

Dr. Eric William Nancekivell MD

Grand Master (1975 – 1979) of the Grand Lodge of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons
of Canada in the Province of Ontario



Photo from the Grand Lodge

(1916 – 2002)

Prepared by V.W. Bro. Marshall Kern.

Eric William Nancekivell was born in Hamilton on August 15, 1916, and took his elementary schooling in the city. He obtained a baccalaureate degree in Arts from McMaster and then began a study of medicine at the University of Toronto where he received an M.D. degree in 1943. As the son of a family physician, both Eric and his brother, also a doctor, entered practice in Hamilton. Dr. Eric Nancekivell was a member of the Hamilton Academy of Medicine, the Ontario Medical Association, the Canadian medical Association and the College of Family Physicians.

He married Alice Isabel McCutcheon (1920 – 2007), a nursing graduate from Hamilton General Hospital and they had two sons: Graham, and Bill.

During World War II, Dr. Nancekivell served as Medical Officer with the Royal Canadian Medical Corps both in Canada and overseas and followed a similar capacity with the Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders (Princess Louise's). He continued his connection with the military as a member of a military band.

The family were members of St. Stephen's-on-the-Mount Anglican Church where he served as Warden, as bass soloist of the choir, and a licensed lay reader of the church.

M. W. Bro. Dr. Eric William Nancekivell, MD, died on July 1, 2002. A Masonic Memorial Service was held the evening before the funeral.

M.W. Bro. Eric William Nancekivell's remains are entombed in a crypt at Bayview Mausoleum, 740 Spring Gardens Road, Burlington.

A portrait of M.W. Bro. Eric William Nancekivell in the regalia of Grand Master is proudly displayed at Hillcrest Lodge No. 594 in Hamilton.

Masonic Career

Mr. Eric William Nancekivell was initiated into Hillcrest Lodge No. 594, Hamilton, on October 14, 1947. He was passed on November 13, 1947, and raised December 11, 1947. Bro. Nancekivell was a charter member of Composite Lodge No. 667, Hamilton, when it was instituted in 1951, and served as the Worshipful Master in 1953. Composite Lodge No. 667 closed in 2012.

M.W. Bro. Eric W. Nancekivell was elected as District Deputy Grand Master of Hamilton District B in 1960. DDGM Nancekivell had twenty lodges under his care.

A highlight of his year as DDGM was making an unofficial visit outside his District by flying 900 miles to be present at the initiation of his brother, Dr. Keith Nancekivell who is a surgeon, into Kaministiquia Lodge, No. 584, Fort William. In addition to multiple Divine Services, and approximately twenty Ladies' Nights, Hamilton Masonic District "B" held a night of Masonic Education. The evening was devoted to "The Music of the Ritual". DDGM Nancekivell noted that it was well attended, and "An idea was presented to form a Hamilton Masonic Choir and this I heartily endorse."

Past DDGM Nancekivell was elected to serve on the Board of General Purposes from 1962 to 1973. For eight years he was Chairman of the Committee on Benevolence. He was elected as Deputy Grand Master in 1973 for a two-year term.



M.W. Bro. Eric William Nancekivell was elected and installed as Grand Master of the Grand Lodge A.F. & A.M. of Canada in the Province of Ontario in 1975 and served that office for two years.

In Capitular Masonry he was exalted into The Hiram Chapter No. 2, Hamilton.

As a member of Scottish Rite, M.W. Bro. Nancekivell was a member of Hamilton Lodge of Perfection, Hamilton Chapter of Rose Croix, and Moore Sovereign Consistory. He was coroneted as an Honorary Inspector General 33° in 1975.

He was a member of the Royal Order of Scotland.

M.W. Bro. Eric W. Nancekivell was honored with distinguished Masonic Service medals by other Grand Lodges. These included the Erasmus James Phillips Medal by the Grand Lodge of Nova Scotia; the Josiah Hayden Drummond Medal by the Grand Lodge of Maine; and the Pierpont Edwards Medal by the Grand Lodge of Connecticut.

In the Annual Proceedings of 2003, 18 lodges in the jurisdiction reported that their member, M.W. Bro. Eric William Nancekivell, had died.

