

D. Garry Dowling

Grand Master (2011 – 2013) of the Grand Lodge of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons of Canada in the Province of Ontario



Photo from the Grand Lodge

Prepared by V.W. Bro. Marshall Kern.

Mr. D. Garry Dowling was born and raised in Winnipeg, Manitoba where he graduated from the University of Manitoba with a Bachelor of Commerce (Hons.) degree in 1969. He married the former Wendy Wilson in Winnipeg in 1969 and shortly after they moved to London, Ontario, where they have lived ever since. They have two children, a son Christopher and daughter-in-law Sharon, living and working in Toronto, and a daughter Deanna, son-in-law Ryan and grandsons Lawson and Braxton living in London.



Garry and Wendy are members of Riverside United Church, and both served as serving and as visiting elders for many years. Garry participated in the London Community with service to Scouts Canada for a number of years and also spent many years serving as a coach, referee and Committee Chairman in the Oakridge Optimist Minor Soccer program. He enjoys several hobbies including running, wood carving and working in the yard.

He was employed as a business analyst in the information systems field until his retirement in September 2009.

Masonic Career

M.W. Bro. D. Garry Dowling is a Life Member of Kilwinning Lodge No. 64, London. He was initiated November 30, 1979, and served as Worshipful Master in 1987. He was elected as DDGM of London East in 1994. After his term as DDGM was completed, he served on the Grand Lodge Long Range Planning Committee.

He was appointed to the Board of General Purposes in 1997. Then he was elected to the Board in 1998 and again in 1999. M.W. Bro. Dowling served on the DDGM Orientation team for several years and as Chairman of Masonic Education from 1999 through 2001, and the Condition of Masonry Committee in 2001 through 2003. In July 2003 he was appointed to the Management Committee of the Board and served until July 2009.

M.W. Bro. Dowling was elected as Deputy Grand Master in July 2009, serving for the two-year term through to 2011. He was elected as our 75th Grand Master in July 2011 for the two-year term to 2013.

He has served as Grand Representative of the Grand Lodge of New Hampshire near our Grand Lodge since July of 2000.

M.W. Bro. Dowling is a member of St. John's and St. George's Chapter No. 3, York Rite, in London.

In Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, he is a member of the London Lodge of Perfection, London Sovereign Chapter Rose Croix, and Moore Sovereign Consistory. He was coroneted an Honorary Inspector General 33° at Moncton, New Brunswick, in September 2010.

He was accepted into the Royal Order of Scotland in October 2010.

As Grand Master

During his term as Grand Master, M.W. Bro. Dowling announced the passing of M.W. Bro. David C. Bradley. M.W. Bro. Bradley served as Grand Master for the years 1989 through 1991. He died on January 19, 2013.



Ontario Masons

Formal recognition of Prince Hall Freemasonry in Ontario by the Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario began in 2005. In 2006 and 2007, fraternal visits were held in both jurisdictions. Many Brethren on both sides devoted countless hours to formulating a plan which culminated in 2008 with both the Grand Lodge of A.F. and A.M. of Canada in the Province of Ontario and the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge F.& A.M. of Ontario and Jurisdiction granting full recognition to each other. Since then, senior Grand Lodge officers have attended each other's Annual Communications. On March 16, 2012, one such historic lodge meeting was held at Kilwinning Lodge No. 64 in London, the mother lodge of M.W. Bro. Dowling. On that evening, M.W. Bro. Dowling, the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario and M.W. Bro. Randolph Kelman, the Grand Master of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Ontario and Jurisdiction, met for the first time in open Lodge as ruling Grand Masters. Approximately 60 Grand Lodge Officers from both jurisdictions were in attendance. It was a wonderful evening of warmth and good fellowship. Both Grand Masters applauded those who had gone before to make such a visit a reality and to enable all Masons in Ontario to share the common bond of fraternal love and affection.

In 2012 the legal structure for our Grand Lodge changed. After detailed work, our Grand Lodge became a Not-For-Profit Corporation in Ontario. Similarly, the ongoing success of the MasoniChIP program drove the decision to create a separate Not-For-Profit Corporation to manage all activities of the program. The first meeting of this new corporation was held January 7, 2012.

The Board of General Purposes created a Standing Committee on Building Compliance to continue the attention given by a previous ad hoc committee. It recognized that the financial burden of maintaining our buildings across the Province is one reason some lodges close, or seek amalgamation.

