

RULES AND REGULATIONS

Solidarity Lodge No. 1457 A. F. & A. M.

*In order to promote peace and harmony among the Brethren, the following customs, rules, and regulations have been adopted by the membership. The balance of this booklet is meant to serve as a guide to the Worshipful Master, Officers, and Brethren as to their conduct, qualifications, and expectations. **In no way, should this booklet, be interpreted as a substitute for, or conflict with, the By-Laws of this Lodge or of the Laws of the Grand Lodge of Texas.***

Section 1 – Lodge

1.01 Firearms. Only concealed firearms are allowed inside the lodge room when the lodge is in session as long as the brother carrying it possesses a license to do so. Brothers that work in law enforcement can openly carry firearms inside the lodge room.

1.02 Alcohol. The possession and consumption of alcoholic beverages is permitted in conformity with the laws of the Grand Lodge of Texas, A.F. & A.M. Any alcoholic beverages shall be for personal consumption only, and the Lodge shall not manufacture, distribute, sell, serve, or furnish alcoholic beverages to any person. The Worshipful Master, (or, in his absence, the Senior or Junior Warden) may prohibit the consumption of alcoholic beverages, if, in his discretion, it is advisable to do so on a particular occasion. All activities involving the consumption of alcoholic beverages on Lodge premises shall conclude no later than 12:00 midnight.

Section 2 – Lodge Room Conduct and Decorum

2.01 Dress Code and Standard Attire. In order to promote respect and ensure proper decorum suitable for the Lodge Room, a reasonable dress code shall be observed. Shorts, ripped jeans, sandals or flip-flops, sneakers, sleeveless or collarless shirts, and tank tops are deemed unsuitable, unless medically necessary, and may result in refusal of admission into the Lodge Room while the Lodge is open.

Officers are urged to dress appropriately as an example of their office and are expected to wear the adopted Lodge uniform, which shall be the Barong Tagalog or coat and tie during Stated Meetings, as determined by the Worshipful Master. Past Masters are urged to wear their Past Master's jacket with appropriate trousers and dress shoes.

Members and visitors may wear the Barong Tagalog or coat and tie during Stated Meetings. Business casual attire is advised during Called Meetings. The Barong Tagalog, coat and tie, and Past Master's jacket shall constitute the Standard Masonic Attire of the Lodge.

2.02 Disability Accommodation. A Brother who has a physical disability may be excused from standing upon three raps of the gavel.

2.03 Flag Protocol. The Pledges to the American Flag and the Texas Flag shall be recited at all Stated, Called, and Open Meetings of the Lodge.

2.04 Sobriety in the Lodge Room. No Brother shall be permitted inside the Lodge Room while under the influence of alcohol.

Section 3 – Affiliation

3.01 Qualifications. Any Master Mason in good standing from a Lodge recognized by the Grand Lodge of Texas, A.F. & A.M., who petitions this Lodge for affiliation, shall comply with all requirements set forth in the Constitution and Laws of the Grand Lodge of Texas and the By-Laws of this Lodge.

3.02 Affiliation Fee. The affiliation fee shall be One Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$150.00), payable at the time the petition is submitted, unless otherwise provided by the By-Laws of this Lodge or the Laws of the Grand Lodge of Texas. The vote to fix the affiliation fee shall be effective after June 24 as per Art 318c of the Laws of the Grand Lodge of Texas.

3.03 Manner of Voting. All petitions for affiliation shall be voted upon by secret ballot, in accordance with the Laws of the Grand Lodge of Texas, regardless of whether an investigation committee was appointed.

3.04 Prorated Dues Upon Affiliation. Upon election to affiliate membership, the individual shall be required to pay the annual dues assessed for regular members, prorated on a monthly basis from the date of election. Such prorated dues shall be paid on or before the end of the calendar year in which the election occurs. This obligation shall apply notwithstanding the individual's election to obtain Endowed Membership.

