

Visit the Past, don't live there

In the masonic fraternity we often like to bring out the famous figures that have graced our lodges. George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Franklin D. Roosevelt are just some of the names that often get knocked around when these conversations come about.

It is inevitable that all of the brothers who are standing around start nodding their heads. Almost saying "Yes, Yes, quite right."

The problem is this makes us the quarterback from our high school days. The guy who threw that amazing touchdown pass in the final seconds of the big game. We all know him or someone like him. Wherever he goes he is telling everyone that story.

The problem is he is now in his 50's and still talks about the big moment because he hasn't done anything since that big moment. He has sat back and let the world pass by convinced that everyone will always be impressed by that "incredible pass". Turns out, they aren't.

Like that former high school quarterback we use great figures in the past to hold on to our glory. Unlike that former high school quarterback we don't realize that there are others, some very recent, who have brought credit to the fraternity. Notice I used the word "credit" instead of glory.

These famous men who have done great and glorious things have brought glory to themselves and credit to the fraternity. Their presence in our lodge rooms should only be a footnote, an example, of what the masonic fraternity is capable of.

Within the walls of our lodges these men have learned the valuable lessons that are taught in our order. Would they have been the same great men without the masonic fraternity? That is hard to say. Personally I doubt it. Who we are is a combination of the sum of all our experiences. Men have come to the fraternity and honed their leadership skills. They have learned to speak in public. They have walked and talked with men from different stations in life and hopefully learned from them.

It is this combination of events, along with so many more than I can offer, that has helped not only make people like George Washington, Ben Franklin and FDR the men they are. It has also helped make men who have been titans of industry and it has helped make leaders out of men in their community, all of them worthy to stand on the same level as those who roll off the tongue when people mention famous masons.

I recently started a website called masonrytoday.com, it is dedicated to revealing facts about famous masons throughout history. It is through this site that I hope to practice the concept of "visit the past, don't live there".

The men who have come before us and have done great things, both inside and out of the fraternity, should be an inspiration to us as members of the masonic fraternity. They should inspire us to do our own great deeds so that we may inspire those who come after us, to do great things as well.

We should look back at the men listed on masonrytoday.com, as well as other websites and publications not to say "This is why we are great as an organization". We should be saying "I am going to do something great to bring the same credit to the fraternity as those men did".

Who knows maybe one day someone will put you on a website.