

KNIGHTS OF THE YORK CROSS OF HONOR – KYCH HISTORY

Chartered April 23, 2003

As an organization, the Convent General P.H.A. formally began in 1987, making this Order the latest entry in what is collectively styled the Prince Hall Family. However, being the newest did not mean we were the least experienced members of the group; in fact, due to our qualifications for membership, this body, collectively has more experience than any other Masonic entity found in Prince Hall Masonry. That being said, with all of our knowledge, we are still making and correcting our mistakes, and we are still evolving as an organization.

Our Mission then and now, is clear and straightforward. We are to ensure that our knowledge and wisdom, is shared with the members of our Lodges, Chapters, Councils, and Commanderies. While we are supporting our subordinate and Grand York Rite Bodies, it appears that we want to do more. In 1987, a group of York Rite Masons from the jurisdictions of Ohio and Michigan organized Alpha Priory No. 1 under the sanctions of The Grand Encampment of Knights Templar and the blessing of the Grand Master of Ohio. Henry Choya Small of Pennsylvania joined Alpha Priory in 1988 or 89, and over the next four to five years; he invited at least two dozen duly qualified Masons from Pennsylvania to join Alpha Priory.

In 1994, twenty Alpha Priory Knights from Pennsylvania demitted and formed John R Gilmore Priory No. 2. Thereafter, Knights from the Jurisdiction of Illinois formed John W. Thompson Priory No. 3. Still later, what was originally to be styled the Southern Priory, became Harry J . Spencer Priory No. 4 in Tennessee. Finally, birth out of the Pennsylvania's Priory, Daniel W . Frazier Priory No. 5 was formed.

In the year 2000, Past Prior Willie Mosley from Alpha Priory No. 1 convened a meeting in a suburb of Baltimore Maryland for the express purpose of establishing a Convent General. Many questions were asked and answered, and later agreed by the representatives of the five Pories in attendance, that no other Pories would be formed before the birth of the Convent General. Three years later, at the request of Eminent Prior Michael Steele from Harry J. Spencer Priory No. 4, with all five Prince Hall Pories in attendance, Knight Robert Wilson was asked to draft a proposed Constitution, General Regulations, and By-Laws for what would later become the Convent General. After completion of that task, Knight Wilson was asked

to preside over the reading of the new Constitution, in its entirety. At the conclusion of the reading, the Document was adopted as changed and it was agreed that the First Five Grand Master Generals would be one each from the Pories then in existence, and in the order of their formation date. Hence, the newly designated officers were:

Grand Master General, Willie Mosley - Alpha Priory No.1

Deputy Grand Master General, Henry C. Small - John R. Gilmore No. 2

Grand Warder of the Temple, Raymond Tucker - John W. Thompson No.3

Grand Prelate, Michael Steel - Harry J. Spencer No. 4

Grand Seneschal, Arthur Taylor - Daniel W. Frazier No. 5

Evolving:

Having the full blessing of the Grand Master of the Jurisdiction of Illinois, Levi L. Rose Priorate Court No. 1, Princesses of the York Cross of Honor became an adopted Court of John W. Thompson Priory No. 3. However, from the late 1990's until 2007, this group was not formally recognized by the Convent General. Since that year, through Levi L. Rose Priorate, Michael E. Steel Priorate No. 2 in Tennessee and The Tarheel Priorate in North Carolina were organized. The Priorates named above have since formed the Tucker-Coffee Grand Court Princesses of the York of Honor. At this writing, there are now five operating Courts and two others Under Dispensation scheduled to receive their Charters in May of 2015.

WHAT IS KNIGHTS YORK CROSS OF HONOUR

Knights of the York Cross of Honour (KYCH), was established as an Honor Group for York Rite Masons. The requirements for membership are that each proposed candidate for membership must have presided over a Lodge as a Master, over a Chapter as High Priest, over a Council as Illustrious Master and over a Commandery as Commander. Knights of the York Cross of Honour are an Honor Group of York Rite Masons who are dedicated to serving the Masonic Fraternity as a Labor of Love. No individual should aspire to membership in KYCH. When he has done the required work and has done it well; he may be invited to membership. Those who labor will be rewarded by being invited. After a Mason has fulfilled the requirements of membership, his name may be proposed for membership by a member of the K.Y.C.H. The prospective member should not know that he has been proposed. When a Priory receives a proposal, such proposal must be held over until the next stated meeting of the Priory before it is Balloted on. Some of the Ballot rules vary in different Jurisdictions, to comply with Grand Lodge Constitution and Bylaws, Rules and Regulations.

If this rule is followed, no one that is proposed and rejected should ever know that he was proposed and rejected, thereby saving much embarrassment to everyone. A member of K.Y.C.H. who has served any of the Four Grand York

Rite Bodies as Presiding Officer is thereby a Knight Grand Cross of Honour, with one Quadrant for each of the Grand Bodies he has served. This means that if he has served any of these Four Grand Bodies before he is inducted into K.Y.C.H., he would be a Knight Grand Cross of Honour upon being inducted into membership. If he serves any of these Four Grand Bodies after he is a K.Y.C.H. member, then he gets a Grand Quadrant when his term ends for each of those Grand Bodies.

When a member is awarded Knight Grand Cross of Honour, he is entitled to a Certificate from Convent General showing the distinction, i.e., Knight Grand Cross of Honour with One Quadrant, Two Quadrants, Three Quadrants or Four Quadrants, as the case may be. These certificates are awarded by the ME Grand Master General through the Office of the RE Grand Registrar – General. Lapel emblems are available to indicate Knight Grand Cross of Honour. Each Quadrant is represented by the appropriate color of the order served, i.e., Blue for the Lodge, Red for the Chapter, Purple for the Council, and White for the Commandery. If a member is a regular K.Y.C.H. member their color is White. The color Blue designates Eminent Prior or Past Prior. Red designates a member is elected or appointed officer of the Convent General. The color Purple designates a Past Most Eminent Grand Master General. If he is a Knight Grand Cross of Honour, but not a Past Prior, the background should be White.

The meaning of membership in K.Y.C.H. can best be explained by a closing statement of Most Eminent Knight Donald E. Friend, Grand Master General, at his Convent General Session in 1995, “As a Knight of the York Cross of Honour; you are a proven servant of the Masonic Fraternity; your inspiration has come from your Past; your duty is in the present; your hope is in the Future. I ask you always to remember—In all you do, In all you say, In all of your actions, take a good look at yourself, you are someone’s impression of Freemasonry”.