As Grand Master

M.W. Bro. Eric William Nancekivell, our 57th Grand Master had the sad duty to report the passing of M.W. Bro. Harry L. Martyn, who had been the Grand Master for the term 1957 – 1959. In eulogizing his predecessor, he said: "A man of the calibre and stature of Harry L. Martyn, a man who could truly be called a giant among Masons, will be sorely missed in our Masonic assemblies and in the individual lodges, as well as in the hearts of all of us whose lives were enriched by knowing him and whose actions were guided by his great knowledge and love of Masonry and his exceedingly wise counsel."

The Grand Lodge office released a revised set of booklets for applicants, and new Masons at each stage of advancement. The useful book Meeting the Challenge was completed and released. It is a manual for lodge officers.

M.W. Bro. Nancekivell was elected as Chairman of the Conference of Grand Masters of North America which met in Washington in February of 1977. He presided over that Conference composed of 49 United States Grand Lodges, 9 Canadian Grand Lodges and the York Grand Lodge of Mexico.

Most of the Grand Master's Address in each year of M.W. Bro. Nancekivell's term is devoted to enumerating the normal tasks that fall to the Grand Master. With the administrative and ceremonial task clearly listed for posterity, M.W. Bro. Nancekivell turned his attention to more fundamental matters. Excerpts of his thoughts are presented now.

“The Ancient Landmarks in this Grand Jurisdiction are ill-defined and, in general, much fewer in number than many of our sister Grand Jurisdictions in Canada, the British Isles or in the United States of America. As Masonry is indeed a beautiful system of morality and as the state of the world's morality seems to be approaching a dangerously low ebb and is ever changing, seemingly for the worst, it behooves us as active Masons to recall and uphold these Ancient Landmarks of our Craft among which are (1) the Brotherhood of man; (2) the Fatherhood of God; and (3) the Immortality of the Soul.”

“It has been said many times over that Masonry is religious but not a religion. For a man to join our Order he must have a belief in a Supreme Being – this is a basic Masonic requirement without which no man can be admitted a member – The Fatherhood of God. This Supreme Being may be known by different names depending on whether the applicant is Christian, Jew, Mohammedan, Hindu or of any other belief.”

“We as Masons must have an unalterable belief in the Immortality of the Soul, a life in the great hereafter, an eternal existence in what we term the Grand Lodge Above. If we have hopes of Heaven, we must conduct ourselves on this earth in such a manner that the All-seeing Eye of the Almighty will approve or, at least, be willing to forgive us our sins as not one of us is free of such.”

“The past is secure – Masonry has an illustrious history with monarchs themselves exchanging the scepter for the gavel – but what of the future? Joseph Fort Newton, the great Masonic scholar, wrote fifty years ago ‘to go on making men Masons as we are now doing by wholesale, without giving them an intelligent and authentic knowledge of what Masonry is, or what it means, with no definite objects beyond fellowship and philanthropy – objects to which other Orders are equally devoted – is for Masonry to lose, by ignorance or neglect what has been distinctive in its history and genesis, and invite degeneration, if not disaster.’”

“It is, therefore, important that in our Lodges and in Grand Lodge we stress proper, efficient and knowledgeable Masonic Education so that our time is devoted, to a greater extent, to teaching the great moral precepts of Masonry and not just to the usual and sometimes only activity of Initiating, Passing and Raising. Entire meetings could and should be devoted to Masonic teachings, as indeed they are already in certain lodges.”

“It is in our relationship to the community that we must change and, to a considerable extent, on this our future depends. In days past, even within the knowledge of some of our older brethren present, the most active men in any community were always known to be Masons. These men were prominent in local charitable drives, regional projects, church and civic government. Without blatantly advertising our Craft, it is incumbent upon us to be more extroverted in our outlook,

not as introverted as we have become, so that it can truthfully be said that we are applying our great moral principles in a practical way to the life of our community.”

“Let us, therefore, brethren, not be swayed by the changing state of world thought and action, but steadfastly observe the great moral principles which are our Ancient Landmarks – the Brotherhood of Man, the Fatherhood of God and the Immortality of the Soul. If we do, our great Fraternity will prosper and progress and become an even more significant influence for good in our communities, our country and the world itself.”

As Past Grand Master

In 1980 M.W. Bro. Nancekivell was elected chairman of the Committee on Recognition during the Conference of Grand Masters and Grand Secretaries of North America held in Washington, D. C.

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