



**The Grand Commandery**  
Knights Templar of Virginia  
**BICENTENNIAL COMMITTEE**



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**May 13, 2019**

***THE HONOR 200 YEARS OF TEMPLARY IN VIRGINIA***

Sir Knights...four years from now, we shall gather to do something few jurisdictions have done, and fewer still will do in our lifetimes...celebrate two centuries of being organized as Christian Knights Templar here in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Your Bicentennial Committee would like to share with you briefly, the vision and scope of what we intend to accomplish on your behalf; and second, ask for your help.

In 1923, over 1500 people gathered in Richmond to commemorate the first century of our order...this number included Knights, their ladies and DeMolay. They marched in a parade down Monument Avenue in Richmond, they conducted business in the Temple in Richmond and concluded the affair with a dance with refreshments.

For 2023, we are most likely going to be in Williamsburg at the Hilton Double Tree Hotel and build upon the Centennial activity. We envision a gathering of Sir Knights at Bruton Parrish Episcopal Church and marching down Duke of Gloucester Street to the Colonial Williamsburg Capitol Building, accompanied by colonial re-enactors and a Bag Pipe Unit where one of the Bicentennial events will be held.

We plan the Double Tree Hotel's grand ballroom to be outfitted with two large screens upon which to present several "virtual visits." Using the technology of our time, those who could not physically attend can still be part of Bicentennial with recorded visits broadcast in the Bicentennial meetings and dinners. After the Grand Commander's banquet, we propose to retire to the ample bar area at the Double Tree and enjoy live music and libations. (No Bicentennial funds will be used to purchase alcohol.)

All Bicentennial activities will be photographed and videoed. Instead of printed programs, the plan is to furnish every Sir Knight attending the Bicentennial Ceremony with a flash drive bearing our logo and loaded with all the video, pictures and virtual visits, coverage of the trip to the Colonial Williamsburg Capitol together with the many documents in our episodic history we are using (hoping) to tell on the Grand Commandery (our) website each month in vignette fashion. This is far more useful as you can have digital access and manufacture of materials and memories of our time together.

Tom Varner, Jeff Burcham and I are writing our history in episodic vignettes over the next four years as it is a way to tell Virginia Templar story rather than try to fit that into an already full agenda at the Bicentennial Conclave. We will strive to post a new episode each month.

You can imagine this will cost money above what is typically spent for an annual Stated Grand Conclave. We do not want to go to funds established for near-term support, whereas we have four years to manage this expense. Here's how you help.

We are asking that each Commandery, all twenty-five of them, exercise a voluntary fund-raising effort between now and the 2021 Stated Grand Conclave. Each Commandery will be given a goal that has been thoughtfully and respectfully set, mindful of your membership size and capabilities. What this means in per capita commitment works out to just \$35 in fund raising per Sir Knight currently on the roles. This is not a mandate from Grand Commandery nor is it an assessment...it is far, far more sacred and inviolable request...it is your committee members asking our fellow Knights...to help us organize a great remembrance for each of you.

In 2019/20, the Grand Commander will be reaching out to the Eminent Commanders and Sir Knights and share the Bicentennial plans and aspirations with the hope to inspire the Sir Knights to help to achieve in raising \$50,000 across Virginia.

The average amount per Commandery is under \$2,000 although many Commanderies can and will exceed that amount...we are not asking anyone for more than is possible.

It is totally up to each Commandery to decide how to get to their number. No one at Grand Commandery seeks to tell you how to do your business. Be creative and be relentless. If we collectively meet the goal, we can afford a Grand Bicentennial Ceremony.

Every Commandery that achieve their goal, will receive a framed Bicentennial Appreciation Certificate and any Commandery that double their goal will

receive an engraved Bicentennial Trophy to be presented at the 2023 Stated Conclave as well.

Hope is that the publicity we arouse in the next four years and the support of our DeMolay, we can help reverse the demise of our numbers in Templar Masonry; and so, the scale of the celebration is key.

We have dropped to 1,637 Knights in Virginia and yet, remember, there were over 1500 souls attending the Centennial in 1923. Let's go back to that future.

This is not just some grand, elaborate party...this is a four-year long activity designed to bring focus to Templar Masonry giving a viable future to the next generation of Virginia Masons. For those of us too old to dance...we are not too old to dream of a legacy passed on in proper form.

The afore mentioned activities are just the first part of what we will faithfully strive to make something for every Sir Knight to share with pride. As further development come into focus, they will be shared with all.

With Gratitude for Your Faith and Service,

Jeffrey C. Hedges

Grand Musician & Chairman, Bicentennial Committee