

Gray Line



NEWSLETTER OF GRAY MASONIC LODGE No. 329, A.F. & A.M.

SEPTEMBER 2021

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HOUSTON, TEXAS 77077

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CHARTERED JUNE 24, 1870

OFFICERS FOR 2021-2022

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JUNIOR WARDEN

DANIEL R. SWEET

TREASURER

DARRIN I. PITTS, PM

SECRETARY

DOUG W. HISSONG, PM

CHAPLAIN

VIGIL M. ROXAS

SENIOR DEACON

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JUNIOR DEACON

LEO I. BARNUEVO

SENIOR STEWARD

M. POLYCHRONOPOULOS

JUNIOR STEWARD

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Greetings from the East



Brethren,

Gray Lodge has been busy the last couple of months. Besides our regularly-scheduled Stated Meetings with special presentations by PM Roberto Sanchez and Past Grand Master Michael D. Nanny, and our monthly Gray Lodge Round Table with presentations by myself and SW Gary Wiener, we have also had several proficiency exams, two Fel-

lowcraft degrees, two Lodge socials, and several projects to improve our Lodge.

Hurricane Ida has devastated our eastern neighbors in Louisiana and I'm proud to see many Masonic organizations band together to help provide what relief they could to those affected by the storm. I'd like to thank everyone for your donations of supplies for the Hurricane Ida relief effort. We collected over 100 gallons of water, six cases of toilet paper, four bags of charcoal, numerous cases of energy bars, two cases of diapers, and various other food, drinks, and survival items that were transported to Houma, Louisiana on Friday afternoon.

If you would like to continue the support for our neighbors, we have set up a donation webpage where you can donate any amount of money you can spare or any amount you may be in the habit of wasting on unnecessary items in a week. Everything we collect will go straight to the Grand Lodge of Louisiana for distribution.

You can view the page here:

<https://www.gray329.org/hurricane-ida-relief-fund/>

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Greetings From the East

(Continued from page 1)

I'd like to thank the officers and members for starting out this year with such infectious zeal. As I said at the beginning of the year, this Lodge is just as much yours as it is anyone else's, and you've taken up the reins and shown your ownership. I hope we can inspire each other to keep it up!

As of right now, we have our eyes on a few projects for the fall. They are as follows:

The Annual A.S. Richardson Lecture

The date and speaker are being finalized now and I will release the details as soon as everything is in place. I can say that it will be a nationally recognized Mason and the date will likely be Saturday, November 13. The venue will be a hotel ballroom and a three-course meal will be included with the ticket price. Be on the lookout for this announcement soon.

Gun Raffle

Our raffle for last year was postponed due to COVID, but we plan on picking it back up this year. The announcement with all the details will be out later this month. All proceeds will go to our scholarship fund to help high school seniors on the journey to college.

Lodge Improvements

Thanks to the zeal of many people, including many Entered Apprentices and even non-Mason visitors seeking membership, the upstairs has largely been cleared. Though there is still work to be done, we're nearing the point where renovations can start and the space made workable with offices for learning and archival rooms for preserving our documents. There are other projects in the works including the patio, library additions, lodge room additions, and dining room additions.

Again, none of this progress could not be possible without your help and support. Thank you.

On a final note, dues notices will be going out soon. Please pay those promptly. We can now accept secure payments on our website with a small PayPal convenience fee. I'd also like to humbly request that our endowed members consider supporting the Lodge by re-mitting their yearly dues anyway and joining the "Master's Club", which will include your receiving a 150th-year Gray Lodge Master's Pin. Portions of this fund will go towards projects and improvements within the Lodge. If unable to donate your yearly dues, please consider donating \$30 to cover your annual per capita assessment from Grand Lodge. Of course, we always appreciate any support, and we encourage automatic monthly payments.

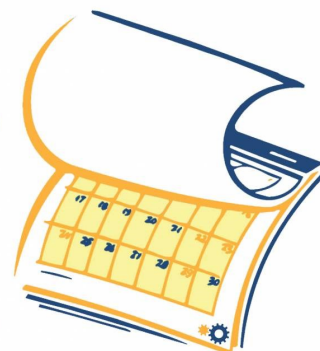
As always, I hope you are well, and if there is anything you need from Gray Lodge, we are here for you. We hope to see you (or hear from you) soon. Be safe and take care of each other.

