



## **2024 Grand Master's Allocution**

**The Most Worshipful Union Grand Lodge of Florida, Belize Central  
America and Its Jurisdiction, Inc.**

**Prince Hall Affiliated**

*The Honorable Jeffery G. Jones 33° KYGCH*

**Most Worshipful Grand Master**

**April 20, 2024**



First Giving Honor to my Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ... The one who ransomed himself that we might have everlasting life.

To the men whose shoulders upon which I stand. The greatest cadre of MWPGMs any Grand Master could hope for in a single Jurisdiction:

our 15<sup>th</sup> Most Worshipful Grand Master, Bishop Dr. Michael R. Moore

our 17<sup>th</sup> Most Worshipful Grand Master, Dr. Anthony T. Stafford

and our 18<sup>th</sup> Most Worshipful Grand Master, Walter Gulley, Jr.

To the Honorable Corey D. Hawkins, Most Worshipful Grand Master, Prince Hall Jurisdiction of Alabama

To the Honorable L. Lamont Banks, Most Worshipful Grand Master, Prince Hall Jurisdiction of Tennessee.

To the Honorable Gregory R. Smith, Most Worshipful Grand Master, Prince Hall Jurisdiction of New York

To the Honorable Kelvin H. Elmore, Most Worshipful Grand Master, Prince Hall Jurisdiction of West Virginia

To the Honorable Michael R. Wilcoxon, Most Worshipful Grand Master, Prince Hall Jurisdiction of Nebraska

To the Honorable Noel C. Osborne, Sr., Most Worshipful Grand Master, Prince Hall Jurisdiction of Maryland

To the Honorable Primus James, Most Worshipful Grand Master, Prince Hall Jurisdiction of Georgia

To the Honorable Mark A. McGraw, Most Worshipful Grand Master, Prince Hall Jurisdiction of Arkansas

To the Honorable Glenn Bishop, Most Worshipful Grand Master, Grand Lodge of Florida F&AM.

To the Honorable Michael T Anderson, Most Worshipful Grand Master, Prince Hall Jurisdiction of Texas

To the Honorable Luis Metan Most Worshipful Grand Master, Prince Hall Jurisdiction of Côte D'Ivoire West Africa

To Right Worshipful Gil Calderone, Grand Ambassador, Representing the Honorable Patrick Abdelkarim MWGM Grand Lodge of Lebanon F&A M

To the Honorable Eugene Anderson, Jr., Most Worshipful Past Grand Master, Prince Hall Jurisdiction of Indiana and President of the Prince Hall COGM

To the Honorable Gardner M. Torrance, Most Worshipful Past Grand Master, Prince Hall Jurisdiction of Washington representing The Honorable Terrell D. Hicklin Most Worshipful Grand Master.

To the Honorable Terrence Jackson, Most Worshipful Past Grand Master, Prince Hall Jurisdiction of Colorado, Wyoming, & Utah, Representing the Honorable Gary B. Thomas, Sr., Most Worshipful Grand Master.

To the greatest line of Elected Grand Lodge officers ever assembled.

RW Deputy Grand Master Gus Harris, Jr.

RW Senior Grand Warden Kendall T. Moore

RW Junior Grand Warden Dr. Marlon S. Honeywell

RW Grand Treasurer Melvin F. Wright

RW Grand Secretary Tommie Wright.

To Dr. Tracy A. Thomas, GWM Jerusalem Grand Chapter Order of the Eastern Star.

To each of our Male and Female Department Heads in their respective places

To the Grand Chancellor, RW Carl Finerson,

To the Grand Lecturer, RW Leonard Ross

To our elected board of Grand Trustees, most notable, RW Henry B. Parker, Trustee Board Chairman.

To the Chaplains and Clergy of this Great Jurisdiction most notable our Worshipful Grand Chaplain Rev. Ernest Powell

To all visiting guests' delegations in their respective places. To all other distinguished Dignitaries.

To all Appointed Grand Lodge and Grand Chapter Officers, To All Past Masters, Past Worthy Matrons, Sitting Masters and Worthy Matrons, Brothers, Sisters, Family, Friends, Guests, and to all God's Children!!!

