Brethren,

My previous presentation dealt with a belief that the Work and its execution is our Masonic cornerstone. The Work sets the standard for the bearing of the beams and walls in the construction of the entire Lodge. It is fitting on an evening when a cornerstone certificate has been earned and presented to Hugh Murray Lodge to continue on a similar tangent. The setting of the cornerstone is precise, and all of the subsequent lines and angles of the building are referenced from it.

When I say that the Work is the cornerstone of Masonry, I am saying that it forms the beginning of our foundation. It is my contention that the Craft Lodge forms the foundation of Masonry and is in part comprised by each of the Brethren sitting in this room.

According to legendary motivational speaker and business consultant **Zig Ziglar “**The foundation stones for a balanced success are honesty, character, integrity, faith, love and loyalty.” (When I read that I had to wonder if Mr. Ziglar knew Masons.)

Craft Lodge has pride of place, it is the foundation upon which our Grand Lodge, and the other concordant bodies rest. Without a solid foundation, the building will fail. And a foundation is only as strong as the materials used in the construction. One wonders, what are the stones the Craft uses to construct such an elegant and sophisticated superstructure?

Consider the symbolism of stone from the Grand Lodge website . Why do we, as figurative Masons, use the terms and tools of the stonemason’s art? Stone is the oldest, most enduring natural building material. As stone is worked, excess is removed to reveal the inner beauty of the material. FreeMasons, as builders of character, polish and refine our raw material to bring out the best in each of us.

Craft Lodges create an opportunity for a coming together of brothers with faith and fellowship to unite, focus and Work. Bringing individuals from the dark to the light and inculcating those lessons of the work in each of our hearts.

As individuals we are fired in the kiln of the Work. Refining in each of us those fundamental Craft Lodge principals and characteristics of Honor, Morality and Integrity.

Craft Lodge provides a resource and safe refuge where men can work on and polish their individual structures. Learning, reciting and contemplating the words of the Work. We are taught to open our hearts, prepare our minds, carry out our allotted tasks, and practice Honour, Morality Virtue and Truth in our daily lives. As individuals we learn and are refined by the practice and delivery of the Work, as we gain in understanding of the meaning behind the words we move from a rough ashlar to one more perfect in use and function.

The end result is that your Craft Lodge delivers a solid foundation for success aligned to the fundamental tenets and principals of Masonry.

**Brotherly Love: Support each other with warmth,** respect the opinions of others; behave with compassion and understanding to each other. The validation we give and receive from each other as men and Masons is overwhelming.

**Relief.**  In addition to providing assistance for those in distress, Craft Lodge especially provides a refuge from our daily stresses. Allowing a brief respite in our busy schedules, a pause that allows us to consider the more important things in our lives and perhaps count our blessings

**Truth. Perhaps the most difficult of virtues, knowing yourself, your talents and flaws and accepting them. Then holding to a principal of** truth in your own heart and in your dealing with others.

Look around this room, in each of us we find the raw materials and stones that make up our foundation. Craft Lodge expects as a requirement for membership that each of us strive to uphold these principles in Lodge and in our public and private lives.

I ask each of you in attendance to consider how your specific talents and ability can be combined with the whole. Each of us have something unique and solid to contribute to the Craft Lodge foundation. With such a solid grounding one wonders how far each of us can go, and what kind of positive impact we can have in the lives of those around us.