

# Most Excellent Union Grand Chapter

**HOLY ROYAL ARCH MASONS**  
of Florida & U.S. Virgin Islands, Inc. P.H.A.

**Dr. Elton L. Lewis K.Y.C.H.**

**MOST EXCELLENT GRAND HIGH PRIEST**



**ACCEPTANCE SPEECH**



*It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.*

*Lamentations 3:22-23*

All reverence and honor first be to the Supreme Architect and Artificer of the Universe, his only begotten son Jesus Christ, and the comforter in the form of the Holy Spirit. Certainly, without his mercy and compassion I would not be standing before you today. To our 19<sup>th</sup> Most Worshipful Grand Master, the Honorable Jeffery G. Jones. To our Past Most Excellent Grand High Priests; Number 9, Johnny McCray, Number 10, Carl Finerson, Number 11 and 13, Henry B. Parker Jr., Number 12 Eugene C. Johnson, Number 14, Lewis S. Thurston, Number 15 and 17, Enoch Mobley, and Number 16, Walter P. Russell. To General Grand King, Nathaniel Degraffinraidt, Most Excellent Grand High Priest Kevin J. Sanderson Sr., Most Excellent Grand High Priest Jerome Brooks, and Most Excellent Grand High Priest Carl Albritton. To Deputy Grand High Priest, Right Excellent Peter J. Bruton, Grand King, Right Excellent Andre Reed, Grand Scribe, Right Excellent Craig Hall, Grand Treasurer, Right Excellent Jose George, Grand Secretary, Right Excellent Canary Williams, and Grand Chaplain, Right Excellent Rev. Ernest L. Powell. To our Most Illustrious Grand Thrice Illustrious Master, Companion Theodore Hammonds Jr., our Right Eminent Grand Commander, Sir Knight Byron Willis, our Eminent Prior, Knight Lynwood Loper, and our Illustrious Deputy for the Orient of Florida, Sovereign Grand Inspector General Chris Terrell. To all appointed Grand Chapter Officers, Excellent High Priests, Past High Priests, Kings, Scribes, guests and dignitaries from abroad, Companions, and all God's Children. Good morning.

It is morning in the jurisdiction of Florida. Some would say that I should be up here and say that I am humbled by this moment and awestruck at the enormity of this experience, but that is not my testimony today. I am excited. That same little guy who first sat over in the southeast corner on the fifth floor of 410 Broad Street some thirteen years ago, as a newly elected Grand Secretary, knew then what I know now. Each and every

Companion that dons the mitre, stands in the East, and wields the gavel of authority is phenomenally equipped, capable, and ready for the task at hand.

I must pay respect to a few giants in this Order who I am sure would love to be here today, but God had a different plan. Number 8, Past Most Excellent Grand High Priest Charles T. Maxwell, PGHP Henry Pate, PHP Williams C.B. James, PHP Andrew Bennett, PHP Glenn Foster, PHP Chauncey Edgecombe, Comp. Theodus Worthey and my dear friend PHP Lawrence A. Sims. I stand on the broad shoulders of these great men.

I can remember on a hot summer night in the month of June in 2004 a hoodwink being removed from my eyes and the first thing I saw was Worshipful Master Horace W. Roberts of Seminole Lodge No. 291. Will the members of Seminole Lodge No. 291 please stand? This lodge raised, taught, and equipped me for this moment here. They have anchored me when the path was treacherous and fortified me with strength each and every time life got tough. I say Thank You. You may be seated.

Then there is the “crown jewel” of this Jurisdiction, Providence Chapter No. 113. Being exalted under the leadership of PHP Steve Rodriguez as Excellent High Priest and PHP Stanley Lamarre, our current Grand State Lecturer, as the King of my chapter it was tough, to say the least. You had to be tried in the fire and cut your teeth on the rudiments of capitular masonry. I am grateful for that time and the work I was required to put in. Will the members of MY beloved Royal Arch Chapter please stand? You gave me my start in leadership. You allowed me to learn, grow, make mistakes, and refine my leadership ability. I say Thank You. You may be seated.

The journey to this moment today actually started in 2007 with a conversation I had with PHP Howard Maddox. This one conversation is

the catalyst that has brought us here, to the cusp of greatness like we've never seen before in this Jurisdiction.

This body, the most ancient in all of freemasonry, does not profess to be Worshipful, Illustrious, or Eminent. We are guided by one principle alone...EXCELLENCE. And thus, our theme over the tenure of this administration will be EXCELLENCE, AND NOTHING ELSE. If and when we have an attitude and Spirit of Excellence about everything that we do, all those other adjectives and superlatives will fall in place. So, in each and every facet of what we do in this Grand Chapter, we will be EXCELLENT.

We will be excellent in our dedication to the life-blood of our organization; membership. We will endeavor to have more members in this Grand Chapter than we've had at any point during the 21<sup>st</sup> century. A plan of action has been developed and our membership program will bring our roster above the 1500 mark. To that end, we also intend to empower our membership with an educational program, the likes of which Prince Hall Masonry has never seen. No one can lay claim to being on our level with regard to our educational programs, and we are just getting started.

We will be excellent administratively. That comes through premier leadership and exceptional execution of the tasks, directives, provisos, edicts, and protocols set forth by this administration. We will continue to be innovative and progressive in our work. Gone are the days of believing that a 19<sup>th</sup> century approach can be affixed to a 21<sup>st</sup> century problem. We can and must embrace technology and all things that are accessible to us today in order to remain relevant and ensure the future of our Order.

Companions this is our moment of exigency. We are coming out of a tumultuous time globally, nationally, and within this Order. We must seize the moment and catapult capitular masonry back into the forefront

of all masonry as it once was. In doing so, we will be greater, more knowledgeable, more spiritual, and ultimately EXCELLENT.

In closing, I ask that in all that you do, do it with a spirit of excellence. Understanding that before you were a mason, you were first a man. As a man, you should always endeavor to have excellent be the prevailing adjective that describes all that you do. Companions, I intimate to you, that if you embrace a spirit of excellence, you will be great, your local chapters will be great, and this Grand Chapter will indeed be EXCELLENT.

I have had many honors of recognition in my life. But nothing compares to honor of kneeling at the Altar of Freemasonry and the confidence you have placed in me.

As the prophet Haggai said to Joshua, Zerubbabel, and the people of Israel, I say to you BE STRONG, BE STRONG, BE STRONG!

God Bless each and every one of you. God Bless our Masonic Fraternity and God Bless all of his people.

Humbly submitted in the Bond of 3 x 3,

A handwritten signature in red ink, appearing to be 'E. L. Lewis', written in a cursive style.

Rt. Ex. Dr. Elton L. Lewis, K.Y.C.H.  
***Grand High Priest of All Capitular Masonry***  
**Most Excellent Union Grand Chapter**  
**Holy Royal Arch Masons**  
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**Prince Hall Affiliated**