

# SCOTTISH RITE

of Freemasonry Southern Jurisdiction USA

## MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Jeremy Hicklin, Membership Chair

Brethren, stop me if you have heard this one, “I am only a card carrier.” So often a brother feels that by only paying dues and collecting a card, that he is not really contributing to the craft or the fraternity. My brothers, we need to change this narrative because that is nothing further from the truth. Let us remind each other that without the card carriers, we have no orient, reunions, or roles of leadership to fill. The bedrock of our fraternity is built upon each and every card carrying member. The next time you hear a brother say, “I am just a card carrier,” please thank him because we have nothing without him.

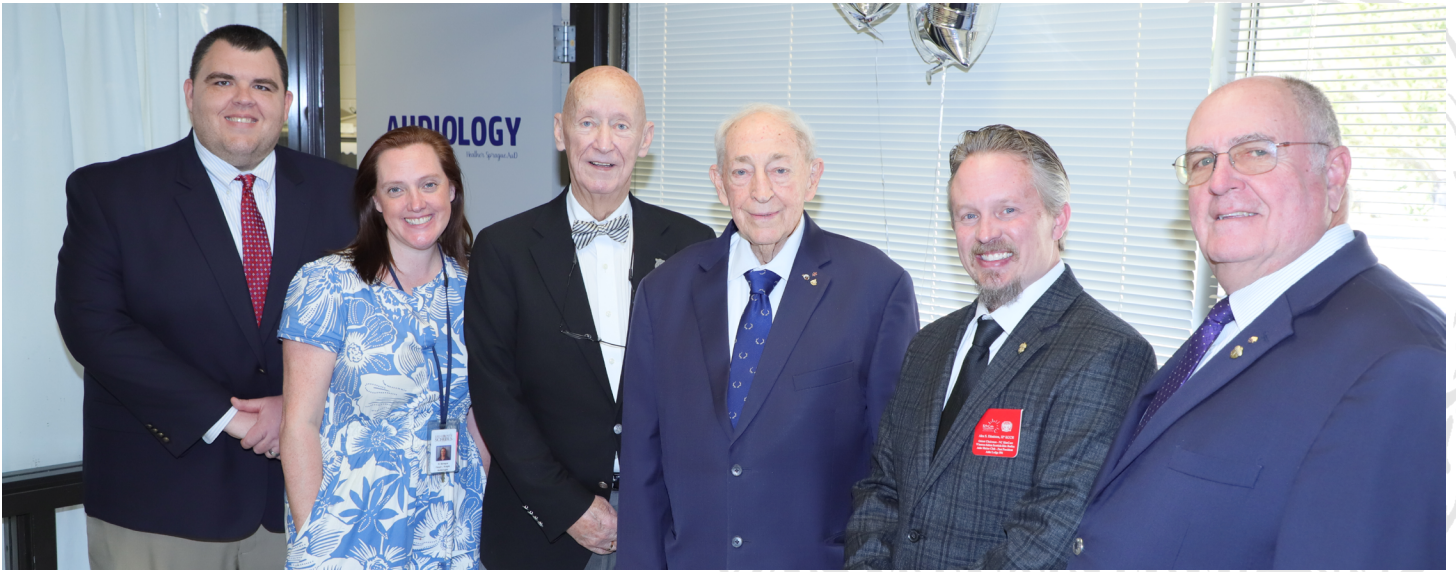
On another note, did you know that currently only about 17.5% of our blue lodge masons are also a Scottish Rite mason? This is below the Southern Jurisdictional average and we believe we are better than average, don't you? Our Orient leadership has set out to challenge ourselves to increase that number to at least 25%, and a stretch goal of 33% by 2035. This goal, along with the Grand Master's blue lodge membership goal, will lead our orient to have over 10,000 members over the next decade. This challenge is every brother's responsibility and our growth will come from successful grassroots efforts. We already have countless examples across the orient of such grassroots efforts. Look at what Fayetteville and Lee County have already accomplished. Are you the next one to help lead a grassroots effort?

THE FUTURE LOOKS BRIGHT, LET'S  
ACHIEVE WHAT WE ARE CAPABLE OF  
TOGETHER.....WE RISE!