Section 4 – Conditions of Office

4.01 Eligibility Requirements for Principal Officers. All requirements prescribed by the Grand Lodge of Texas for the offices of Worshipful Master, Senior Warden, and Junior Warden, including those set forth in Form 101, shall be completed and submitted no later than the April Stated Meeting preceding the annual election of officers.

Failure to complete and submit the required documentation by the April Stated Meeting shall render the Brother ineligible to be elected to the office for that Masonic year.

4.02 Financial Standing – Endowment Loan. Any Brother who has received financial assistance from the Lodge pursuant to Article XIV, Section 2 of the Lodge By-Laws (Endowed Membership Fund), and who has an outstanding balance on such loan, shall be ineligible for election or appointment to any office.

For purposes of election, eligibility shall be determined as of the June Stated Meeting at which officers are elected. For purposes of appointment, eligibility shall be determined as of June 24 of the same Masonic year.

Section 5 – Dues, Fees, and Bills

5.01 Annual Dues. The annual dues of Solidarity Lodge No. 1457 shall be Two Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$250.00) and shall be due and payable on January 1 of each year.

5.02 Endowed Membership Fee. The Endowed Membership fee shall be One Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$1,500.00). In accordance with Article 318a of the Constitution and Laws of the Grand Lodge of Texas, the fee shall be fixed at the time of the annual election of officers and shall become effective on the subsequent date of June 24. The provisions of Article 318a shall apply to Endowed Memberships purchased for deceased Masons and Fifty-Year Masons, as permitted under Grand Lodge law.

5.03 Endowed Membership Loan. Pursuant to Article XIV, Section 2 of the Lodge By-Laws (Endowed Membership Fund), the Lodge may provide financial assistance to a Brother for the purchase of an Endowed Membership.

Any such loan must be approved by the Lodge and shall be repaid in full within twelve (12) months from the date the request is made to the Secretary. All loans shall comply with the limitations and provisions set forth in Article XIV, Section 2 of the Lodge By-Laws.

5.04 Degree Fees. Degree fees may be changed after a proper amendment to these Rules and Regulations, but shall at all times be subject to the limitations of Articles 307 and 308 of the Constitution and Laws of the Grand Lodge of Texas. The degree fees are as follows:

Entered Apprentice Degree: \$500.00 | Fellow Craft Degree: \$500.00 | Master Mason Degree: \$500.00

These fees are inclusive of the \$5.00 donation to the George Washington Masonic National Memorial in the Entered Apprentice Degree; \$25.00 for the Texas Masonic Charities Foundation,

Inc. in the Master Mason Degree; \$30.00 per degree for the Grand Lodge Degree Fee; \$1.00 per degree for the Grand Lodge General Fund; and \$100.00 in each degree for the Stewards Fund.

They further include Lodge assessments consisting of L.C.S. Books in the amounts of \$10.00 for the Entered Apprentice Degree and \$5.00 each for the Fellow Craft and Master Mason Degrees; \$13.00 for A.L.L. Books in the Master Mason Degree; \$25.00 for the Sunshine Fund in the Master Mason Degree; and \$25.00 for the Capital Fund in the Master Mason Degree.

5.05 Stewards Fund – Dinner Donation. In order to adequately support and fund the Stewards Fund, the suggested dinner donation for Stated and Called Meetings shall be Ten Dollars (\$10.00) per person.

Section 6 – Miscellaneous

6.01 Presentation to the Candidate. A white lambskin apron and the Holy Bible (or the candidate's Book of Faith, if requested) shall be presented to the candidate upon the conclusion of the conferral of the Master Mason Degree.

6.02 Special Distributions. Solidarity Lodge shall provide the incoming Worshipful Master each year the sum of Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00) for his use in defraying the expenses associated with the Installation of Officers, and any expense beyond that amount shall be his responsibility.

The Lodge shall also award a Master's Plaque to the outgoing Worshipful Master and may provide, if the finances of the Lodge so warrant, a sum not to exceed One Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$150.00) for the purchase of Masonic regalia of his choosing, including but not limited to a Past Master's Jacket or coat (including patch), ring, watch, tie tacks, lapel pins, gavel, Past Master's Apron, or Apron case.

