

# The Maven's Journal

(Dec. 2017)

*"Dedicated to promoting Masonic leadership and education"*

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## Determination and Persistence

*(Richard H. Ryder, 2017)*

When the pressure is on to deliver, and you feel you are not qualified to handle a task, to what do you turn to get the job done? When the odds are against you, when you are exhausted or when everyone is telling you to give up, what provides you the



**Editor's Note:** The Maven's Journal is changing to a quarterly publication, with the next edition arriving in your email inbox in March 2018. Due to the amount of time necessary to research,

motivation to carry on? When others seem to pick things up like a **sponge, but you just can't seem to grasp what is going on, what** provides you the extra punch to compensate for perceived incompetence. Well, I would argue determination and persistence can trump skill and intelligence more often than you think.

**Let's face it, we can't all be experts in everything.** Some are better with their hands, some are more cerebral, and some have not benefited from advanced, formal education. And yet, we all find ourselves in situations that test our abilities and our mettle. The easy route might be to exit stage left, get out of the pressure cooker, and move on to something within your comfort zone. Sometimes this may be the best course of action, but leaders need to dig deeper and find the best within themselves.

In my 35 years in high tech I was fortunate to work with many talented, driven, intelligent, and capable people. There were times when I was intimidated by their abilities, oftentimes overwhelmed by their productivity, and sometimes upset that I was not able to pick things up as easily or as broadly as they could. Sometimes it seemed they were coasting, and I was peddling as fast as I could just to keep up. But, it was those very moments that strengthened me and allowed me to grow, professionally and personally. What I may have lacked in experience and education, I made up for with determination and persistence.

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*Richard H. Ryder, 2017*



write, edit, and format each edition, it is becoming increasingly hard to meet monthly deadlines. This was a difficult, but necessary decision.

Between quarterly editions readers can follow Masonic Maven on [Facebook](#).

This month the *Leadership Series* describes why determination and persistence are key traits for the successful leader.

The multi-part *Architecture and Freemasonry* series continues with *Gothic Builders. Looking Toward the East* profiles the

Stewards and the *Spotlight* article provides a profile of MW Harry S. Truman, 33rd President of the United

States. As always, visit us at [MasonicMaven.org](#) and be sure to [Follow us on Facebook](#).

Regards,  
Wor. Richard Ryder

## Education Series

Architecture and Freemasonry - Gothic Builders

(Richard H. Ryder, 2017)

The June issue of **The Maven's Journal** introduced you to the life of a Medieval Mason. In this installment of the ongoing *Architecture and Freemasonry* series I will provide a broader understanding of why Gothic structures were built, who called for their construction, who led the work, and how workers were organized.

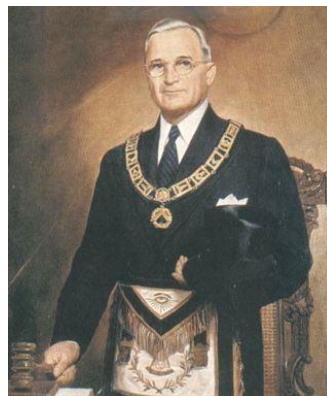
### Gothic Cathedrals

A spike in cathedral construction coincided with the millennium, a period of great fear. It was commonly believed the millennium **marked the end of man's existence. When the world did not end,** according to H.L. Haywood and James E. Craig, in their book *A History of Freemasonry*, **"popular thanksgiving was manifest in an** almost universal desire to perform notable works of piety. Bishops and abbots expended the offerings of the faithful in erecting cathedrals, churches, and monasteries. Feudal lords and ladies found admirable means of atonement for sundry misdeeds by setting aside sums for building or adorning temples. A knight hard pressed in battle might vow a gift of gold to the shrine of a favored saint. Occasionally, some secular dignitary might desire a castle or palace befitting his dignity.

### The Master Builder

**Though there were no architects by today's standards, master** builders were responsible for designing and supervising construction. This was not just a management job; master builders helped with the physical labor.

The master builder was carefully selected by bishops, abbots, princes, and barons. Those master builders who were more experienced and could commit to finishing the work as inexpensively as possible were selected to construct the building. Once selected, **according to Haywood and Craig, an "agreement was made with the** ecclesiastical powers for a definite wage undertook to carry out the stipulated construction. Only in exceptional cases was there **anything approaching a contract." The master builder, like the**



Masonic Spotlight

MW Harry S. Truman –  
Grand Master, U.S.  
President, Haberdasher  
(Richard H. Ryder, 2017)

When the world awoke on April 12, 1945 no one knew it would be a date all adult Americans at that time would remember. This included Harry Truman, who was just a few weeks short of his 61<sup>st</sup> birthday and less than three months into his term as Vice President of the United States. The International News Service broke the news at 5:47 P.M. Eastern War Time - Franklin Delano Roosevelt was dead, succumbing to a cerebral hemorrhage at Warm Springs, Georgia. And so, the reins of power, guided by the 25<sup>th</sup> amendment of the U.S. Constitution, shifted as they have on numerous occasions.

workers beneath him, received a regular salary.

**The master builder's first step was to create detailed drawings. Plain** and not overly detailed, the drawings were for practical use, not for general display. Sometimes models were created to aid the builders. To properly supervise all aspects of the work, master builders lived near the construction site and were close to those they supervised, even working alongside them. As time went on, master builders did less hands-on work and spent more time directing the construction. They also developed more architectural skills.