Alex Edmisten, RiteCare Chair

## The Golden Age of ...

NC RiteCare has begun. How and why is it different from before? That's a great question and the answer will continue to evolve during 2025. During a recent grant celebration in Lee County, how we help children with speech and language disorders has changed. We have always helped support university care outreach that supports our local communities from a more distant level, with this step forward now we can help at the grass roots, local school system level and it is truly impactful. If you take a look at 2024 the North Carolina Scottish Rite Masonic Foundation contributions for NC RiteCare assistance helped 303 children with 2,847 care visits and helped allocate 14 hearing aids to children in need. Not to mention the scholarships for undergraduate and graduate students at 3 universities across the state. Those numbers continue to increase as children have more access to quality hearing screenings and care. That brings us to our Lee County initiative. Lee County Schools has a combined student population of 10,000 students, 17 schools and now has an updated Audiology booth with top of the line equipment. This equipment is being used by Lee County Pediatric Educational Audiologist Dr. Heather Sprague, Au. D and has already benefited over 30 children by those services and another 70 projected by the end of the school year. Now, moving forward the NCSRMF and NC RiteCare have the model in place to be impactful in all 100 counties of North Carolina, from Manteo to Murphy, we have the ability to help more children. How do we find those needs? Another great question, that is where Project 100 has been launched. The Orient of North Carolina serves all 100 counties, not just those around our Valleys. Over the next few weeks we are identifying Scottish Rite members that live in all 100 counties to be our “listeners” for local communities hearing and language needs. We will have Valley information on how you can be active across the state coming soon. It is an exciting time for our Charity and now is the time.



NC Scottish Rite donates diagnostic audiology equipment to LCS in support of educational access for students with hearing challenges

SANFORD, NC - Due to a generous gift from the North Carolina Scottish Rite Masonic Foundation (NCSRMF), Lee County Schools is now better positioned to support students struggling with hearing loss and difficulties in our community. NCSRMF provided new diagnostic audiology equipment to refit the district's diagnostic testing center, expanding the ability to provide services quickly to students struggling to hear.

“When a student is having difficulty hearing they miss vital instruction,” emphasized Lee County Schools Educational Audiologist, Heather Sprague. Sprague joined Lee County Schools from another district that was outfitted with a hearing clinic and knew the benefits to students and families that a testing center could have first hand. “Missing instruction can have long standing impacts on a student’s academic progress, and the sooner we can get a child tested and address any issue they are having, the sooner we can get them back to learning.”

NCSRMF has made it their mission to support speech and hearing programs at Universities across the state in rural areas where access to diagnostic equipment and professional audiologists is more challenging than in the state’s metro areas. Lee County Schools is the first K-12 school district the organization has partnered with in support of the group’s mission to give financial support for the treatment of children with speech, hearing, and learning disabilities who may receive services with little or no cost to families.

Gene Cobb serves as the Sovereign Grand Inspector General in North Carolina for the NCSRMF. With his ties to the Sanford area from serving 11 years as pastor at St. Luke United Methodist Church, this Scottish Rite partnership felt like a natural outgrowth of the group’s mission. “I have a deep love for the people of Lee County,” explained Cobb. “When you put that together with the Scottish Rite’s commitment to helping children with speech, hearing, and learning disabilities, you have the formula for what you see happening.

Join the *SCOTTISH RITE* Valley of Charlotte

**APRIL 26 & 27**

**Valley of Charlotte**

Ill. Gilbert Bailey, 33°, Personal Representative

Ill. D.C. Heilman, 33°, General Secretary

(704) 365-3579

CharlotteScottishRite.com

JOIN US FOR THE  
BIGGEST GOLF TOURNAMENT OF THE YEAR AND SUPPORT THE KIDS!



NC RiteCare Golf Tournament

Are you ready to be part of something truly special? **The North Carolina Scottish Rite Masonic Foundation's Annual Charity Golf Tournament** is shaping up to be **one of the most talked-about events in the state this year**, and we want **YOU** to be a part of it!

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2025

EMERALD GOLF CLUB, NEW BERN, NC

**WHY YOU SHOULD GET INVOLVED**

**GOLFERS – PLAY FOR A CAUSE!**

Enjoy a beautifully designed course by Rees Jones while playing for a purpose. The tournament follows a scramble format, making it fun and accessible for all skill levels. Gather your friends, form a team, and enjoy an unforgettable day of golf!

**SPONSORS – GAIN VISIBILITY & MAKE AN IMPACT!**

This is an opportunity to align your brand with a noble cause and showcase your commitment to making a difference. Sponsorship starts as low as \$100 or \$200—a small investment for a huge impact!

**Sponsorship Levels:**

- Platinum Sponsor (\$5,000): Entry for two teams, banner recognition, and featured acknowledgment on our website and social media.
- Gold Sponsor (\$2,500): Entry for one team, banner recognition, and online acknowledgment.
- Hole Sponsor (\$100 - \$200): Signage at one of the 18 holes, showcasing your support to all participants.

This is your chance to gain exposure while supporting kids who need us most! Visit our Sponsorship Page to learn more.

