



Biography

The Honorable Gus Harris, Jr., Most Worshipful Grand Master

A Life of Service and Leadership: The Masonic Journey of a Dedicated Prince Hall Mason

In the annals of Prince Hall Freemasonry, we are blessed with Brothers whose lives are so deeply woven into the fabric of our institution that their stories become part of our legacy. Such is the case with the distinguished Brother whose journey you are about to read.

From the rice fields of Southeast Asia to the altar of our sacred lodges, his path has embodied duty, humility, and leadership. This is not simply a Masonic biography, it is a chronicle of unwavering commitment to our fraternity, our nation, and our community. He is a Brother who climbed every station of responsibility not for title or prestige, but out of a calling to serve with excellence and uplift others in the process.

As the 20th Most Worshipful Grand Master of the Most Worshipful Union Grand Lodge of Florida, he follows in a rich tradition of veterans of the United States Armed Forces who rose to the highest station in Prince Hall Masonry. This tradition traces back to Grand Master H.H. Thompson and Grand Master Tillman Valentine, both veterans of the 3rd United States Colored Infantry (USCT) - the same regiment formed in the wake of Frederick Douglass's call to arms. These trailblazers not only fought for freedom on the battlefield but laid the foundation for our Grand Lodge and its enduring legacy.

It is with great honor that I present this tribute to a man whose work and worth truly exemplify the very best of Prince Hall Masonry.

Born and raised in Augusta, Georgia, and a proud graduate of the historic Lucy Craft Laney High School in 1961, Gus Harris began his life of service by enlisting in the United States Air Force at a very young age. He went on to serve his country honorably for 28 years.

While on active duty and stationed at U-Tapao Air Base in Thailand, he was introduced to the Masonic Fraternity by a fellow serviceman he had known in Vietnam, Tom Bradley. Inspired by the ideals of the organization, he submitted his application and began his Masonic journey. He was initiated on February 28, 1976, passed on March 27, 1976, and raised to the degree of Master Mason on April 24, 1976, in Siam Military Lodge #30 in Bangkok, Thailand, under the Delaware Jurisdiction, Prince Hall Affiliation.

Shortly after, he was reassigned to Hurlburt Field in Mary Esther, Florida, where his Masonic journey accelerated under the guidance of J.R.L. Conyers - a respected leader who served as Grand Worthy Patron, District Deputy Grand Master, and High Priest of Maxwell Chapter #115, as well as Worshipful Master of Crestview Lodge #364 (later renamed in his honor). Moved by the commitment and integrity of its members, he demitted to the Most Worshipful Union Grand Lodge (MWUGL) of Florida, Prince Hall Affiliated, in June of 1976. That same year, he joined Beulah First Baptist Church of Fort Walton Beach, Florida, cementing his ties to the local community.

By December 1976, his leadership abilities were recognized when he was appointed Junior Deacon. He quickly rose through the ranks, eventually being elected Worshipful Master of J.R.L. Conyers Lodge #364 in December 1982. He served in that position until 1986. Even when reassigned to Lajes Air Base in the Azores for 15 months, he remained loyal to his home lodge and MWUGL of Florida.

Returning to Florida in 1988 and stationed at Eglin Air Force Base, he was again elected Worshipful Master of J.R.L. Conyers Lodge #364 in 1991, serving until 1996. Throughout his journey, he held numerous other positions that reflected the trust his brethren placed in him, including:

- High Priest of Maxwell Chapter #115 (1997–2000)
- Thrice Illustrious Master of C.P. Randolph Council #9, Royal & Select Masters (2002–2006)
- Eminent Commander of Frank Carter Commandery #103 (2000–2001)
- Assistant Rabban of Islam Temple #182
- Member of West Florida Consistory #252
- Honorary 33° (SJ-PHA)
- Member of the Knight York Cross of Honor

He also served in leadership roles as:

- Worthy Patron of V.K. Conyers Chapter #7
- Worthy Joshua of E.L. Seawright Court #90
- President of the Conyers/Randolph Study Club
- Assistant District Deputy Grand Master
- District Deputy Grand Master under PGM Dr. Henry Simmons
- Chairman, Committee on Foreign Correspondence under PGM Bishop Dr. Michael R. Moore

Among his most treasured milestones was his election as the 20th Grand Master of the Most Worshipful Union Grand Lodge of Florida.

In recognition of his enduring service and exemplary leadership, he was elevated on October 10, 2016, to the rank of Sovereign Grand Inspector General Emeritus, 33°, by the United Supreme Council, Prince Hall Affiliation, Southern Jurisdiction.

He has had the honor of serving under four Grand Masters: the 15th MWGM Michael R. Moore, the 17th MWGM Anthony T. Stafford, the 18th MWGM Walter Gulley Jr., and the 19th MWGM Jeffery Jones. In his first address to Craft, he acknowledged working under such prestigious leadership and how their example paved the way to the Grand Master's chair.

He remains an active voice in the leadership of the jurisdiction and a respected presence among his peers. His first initiative as Grand Master focuses on securing the safety of the Craft and establishing comprehensive emergency preparedness. He plans to enact policies that prepare lodges for hurricane season and natural disasters, while also strengthening partnerships with the American Red Cross and other emergency response services. As Prince Hall Masons, he emphasizes the importance of being visible and engaged in the well-being of their communities.

