



The Ashlar

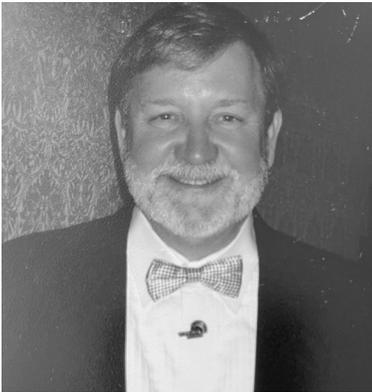


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Thomas Andrews “Tommy” Collins



In keeping with “The Lifesavers” theme for 2022, the Worshipful Master has requested each issue of The Ashlar to feature an article honoring a deceased member of our Lodge who has preserved life in addition to being a distinguished community member. “Distinguished” could mean anything from notable military service, an esteemed political career, or virtually any other qualifying instance elevating that member to recognition on a local, statewide, and/or national scale. For this month’s article, we feature Bro. Thomas Andrews “Tommy” Collins.

Collins was born in Norfolk in 1951 to Charles & Geraldine Collins. After moving to VA Beach, he attended school and worked for the locally renowned Plaza Bakery on VA Beach Blvd. The culinary skills that he honed there would last for the rest of his life, and earned him a reputation as an outstanding caterer and chef. In his later childhood, he attended First

Colonial High School, where he was a star player on the football team. After graduating in 1971, he earned an associates degree in criminology from St. Leo College.

After college, Collins began his career as an undercover narcotics officer with the VA Beach Police Department, receiving special training from the Drug Enforcement Administration. Eventually, he became a uniformed officer and detective, serving alongside his partner, Bro. Richard Chrisman. Dedicated to law enforcement and his community, he was at one time president of the VA Police Association, president of the VA Beach Fraternal Order of Police, and an active member of the VA Beach Jaycees- the latter two organizations would name him “Police Officer of the Year” in 1978. His friends and colleagues in law enforcement universally praised his ability to deescalate virtually any situation.

In 1979, Collins married Deborah Smith, with whom he had two children. He regarded fatherhood as his most cherished career. He treasured his children, coaching them in baseball and football, and was even president of their high school’s PTSA. His children are eternally grateful for his ability to offer guidance through all of the circumstances of life, and will never forget the many spontaneous family trips that he orchestrated through the years. During the hours in which he wasn’t working or engaged in other duties to his family, he took great pleasure and pride in cooking for them- a natural, he cooked gourmet recipes written on the pages of his mind.

In the early 1980s, Collins followed his interests in criminal defense and domestic cases and decided to become a private investigator. He was quickly recognized as one of the best investigators in the Hampton Roads legal community, and was the investigator of choice of numerous attorneys and other clients. In a time before the internet, his most valuable service was his uncanny ability to locate assets, information, people, and resources. As such, his career took him to places as distant as China to ensure his clients’ rights to a fair trial.

On one occasion, Collins was hired by a criminal defense attorney representing a man charged with murder. The prosecution had amassed witnesses whose testimony was seemingly infallible. On the night prior to what was expected to be the final day of the trial, he uncovered critical information from a

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From The East



Through the verbiage of our ritual, all Masons learn of the historic and symbolic importance of corn, wine, and oil. History teaches us that, during the building of King Solomon's Temple, the Fellows of the Craft were paid with these goods. All told, the Second Book of Chronicles records that 120,000 bushels of corn and 120,000 gallons each of wine and oil were paid to the workmen. A recent estimate suggested that this compensation would have been worth approximately \$30 million in 2021. Although corn, wine, and oil feature characteristics that make their usefulness and value self-evident, the symbolic significance of these necessities are not as easily understood without looking into the history that preceded them.

Although our ritual enshrines corn as the grain exchanged in this famous biblical contract, the Bible indicates that barley, flour, and/or wheat was/were exchanged. Masonic scholars suggest that corn substituted the other grains in the wording of the ritual to maintain brevity, and because corn was definitely a prolific food in Jerusalem in 957 BC. Grains in general were prepared for human consumption at a rate that surpassed any other food product at that time. In its own right, corn (including barley, flour, and wheat) was regarded as the manna of life and a requisite for existence- it now serves a Masonic purpose as the symbol of nourishment.

Prehistory postulates that wine has been produced by humans since approximately 6000 BC. In the millennia prior to the development of sanitation infrastructure, wine was regarded as a water purifier. In fact, the ancient Greeks are known to have mixed it with water to stave off waterborne pathogens. Unfortunately, its lengthy production process established it as a costly product and a symbol of wealth. Regardless, its daily and ubiquitous consumption by individuals from all walks of life ensures its place as the Masonic symbol of refreshment.

