

Charles Edwin Drew

Grand Master (1992 – 1995) of the Grand Lodge of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons of Canada in the Province of Ontario



Photo from the Grand Lodge

(1931 – 2018)

Prepared by V.W. Bro. Marshall Kern.

Charles Edwin Drew was born on May 6, 1931, in England, where he was educated and served with the Royal Naval Air Service before coming to Canada in 1951. On arriving in Canada, he was employed by the Avro Aircraft Company at Malton which was then engaged in the design, development and construction of the CF-105 Arrow and the ongoing construction, testing and delivery of the CF-100 Canuck to the RCAF.

In 1959, the development of the Avro Arrow was cancelled. C. Edwin Drew was laid off and he began his sales career. He began insurance sales with Great West Life for a brief time before moving to the Allstate Insurance Company. Ed Drew received numerous sales awards and spent the majority of his career at the Willowdale office. In 1984 he became a General Agent and retired from his successful career in 1994.

1958 was the year he married Ellen-Orr Patterson. They have two sons, Mark and Wayne, and a daughter, Laura.

M.W. Bro. C. Edwin Drew died June 1, 2018. A Masonic Memorial Service was conducted on June 5, attended by many current and past Grand Lodge officers as well as Masons from across the jurisdiction.

A large portrait of M.W. Bro. C. Edwin Drew in the regalia of the Grand Master is securely held by Georgina Lodge No. 343 until a permanent location for the lodge is determined.

Masonic Career

Mr. Charles Edwin Drew was sponsored into Freemasonry by his father, Bro. Charles Barry Drew. He was initiated into Georgina Lodge No. 343, Toronto, on November 25, 1955, then passed on January 13, 1956, and raised on March 9, 1956. Bro. Charles Barry Drew saw both his sons, Edwin and Alan, become members of Georgina Lodge No. 343. M.W. Bro. Drew's sons Wayne, and Mark, also were initiated in Georgina Lodge No. 343. Both are Past Masters of the lodge.

M.W. Bro. Drew was elected the Worshipful Master of Georgina Lodge No. 343 in 1973. He was elected as District Deputy Grand Master of Toronto District 3 for the 1976 – 1977 term. There were 17 lodges under his care in Toronto District 3.

In 1977 M.W. Bro. C. Edwin Drew was a charter member of The Heritage Lodge No. 730, Cambridge, where he served as Worshipful Master in 1985. In his commitment to The Heritage Lodge No. 730, he was a charter member of the Heritage Masonic Corporation and a Past Chairman of the Black Creek Pioneer Village Project. The purpose of the Masonic Lodge at Black Creek Pioneer Village is to present Masonry in a favourable light to the many visitors who tour the village each year and to give them a better understanding of the place of Freemasonry in the social fabric of an 1867 crossroads rural community. The Lodge Room is furnished with pre-Confederation furnishings and is staffed by volunteer Masonic Interpreters.

Fourteen other lodges across the jurisdiction claimed M.W. Bro. Drew as a member through affiliation or Honorary Life membership.

M.W. Bro. Drew started service on the Board of General Purposes in 1985, officiating as chairman of several committees. He was the first chairman of the Management



Committee when it started in 1991. He was elected as Deputy Grand Master for 1991 – 1992 and 1992 – 1993 terms.

M.W. Bro. Charles Edwin Drew was elected as Grand Master for the 1993 – 1994 and 1994 – 1995 terms in the Grand Lodge of A.F. & A.M of Canada in the Province of Ontario.

With Royal Arch Masons he served as First Principal of University Chapter No. 241 in 1983 and was appointed as Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies in 1990, and then appointed to the Executive of Grand Chapter in 1994. He is a member of Holy Land Conclave No. 3, Red Cross of Constantine.

M.W. Bro. Drew was a member of York Council No. 133, Allied Masonic Degrees.

He was a member of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite in Toronto, Barrie, and Hamilton. He served as the Most Wise Sovereign of the Toronto Sovereign Chapter of Rose Croix in 1985. He was coroneted as an Honorary Inspector-General 33° in 1998 at Vancouver and as an active member of the Supreme Council in 2000 at Winnipeg.

M.W. Bro. Drew was also a member of the Royal Order of Scotland.

He joined Rameses Temple of A.A.O.N.M.S., of Shrine International.

