

BE PROUD OF YOUR MASONIC MEMBERSHIP

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Did it happen to you today? As you were driving to or from work, did you sight a Masonic car emblem or license plate? Did a Fourteenth-Degree ring or Square and Compasses belt buckle suddenly catch your eye as someone passed you on the street?

While on a business trip to a new place, did you by chance notice a building with a Masonic cornerstone or sign?

I confess this unexpected evidence of our gentle Craft always gives me pleasure. Time and time again during each day I am reminded of our Order and, more importantly, of the pride our Brethren take in the Craft. Pride, so the proverb goes, comes before a fall, but this is not the kind of pride I mean.

Wrongful pride is unfounded. It is being vain or haughty, putting yourself above someone else for no good reason. There is, in contrast, a proper pride. It comes from accomplishing something that is worth doing or from being an active participant in an organization that deserves to be looked up to because of its goals and achievements. That is Masonic Pride.

It is a proper sense of uplift from working in harmony with good men on worthy endeavors. I am proud to be a Mason and proud of my Brothers who share their love for the Craft with me. Like them, it is a pleasure to affirm this affiliation to others. This is not simple display. There is no reason to flaunt Freemasonry, to make a show of being a Mason.

Rather, just BE a Mason. This means living Masonry, not parading its emblems. It has been my experience that a true Brother relishes the Craft.

He enjoys coming to Lodge and sharing Masonic fellowship with his Brothers. He is eager to carry his share of responsibility.

You don't have to force him into serving on a committee. He volunteers. You don't have to plead for his assistance. He gives it gladly. This is the type of Mason whose pride in being a Brother consists of solid work first and display of Masonic symbols second. The ring, the buckle, the lapel or tie tack, the automobile emblem, the hearty Masonic grip---all are small parts of his total commitment to

the Craft. But they are important because they testify to others, as do his actions, that here is a Mason, a good man working to make the world a better place and himself a better man. His pride makes you proud.

Proper pride regarding Masonic emblems and facilities will naturally spur public curiosity. You will find people asking the meaning of your ring or tack, your car's emblem, or license plate. They will come to a Masonic open house or public activity and stay to learn more about our Order. Then they will know why we are so proud:

[*] proud of Masonry's wisdom, its universal principles that inspire moral conduct and personal virtue while fighting all forms of bigotry and intolerance;

[*] proud of Masonry's contribution to the ageless and worldwide battle to liberate man's mind and soul;

[*] proud of Masonry's innumerable leaders in every walk of life, men who have distinguished themselves as educators, soldiers, industrialists, doctors, ministers and statesmen;

[*] proud of Masonry's philanthropic efforts to worthy causes of every type. For these and still other reasons too numerous to mention, I am, like you, proud to be a Mason.

I am, therefore, all the more puzzled and frustrated by current membership statistics. Why don't more good men recognize the benefits of joining our ranks?

What can we do to reverse declines and, instead, swell our ranks?

How can we enlighten the public about our great work? These are questions for each of us to consider. Obviously, membership is a central and appropriate concern of the Craft today. We love our Order, desire to share its benefits, and take pride in avowing our Masonic affiliation.

Let us continue to display our Craft's emblems, wear our Masonic regalia, perform our rituals, and maintain our facilities with pride. Let each day be your personal testimony of what Freemasonry has done and is doing for you and others. Then good men everywhere will ask to join our honoured ranks, and we will have a future worthy of our past.