Fraternally and Sincerely,
Erickson Ybarra, Worshipful Master

Mark Your Calendars Now!

There are a LOT of great activities coming up soon at Gray Lodge No. 329! The full calendar through November 2021 is on Page 7, but here is just a taste:

SAVE THE DATE



- JW Steven Cobb and the Lodge's Activities Committee have organized monthly outside-the-Lodge social events. The next one is planned for Saturday, October 16; if you would like to attend, please contact jwarden@gray329.org for details!
- Gray Lodge is once again hosting District 30-B's Briscoe Workshop, on October 20 at 7:00 pm. DDGM Darrin Pitts, PM, and his District Service Team are planning a tremendous event. If you are interested in Masonic education (and especially if you have never been to a Briscoe Workshop before), we encourage you to attend a one-of-a-kind program!
- SD Vigil Roxas is planning something that hasn't been done in Gray Lodge in decades: a Master Mason's Degree on a worthy Brother, with every degree role filled by a Past Master of Gray Lodge No. 329 (or its current Master and Wardens)! This will be a historic evening and we hope you will be there for this very special event.
- The annual A.S. Richardson Lecture and Dinner is back! Although we were forced to cancel last year's event, Gray Lodge will host its 13th Richardson Lecture on Saturday, November 13th. The speaker and venue will be announced soon. All Masons (sorry, no families) are invited to attend what will certainly be a festive evening and very informative educational event!

Greetings from the West

Brethren,

I have been a Master Mason in Texas for 37 years. I have NEVER before seen the zeal being shown by our current Officers, Brethren and Candidates in working to improve our Lodge. As someone who has always believed in "taking the bull by the horns" and just *getting things done*, I am nonetheless impressed by the effort and commitment our Members are showing ... and for those who think Masonry in Texas is withering and dying, I offer as contrary evidence the following:

- SD Vigil Roxas has organized our Brethren (and especially our Candidates and younger Brothers) to clean out our under-utilized upstairs space, tastefully add décor to parts of our Lodge building, and generally make Gray Lodge an even more pleasant place to visit.
- PM Billy Moreno secured our building's perimeter with wrought-iron fencing, so we can safely use all of our outdoor space. He also installed blue tapestries and gold paint in our Lodge Room to break up the white walls; and we'll soon have gallery lighting for our five Gray Lodge Grand Master portraits. If you haven't seen how it looks lately, you really owe it to yourself to do so!
- SS Leo Barnuevo and JS Michael Polychronopoulos have been spoiling us rotten with exceptional meals, not only on Stated Meeting evenings but at nearly every Lodge gathering. Come and see (and taste) for yourself!



There are so many more Brethren I could brag about, but I have run out of room ... so I suggest you just make plans now to come by and look at the amazing things that are happening these days at Gray Lodge No. 329!

- Gary Wiener, Senior Warden

Speculative Masonry

Bro. Don Falconer

Grand Lodge of England

The origins of Speculative Freemasonry can be traced directly and indirectly to the craft practiced by the Operative Masons, who flourished in the Middle Ages under the auspices of the guild system. The skill of the medieval Free Masons was outstanding and they were renowned for the cathedrals they built. Their work was the pinnacle of Operative Masonry, reflecting the experience gained by Masons throughout the evolution of civilization over some 12,000 years, working in brick and stone to construct every conceivable edifice. In the present context Freemasonry distinguishes the purely speculative art from the practical craft that was the province of the Free Masons. However, it should not be inferred that there was no speculated component in the work carried out in the lodges of operative Free Masons, because they had developed because of the Passion Plays of the Middle Ages. As medieval guilds were highly secretive in their respect of the private proceedings of their fraternities, information concerning their ceremonials is somewhat sketchy. Because of very few records have survived from before the formative days of purely speculative lodges in England, Masonic writers all too frequently have said that Operative Masonry had no speculative component and therefore that Speculative Masonry could not be a derivative for it. Having regard to the circumstances prevailing in those times, it is remarkable that any documentary evidence has survived and had been discovered.

