

Degrees of the Rite

Our Supreme Council has in its Archives copies of the Degrees of the Rite of Perfection and of additional Degrees, including the 33°, which were in use at Charleston in 1801. Some of these old Degree documents are fragmentary, and some Degree manuscripts have not survived the centuries.

In the mid-19th century, Grand Commander Albert Pike (photo left) revised these Degrees. He retained the original titles, substance, and sequence. Out of his own great scholarship and knowledge of ancient philosophies, he added new substance and significance to the Degrees, which enhanced their importance. The Southern Jurisdiction has continued to use the basic Albert Pike Rituals. While the Rubrics permit variations in the manner of their rendition, the Degrees have remained otherwise relatively unchanged. The Pike versions are also widely, although not exclusively, used elsewhere. For the past several years, as authorized by the Supreme Council and its Committee on Ritual and Ceremonial Forms, Dr. Rex R. Hutchens, 33°, Grand Cross, author of several authoritative books about Pike's writings, has worked with a resource team of experienced Brethren to modernize the language, accent the significance, and enhance the dramatic performance of the Pike Degrees. The Revised Standard Ritual maintains the moral vision and philosophical integrity of the original Pike Degrees while making them more accessible to contemporary Brethren. The new Degrees are being honed through authorized trial performances in Valleys throughout the Southern Jurisdiction and is the official Ritual of the Scottish Rite, Southern Jurisdiction, U.S.A.

The Subordinate Bodies usually confer the Degrees in one of two ways: in a Class which meets once a week over a period of several months, in the spring and in the autumn; or at a Reunion at which the Degrees are conferred or communicated over a period of one or more days.

The candidates are not required to memorize any portion of the Degrees. Every member is encouraged, however, to witness the Degrees thereafter as frequently as possible so that he will become more fully aware of the nature of each Degree and the lessons it teaches.

A comprehensive and concise book, *A Bridge to Light* by Dr. Hutchens, summarizes our Scottish Rite Degrees and assists in a ready understanding and appreciation of our Ritual. Also, it frequently returns to the great cornerstone of our Order, Albert Pike's *Morals and Dogma*, by presenting eloquent quotations that clearly fix the meanings of each of the Degrees and places them within the context of the modern era.

Having become a valuable aid, *A Bridge to Light* may be used by the Ritualist desiring to improve his work and as a cordial guide to the Brother reaching for a better understanding of the beauty and significance of the Scottish Rite Degrees. A copy of this book is provided to each new Fourteenth Degree initiate in the Southern Jurisdiction and is available from the Supreme Council to any interested party.

Lodge of Perfection

4° - Secret Master

Duty, reflection and study are the gateway to opportunity, as such one honors those relationships to God, family, country and Masonry. The apron of the 4th degree is white and black, with a letter "Z" and all-seeing eye. The jewel of this degree is an ivory key with the letter "Z" on the wards. The teachings: secrecy, obedience and fidelity.

5° - Perfect Master

The degree teaches Masonic honor; that honesty and trustworthiness is the cornerstone of the foundation of such. This virtue should be in all of our undertakings with mankind. The apron of the 5th degree is white and green, with a cubic stone and a Hebrew YOD. The jewel is represented by a compass open on a segment of a circle, to an angle of sixty

degrees. The teachings: honesty, sincerity, and good faith.

6° - Intimate Secretary

In this degree one should expand their knowledge of duty, charity and toleration. We are instructed to reshape ourselves and our thinking into charity, self-control, and success i.e. to be a peacemaker. The apron of the 6th degree is white and red, with Hebrew letters YOD HEH in the center and a small triangle containing the Hebrew letters (clockwise from top) BETH, NUN, and SHIN. The gold triangle with the same three letters inscribed is the jewel that represents this degree.

7° - Provost & Judge

We learn that impartial justice protects person, property, happiness and reputation. We are instructed to judge with patience and impartially. The apron of the 7th degree is white, edged with red, with a key and five rosettes. The jewel is a golden key.

8° - Intendant of the Building

We should strive for perfection by using the great principles of "God's inherent love, charity, morality and kindness". The apron of the 8th degree is white, with red and green, with a balance, a nine-pointed star, and a triangle with the Hebrew letters BETH (for Ben-Khurim), YOU (for Jakinah), and ALEPH (for Achar). The jewel of this Degree is a gold triangle with the same three letters.

9° - Elu of the Nine (Elected Knight of the Nine)

Truth, candor and generosity; the foundation of Scottish Rite Masonry is most reflected in this degree. We should use these truths to shape our lives and conduct. The apron of the 9th degree is white, lined with black, and sprinkled with blood, with an arm holding a dagger and a severed head held by the hair. The jewel of this degree is a dagger, hilt of gold and blade of silver.

