMMRF: Peter Bard, Sudhanshu Shukla, Mike Taylor, Jim Arnold, Keith Bryant,
Joe Bradley

Entertainment: Joseph F. Oelgoetz, III, Chair; Mark A. Bradley; Judd Wolfe

Educational/Historical: C. Danny Wofford, Chair; Joe E. Turner; Timothy K. Starling;
Jimmy Densmore; Matthew Sanford

Long Range Planning: Tyler W. Pledger, Chair; James W. Bard; Michael Hamlin

Public Relations: John T. Flener, Chair; Joseph F. Oelgoetz, III; Rick Hallwood

Membership: Tyler Pledger Chair; James Bard; Brandon P. Simmons

Perpetual Memberships: Benjamin W. Polston, II, Chair; Mark A. Bradley;

Michael H. Wilson; Joseph F. Oelgoetz, III; Matthew R. Astin

Code Revision: Joe E. Turner, Chair; Ryan C. Nealey; William White

Masonic Messenger Supplement: John T. Flener, Jr., Chair; John E. Finch

Web Master: Thomas J. Chapman, Chair; Richard T. Peterson; Joseph F. Oelgoetz, III

Grand Master Y.R. Festival: John T. Flener, Jr., Chair; Daniel C. Ricketts; Peter Bard;
Joey E. Jackson; Matthew Sanford

Photographer: Thomas J. Chapman, Chair; Bayardo Reyes; Robert W. Tidwell

Parliamentarian: Johnie M. Garmon

Fundraising: John T. Flener, Jr., Chair; Jack J. Bell

Sunshine: Floyd Edmondson