**GOOD AFTERNOON!!!!**

*A charge to keep I have, A God to glorify, A never-dying soul to save, and fit it for the sky.*

*To serve the present age, My calling to fulfill: Oh, may it all my powers engage to do my Master's will!*

*Arm me with jealous care, As in Thy sight to live; And O Thy servant, Lord, prepare A strict account to give!*

Brothers and sisters, As I stand before you once again as your 19<sup>th</sup> Most Worshipful Grand Master, I am reminded that, but for God, we have seen successes that seemed impossible at the beginning of this administration. We have placed a great deal of faith in Him and He has never failed us. More importantly, I am reminded, that God placed upon your hearts to entrust in me the Leadership and future of this Most Worshipful Grand Lodge. For that reason, the hymn "A charge to keep" has such great meaning to me. It is a reminder of my duty to each of you and to my God.

This afternoon I present to you the current state of our nation, our organization, and my view of our future as we navigate the forward movement of Prince Hall Masonry in the Jurisdiction of Florida.

Through this administration, our Jurisdiction has faced many challenges and much has been asked of you. First, to be able to endure and continue to thrive in the midst of a COVID pandemic, you were asked to trust me; and the process presented to keep us safe. Secondly, we were and are still faced with Masonic Jurisdiction encroachment. Because of this, you were asked to consider Constitutional change for the protection of your masonic Jurisdiction. And lastly, you were asked to make one of the greatest decisions in the history of this organization since the earliest days of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as it pertains to the development partnership of your beloved Grand East facility. Through it all, you have maintained your faith in God, trusted in Him, and I am happy to say, He has not failed us yet.

**2 Corinthians 5:7 says:**

**For we live by faith, not by sight.**

**Hebrews 11:6 further says:**

**And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.**

**It is my humble and earnest opinion that it is because of our faith in God and because we have leaned on Him who is able to do all things, in spite of it all, ..... We are still here.**

**With that sentiment, I humbly ask that the Grand Chaplain take us to the throne of grace as the Choir sings the old gospel spiritual “I need thee”**

**([https://youtu.be/NWhe2\\_WDBNw?si=LStkR4qQtO3dDtAp](https://youtu.be/NWhe2_WDBNw?si=LStkR4qQtO3dDtAp) - Prayer)**

Brothers and Sisters, I once again greet you in the matchless name of our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ. It is with great pride and privilege that I welcome you to this 154<sup>th</sup> Grand Communication of the Most Worshipful Union Grand Lodge of Florida. As I begin this address, I reflect on the aforementioned challenges faced by this Grand Lodge and this administration. But again, through it all we are still here.

We must remember to always lean on our Faith in God. We must remember this because we are yet not done. There is still much we must do in faith if we are to reap our rewards.

I want to share with you a few words spoken by gospel artist Tye Tribett.....Brother Tribett states that “In order to come up or to move forward, there must first be some form of departure”. Let me explain.....The thing that keeps many people from moving forward or rising above their current state is the fear of the departure from the current situation or their current state of mind. If you are sitting in a chair, before you can walk; you must first stand-up thus leaving the comfort of the chair. If what’s next, does not appear to be worth the departure, many people will wait until it is. This is the true embodiment of procrastination. Always waiting for the right time; waiting for the moment that over there looks better than where they are. But to the procrastinator,

over there rarely ever reveals itself. To the procrastinator, faith is low in supply. The procrastinator fails to realize that sometimes the blessing does not come until the departure. This is where an abundant supply of faith will help you reach your goals. If you are unwilling to step out on faith, the blessing in all likelihood will be missed. The blessing is in the steps you must take to reap the reward. Faith without works is dead. I ask that you remember this sentiment, for it is the focus and premise behind this address today.

## **NECROLOGY**

Psalm 90:12 - So teach us to number our days that we may apply our heart to  
Wisdom

The bible reminds us that our days in the land of the dying are few. For as soon as we are born, we begin to die. Since our last communication, 33 brothers have taken their rest. Having been called, they await the day that the trumpet shall sound, they await the day that every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess. This is the day of judgement. Here on earth every headstone has two dates inscribed upon it. A date of birth, and a date of death. But it has been said; it is the dash between these monumental dates that is most important. The dash that represents the span of time you spent here on earth. What did you do with the time God gave you. That is the question we must ask ourselves. Masons should be uniquely in tuned to this question. The entire premise behind our order is to remain mindful to spend each day making ourselves better. Slowly chipping away the rough edges of life making ourselves a better fit for that spiritual building not made with hand eternal in the heavens. Again, many of our very own brothers and sisters who were with us just one year ago are not here today. When death calls, we will and must answer. Did our brothers and Sisters who have gone on before us spend the time God gave them as He intended. Are we spending God's time as He intended. I lift up my brother and sisters past and present in prayer. I pray that those who have gone before us will find comfort with our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ, and I pray for each of you as we continue to navigate this time God has given us here on earth.