10° - Elu of the Fifteen (Illustrious Elect of the Fifteen)

This degree teaches us to be tolerant and respect the opinions of others. Freedoms of political and spiritual ideologies should be shared by all. The apron of the 10th degree is white, with a black flap, and with three arch-shaped gates - over each a head on a spike. The jewel of this degree is a dagger as in the 9th degree.

11° - Elu of the Twelve (Sublime Knight Elect of the Twelve)

This degree teaches sympathy. We should be compassionate to our brother Masons and to all mankind as well. The apron of the 11th degree is white, lined with black, with a flaming heart in the center. The jewel being a dagger suspended from a black cordon inscribed with the words "Vincere aut Mori" the pledge "that you will rather die than betray the cause of the people, or be overcome through your own fear or fault."

12° - Master Architect

This degree teaches faith in morality and virtue and in God. "Life is what each man makes of it; the optimist turns a trial into a blessing. The apron of the 12th degree consists of a white outer shell, lined with blue and gold (symbolizing the Craft degrees), with a protractor, plain scale, sector, and compasses. The jewel is a heptagonal medal of gold.

13° - Royal Arch of Solomon (Knight of the Ninth Arch)

Liberty; in our mind and our hearts, motivated by duty and honor are the lessons of this degree. The apron worn is purple, bordered with white, and with the "Enochian delta" (hexagram with inscribed Tetragrammation) in the center. The jewel comprises a circular medal of gold.

14° - Perfect Elu (Grand Elect, Perfect and Sublime Mason)

This degree teaches us to reflect and scrutinize oneself. We should strive to be true to ourselves and our God. The apron being of white silk, bordered in gold, with the Ineffable Delta in the Center is truly emblematical of the degree. The jewel of the 14th Degree is split; one being a quadrant (compass open to ninety degrees) topped by a crown and with a nine-pointed star on the obverse, the other being a five-pointed blazing star (with the Tetragrammaton) on the reverse. The compass is opened on a segment of a circle, inscribed with the numbers 3, 5, 7, 9.

Chapter of Rose Croix

The Chapter of Rose Croix attempts to provide the candidate with a deeper understanding of religion, philosophy, ethics and history through a variety of complex "historical degrees". The intellectual challenges presented in these degrees are numerous, and at times overwhelming and can take years to master.

15° - Knight of the East, of the Sword or of the Eagle

Fidelity to obligations and perseverance of purpose under difficulties and discouragement are the lessons of this degree. The striking crimson velvet apron of this degree is edged with green, having a bleeding head above two crossed swords, and a triangle (top point to the left) with three interlaced triangles inside it. The jewel is three golden concentric triangles encompassing two crossed swords.

16° - Prince of Jerusalem

We learn "heroism of patience, the nobility of self-sacrifice" and compassionate judgment, along with charity, fidelity and brotherhood. This crimson apron is edged in gold and aurora-color, and with a square, shield, Delta (with three YODs), balance and a hand of justice. The jewel worn is a mother-of-pearl lozenge with a hand holding a balance in equipoise; under it a sword with five stars surrounding the point. On the left is a Hebrew D, on the right is a Hebrew Z.

17° - Knight of the East & West

The wisdom of this degree is that loyalty to God is man's primary allegiance and the temporal governments not founded upon God and His righteousness will inevitably fall. The apron worn is of yellow satin, with crimson and gold, and with a sword and Tetractys (of the Tetragrammaton) on it. The jewel is a heptagon of half silver and half gold, with crossed swords on a balance on the obverse and a lamb on the Book of Seven Seals on the reverse. The jewel is hung from a double order - one black (left-to-right) and one white (right-to-left), representing good versus evil. A gold coronet is also presented.

18° - Knight Rose Croix

This degree emphasizes that life and its strength come from God. The rose signifies the dawn and the cross is a sacred symbol of antiquity in many cultures. One is also taught to be tolerant of others errors and their faults. The apron worn is of white leather or satin, bordered in red, with a skull and cross-bones, a red passion cross, and three red rosettes. The grand jewel is a gold compass open a quarter circle. A rose-cross is between the legs of the compass and under it is a pelican, tearing its breast to feed its seven young on the obverse and an eagle with wings extended on the reverse. On the circle are the letters I.N.R.I.

Council of Kadosh

The word "Kadosh" is a Hebrew word meaning Holy. Although Pike identifies the degrees of the Council of Kadosh as chivalric and philosophical, they are all intensely mystical with respect to the lessons conveyed and symbols employed.

