

The Policies and Procedures  
Conference of Grand Masters

Prince Hall Masons, Inc.

1998 First Draft

MWPGM Warren R. Whitley (DC) Committee Chairman

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MWPGM Warren R. Whitley (DC) Committee Chairman

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PMWGM Lewis R. Brent (AZ) – Chairman

# The Policies and Procedures Conference of Grand Masters Prince Hall Masons, Inc.

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In agreeing upon a proper title for the proposed document, there is some overlapping of meaning in the terms used. Policy defines a plan or course of action intended to influence and determine decisions, actions, and other matters.

Procedure describes a way of performing or affecting something or it is a series of steps taken to accomplish an end.

Other terms used by various regions and/or Jurisdictions include "traditions" and "guidelines." None of the titles is improper, but some are more descriptive than others are. Thus, while there is some redundancy, the Conference of Grand Masters may be better served by adopting the title suggested above.

## **FORWARD**

Recognizing that the several Grand Masters in the Prince Hall Masonic Sodality are the Conservators of Freemasonry in their respective Jurisdictions, and that the right of Conservatorship is an inherent right, and that collectively, as a Conference of Grand Masters, it becomes necessary to frame the following policies and procedures as a Conference of Grand Masters.

As a Masonic Conference, on an interstate, regional, national, and international level, by virtue of the Masonic concept of sovereignty and the policy, practice, and tradition of exclusive jurisdiction, it can only be an assembly gathered to improve the social, civic, and fraternal relationships that affect the Fraternity.

Privileged only to discuss debate and promote ideas for analysis and/or consensus opinion. It may suggest or recommend implementation of such ideas as may benefit the Fraternity.

The Conference of Grand Masters does not have legislative authority or power except that granted for the Conference to operate when convened. It is by mutual consent that the Conference exists and functions. Each represented Jurisdiction is Sovereign unto its self.

## **POLICIES**

### **Mission**

The Conference is an opportunity for jurisdictions to come together to discuss common ideas, share information and recommend procedures that will lead to consistency and promote Prince Hall Masonry by addressing issues that will insure the future of Prince hall masons throughout the world.

### **Objective**

The objective of this Conference of Grand Masters, Prince Hall Masons, Inc., shall be to perpetuate fraternal harmony among Grand Masters of Grand Lodges of the Masonic Jurisdictions; to share constructive ideas, to promote and encourage community involvement encourages a positive relationship with the local and national business sector, to conduct educational workshops and seminars, to support charitable organizations and agencies that assist those persons less fortunate than ourselves; and to extend strong educational support to our youth through annual scholarships.

### **Meeting**

The Conference of Grand Masters usually convenes annually on the Wednesday after Mother's Day. The Time and Place Committee determine the Host Jurisdiction

of the Annual meeting. However, to commemorate our founding Father Prince Hall, the Conference will meet in Boston, Massachusetts every tenth (10th) year.

### **On Recognition**

The Conference is mindful that all Grand Masonic Jurisdictions are Sovereign, operating without fear or favor as their members so desire, and that the question of recognition by Caucasian Masons is a controversial one.

The Conference still believes that in the interest of Prince Hall Masonic Solidarity, open discussions (pro

and con), that might be or perceived to have a positive or negative impact on Prince Hall Masonry should take place at the Conference. Further, that a Grand Masonic Jurisdiction, it is free to seek or accept recognition from whomever it pleases.

The Conference would ask those Jurisdictions with such relationships to share such information with the Conference.

As a Conference, it shall be noted that no Grand Masonic Jurisdiction should be subjected to ridicule, castigation, or any other act at any time, whether that jurisdiction is for or against "recognition." The heritage and future of Prince Hall Masonry is to be protected. Recognition is commonly framed as a "removal of the stigma of illegitimacy "nothing more and nothing less.

### **CONFERENCE OF GRAND MASTERS**

The Grand Masters of the jurisdictions that make up the Prince Hall Masonic Sodality have formed the Conference of Grand Masters whose purpose is to foster progress and well-being for Prince Hall Masons wherever dispersed around the globe. It is an advisory body, assuming no powers except those agreed upon by the Grand Masters when in attendance at anyone meeting.

