

Sean H. McNorton - Candidate for General Grand Principal Conductor of the Work

Companions,

I want to speak to you plainly — not just as a candidate, but as your Brother, a Brother who has walked this journey with you for many years. We have broken bread together, sat beside each other, helped one another, whispered and received friendly counsel, served alongside one another, and learned from each other. I have witnessed many of the challenges our Cryptic Rite faces (certainly not all), shared in the frustrations, and often asked myself: should I step forward to be part of the solution, or remain on the sidelines, accept the status quo, and let it just be?

This has not been an easy decision. It was not a question of passion or commitment — those have never been in short supply. As those who know me understand, while I support all York Rite Bodies, there is an unmistakable love and connection to the Cryptic Rite in my heart. No, it was not an easy decision, so I took more time — a long pause — to reflect on whether my time, energy, and resources could truly make a difference. I asked myself: Why do this? What can I do? Why dedicate the next three / six / nine years and beyond of my life to this organization? After careful consideration, a clear sense of purpose guided me to step forward — not merely to occupy a role, but to serve as a Change Agent committed to improving the experience, engagement, and value for every single member of the General Grand Council Cryptic Masons International.

Over the years, I have had the honor of serving our Craft — and especially our Cryptic Rite in many capacities. These experiences have shown me that the strength of our Fraternity does not come from titles, but from the active participation, dedication, and fulfillment of every member. We stand on timeless principles: Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth. Those values remain strong. But how we operate around them — how we manage, communicate, allocate resources, and engage our members must evolve if we are going to thrive.

We are not in crisis. But we are at a moment that calls for honest evaluation, and before we move forward, leadership must pause. We must take a serious look at how we currently operate — how decisions are made, how finances are communicated, how resources are allocated, how responsibilities are assigned, and, most importantly, whether every member truly feels valued.

Too often, organizations fall into habit. We repeat processes because they are familiar. We maintain systems because they are comfortable. But comfort does not always equal effectiveness. Builders do not work on autopilot.

It is time to thoughtfully examine how we do business — and where necessary, change must happen. In my professional life, I currently serve as an Operations Manager with a foundation in Project Management. This path grew from a desire to always improve, to learn from those around me, and to “leave it better than how it was found.” My work demands precision, intentional listening, disciplined execution, and consistent follow-through. Each day, I focus on understanding needs, asking the right questions, and ensuring concerns are addressed while delivering results that meet or exceed expectations.

That same approach guides my Masonic service: careful planning, accountability, and a commitment to improving the experience for all members. Strong leadership begins with listening, understanding the needs of those we serve, asking questions when we do not understand, and aligning the right resources with the right roles. That is just a foundation — one to build upon, one that will grow through engagement and strengthen through empowerment. We cannot do it alone.

You may say, “But wait, Sean — you are a Manager, not a leader.” You are correct. At my core, it is about managing — managing with a mindset and a proven track record of building teams composed of talented individuals who are not micromanaged, who take ownership of their assignments, who hold themselves accountable and who trust the process to deliver the best results. I believe in empowering people — not by being a superficial cheerleader, but by recognizing their strengths and providing the resources necessary for them to excel, to be recognized, and to be admired for their work.

Unity is equally vital. Our Cryptic Rite shall not operate in isolation. We shall collaborate with other York Rite Bodies, support one another, and remove silos that fragment purpose. When one Body thrives, we all benefit. When one struggles, we respond together. There are great programs, initiatives, and processes being utilized and developed by those around us. When I have learned of them, I have asked questions — and I am grateful to those who have shared and supported a unified vision.

THIS IS THE RITE TIME FOR UNITY

Your time and energy shall be respected, every effort shall be acknowledged and celebrated, and every idea shall receive the attention and follow-through it deserves — IT SHALL. The hope is that every Companion feels engaged, looks forward to attending an Assembly, and walks away each night knowing he has ownership in the future of our beloved Rite. Feedback and concerns shall be received with an open mind, carefully considered, and acted upon whenever possible. Transparency is critical throughout. Your voice shall not fall on deaf ears; it shall guide how we operate, how we engage members, and how we deliver meaningful value to every Companion of the Cryptic Rite.

This is not about ignoring the past, nor is it about membership growth. It is about improving the journey for every Companion today and ensuring the experience is rewarding, engaging, and meaningful. This will ensure our legacy. It will improve what we offer and create demand — one that becomes infectious and naturally attracts new members to the York Rite. We shall pause, evaluate, adjust, and act — TOGETHER.

Companions, this is not about criticizing the past nor the present. It is about taking responsibility for the future. Our predecessors built what we inherited. Now it is our turn to refine it, strengthen it, and prepare it for those yet to knock at our door. I respectfully ask for your trust and support. I am committed to being your advocate, your partner, and a leader who listens, acts, and ensures we are moving forward for the betterment of our Fraternity!

If this vision resonates with you — if it truly piques your interest — then I humbly welcome your consideration of my candidacy. If you have questions or concerns, I invite you to reach out. Bring your thoughts forward. Bring your ideas. Let us meet on the Level and speak openly as Brothers committed to the same purpose.