Lodges of operative Masons must have worked independently in the earliest days, because travel was difficult and time consuming. However, sometime in the twelfth century the operative Masons appear to have been organized under the protection of the craft guilds that came into existence to watch over the interests of skilled workers in the various trades. The guilds were known as Fellowships or Fraternities and with the exception of the operative Masons, their constituent trades worked under the provisions of relevant ordinances. Guilds were also religious fraternities, whose members were required to attend church frequently, if not regularly. Family peace guilds existed in London Dover around the middle of the eleventh century, when the weaver guilds also appear to have been formed. There is no doubt that many craft guilds were well established in England during the reign of Henry I, by around 1135. There is evidence that annual assemblages of Masons were being held from the 1300's onwards and that they were the gatherings which Henry VI unsuccessfully sought to prohibit by the Statutes of 1436-1437. Under the guild system, many families rose from serfdom to become employers in a few generations. The system was highly successful until the Reformation, when Henry VII enforced the Act of 1547 that disendowed all religious fraternities, including the operative Masons.

As in the other craft guilds, lodges of operative Masons were subject to a strong religious influence and their ceremonial had a religious component. Practical work and its related instruction took place in the stone yards, but all moral and ethical instruction and matters relating to general conduct, as well as the modes of recognition, were imparted in the ceremonial lodges held weekly on Saturdays at high twelve. All apprentices were obligated and indentured in the ceremonial lodges, where candidates for promotion also were examined,

tested for proficiency in the non-manual aspects of their work, obligated and entrusted. Lodges of operative Masons were unique, because the rules and regulations for their establishment and operation were set out in documents called “charges”. The possession of an authentic copy of the “charges” was the authority under which a lodge worked. The “charges” included the traditional history, rules governing work practices and codes of conduct for behavior at church, in the home and in company. The oldest known record of the Ancient Charges of Freemasonry was the Regius MS about 1390.

The usages and customs of Operative Freemasonry that have come down to us in Speculative Freemasonry include various traditions concerning the construction of the temple in Jerusalem, the symbolic use of the working tools to impart moral instruction and the modes of recognition used in the various grades of membership. When persons other than tradesmen were first received into operative lodges, men of learning and public stature no doubt would have been welcomed because of their eradication and the influence that they could bring to bear in the community for the benefit of the members. Those who were received into membership also would have been benefited from the widening of their interests in the new avenues of tradition and knowledge that were available to them. As long ago as the 1500's many Scot lodges welcomed local lairds as honorary members. Although they would not be regarded as Speculative Freemasons in the modern sense, they were the forerunners of the many who joined Scots operative lodges when work declined.

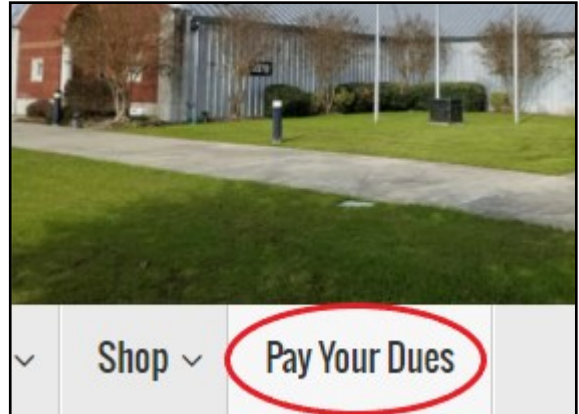
Modern Freemasonry has many branches, with a multitude of complimentary degrees that are progressive along a variety of paths. The constitutions and laws of modern Grand Lodges refer to their members as Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons. Most constitutions define Pure Ancient Masonry as comprising the three degrees of Entered Apprentice, Fellowcraft, and Master Mason, commonly with the stipulation that it also includes either or both of the Honorable Degree of Mark Master Mason and the Supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arc, even though the constituent degrees are not usually are not worked under the auspices of the Grand Lodge. The traditional degrees of Freemasonry include all of the foregoing and several others that are based on the story of the construction of King Solomon's Temple at Jerusalem; its subsequent destruction when The Jews were exiled to Babylon; and its rebuilding by Zerubbabel under the provisions of the Degree of Cyrus.