## **STATE OF THE NATION**

I love America more than any other country in the world. And for that exact reason, I insist on  
the right to criticize her perpetually.

~James Baldwin

During our 151<sup>st</sup> grand communication in 2021 as I delivered my address, I proclaimed to you  
the following and I quote:

“The United States of America is a country with great vision. Two Hundred and Forty-Five (245) years ago, the founding fathers of this great nation proclaimed this country the land of opportunity; the land of the free, and the home of the brave. By proof of its very own constitution, the founders set out to create a more perfect Union, establish Justice, and ensure domestic Tranquility, they further established, as the country declared its independence from British rule; several truths to be self-evident. These truths became the foundation and founding principles of what would one day be considered the greatest country on earth. These principles proclaimed:

‘that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of happiness’.” – unquote. These words by the founding fathers are the founding principles of our democracy.

Three years later I still believe this vision to be great. And if our country ever lives up to its vision, America would truly be a great nation. I say to you here today, America has fallen short of her vision. She has failed to treat all men equally and our nation is in extreme danger of losing its democracy. Just a little more than a half century ago, our country stood in division. Unfortunately, then, the division was racially motivated. Systemic racism plagued the country with State sanctioned Jim Crow laws put in place to keep one racial demographic trodden underfoot. Today, while some may see racial divides less obvious having made some progress in the job markets, housing markets, and a narrowing of the income gap; today the division in this potentially beautiful nation of ours has only widened.

Today in 2024, the division is no longer along racial lines but has shifted to political party lines. The division is no longer about Racial Majorities and Minorities, but is nearly a 50/50 split of massive proportions. The old adage a house divided will fall has never been more evident than it is today as it relates to the state of our Country. Democrats and Republicans, Conservatives and Liberals are at great odds with each other, they have lost sight of what is most important; America and the American people. While Democrats and Republicans leaders fight each other for political power, the American people are forced to witness and in many cases fall victim to: gun violence, mass shootings, acts of treason, a government insurrection, domestic terrorism, climate change affects, unchecked homelessness, disproportionate incarcerations, prisons for profit, underfunded educational systems, under educated and poorly trained law enforcement officers, poor immigration laws, reproductive health concerns, unchecked police brutality, surging healthcare costs, and the list goes on. We are the richest and most powerful Nation in the world and we as citizens live in the only superpower nation outside of the Soviet Union without free healthcare and education. It is said that it is because of a national debt that we can’t afford it. While I am all for helping our allies and fellow man across the globe, I have to ask myself why can we find a reason to print billions of dollars to assist other nations, but we find it too high of a price tag to help our own. The term “Woke” has been painted to be an ugly word designed to label some Americans to be weak, lazy, and worthless. Well, I truly believe, if the entire country doesn’t wake up soon, these yet to be United States of America will fall. To sum it all up.....I conclude, that our Nation collectively has fallen victim to an era of political leaders who have place Politics and Party over its People. And sadly, a significant majority of our citizens are too deeply asleep to see it.

When I look at our Nation today, I am reminded of the poem by James Patrick Kinney “The Cold Within”: The Poem shares with us the story of 6 men who sat around a fire in the freezing bitter cold. Each held a log of wood in their hands all refusing to put their log on the fire to spite the others. One man refused to place his log on the fire because another was black, another refused because the other was white. The poor man despised the rich, and the rich man had no empathy for the poor, and still another refused to place his log on the fire because he saw one in the 6 that

did not share in his religion. And finally, the last man refused to help the others because he only gave to those that give. The poem ends with a hard pointed truth that say this:

**Their logs held tight in death's still hands Was proof of human sin. They didn't die from the cold without They died from the cold within.**

This Nation is nearly 250 years old. It's time to embrace our differences, put our trust in God, step out on faith, and create an America that represents us all and remembers our founding principle:

**That all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of happiness'.**

### **STATE OF THE CRAFT**

Since the founding of our Jurisdiction in the year 1870, Prince Hall Masonry in Florida has established itself as an organization with a history steeped in greatness. Prince Hall Masonry in Florida can boast a number significant contributors to the rich history of this great state counted among its members. Many of the greatest African American leaders since the era of reconstruction as well as the civil rights movement have called the hallowed halls of our Grand Lodge their masonic home. Men like Josiah T. Walls, Florida's first black politician who in 1870 would become Florida's first Black Congressman in the US House of Representatives. And Women like Mary McLeod Bethune, and Zora Neal Hurston whose contributions to Florida as well as the country are well documented.

