

Masonic Secret's - out for good

An interview with Raymond S.J. Daniels by YorkRegion.com

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As a teenager, I recall my father pacing back and forth across the farm kitchen floor, holding tightly in both hands a little black book and talking quietly to himself.

We kids never knew what he was talking about and didn't ask. For it was obvious the subject matter was top secret, so much so, I doubt even my mother was aware. She went about her regular household chores unmindful of dad's mental immersion in hush-hush stuff.

My father was a Freemason, a fraternal interest that, for him, bordered on obsession. His membership, associated with Markham Union Lodge, saw him graduate through the chairs to the position of senior warden. But he never went further, thinking perhaps more of his time should be spent at home.

While I don't recall dad suggesting I should follow his footsteps, there's no doubt he wished for that. However, it wasn't to be. But I never lost interest in the alliance, a form of brotherhood that had a way of welding men together into the single cohesive company it still is today.

However, things change. The mystery that once proliferated this fraternity has receded, replaced by openness and sincerity. This was apparent when Richardson Masonic Lodge of Stouffville celebrated its 150th anniversary June 19. A banquet, to mark the occasion, was held in The Great Hall of Christ Church Anglican with a cross-section of the community attending.

Richardson Lodge, named after the late Francis Richardson, had its humble beginnings June 15, 1860, in the upper room of a stable at Cashel, at what is now 18th Avenue and Kennedy Road in Markham.

In the spring of 1866, the lodge moved to Knill's Hall in Stouffville. The present structure, at the corner of Ninth Line and Second Street, was erected in 1955.

All this and more was included in an historical moments' brochure and video provided by Bill Sanders, Peter Burkholder, Sandy Sandiland, Jim Johnston, Kelly Holden, Steve Fronske and Ben Wallis.

The anniversary's co-chairs were Ken Prentice and Kelly Holden.

A cheque, valued at \$1,000, was presented to an autism services provider in Aurora.

The current worshipful master is Bill Bower of Cannington.

Guest speaker Raymond S.J. Daniels of Kitchener, Grand Master, Grand Lodge of Canada, praised the Richardson image as seen through the attendance of so many public people.

“You,” he said, “are in the business of planting trees, under whose shade you do not expect to sit.”

Some visitors came from a distance including sisters Betty Miller of Ottawa and Mary Davis of Toronto, daughters of K. Ross ‘Shine’ Davis, lodge master 1923-24. Mr. Davis was described as “a man whose traits placed him at the pinnacle of what it means to be a true Mason”.

Tribute was also paid to Edward (Ted) Barry who, on Jan. 12, 2000, was presented the Wm. Mercer Wilson Medal, most prestigious of recognitions a Master Mason can receive.

Of interest also is the fact no less than seven Wagg family members have served the position of worshipful master: Dean Wagg, (1950); Norman Wagg, (1951); Kenneth N. Wagg, (1954); Herb Wagg, (1959); Ken Wagg, (1968); Murray Wagg, (1970) and Gordon Wagg, (1972).

Hopefully, the Richardson motto “happy to meet, sorry to part, happy to meet again” will be repeated 50 years hence.

Note: At the time of publishing, this article was available on the web at the following address.

<http://www.yorkregion.com/news-story/1438026-masonic-secret-s-out-for-good/>