Although the catechism that every initiate in the Craft is required to learn, defines Freemasonry as a peculiar system of “morality veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols,” there are many misconceptions about the purpose of Freemasonry. A significant factor contributing to this dilemma is the reversal of the two roles of two key elements in the practice of the speculative art. The available records clearly show that the founders of Speculative Freemasonry in England regarded a lodge meeting as a forum for philosophical discussion, wherein the members could discourse upon a wide range of relevant topics, more or less in the fashion of meetings of the Royal Society to which many of them belonged. Before an application for membership would be considered, the petitioner was required to demonstrate that his interests were compatible with those of the members. Admission into the various degrees was to ensure that all members had a common foundation for their activities in various degrees was to ensure that all members had a common foundation for their activities in the lodge, as well as

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It's About Dues Time Again!

Within the next 30 to 60 days, all Gray Lodge members should expect to receive either your annual Dues notice, or a personal letter from Worshipful Master Ybarra regarding your endowment, life, or 50-Year membership. Your dues payments provide the funds that allow Gray Lodge to pay our bills, so when asked, please provide your financial support to the Lodge promptly.



You can now pay your annual Lodge dues, join the Master's Club, or increase your Endowment online through the Gray Lodge #329 website! Go to <http://www.gray329.org> and in the navigation banner, just under the picture of our Lodge building, click "Pay Your Dues".

This link will take you to a page where you can make your dues payment via PayPal, either using your credit card or PayPal Account. (PayPal will add a small convenience fee.)

Our Secretary and Treasurer will be notified of your payment, and your dues card will be mailed to you as soon as we receive it from Grand Lodge.

Did You Get Your Stuff Yet?

If you were able to join us last May 22 for Gray Lodge's (belated) 150th Anniversary Celebration, you received a complimentary 48-page historical magazine and a special anniversary challenge coin designed by PM Billy Moreno. But if you weren't able to join us ...

... you can still have the magazine and the coin! The magazine is still complimentary for every Lodge member and visitor; just come by the Lodge to get your copy, or ask us to mail it to you. You can order coins for \$15 each, plus postage. Payment options will soon be available on the Lodge website (<http://www.gray329.org>), or you can send us a check; please write to secretary@gray329.org to reserve your coin.

It's not too late to celebrate our historic Gray Lodge Sesquicentennial (we're only 16 months into our next 150 years, after all), so get your magazine and challenge coin today!



UPCOMING LOCAL MASONIC EVENTS (Gray Lodge activities are [hyperlinked](#))

Please note that all plans are subject to change and should be confirmed before attending. The most up-to-date calendar info is always available at <http://www.GRAY329.org/calendar>.

Online calendar feed for your personal device:
<https://calendar.google.com/calendar/ical/graylodgecalendar%40gmail.com/public/basic.ics>

SEPTEMBER 2021

19	Mon.	Arabia Shrine Stated Meeting	Arabia Shrine Temple	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
22	Wed.	District 30 MWSA Meeting	Reagan Lodge #1057	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
23	Thurs.	Lodge Catechism Instruction	Gray Lodge #329	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
23	Thurs.	Scottish Rite Stated Meeting	Scottish Rite Temple	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
26	Sat.	GL CoW Forum & Exam	BW Tinsley #1458	Forum at 9:30 am, Exam to follow