There are hundreds of other men and women like these who have distinguished themselves from others throughout our masonic history. This is why its is important to preserve our history; for no one can tell our story better than us. Since I have been Grand Master, I reinstated the printing and publishing of the annual proceedings book. This was once a long-standing tradition in our Jurisdiction but for some time, had been discontinued. Since 2021, we have printed our proceeding and submitted them to the Iowa Masonic Library and Museum for historical preservation. This year in addition, we are submitting a copy the Library of Congress in Washington DC. This will ensure that our history as we move forward is preserved in perpetuity.

One hundred and twenty (120) years ago John G. Jones was expelled from Prince Hall Masonry by the MW Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Illinois for unmasonic conduct and irregular masonic practices. After that time, John G. Jones spent the rest of his masonic career Opening clandestine masonic lodges and initiating members into these clandestine groups. As a result of this, John G. Jones has been and will forever be known as the Father of Bogus Prince Hall masonry.

Jones was an educated man with a Law degree who would eventually become State representative of the 5<sup>th</sup> district of cook county in Chicago, Illinois. As educated and intelligent as he was, John G Jones's unmasonic actions, left such a mark and scar on the history of Prince Hall Masonry, the disgust was expressed by our Mother Grand Lodge, The MWPHGL Free and Accepted Masons of the Jurisdiction of Massachusetts in the famous letter of 1903. The letter proclaimed to all PHA Jurisdictions "That the MWPHGL, Free and Accepted Masons, State of Massachusetts, does not and will not affiliate with or in any way recognize masonically, any



person affiliating with, recognizing or in any way having Masonic intercourse with John G. Jones, recently expelled from Masonry by the MWPHGL of Illinois, or with those whom he is in affiliation.” This was signed by GM William H. Jackson, and attested by Benjamin C. Hazel, Grand Secretary”. In accordance with this declaration, the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of New York followed close behind with a similar declaration; followed by the MWPHGL District of Columbia who suspended several individuals because of their association with John G Jones in his bogus Scottish Rite body of the South and West.

I said all of that to say this: One hundred and twenty years ago, Prince Hall masonry was under attack by a man of selfish intent, with personal agendas, and held no respect for the sanctity of our great order. But there is nothing new under the sun. The threat we faced 120 years ago is the exact same threat we face today. Bogus Prince Hall Masonry is being promoted and pitched within the boundaries this very Prince Hall jurisdiction. A very small minority of our members have taken the bait of this new leader of Bogus Prince Hall masonry. A very small minority of our members have put their own desires for bogus titles over the protection of their masonic Jurisdiction. I believe the needs of the many overwhelmingly outweigh the wants of the few. Separation from these individuals has been swift and I stand ready to defend every decision and action I have taken on your behalf in the protection of you and our masonic Jurisdiction. Florida is strong and will remain strong as long as we keep our faith in God, do what is right in the sight of the Lord, and stick together avoiding the same division that now plagues this Nation today. Taking the appropriate steps is how we will defeat this attack. Prince Hall Masonry survived the attacks of John G Jones 120 years ago, we will survive this attack today.

### **THE GRAND EAST**

Once again, I remind you of the sacrifice our masonic forefathers made in 1912 when they had the vision to build our 48,000sf 6 story edifice in downtown Jacksonville. Today it is our greatest asset. It is the pride of our masonic jurisdiction. At the 2022 grand session I presented to you a plan to renovate and develop our property in partnership with investors to turn our pride and joy into a beautiful hotel creating a residual flow of income for this Grand Lodge thereby securing our financial future for years to come. At the 153<sup>rd</sup> Grand session in 2023, you stepped out on faith giving me permission to move forward with this vision.