The work of Canada Lodge U.D. in Afghanistan continued. This Lodge carried a travelling Warrant from our Grand Lodge to allow it to provide the opportunity for Freemasons serving in Afghanistan to meet and enjoy fellowship. The Ritual used for the meetings was that authorized by our Grand Lodge. M.W. Bro. Dowling received personal thanks from three young Masons who had attended Canada Lodge U.D. Two of the brethren were from Ontario, but the third Brother was a member of the Grand Lodge of Maryland. This Brother made a special effort to seek out and thank M.W. Bro. Dowling while he attended their Annual Communication. The positive impact of Canada Lodge U.D. was also acknowledged when M.W. Bro. Dowling attended the Conference of Grand Masters of North America.

In April of 2013, M.W. Bro. Dowling met with the Potentates of the three Ontario Shrine Temples and signed an agreement to allow certain Shrine logos and information to be shared in a Craft lodge summons.

In an Address to the Grand Lodge Communication, M.W. Bro. Dowling expressed concern that petty piques and quarrels continue to occur. He commented on the time

it took to bring two discipline cases through the established process and encouraged every effort be made to reconcile differences and maintain the harmony of the lodge.

Throughout his term M.W. Bro. Dowling devoted his time and attention to the Condition of Masonry. While the office of District Deputy Grand Master is filled by election, the process of selection and nomination of candidates for election may not provide the consistent quality of leadership needed for the Districts. He suggested that each District should consider how effectively their method of choosing their DDGM is providing quality leadership. If a change is needed, it should happen at the District level.

The concept of a Daylight Lodge is that a lodge changes their meeting time from an evening to sometime during the day. This was expected to allow more senior members to attend lodge meetings without the concern of traveling at night. It was noted that the popularity of this idea is waning. M.W. Bro. Dowling encouraged lodges to look at other concepts to meet the needs of their members.

The condition of buildings for Masonic lodge meetings has been a concern for many Grand Masters. M.W. Bro. Dowling shared his concern that some buildings, particularly older buildings, were in need of additional maintenance to assure the safety of the members who meet there. He supported and introduced a Building Compliance Policy to direct the attention of lodges to meet building and fire safety codes.

Town Hall meetings were organized and held as M.W. Bro. Dowling traveled across the Province. These were successful in sharing progress of Grand Lodge efforts to support Masonry, and as a place where brethren could voice their concerns. This was a very visible means for M.W. Bro. Dowling and other Grand Lodge Officers to communicate to, and with, the member of our Fraternity.

During his term as Grand Master, M.W. Bro. Dowling demonstrated and encouraged the use of Strategic and Tactical planning processes. These processes guided the efficient and effective operation of the Grand Lodge Office to serve the brethren of the jurisdiction. M.W. Bro. Dowling pointed out that the operating budget of all the Grand Lodge activities is over \$1 million and that business skills to run this million-dollar organization are needed. This includes the important tasks of Grand Lodge leadership to ascertain the needs and wants of our members and then finding effective ways to close gaps in meeting expectations. Fundamental to this is communication between Grand Lodge and members of lodges.

Finally, the Grand Lodge leadership and administration needs to continuously evaluate the value that it provides to the membership in return for the annual dues collected from the members.

M.W. Bro. Dowling noted that it does take time to meet the challenges and opportunities. The strategic plan shows the long road to the future and yearly tactical plans allow short-term goals to be set and then achieved within the capacity of Grand Lodge to deliver.

As Past Grand Master

As a Past Grand Master, M.W. Bro. Dowling was immediately appointed by the Ritual Committee to fill the role of Custodian of the Work. He served in that position from 2013 to 2018.

He was elected to the position of Grand Secretary in July 2018 after the retirement of M.W. Bro. Terence Shand. M.W. Bro. Dowling held this position through the very trying times of the COVID-19 pandemic. He guided the transition of the Grand Lodge Office and administration to include the role of Chief Operating Officer. M.W. Bro. Dowling completed his term as Grand Secretary in July of 2023.

Other Grand Lodge jurisdictions have honoured M.W. Bro. Dowling for his extensive contributions to Freemasonry. In August 2012 he was appointed as Past Grand Master (Honourary) of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge F.&A.M. in the Province of Ontario and Jurisdiction.

M.W. Bro. D. Garry Dowling, then the Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario, was recognized as an Honorary Past Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Michigan in May of 2023. Shortly thereafter, at the 2023 Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge of Quebec, newly installed Grand Master M.W. Bro. Robert Dupel recognized our then-Grand Secretary and Past Grand Master, M.W. Bro. D. Garry Dowling as an Honourary Past Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Quebec.

Sources:

- (1) *Annual Proceedings* of the Grand Lodge A.F. & A.M. of Canada in the Province of Ontario: 2012, 2013.
- (2) 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.
- (3) *Proceedings* of the Grand Lodge of Quebec, 2023
- (4) *Proceedings* of the Grand Lodge of Michigan, 2023
- (5) Personal communication, 2023 – 2024