19° - Grand Pontiff

We learn from the past and how it affects the present and the influence we live in the future in this degree. We as mortals strive to endure, produce and improve the world as it surrounds us. There is no apron, but the jewel is a gold "parallelogram" (rectangle) with a Greek Alpha on one side and an Omega on the other.

20° - Master of the Symbolic Lodge

This demonstrates liberty, fraternity and equality. These truths teach morals, religious and philosophical understandings. This degree helps one to comprehend Deity, forces of nature, good and evil. The apron worn is yellow, bordered in blue, with three concentric point-down triangles, with the Tetragrammaton (horizontal) and "Fiat Lux" (vertical) at the center, forming a cross. Its triangular shape relates to the "fourth great light, which reminds us of the Deity and his attributes". The jewel that is worn is made of gold with the same three concentric triangles.

21° - Noachite or Prussian Knight

The lessons to be learned from this degree are that arrogance, defamation and cowardice are unworthy attributes of a Mason and that humility, modesty and courtesy are the true virtues of men and Masons. The apron worn is yellow and contains an arm holding a sword, a winged figure holding a key in the left hand and the right forefinger on the lips (the "Egyptian figure of Silence"). The jewel can be described as a point-up triangle, with an arrow, point downward, an arm holding a sword, and the motto "Fiat Justitia, Ruat Coelum."

22° - Knight Royal Axe, Prince of Libanus

This degree emphasizes work ethics: By doing good work we improve character and become better citizens. The apron worn in this degree is white, bordered in purple, and contains a three-headed serpent and a table with instruments and plans on it. The jewel is an axe and handle of gold. On the top of the handle are the initials of Noah and Solomon. In the middle of the handle are the initials of Libanus and Tsidun. On the blade are the initials of Adoniram, Cyrus, Darius, Zerubbabel, Nehemiah, Ezra (on one side) and Shem, Kham, Yapheth, Moses, Ahaliab, Betselal (on the other).

23° - Chief of the Tabernacle

We learn in this degree that the man who forgets his duty to God, family, country and himself will be in danger of moral and spiritual destruction by thoughts and unworthy ambition. The apron worn is white, bordered with red, blue and purple ribbons. These colors, from the curtains of the Tabernacle, represent earth, fire, air and sea, respectively, as well as the Lord's beneficence, glory, wisdom and power. On the apron is the golden seven-branched candlestick, representing the seven planets and virtues: Sun, faith "aspiration toward the infinite"; Moon, hope; Venus, charity; Mars, fortitude "victory over rage and anger"; Mercury, prudence; Saturn, temperance; Jupiter, conqueror of the Titans, justice. The jewel worn is a small silver censer, or ornamented cup, held by a handle in the shape of an open hand.

24° - Prince of the Tabernacle

A Mason must show evidence of compassion, piety and justice in this degree. After initiation he may "manifest faithfully the social virtues in order to receive the rewards", to serve humanity through our brotherhood. The apron worn is of white lambskin, with scarlet, green and blue. On it is a violet myrtle tree, and a gold representation of an Arabian tent. The jewel worn is the Hebrew letter ALEPH, suspended from a violet ribbon.

25° - Knight of the Brazen Serpent

This degree attempts to explain the conceptualities of celestial purity and the eternal soul of man. The apprentice is driven to look within his faith, life and God and to get a clear look at his inner self. The apron worn is white, lined in black, and with gold stars on the white side (Pleiades, Hyades, Orion, Capella) and with silver stars on the black side (Perseus, Scorpio, Bootes). Also on it is a serpent, ouroboros, surrounding a scarab, a triangle in a glory with the Tetragrammaton in its center, and the four initials of the stars Regulus, Aldebaran, Antares, and Fomalhaut. The jewel is a gold tau cross (crux ansata) with a serpent entwined around it, and the Hebrew words HLThl ("he has suffered or been wounded") and

NChShThN ("the Brazen Serpent") on it.

26° - Prince of Mercy or Scottish Trinitarian

In this degree we explore for "the rewards of the trinity of Gods attributes - wisdom or intelligence, force or strength, harmony or beauty". The apron is scarlet, bordered in white, with a green triangle (point-down) in the center. In the triangle are the initials of force, wisdom, and harmony, and a flaming heart of gold with the initials I.H.S. (Jesus Hominum Salvator or Imperium, Harmonia, Sapientia). The jewel is gold and is the same triangle, suspended by a purple ribbon.

27° - Knight Commander of the Temple

This degree teaches the apprentice to scorn selfishness, and to uphold the knightly virtues of charity, truth and honor. We should always strive to assist the poor, helpless and infirm. The apron is of scarlet lambskin, lined in black, with a Teutonic Cross (cross potent sable, charged with a smaller cross double potent or, surcharged with the escutcheon of the Empire - the two-headed black eagle) and a black key surrounded by a laurel wreath. The jewel is the Teutonic Cross shown on the apron.

