

Eulogy – MW Bro Ben Lindeque OSM

Ladies, Gentlemen and Brethren all, Freemasonry is a universal society of men who seek to improve themselves through their association with one another and their families. It promotes the basic precepts of Truth, Morality and Brotherly Love. It brings good men together for fellowship and the promotion of integrity and good citizenship. It encourages charitable activity and social awareness and strives, through its teachings, to uplift its members and assist them in their efforts to attain high moral standards, to live decent lives and to conduct themselves to the benefit of others.

For Freemasonry to have any relevance whatsoever, however, its members have to follow the principles that our Order promotes. It is not just a doctrine, it's a pattern for a meaningful life and this way of life has to be demonstrated and visible. In the 3rd degree the candidate is exhorted to "be henceforth an example ... in faithfulness and zeal for our Order, as well as in the practice of all Masonic virtues" and to "incite them, by your example to emulation". In Ben Lindeque our Order had a leader who set the example that is so critically important to us as we face today's challenges.

Ben was born in and spent most of his life in Johannesburg. He was married to Marge and also leaves his daughter, Leigh-anne, daughter-in-law, Debbie, and 2 grandchildren, Daniel and Rebecca and he was extremely proud of all of them. Our heartfelt condolences are extended to each and every one of you as you look for strength at this difficult time. May your memories of the good times shared provide you with some comfort during the darkest hours.

Ben spent his working life in the Financial Services industry and his interests included a love of animals and the outdoors, as well as in collecting classic cars. Some of his fondest memories would have included going on safaris or getting into his Landrover and disappearing into the wild.

Ben's Masonic life began in 1972 when he joined Lodge Benoni Golden Jubilee. He became Worshipful Master in 1982, joined Provincial Grand Lodge shortly thereafter and was appointed as Provincial Grand Master in 1990. After 5 years as Provincial Grand Master Ben was promoted to an Assistant Grand Master in 1995 and was elected as the 6th Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of South Africa in 1997. He served in this role, with much distinction, until 2003.

As a Grand Master, Ben was firm and decisive. He had clear ideas on what he was trying to achieve and would do everything in his power to see that the goals he set were accomplished. He was an absolute stickler for protocol and would get most unhappy when Brethren behaved in a manner which he believed undermined our Order in any way. I remember him telling me that "we must take the serious things seriously and enjoy the festive times" and he really did apply this to his Masonic life. Inside the Temple or at formal Lodge meetings it was serious business, while festive boards or social functions were there so that we could relax and laugh together and get to know each other better. Ben, of course, was an accomplished raconteur. He was an impressive speaker, even at very short notice, and had the ability to always amuse his audience with his never-ending supply of jokes. He described himself as a "man of many words" and, for the most part nobody minded – although there were occasions when I questioned whether my flight would still be waiting for me!

As far as protocol was concerned, after giving a very well received lecture on the subject Ben was persuaded to document his thoughts. This he did and over the past few months this has been further updated to resolve any variances between the Divisions. This very week, the final document is in the process of being circulated to all Brethren falling under the Grand Lodge of South Africa and I have no doubt that Ben would be delighted. Perhaps it symbolises his very significant contribution.

Ben was never afraid to take on the tough or controversial challenges and I cannot help but look back on his decision to implement "Open" Installation and Lodge of Mourning workings. Ben was concerned about some of the negative religious and political perceptions that were being propagated at the time and he decided that we had to dispel the idea that we may be a secret society and encourage people to "come and see for themselves". Having said that, he was extremely sensitive to any impact our new rituals may have on our relationship with our sister Constitutions and the skilful

manner in which he ensured that all affected were prepared to accept our plans, even though they would not implement them in their Grand Lodges, was an object lesson in Masonic diplomacy.

It is some years now since Ben was Grand Master but he remained extremely active and continued to contribute so much to so many of us. This Temple in which we are celebrating his life was initiated by Ben and he played a leading role in its development - and there are many other examples of his selfless contribution. From a personal point of view, Ben was somebody I could talk to and I always knew that he'd give me his honest opinion, even if I didn't always like it. Ben talked straight, and I loved him for it. I'll miss the steady stream of emailed jokes or just being very aware when I implemented something that Ben wouldn't necessarily approve of. As a Freemason, he really was larger than life and Brethren like MW Bro Ben Lindeque cannot be replaced.

Brother Ben, your earthly journey is now complete. Those of us that you have left behind will always remember you and look forward to meeting you again in another and better world.

SMIB

MW Bro Geoff Edwards OSM
Grand Master