



Berea Lodge 617

Past Masters Night

Greetings, & a heartfelt “Welcome,” to all Brothers, our guests, and especially, to our Past Masters. We have set aside tonight to celebrate you and your gift to Freemasonry. First, I’d like to thank all our Past Masters for their many contributions to the growth of Berea Lodge as well as their contributions to the body of Masonic knowledge in general. Allow me to illustrate. Ours is a brotherhood whose traditions are somewhat peculiar in the information age, in that they are, by and large, strictly *oral* traditions. That means that for every potentially attentive ear that comes to us wishing to receive more light in Masonry, there needs must be an instructive tongue, and it is you, my brothers who have assumed these “obligations,” and many more besides, with such alacrity. Masonry owes its very continued existence to brothers such as yourselves who have gone the extra mile, shown the extra measure of patience and made the extra sacrifices which the occidental chair requires of the man blessed enough to be invested by his esteemed fellows with the exalted title of “Worshipful Master.” In my brief Masonic career, I have depended heavily upon the wisdom of our Past Masters to insure that I was doing the right thing, or to clarify a particular point which may to me have seemed ambiguous. This is the area where I have seen Past Masters really shine. Ever self-effacing and humble, their advice is invariably given with an apology for being “bossy” or “interfering.” For my own part, nothing could be further from the truth, and yet I confess, to me, nothing displays a brother’s wisdom more effectively than his humility in sharing it. I have read many books and articles about Masonry, yet the bulk of what little I know comes from Past Masters like yourselves. Then I got to thinking about those very same books and articles, and sure enough, almost each and every one of them which were worth reading were written by a Past Master. You are numbered among an august and necessarily exclusive body of truly worthy and well-qualified brethren. Whether you realize it or not, you have added immeasurably to the body of Masonic knowledge and indeed, to insuring the perpetuity of Masonry. For this we owe you our gratitude, for being such fine examples, we owe you our respect, and ultimately, for being our dedicated brothers and fellows, we owe you our brotherly love and affection. Would everyone please rise. And now, in demonstration of our esteem for each and every Past Master

here assembled, join me my brethren in rendering our Past Masters the Masonic Public Grand Honors, together Brethren, (3x3). You may be seated. It has been an honor to be with you this evening, and may the next 125 years find Berea Lodge blessed with such fine men as yourselves, thus assuring the continuance of not only our Lodge, but of our beloved Fraternity. Thank you.

Bro.: Jeff Hatmaker, 32° A.A.S.R.
Master, Berea #617, F. & A. M.