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2	Sat.	GL CoW Forum & Exam	Katy #1439	Forum at 9:30 am, Exam to follow
6	Wed.	Gray Lodge Stated Meeting	Gray Lodge #329	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
7	Thurs.	Lodge Masonic Education	Gray Lodge #329	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
8	Fri.	Ruthven Cmdry #2 Stated Meeting	Holland Lodge #1	Meeting 7:00 pm
11	Mon.	Houston Council #1 Meeting	Holland Lodge #1	Meeting 7:00 pm
12	Tues.	Bluebell Chapter OES Meeting	Gray Lodge #329	7:30 pm
14	Thurs.	Lodge Education & Esoteric Work	Gray Lodge #329	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
18	Mon.	Arabia Shrine Stated Meeting	Arabia Shrine Temple	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
20	Wed.	Dist. 30-B Briscoe Workshop	Gray Lodge #329	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
21	Thurs.	Lodge Ritual School & Practice	Gray Lodge #329	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
27	Wed.	District 30 MWSA Meeting	Reagan Lodge #1057	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
28	Thurs.	Scottish Rite Stated Meeting	Scottish Rite Temple	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
28	Thurs.	Lodge Catechism Instruction	Gray Lodge #329	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm

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3	Wed.	Gray Lodge Stated Meeting	Gray Lodge #329	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
4	Thurs.	Lodge Masonic Education	Gray Lodge #329	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
6	Sat.	GL CoW Forum & Exam	Temple #4	Forum at 9:30 am, Exam to follow
8	Mon.	Washington Chapt #2 Meeting	Holland Lodge #1	Meeting 7:00 pm
9	Tues.	Bluebell Chapter OES Meeting	Gray Lodge #329	7:30 pm
11	Thurs.	"PM's" Master Masons Degree	Gray Lodge #329	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
12	Fri.	Ruthven Cmdry #2 Stated Meeting	Holland Lodge #1	Meeting 7:00 pm
13	Sat.	13th Ann. A.S. Richardson Lecture	TBA	TBA
15	Mon.	Arabia Shrine Stated Meeting	Arabia Shrine Temple	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
17	Wed.	District 30 MWSA Meeting	Reagan Lodge #1057	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
18	Thurs.	Lodge Ritual School & Practice	Gray Lodge #329	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
18	Thurs.	Scottish Rite Stated Meeting	Scottish Rite Temple	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm

October Stated Meeting

Please plan now to join us for our next Stated Meeting on Wednesday, October 6. Dinner will be served at 6 p.m., with an Entered Apprentice lodge to open at 7 p.m.

WM Ybarra is planning meetings that will be more entertaining and educational than the typical monthly business of the Lodge, so we hope you will be there on Wednesday, October 6!

Keep Us Posted

If you have moved, or updated your email address or phone number, please update your record at grandlodgeoftexas.org (in the Member Portal), call us at 713-730-9329, or email Bro. Darrin Pitts at secretary@gray329.org with your new information so we can stay in touch.

Also, please let the Secretary know if you have any personal announcements you would like us to pass along to the Brethren.

MASTER MASON ANNIVERSARIES

SEPTEMBER 2021

5	Dwight Hollon	18	Roger Castillo
6	Mark Vonderau	19	Abdel Fustok
7	Bob Martin, Jr.	22	Jim Hoffman, Jr.
9	Alexander Di Caro, Jr.	22	Christopher Spry*
10	Norman Dow	23	Roy Shaw, Jr.
10	John McGalin	24	Christopher Haist
11	Gregory McCoy	29	Merle Zimmerman
15	Larry Gabriel	30	James Gilbert
15	Norman Peterson,	<i>* Past Master of Gray Lodge</i>	
17	Miguel Grajeda, Sr.		

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1	Shearn Smith *	11	Alvin Schimming	20	Richard Ferrari
1	Joseph Reynolds	11	Gary Wiener	21	Sean Martin
4	Samuel Ayers	15	William Page	22	Darryl Puckett
4	Kleber Siqueira	16	Danny Fuller, Sr.	24	Richard Longino
7	Samuel Sikes	17	Harold Pascoe	25	David Englet
8	Jerry Chumley	17	David Murray	28	Keith Schmidt
8	Wayne Huddleston *	18	Collin Wilson	<i>* Past Master of Gray Lodge</i>	