28° - Knight of the Sun or Prince Adept

We learn in this degree that our love for God manifests itself in our love for truth, justice and nobility of soul. The apron worn is white lambskin, with a vermilion pentagram. The jewel is a gold five-pointed star.

29° - Scottish Knight of Saint Andrew

The virtues taught in this degree are "Love of God, loyalty to superiors, faithful adherence to promise and active resistance to unfair judgment." There is no apron. The jewel is a gold St. Andrew's cross ("X"), surmounted with a knight's helmet with a thistle of gold between the arms at the bottom. In the center of the cross is a Hebrew YOD, and on its points, clockwise from bottom, the Hebrew letters N M I N.

30° - Knight of Kadosh or Knight of the White & Black Eagle

The lesson of this degree is to be true to ourselves, to stand for what is right and to be just in our lives today with a belief in God, country and oneself. There is no apron, but the jewel is a gold Teutonic cross, enameled in red, with a silver double-headed eagle, with wings spread pointing downward, resting upon it.

Consistory

The Consistory Degrees are very different from each other in form and content. The 31° reveals the dynamic relationship that has existed for centuries between human law as a means of achieving justice, and divine justice as an ideal. The 32° reviews the degrees of the Lodge of Perfection, the Chapter of Rose Croix and the Council of Kadosh.

31° - Inspector Inquisitor

In this degree the apprentice learns prayerful self-examination. The mistakes today should not be committed tomorrow. Simply, the daily look at ones self to learn to live with the future. No apron is worn in the Supreme Tribunal, but the traditional apron displayed is of pure white lambskin with a Teutonic Cross of black and silver embroidered upon the flap. The jewel is a silver Teutonic cross. The jewel is suspended from a white collar, with a gold triangle with a "31" inside it.

32° - Master of the Royal Secret

The lessons taught in this degree are that genuine brotherhood requires mutual regard, opinion, esteem and charity. We always look for the good in all, make allowances for others' shortcomings. We trust the Supreme Architect to lead us to friendship, morality and brotherly love. The apron worn in this degree is white, lined in black, with a double-headed eagle and a plan of the Camp of the Princes. The jewel worn is a golden Teutonic Cross. In the center are the letters XXXII, surrounded by a green wreath. The cap of a Master of the Royal Secret is black silk with a black band trimmed in gold. In the center front is a double-headed eagle emblem with a rayed equilateral triangle above in gold. The triangle is red, has 32° in its center, and is trimmed with gold.

Court of Honour

The Scottish Rite confers a number of honors upon members who have contributed extraordinary service to the Rite, to Masonry in general, and to the world at large.

Knight Commander of the Court of Honour

The Rank of Knight Commander of the Court of Honor is not a Degree, but an Investiture, bestowed upon members deserving recognition for faithful services to the Rite or to mankind. At the biennial session of the Supreme Council, certain Masters of the Royal Secret are chosen to be invested with the Rank and Decoration of Knight Commander of the Court of Honour. The respective Sovereign Grand Inspectors General or Deputies nominate members for this honor, and they must also be unanimously approved by The Supreme Council. This Investiture is a prerequisite to receiving the Thirty-third Degree. The Rank of K. .C. .C. .H. . may not be requested, and if requested must be refused. The cap of the Knight Commander Court of Honour is red with a darker red band trimmed in gold. In the center front is a representation of the Knight Commander Jewel, a Passion Cross with fancy arms, featuring in the center a trefoil embroidered in green encircled by "Kt. . Comm. . Court of Honour" embroidered in gold.

33° - Inspector General Honorary

The Thirty-third Degree is conferred by the Supreme Council upon members of the Rite in recognition of outstanding work in the Rite or in public life. At its biennial session the Supreme Council elects members of the Rite to receive the Degree. Members unanimously so elected become honorary members of the Supreme Council. The Thirty-third Degree may not be requested, and if requested must be refused. The Degree is granted solely out of recognition for outstanding services. These 33° Masons are Inspectors General Honorary and honorary members of the Supreme Council. The active members of the Supreme Council are chosen from among them. The cap for an Inspector General Honorary is white with a white band edged in gold, featuring the symbol for this honorary Degree, a red slanting Patriarchal Cross.

Grand Cross of the Court of Honour

This is the highest individual honor that The Supreme Council bestows. It is voted very rarely to Thirty-third Degree Masons only for the most exceptional and extraordinary services. The Grand Cross cap is white with a blue band. On the front is a replica of the Grand Cross jewel, which is composed of a Teutonic Cross, with an embroidered crimson rose with green leaves at its center.