And if you are ready to move forward, then let us do so together — with purpose, with integrity, and with a shared commitment to meaningful progress. Together, we shall strengthen our Fraternity and make our Cryptic Rite a place where every member feels valued, empowered, and deeply connected to the journey we share.

In Service and with Fraternal Love,

Comp. Sean H. McNorton

Born in Gary Indiana, 1972.

Lake Lodge No. 157 F&AM Crown Point, IN –
Raised to the Sublime Degree on February 2nd, 2007, by my Father: WB Thomas McNorton

Service:

Copestone-Ophir No. 108 F&AM Kearny, NJ - Worshipful Master 2014 and 2015

Masonic Kilties of New Jersey - Life Member, Past 1st Vice President 2019

8th Masonic District Masters and Wardens Association - President 2014

The Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of New Jersey F&AM –

- Right Worshipful Junior Grand Deacon, 2019
- Committee on Appeals and Grievances, 2020-present, Chairman 2020 - 2022
- State of the Craft Committee, 2022-present

Corinthian Chapter No. 57 Royal Arch Masons Westfield, NJ - Excellent High Priest 2015

Union Chapter No. 7 Royal Arch Masons Caldwell, NJ - Member, Ritual Instructor 2013 – 2018,
Trustee 2022-2024

Haggai Lodge of Mark Master Masons New Jersey - Past JGW

Alexandria Council No. 478 Allied Masonic Degrees Nutley, NJ - Sovereign Master 2014 & 2015

Grand Royal Arch Chapter of The State of New Jersey –

- 5th Capitular District Deputy Grand High Priest 2016-2017
- Deputy Grand Treasurer 2016-2019
- Grand Lecturer 2016-2019, 2022
- Grand Marshal 2017-2019

Kane Council No. 2 R&SM Kearny, NJ - Thrice Illustrious Master 2013

Saint Andrew's Council U.D. - Founding Thrice Illustrious Master 2015

Saint Andrew's Council No. 18 Royal and Select Masters –

- Thrice Illustrious Master 2016
- Trustee 2017-2020

Most Puissant Grand Council of Royal and Select Masters of New Jersey –

- Grand Marshal 2014, 2016-2019
- Deputy Grand Treasurer 2016-2019
- Most Illustrious Grand Master 2022 and 2023
- Grand Trustee 2023-2024

General Grand Council Cryptic Masons International –

- Regional Deputy General Grand Master, Mid-Atlantic 2023-2026

Memberships / Other:

Lewis Jewel Recipient, 3rd Generation Freemason

Essex Lodge No. 7 F&AM Caldwell, NJ - Dual Member since 2016

Northern New Jersey Past Masters Association - Member

Masonic Key Square Club - Member since 2008

Zerubbabel Society of New Jersey - Charter Diamond Member 2013

Hugh de Payens Commandery No. 1 Ridgefield Park, NJ - SK

AASR Valley of Northern New Jersey - 32^o

Crescent Shrine AAONMS - Noble

Grand Royal Arch Chapter of The State of New Jersey –

- Order of High Priesthood 2015
- Junius C.H. Schmidt Medal Recipient 2016

General Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons International –

- Ritual Jewel Recipient 2016
- Life Member

Marion Crum Fellowship 2021

Most Puissant Grand Council of Royal and Select Masters of New Jersey –

- Order of the Silver Trowel 2013
- Godfrey Pittis Meritorious Award Recipient 2013 & 2015
- MI Harold D. Elliott II Award Recipient 2018

General Grand Council Cryptic Masons International –

- Harry Ames Putnam / Cryptic Mason of the Year Recipient 2013
- College of Preservation, Order of the Secret Vault 2016
- Ritual Jewel Recipient 2023, Royal Master and Select Master Degree Bars
- Life Member

Honorary:

The Grand Council of Cryptic Masons of Indiana (Honorary Member, Council of Thrice Illustrious Masters 2022 & 2023, SEM 2022), The Grand Council of Royal and Select Masters for the State of Maine, The Grand Council Cryptic Masons of New Hampshire, The Grand Council of Royal & Select Masters of Vermont. The Grand Council Royal & Select Master Masons of Massachusetts, The Grand Council of Royal and Select Masters for the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, The Most Puissant Grand Council of Royal and Select Masters of Connecticut, The Grand Council of Cryptic Masons of Delaware, The Grand Council of Cryptic Masons of the District of Columbia, The Grand Council of Royal & Select Masters of Maryland, The Grand Council of Cryptic Masons of the State of New York (Honorary Member, SEM 2013, 2021 & 2022), The Grand Council Royal & Select Master Masons of Pennsylvania (Honorary Member, SEMM 2022 & 2023, Ernest C. Reynolds Grand Master's Fellowship Recipient), AND The Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons in Virginia (Anointed High Priest 2022, SEM 2022 & 2025, Council of Thrice Illustrious Masters 2022 & 2025).