As a matter of tradition and law by the several Grand Jurisdictions, the following bodies of Prince Hall Free Masonry are recognized as being either concordant, appendant, adoptive, or affiliated:

1. Royal Arch Masons
2. Royal and Select Masters
3. Knights Templar Masons
4. Ancient and Accepted Scottish rite Masons
5. Adoptive Rite, Order of Eastern Star
6. Heroines of Jericho
7. Circle of Perfection
8. Cyrene Crusaders
9. Order of the Golden Circle

The above organizations are rooted in symbolic Masonry through the Master Mason, and by the right of recognition granted by the Jurisdictions represented in the Conference of Grand Masters. \*They shall frame their Constitutions and Bylaws, and administer and enforce such laws pertaining to the governance of their members as long as those laws, rules and regulations, shall not be in conflict with those of the Grand Masonic Jurisdictions in which they reside. Each year the Conference will extend an invitation to the National Body Leaders of the Prince Hall Sodality to attend the annual meeting.

Further, the Conference each year may extend invitation, to the heads of governments or any other political, social, or otherwise designated field of endeavor which the Conference and/or the host Grand Master may choose.

Grand Masters, individually and collectively when appropriate, shall attend all Masonic meetings, in person or by representation.

## PROCEDURES

### Executive Council

The Executive Council consists of nineteen (19) members:

1. President (Must be a Grand Master or an actual Past Grand Master)
2. Vice President (Must be a Grand Master or an actual Past Grand Master)
3. Grand Masters representing the seven (7) regions of the Conference (His Jurisdiction must be in the region he represents):

**North East Region** (Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Ontario, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Alberta)

**Mid-Atlantic Region** (District of Columbia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia)

**South East Region** (Alabama, Bahamas, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, Tennessee, Caribbean)

**Mid-West Region** (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, Wisconsin)

**South West Region** (Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas)

**Pacific Rim Region** (Alaska, California, Idaho-Montana-Oregon, Washington, Hawaii)

**Four Corners Region** (Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico)

4. Seven (7) Past Grand Masters
5. Executive Secretary (Must be a current or past elected Grand Lodge Officer)

6. Executive Treasurer (Must be a current or past elected Grand Lodge Officer)
7. Assistant Executive Secretary (Appointed by President)
8. Financial Secretary (Appointed by President)

The President, Vice-President, Executive Secretary, Executive Treasurer are elected annually. Past Grand Masters (At Large delegates) shall be elected annually to serve not more than two (2) successive three (3) year terms.

All nominations for vacant offices will be made in Executive Session.

The President of the Executive Council shall be the spokesman on all matters agreed upon by the Conference and have full authority to speak for the Prince Hall Sodality at appropriate times and on public occasions.

### **VOICE AND VOTE**

Grand Masters and Past Grand Masters on the Executive Council are the only ones with voice and vote on all subjects in the Conference.

Past Grand Masters, without permission from their Grand Master, have voice and vote on all subjects except voting for the Office of President.

Registered Deputy Grand Masters can speak and have voice without the permission of their Grand Master. They cannot make or second motions. They do not have a vote, the exception being if they have been designated by their Grand Master to be his Official Representative.

In the Executive Council sessions all members, elected and appointed, have voice and vote on all subject matter before the Executive Council.

### **Standing Committees**

1. Audit Committee
2. Budget Committee
3. Masonic Recognition

4. Bogus Masonry
5. Community Public Relations
6. History Education
7. Protocol
8. Jurisprudence
9. Time and Place

Additional Committees may be appointed by the Conference President as needed.

### **Financial Responsibility**

By virtue of his office, the President's lodging for the duration of the Conference should be secured as a courtesy of the hotel, such arrangements to be made under the direction of the Convention Coordinator. Additionally, the President's registration fee for the Conference should be waived. The same privileges (lodging and registration) should be extended to the Vice President with proper arrangements having been made.

### **Agreement of Conference Members**

That an agreement be signed by all sitting Grand Masters to be passed on to their successors, that the Prince Hall Masonic Jurisdictional boundaries and territories as of May in the year of our Lord 1995, in the year of Light 5995, will be honored and respected against what is commonly known as Masonic invasion or encroachment, unless it is mutually (by parties involved) determined that the territory in question is unencumbered.

Further, that each jurisdiction will show all territories on their letterhead, if practical, and if not, will file same with the Executive Secretary of the Conference of Grand Masters, should said territories lie outside the boundaries of the particular Grand Masonic Jurisdiction. If any Prince Hall Grand Masonic Jurisdiction "invades" or is "invaded" by another, the two will bring the matter before the Conference of Grand Masters for discussion, and the Conference will make a determination of the matter.

# **PROTOCOL**

## **Respect and Honor**

Masonry has maintained a high standard of decorum, which has lifted it above all other orders of similar design. It owes much of its success to men who are willing to follow very closely the ancient traditions that have made quite ordinary men radiant and lifted them to a pedestal crowning them with manners as traditions of Masonic etiquette.