He was the Grand Representative of the Grand Lodge of New York near to the Grand Lodge of Canada.

M.W. Bro. Ed Drew was a member of The Philalethes Society and the Quatuor Coronati Correspondence Circle.

As Grand Master

Our 66th Grand Master, M.W. Bro. C. Edwin Drew had the sad duty to report the death of Past Grand Master, M.W. Bro. A. Lou Copeland. Grand Master Drew eulogized his predecessor: "The enormous contribution made to our Order by Past Grand Master Copeland is well documented and will be long remembered. His admonition to 'Ignite Masonic Pride' rang loud and clear across the jurisdiction; he was the driving force to computerize our records, and initiated our mentor programme. During his term he led the drive to improve our communications both within and outside the fraternity, emphasizing the universality of Masonry.

He was elected Grand Treasurer in 1988 and faithfully served the brethren in that office until his passing two days after our Annual Communication in July 1993."

While many other Grand Masters used their annual Address to comment on the state of the world, M.W. Bro. Ed Drew focussed his attention on the activities of Masons and of Grand Lodge.



The Square and Compasses logo, the well-known symbol of Masonry, was in danger of being used by a commercial interest with the consequence of preventing our use of it. Over a long period of legal defence, the position of our Grand Lodge, the Masonic Foundation of Ontario, the Grand Lodge of Quebec, the Grand Lodge of Manitoba, the Grand Lodge of Alberta and the District Grand Lodge of Newfoundland (Scottish Constitution), was successful. The logo was protected and registered as a trademark.

The visibility of Masonry in Ontario was vigorously pursued with a Canadian edition of the "Friend-to-Friend" program initiated in the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania being approved and launched under Grand Master Drew. The Ontario Mason magazine was launched in 1994 with direct mailing to the homes of all Masons in the province. Our Grand Lodge participated in the Annual International Plowing Match. These, and other programmes, were supported by a fundraising effort started by M.W. Bro. Norman Byrne in 1993, and M.W. Bro. Drew continued with the fundraising efforts and policies for use of the monies raised.

Masonry in London was visible with the sod-turning, and cornerstone-laying ceremonies for a new seniors home called "The William Mercer Wilson Centre". M.W. Bro. Drew participated in the ceremonies and praised it as "a fine examples of initiative and cooperation and worthy of our support."

Individual Masons were encouraged to wear a newly-approved lapel pin. The lapel pin which combines the Canadian Maple Leaf and the square and compasses logo was approved in 1994. M.W. Bro. Ed Drew noted "this expression of loyalty to our Country and our Craft is now being widely used by our brethren throughout the jurisdiction and beyond."

M.W. Bro. Drew reminded his audience that the Mentor programme was launched in 1985 by Grand Master A. Lou Copeland as part of the five-point programme to "Ignite Masonic Pride."

Grand Master Drew said that M.W. Bro. Copeland "laid the groundwork for one of the most essential programmes of our Grand Lodge, one which is even more vital after the successful launch of Friend to Friend, which has attracted so many new quality candidates to our Order."

Revisions to the Installation Ceremony were carefully considered and approved while M.W. Bro. Drew was Grand Master.

With the visibility of Masonry, and the tools in place to support lodge activities Grand Master Drew was pleased to observe: "We are fortunate to have so many degree teams providing a wide

diversity of experience and talent for the benefit of the Craft: Past Masters and Wardens, Native Canadians, the R.C.M.P., O.P.P. and many Regional Police teams, Armed



Forces, Firefighters. Educators, Railroaders, Telephone, Transit and Airline employees, Mariners, Historians, Pharmacists, Hunters, Funeral Directors, Scottish, Irish, Welsh, Caribbean, Chapter,

Scottish Rite and Shriners and so many others with vocational and recreational connections, each working together to provide very special nights for the benefit of the brethren."

Although he held the highest office in the Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario, he made it clear that he was well aware of, and appreciative of, those around him. The Annual Proceedings for 1994 record that "M.W. Bro. C. E. Drew, upon noting the arrival of his father to the assembly, then welcomed and introduced Bro. Charles Drew to the brethren."

In his last Address as Grand Master, he offered his "thanks to all of those who assisted in my Masonic journey; my dad, Bro. Charles Drew who sponsored me, my lodge Georgina No. 343 G.R.C. who raised me and nurtured my Masonic growth, my family who assisted and encouraged me at every step along the way, and most of all to Ellen-Orr who shared the many extra burdens associated with the office, cheerfully and efficiently. Thank you so much!"