Watching over the master builder and the workers, in the case of a cathedral construction, was the abbot or bishop. They not only provided material, but also advised with architectural and artistic decisions. **The master builder's role was to execute the desires of** the abbot or bishop and assist with technical aspects of the construction. At the end of the day, the ecclesiastical authorities were in charge.

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*Richard H. Ryder, 2017*



## Looking Toward the East

The Stewards

*(Richard H. Ryder, 2017)*

**Baseball has its farm league system to groom tomorrow's great** players; Masonry has its Steward stations for a similar purpose – preparing men for more responsibility within their lodge. Being asked to serve as a steward is an invitation to show your interest in

That evening, as Truman sat in the cabinet room of the White House, he appeared **“absolutely dazed”** according to those present. He placed his hand on an inexpensive Gideon edition bible, the only bible available, to take the oath of office as the 33<sup>rd</sup> President of the United States. The time on the mantel clock was 7:09 P.M., just 2 hours and 24 minutes **after FDR's death**. To many in the country – Washington D.C., the military high command, and elsewhere – the future seemed bleak. The country had just lost the iron leader who had brought America out of depression and through four grueling years of war, only to be replaced by the likes of Harry Truman. As David McCullough states in his book, Truman, **“To many it was not just that the greatest of men had fallen, but that the least of men – or at any rate the least likely of men – had assumed his place.”** This was the atmosphere in which Harry S. Truman found himself as he became the most powerful man in the world.

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*Richard H. Ryder, 2017*

the governance of the lodge.

The Senior Steward has a small piece of ritual during long form openings, providing the opportunity for others to see if he can clearly, confidently, and without fear speak in public and among peers. Both stewards have floor work – important floor work during the degrees and visits of the District Deputy Grand Master. They also assist in protecting the lodge during the balloting process. Proper execution of these responsibilities demonstrates they can handle their official roles during important Masonic ceremonies, and may present advancement opportunities.

Prior to monthly meetings the Stewards help prepare the lodge room, most particularly the proper placement of regalia at the respective stations. Upon completion of the meeting, they should properly and neatly store the regalia for the next meeting. Prior to meetings for the degrees, the Stewards play a critical role in preparing candidates, ensuring they are properly attired. Finally, the Stewards assist the Junior Deacon by ensuring the dining tables are properly prepared; then, after each meal they take charge of the cleanup.

It is easy for the new Steward to take his role lightly, but this would be a mistake. Being a Steward is an honor, a test, and an opportunity for advancement toward the East if the Steward holds this aspiration.

The following checklist will assist the Senior Steward in preparing for his term:

- Become more acquainted with lodge members
- Become more acquainted with Stewards within the district
- Increase visibility within the lodge and at lodge activities
- Increase visibility within the district and at district activities
- Regularly attend and support district Lodge of Instruction
- Attend all rehearsals and monthly meetings
- Properly prepare for and effectively execute floor work and ritual



## The Word

*Free*

*Richard H. Ryder, 2017*

To Freemasons, the word **“free” has two meanings.** As early as the tenth century it referred to a man who was free of the company or guild of incorporated masons. Operative masons, not yet free from the guild, were not permitted to work with those who were. A second meaning refers to those who were not bound in captivity, for no one can be initiated who is at the time restrained of his liberty.<sup>1</sup> Lastly, free also refers to the fact that early masons worked with freestone to construct medieval edifices.

**Men must be “free born”** to join the Fraternity. Given a man enters into a solemn contact with God he can not bind himself to an obligation if he is not the master of his own actions. Likewise, he cannot fulfill his obligation if he is temporarily deprived of his

- Observe the Junior Deacon and mentally prepare to step into that position
- Fulfill the Senior Steward roles and responsibilities as outlined in the book, *Duties and Responsibilities of Lodge Officers and Committee Chairmen*

The following checklist will assist the Junior Steward in preparing for his term:

- Become more acquainted with lodge members
- Become more acquainted with Stewards within the district
- Increase visibility within the lodge and at lodge activities
- Increase visibility within the district and at district activities
- Regularly attend and support district Lodge of Instruction
- Attend all rehearsals and monthly meetings
- Properly prepare for and effectively execute floor work
- Take your roles and responsibilities seriously
- Observe the Senior Steward and mentally prepare to step into that position
- **Fulfill the Junior Steward's roles and responsibilities as outlined in the book, *Duties and Responsibilities of Lodge Officers and Committee Chairmen*.**

Richard H. Ryder, 2017

liberty or freedom of will.<sup>2</sup>

The word “free” is often used with the word “accepted”, as in “Free and Accepted Mason”. When thus used it refers to one who is not an operative mason and, according to Albert MacKay in **Lexicon of Freemasonry**, “has been adopted into the order and received the freedom of the society”.

<sup>1</sup> Encyclopedia of Freemasonry, Albert G. Mackey, Charles T. Clenahan, 1912, p. 228

<sup>2</sup> Lexicon of Freemasonry, Albert G. Mackey, 2004, p. 152

Richard H. Ryder, 2017



What did he say?

***“Perseverance accomplished what first seemed impossible”***

Bro. Henry Knox on the challenges crossing the Delaware River, Christmas Day, 1775



### Coming Attractions

In March, *The Maven's Journal* will continue presenting a *Leadership Series* article on time management. The *Architecture and Freemasonry* installment within the *Education Series* continues with more insight into Gothic cathedrals and the medieval workers who built them. *Looking Toward the East* will provide considerations for those holding junior officer positions. The *Spotlight Series* continues, but the person has not yet been selected. We also hope to provide an article from a guest contributor. Happy New Year from *The Maven's Journal*!



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