Oil has served humans for an inexplicable expanse of time, in an innumerable number of capacities. Much like butter, fat, and similar products, it was integral in the preparation of food. Long before the existence of engines, it fulfilled mechanical purposes as fuel for lamps and lubrication for contacting metal components and surfaces. It was even used in the medical field to treat injuries, and

in cosmetology as a vehicle for the application of ointments, perfumes, and spices such as frankincense, myrrh, and cinnamon. With these uses in mind, it is no wonder that oil is the Masonic symbol of joy and gladness.

Understanding the historical applications of corn, wine, and oil assist in the construction of a context in which it becomes clear that these items collectively comprise the symbols of Masonic nourishment, refreshment, joy, and gladness, respectively. As such, corn, wine, and oil serve to nourish our bodies, refresh our minds, and remind us of the joys of brotherhood.

Brother John Settle, III, Worshipful Master

From The West



It was a time not long after Fort Sumter and The War of Northern Aggression was well under way. The Yankees, as they are still wont to do, had promptly flocked to Hilton Head and Tybee Islands, the barrier islands on opposite sides of the mouth of the Savannah River. The Savannah Folks didn't mind much that the Yankees had stolen the good beaches, for the water was still a bit cool for Southern preferences and, besides, they knew the gnats and mosquitoes would teach the Yankees a lesson they'd never forget. So, the Southerners, as Southerners are wont to do sometimes, just waited.

They didn't have to wait very long before the Yankees on Hilton Head sent out a messenger under a white flag. It seemed that the Yankees had among them a young fellow who had passed through the Fellow Craft Degree before shipping out. The Yanks were just sitting around slapping gnats when it occurred to one of them that, just maybe, there was a nearby lodge that could test him in the Fellow Craft Degree and raise him to that of a Master Mason.

As luck would have it, there was indeed a lodge in Savannah that would soon be having a Masters Degree.

One morning, not too many days later, a detail of Confederate Cavalry slipped across the Savannah River into South Carolina and traveled through Bluffton to the shore opposite Hilton Head Island.

From there they escorted one Fellow Craft Mason and, I believe, a number of Master Masons of the Northern Persuasion, safely through the Confederate Lines and back through about 35

Collins' entrenched excellence in investigation, justice, and law enforcement typify him as a ceaseless adherent to the prevailment of reconciliation and truth. For his entire life, he applied his skills with those of his clients, colleagues, and community to ensure justice from both the private and public factions of the criminal justice system. These endeavors seal the necessity of his veneration in this series as an apparent lifesaver. If you're aware of a deceased member of our Lodge who may fit "The Lifesaver" criteria, please email johnrs4@vt.edu.

2022 Kempsville Masonic Lodge Scholarship Recipients

On June 8th, our Worshipful Master had the great pleasure of presenting \$500 Lodge scholarships to two very deserving students who attend the Virginia Beach Technical and Career Education Center. The first scholarship recipient, Ethan Kabaitan-Pacomio, is an awesome 3.3 GPA student who attends the carpentry program at the school.



He is a great citizen who participates in ROTC, and he will be attending college after high school. Our second recipient, Drew Styron, is a graduating senior at Tallwood High School who has attended the first part of the Practical

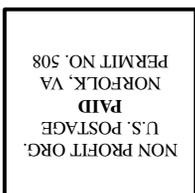
Nurse program at the Career Education Center. He will be using his scholarship to attend the second part of the program this fall, and he will receive his LPN upon completion next year.

Many thanks to everyone who helped support the Bull Roast in May. These annual scholarships are one of the worthy causes that are funded by the proceeds from that event each year.

Worshipful David Trzeciakiewicz

Lodge Officers

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Senior Warden	Pat Blankenship	406-6166
Junior Warden	Doug Dunn	781-389-6557
Treasurer	Chris Anders	635-7617
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Junior Deacon	Keith Ingraham	613-5474
Senior Steward	Todd Moissett	604-3085
Junior Steward	Scott Sherman	597-1150
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Marshal	Dickie Cooper	971-7347
Tiler	Dennis Dimaggio	582-3320
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Education Officer	William Rawson	724-4867
MAHOVA Ambassador	Ray Connard	630-5797
Blood Coordinator	Michael Blankenship	438-2862
Youth Advisor	Eddie Foley	581-8144



Kempsville Lodge #196 AFA&AM
4869 Princess Anne Road
Virginia Beach, VA 23462

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