Section 7 – Stewards Fund

7.01 Annual Allocation. At the beginning of each Masonic year, the Stewards shall receive a starting fund of Two Thousand Dollars (\$2,000.00) designated for refreshments at all Stated and Called Meetings. This fund may also be used for necessary pantry supplies.

All expenditures must be supported by receipts. The Worshipful Master's adopted annual budget may include additional funds for the Stewards as needed.

When necessary, the Lodge may replenish the fund. The amount of replenishment shall be recommended jointly by the Junior Warden and the Stewards and approved by the Lodge.

7.02 Funding Source. The initial allocation, additional funds, and any replenishments shall be drawn from the Lodge General Account. Additional support may come from the portion of

degree fees allocated to the Stewards Fund, dinner collections, or donations.

7.03 Special Events. Events other than Stated and Called Meetings shall require a separate, approved budget for food and supplies.

7.04 Year-End Reconciliation. At the end of the Masonic year, the Stewards shall return any remaining funds to the Secretary.

Section 8 – Scholarship Fund

8.01 Establishment of Scholarship Fund. Solidarity Lodge No. 1457 shall maintain a Scholarship Fund for the purpose of providing financial assistance to qualified applicants as determined by the Lodge. The Scholarship Fund shall be used exclusively for educational scholarships or recipients attending accredited, degree-granting colleges and universities within the United States, including four-year colleges and universities and community colleges and related charitable purposes approved by the Lodge.

8.02 Administration. The Scholarship Fund shall be administered by a Special Committee called the Scholarship Committee appointed annually by the Worshipful Master. The Committee shall consist of not fewer than three (3) Master Masons in good standing.

The Committee shall:

- a. Develop eligibility criteria and application procedures;
- b. Review applications and verify qualifications;
- c. Recommend recipients and award amounts to the Lodge for approval; and
- d. Maintain records of applications and awards for Lodge review.

All scholarship awards shall require approval by majority vote of the Lodge at a Stated Meeting.

8.03 Conflict of Interest. Any member of the Scholarship Committee who has a personal, familial, financial, or other close relationship with an applicant shall disclose such relationship to the Committee and shall excuse himself from all discussion, deliberation, and voting related to that applicant.

The affected Committee member shall not attempt to influence the recommendation of the Committee regarding that applicant. The minutes of the Committee report to the Lodge shall reflect that the member properly recused himself.

8.04 Funding Sources. The Scholarship Fund may be supported by:

- Allocated portions of degree fees, if so designated;
- Fundraising events;
- Voluntary contributions and donations;
- Surplus funds approved by the Lodge;
- Memorial gifts or designated charitable contributions.

All monies designated for the Scholarship Fund shall be separately accounted for in the Lodge's financial records.

8.05 Disbursement. Scholarship funds shall be disbursed directly to the educational institution or program whenever practicable. No funds shall be distributed without Lodge approval and proper documentation.

8.06 Reporting and Oversight. The Scholarship Committee shall provide a written report to the Lodge at least annually, detailing the balance of the fund, amounts awarded, and any recommendations for improvement.

Section 9 – Amendments

9.01 Method of Amendment. No amendment to these Rules & Regulations, whether by alteration or addition, shall be made except in the following manner:

- a. The proposed amendment shall be in writing, signed by the proposer, and presented and read at a Stated Meeting of the Lodge. At that meeting, the proposal may be discussed and amended as necessary; however, it shall not be voted upon until the next Stated Meeting.
- b. At the next Stated Meeting, the proposed amendment shall be considered and voted upon without further amendment. If approved by a majority vote of the members present, it shall be adopted and become part of these Rules & Regulations.

In order to preserve order within and without the Lodge, and to uphold a certain standard by which this Lodge should function, it is expected that every member will be familiar with and carefully follow these guidelines. Violations of which may incur the distaste of other Brethren and may be subject to disciplinary action by order of the Worshipful Master and consent of the Lodge.