It was with his final thoughts as Grand Master that he turned his attention away from the successful operation and functioning of the Grand Lodge and of Masonry in Ontario to consider something more. M.W. Bro. C. Edwin Drew brought his final Address to a close by looking to the future. "We look to the future with a renewed sense of confidence and with the knowledge that many new challenges await as we prepare to enter the new millennium, providing the opportunity for growth and development that has been the landmark of our order since time immemorial.

Our potential to contribute for the betterment of the society in which we live is enormous, we are all charged to work while it is yet day, for the time comes when no man can work.

Our personal contribution can take many forms, the important point is that we perform our allotted task to the best of our ability, for if we are to pursue quality and excellence, we must pay equal attention to all of our Masonic duties, the seemingly simple task is worth doing well, and each task is just as important in maintaining the fabric of the Craft.

At the end of our journey on this sublunary abode, the spirit returns unto God who gave it. We are all here for a relatively short time, and no one amongst us knows how much time is left. We came alone and we leave alone, for we are individuals, each endowed with certain faculties, each enjoying many privileges and each assuming certain responsibilities. We are responsible as individuals for our conduct in this life, and we know that all of our action are not only observed, but are also recorded.

Masonry need have no fear for the future, providing that our members are true to its precepts and follow the illustrious example of our predecessors. By the QUALITY of our lives, by our readiness to SERVE, and by the infectious happiness of our brotherhood, we SHALL be true to our ancestors, and responsible to our successors by what WE DO TODAY!"

As Past Grand Master

As a Past Grand Master, M.W. Bro. C. Edwin Drew was appointed by the Ritual Committee to the office of Custodian of the Work in 1995 and retired from this office in 2006. M.W. Bro. Drew was responsible for initiating the very successful Lodges of Instruction which toured this jurisdiction providing advice and instruction to lodge members on the proper Mechanics of the Work.

After several years as the Custodian of the Work and traveling across Ontario to lead the Grand Lodge of Instruction, M.W. Bro. C. Edwin Drew compiled the many questions he was asked, with his answers, into a booklet. It was titled "Questions and Answers" and was published in 2004. It proved to be very popular. A second booklet titled "Questions and Answers Supplement" was published in 2006.

He served as a Director of the Masonic Foundation of Ontario since 1991, was Chairman of the Millennium project (Help-to-Hear) and Chairman of the Foundation Masonic Foundation in 1999.

In speaking of M.W. Bro. C. Edwin Drew, Past Grand Master M.W. Bro. Ronald E. Groshaw commented "Ed Drew had a great memory for names. He could greet people by name that he had met once years before." M.W. Bro. Paul E. Todd eulogized M.W. Bro. Ed Drew with the comment: "M.W. Bro. Drew was always a voice of moderation and wise counsel. The impact his kindness and willingness to serve others has made on Masons of all ages will long be felt and remembered."

Sources:

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- (3) *Commemoration of the Graves of the Grand Masters*, December 2018. A project of the Museum and Archives Team.
- (4) McLeod, W., and Jenkyns, M. *Whence Come We? Volume II* (2010), Grand Lodge of A.F. & A.M. of Canada in the Province of Ontario.
- (5) Reynolds, John W., (2012) *An overview of some significant or interesting contributions during the terms of the Grand Masters of the Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario, revisited* 'The Architect' December 2012

- (6) Family information confirmed via Ancestry.com and FindAGrave.com.
- (7) *River Park Lodge A.F. & A.M. No. 356 G.R.C. Streetsville, 125th Anniversary booklet*, September 28, 2002.
- (8) Hamilton District C “Chronicle”, July 2018, Edition No. 119.
- (9) Obituary of C. Edwin Drew, Ogden Funeral Home.
<https://ogden.funeraltechweb.com/tribute/details/16644/Mr-C-Edwin-Drew/obituary.html>
Accessed December 2024
- (10) M.W. Bro. Ronald E. Groshaw, personal communication.
- (11) W. Bro. George McCowan, Secretary of Georgina Lodge No. 343, personal communication October 2024
- (12) W. Bro. Wayne Drew, of Georgina Lodge No. 343, personal communication, October 2024 through January 2025