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9	Daniel Krukewitt	19	Joshua Perez	28	Laurence Ames
12	Erickson Ybarra	20	Jimmy Albers	29	Ernest Bugh
13	Thomas Kenyon	20	Randon Reaves *	29	Mario Reyna *
15	Joseph Saber	20	Charles Percy	29	Billy Moreno *
19	Mike Adal	20	Chuck Mitchell	30	Duke Isak
19	Iain Clark	21	Clarence Givens	30	John Minniece *
19	David Cousins *	24	Leslie Jeko	30	Norman Tucker
19	Roberto Sanchez *	26	Richard Fawcett *	30	Bogdan Grosu
19	Timothy Crump	27	William Kent	<i>* Past Master of Gray Lodge</i>	

Speculative Masonry

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establishing a basis for assessing the credentials of strangers wishing to attend meetings. This followed the precedents established in lodges of Operative Masons and in other trade and religious fraternities that had been in existence for many centuries. In contrast, modern Freemasonry places the greatest emphasis on the working of the various degrees, which in the great majority of lodges is almost to the exclusion of philosophical discussion.



Bro. Iain Mackechnie Dobbie

June 23, 1947 — August 24, 2021

We are sad to report that Brother Iain Mackechnie Dobbie laid down his working tools on August 24, 2021 in Shenandoah, Texas, and was laid to rest on September 4 in Boerne Cemetery with Masonic honors. Brother Dobbie had been fighting illness for quite some time. He leaves his loving wife Martha; his children Fraser, Lynsey, Sallie (Faircloth), and Natalie (Butcher); his grandchildren, Katie, Martha Rose, Cillian, Alexander, and Mathew; his cousin Billy; his sister-in-law Marion; and his nieces, Sandra, Lorraine and Diane.

Bro. Dobbie was born in Glasgow, Scotland on June 23, 1947. He began playing professional soccer at age 14 for his beloved Glasgow Rangers, as well as for Germany. Bro. Dobbie earned a Bachelor's in Naval Engineering and a Master's in Scottish history from the University of Glasgow. He then worked as a welder, first in the shipyards of Scotland and then all over the world for the oil and gas drilling industry, which led him finally to Houston.

Bro. Dobbie received the degrees of Freemasonry in Glasgow Lodge No. 441, Provincial Grand Lodge of Glasgow, Grand Lodge of Scotland. He was initiated as an Entered Apprentice on June 10, 1966; passed to the degree of Fellowcraft on Sept. 23, 1966; and raised to the Sublime Degree on March 24, 1967. Bro. Dobbie affiliated with Gray Lodge No. 329 on May 2, 2001, and served our Lodge as Tiler for the 2005-06 Masonic year. He received his 40-Year Masonic Service Award in July 2008, and was due to receive his 50-Year Service Award from the Grand Lodge of Texas.

Please keep his family in your thoughts and prayers at this time.



Bro. Elza Lee Steen

May 25, 1924 — September 18, 2021

Just before we sent out this issue, we learned of the passing of Brother Elza Lee Steen on September 18 at age 97. A Celebration of Life service will be held on September 25 at 10 am at Westbury Baptist Church. Brother Steen was preceded in death by his wife of 67 years, Marion, and leaves his sons, Bro. David Steen of Gray #329 and Charles; his daughter Nanci Faris; his grandchildren Kristen, Clayton, and Erica; and three great-grandchildren.

Bro. Steen was born in Eldorado, Arkansas on May 25, 1924 and grew up in Gladewater, Texas. After graduating high school, he served with the U.S. Army Air Corps from 1943-1945. Upon returning, he graduated from Baylor, and was an accountant with Texaco for 58 years. It was in Gladewater Lodge No. 852 where Bro. Steen was initiated January 22, passed June 10, and raised to the Sublime Degree on August 12, all in 1948.

He and his family moved to Houston in 1964, and affiliated with Gray Lodge No. 329 on April 18, 1973. He became an endowed member of our Lodge on April 2, 1992; and received his Fifty-Year Service Award on June 24, 1998, from both Gray and Gladewater Lodges.

Bro. Steen was also a 31-year volunteer at Herman Memorial Hospital where he donated 30 gallons of blood. Please keep his family in your thoughts and prayers at this time.