In every occupation, due respect should be paid to rank, otherwise all ambition and progress would cease. This is why Masonry makes part of its creed, respect for all seniority. Rank and title should be given due recognition at the proper place and time.

Inherent in the prerogatives of a Grand Master is being the Head of the whole Fraternity, and is not only entitled, but also bound in faithful discharge of his duty. To superintend the transactions of the Craft and to interfere in all congregations of Masons to prevent the commission of wrong and to see that the Landmarks and usages of antiquity and the Constitution and Laws of the Grand Masonic Fraternity are preserved and obeyed. As the Chief Executive of the Order, He is entitled to the respect and dignity appertaining to his office.

The Grand Master is the highest officer in Prince Hall Masonry, and as such, is to be afforded due respect and honor as pertains to his office at all Masonic functions, of whatever Masonic body.

This includes, but is not limited to place of honor, regardless of the function or attendees, whether it is local, regional, national, or international. If a Grand Master is a guest in another jurisdiction, it would be incumbent upon the host Grand Master at such gatherings to see that due respect, honor and decorum are given, or that Masonic protocol is observed.

Visiting Grand Masters are the guests of the host Grand Master, and not of the functioning Masonic body. Any breach of the above would be brought to the attention of the host Grand Master for proper actions and/or corrections.

In the Conference of Grand Masters all Grand Masters are Sovereign in their own right and as such, should be and will be treated with the due respect each rightfully deserves. Recognizing the confusion that could exist in a body such as the Conference of Grand Master, the Grand Masters exercising the wisdom of the Solomon they represent, have agreed to abide by the Protocol established by the Host Jurisdiction in which the Conference will be held.

Further, they have agreed that once established, the Host Grand Master should allow the President of the Conference or Presiding Officer to preside over the business of the Conference. At all times due and proper respect will be given to the Host Grand Master, to the President or Presiding Officer, and to the attending Grand Masters or their Official Representative.

The Conference leadership will occupy seats of honor on the podium during the opening ceremonies and at the head table during the two (2) luncheons and at the banquet. The head table will include but not limited to the President, Vice-President, each of the seven Regional Chairman, State and Local Officials and the Heads of National Bodies.

### **National Bodies**

Each year the Conference will extend an invitation to the National Body Leaders of the Prince Hall Family. Further, the Conference each year would extend an invitation, to the heads of governments or any other political, social, or otherwise designated field of endeavor, which the Conference and/or the host Grand Master may choose.

In meetings of National Bodies, the Host Grand Master will be seated at the Head Table along with the President of the Conference of Grand Masters. Both will be properly received and introduced. The Host Grand Master will receive all attending Grand Masters as his guest. Prior to the meeting, the Host Grand Master will forward to all Grand Masters the dress code (regalia) for the receiving of Grand Masters in the National Body meeting.

Each host Grand Master should send to the National Body Leader, the customs and traditions to be honored while they are in his Jurisdiction and under his gavel. Due

respect and protocol should be given to the Host Grand Master, President of the Conference and to attending Grand Masters.

## **SAMPLE AGENDA**

(May be modified as required)

### **Wednesday**

9:00 A.M. Registration

9:00 A.M. Opening session for Knights of Pythagoras

1:30 P.M. Foundation Board Meeting

2:00 P.M. Grand Masters Meeting

5:00 P.M. Steering Committee Meeting

### **Thursday**

7:00 A.M. Executive Committee Breakfast (1<sup>st</sup> Executive Session)

8:00 A.M. Registration

8:30 A.M. Devotion

9:00 A.M. Official opening (1<sup>st</sup> General Session)

11:00 A.M. Committee's meet

12:00 P.M. Lunch

1:30 P.M. Committee's resume

5:00 PM. Recesses

6:00 P.M. Memorial Service

### **Friday**

7:00 A.M. Executive Committee Breakfast (2<sup>nd</sup> Executive Session)

8:00 A.M. Devotion

9:00 A.M. Committee's resume (2<sup>nd</sup> General Session)

12:00 P.M. Luncheon

1:45 P.M. Photo Sessions

3:00 P.M. Regional White Paper Reports

7:30 P.M. Banquet

**Saturday**

8:30 A.M. Devotion

9:00 A.M. (3<sup>rd</sup> General Session)

Staff Reports

Unfinished Business

New Business

3<sup>rd</sup> Executive Session

Election of Officers (Only Grand Masters vote for President)

Installation of Officers

Announcements (Time & Place)

Written reports ***must*** be furnished to the President, Host Grand Master, Vice-President, and Executive Secretary. Other participants shall receive a copy when available.