For the sake of time, I won't go into the details of the plan in this address today, but upon the conclusion of this allocution, I will present to the brothers via special committee, the findings of our detailed analysis over the last year, and the plans for our next steps when our session reconvenes. I will share the same with the ladies when I have opportunity to meet with you Monday morning. But let me just say, I am excited for our Jurisdiction. The future of Prince Hall masonry in Florida is bright. One of the biggest concerns raised by some of you last year was centered around the protection of the building. While most of you agreed with the approach we were taking, still many of you had reservations about the potential to loss of our pride and joy to the investors. With careful planning to ensure that all parties invested in this project are protected, I am happy to announce to you that we have developed a model that 100% mitigates the risk of loss of ownership. 410 Broad Street will continue to be 100% owned by the MWUGL of Florida and we still have an opportunity to have a stake in the ownership of the hotel business

within its walls. More specific details are forthcoming to you today via the special committee presentation. As I have said before, Faith without works is dead. Many thanks to each of you for trusting in me but more importantly stepping out on your faith in God.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. All houses concordant and appendant will immediately begin the process to updated its constitution to align with the MWUGL constitution relative to the approved path of Masonic advancement and the recognized masonic houses as it pertains to the prerequisite of membership within this masonic Jurisdiction.
2. All members who previously made a pledge to the Masonic Capital campaign or anyone wishing to make a pledge be given an additional 6 months to pay their pledge in full.
3. Authorize the Grand Chancellor and the Fraternal Relations Committee to move forward with the submission of the Application for fraternal recognition to the UGLE to expand on our recognition of its masonic regularity and our fraternal relationships worldwide.
4. This Jurisdiction to include all masonic bodies develop a plan to institute a more concerted effort to register and educate voters in the State of Florida.
5. All masonic house within the Jurisdiction of Florida will annually publish its annual proceedings documents to include minutes, reports and the leader's address as a means of preserving the history of our entire Jurisdiction. These proceedings are to be annually submitted to the Iowa Masonic Library & Museum as well as the Library of Congress, Washington DC

In conclusion, I leave you with this quote. ~author unknown: **Every time a man implements a new idea, he finds ten men who thought of it before he did. Trouble is, they only thought of it.**

Again, I said that to say this. Faith without works is dead. Always remember, before there can be any forward movement, reaping of rewards, or any success gained, there must first be a departure. There must first be a departure from the current situation or current state of mind.  
**FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD!!!**

I AM,



The Honorable Jeffery G. Jones

19<sup>th</sup> Most Worshipful Grand Master, MWUGL Jurisdiction Florida

**GOD SAVE THE CRAFT – GOD SAVE THE MWUGL OF FLORIDA - GOD SAVE THESE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, AND MAY GOD BLESS EACH OF YOU IS MY PRAYER**

## Stewardship & Actions

(Some Virtual Items may have been omitted)

Date	To	Event
Jan 5-8	Orlando	York Rite Session
Jan 18-21	Atlanta	SERCOGM
Feb 23 - 25	Arkansas	Grand Session
March 23-24	Orlando	Meeting with Mainstream
April 13-21	Jacksonville, FL	Grand Session
May 17-20	New Orleans	COGM
May 28-31	Orlando	FL Mainstream Grand Session
Jun 9-11	Cocoa	Youth Grand Session
Jun 22-25	Texas	Grand Session
Jun 30	Jurisdiction	Masonic declaration form sent
Jul 7-9	West Palm Beach	Dept Head Mid-Year meeting
Jul 21-23	Orlando	FCOD Workshop
Aug 18-20	Pompano	GWM Visitation
Aug 31 - Sept 3	Orlando, FL	Leadership Lyceum
Sept 8 - Sept 10	Orlando, FL	MID Year Workshop HOJ
Sept 28 -Oct 1	Panama City	Zone 1 GM Visitation
October 5-11	Huntsville, AL	United Supreme Council
Oct 13-15	Miami	LOCOP Zone 3 Visitation
Oct 20-22 - 26	Orlando	OES Workshop
October 26-30	Belize	Visitation
Nov 3-5	Ocala	GM Zone 2 Visitation
Nov 10 - 12	Jacksonville, FL	FCOD Grand Session
Nov 15 - 21	Cote D'Ivoire West Africa	Grand Lodge Consecration
Dec 1 - 3	Maryland	Grand Sessions
Dec 3-5	Mississippi	Grand Session
Dec 7-10	Miami	GM Zone 3 Visitation
Dec 17	Clewiston, FL	St John Evangelist Day