**VOLUNTEERS – BE PART OF SOMETHING SPECIAL!**

We need dedicated individuals to help make this event a success! Whether you can contribute a few hours or an entire day, your help will ensure the event runs smoothly. Every hand makes a difference!

**Mark Your Calendar!**

Friday, October 3	2:30 PM – Tour of the ECU Speech-Language and Hearing Clinic. Witness firsthand how your support changes lives!
Saturday, October 4	11:00 AM – Lunch and registration. 1:00 PM – Shotgun start for the tournament.

This isn't just about golf—it's about **coming together as a community** to support **children facing speech, hearing, and learning challenges**. Every dollar raised directly benefits **RiteCare Scottish Rite Childhood Language Programs at Appalachian State University, East Carolina University, and Western Carolina University**. These programs provide essential speech and language therapy to children in need, ensuring they **receive life-changing support—regardless of their family's financial situation**.

We're calling on **sponsors, volunteers, and golfers** to help make this our **biggest and best tournament yet!**

VISIT US AT  
[NCGOLFTOURNAMENT.COM](http://NCGOLFTOURNAMENT.COM)  
FOR MORE DETAILS.

Join the *SCOTTISH RITE* Valley of Raleigh

MARCH 22 & 29

**Valley of Raleigh**

Ill. David Wicker, 33°, Personal Representative

Ill. Don Butto, 33°, General Secretary

(919) 795-8505

RaleighScottishRite.org

### Valley of Asheville Continues Recovery Efforts Following Tropical Storm Helene

The Valley of Asheville remains steadfast in its efforts to rebuild and recover in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Helene. At the January Stated Meeting, a heartwarming and meaningful presentation underscored the spirit of Masonic charity and relief.

Illustrious Brother Phil Presley, 33° (second from the right) was presented with a generous disaster relief check from the North Carolina Scottish Rite Masonic Foundation (NCSRMF) to assist in property damage recovery. Days before the meeting, Brother



Clayton Harpold, 32° (second from the left) also received disaster relief funds from the NCSRMF. These contributions stand as a testament to the profound commitment of Scottish Rite Masons to the principle of relief.

Presenting the check and representing the NCSRMF were Illustrious Brother

Join the *SCOTTISH RITE* Valley of Asheville

**MARCH 15**

North Carolina *SCOTTISH RITE* Newsletter Valley Editor: Rusty Woomer, 32° KCCH

Orient of North Carolina Scottish Rite Newsletter

Rick Patton, 33° (left) and Orient Personal Representative, Illustrious Brother Russell Bridges, 33° (right). Their dedication and service exemplify the highest ideals of our fraternity, reinforcing that Masonry is more than just words—it is action.

One of the principal rungs of Jacob's Ladder is charity, and one of the core tenets of Masonry is relief. The Scottish Rite ongoing support for its brethren in need highlights these essential Masonic values. Charity is one of the first lessons we learn as Masons, and the events of this past month have reaffirmed its significance in our work and daily lives.



The Valley of Asheville was honored to see strong attendance at the January meeting, demonstrating the resilience and unity of our Brotherhood. As we continue into the new year, let us remain committed to the principles that define us: charity, relief, and brotherly love.

### Valley of Asheville

Ill. Barry Rigdon, 33°, Personal Representative

Ill. Tony Rathbone, 33°, General Secretary

(828) 550-6097

AshevilleScottishRite.com

Sign Up for  
Press Pool  
March/April 2025

### SPRING REUNION

The Winston-Salem Scottish Rite Valley will be holding their Spring Reunion on April 25 and 26, 2025. We will be honoring Illustrious Brother Lewis Ledford, 33° Past Grand Master, and Brother William “Bill” Wallin, 32° K.C.C.H.

### 25-YEAR SCOTTISH RITE SERVICE AWARD

Brother Horace Holland, 32° was recently presented with his 25-Year Scottish Rite Service Award. Thank-you for the years of service and dedication to our Valley. This award was presented to Brother Holland by Valley Secretary Ill. Brother Michael Fischer, 33°.



### ACACIA GUILD

Congratulations to Ill. Brother Todd Hildebran, 33° on renewing his membership in the Acacia Guild. Well done Brother.

### KNIGHTS OF SAINT ANDREW SECRETARY EMERITUS

Congratulations to Brother Robert “Bob” Blair, 32° K.C.C.H. for over 8 years of exceptional service as the Secretary/Treasurer of the Winston-Salem Chapter of the Knights of Saint Andrew! The KSA Officers recently recognized and awarded Brother Blair as a Secretary Emeritus of the Knights of Saint Andrew. Well done and thank-you brother!

### LIFETIME MERITORIOUS AWARD

Congratulations to Brothers Joey Transou and Cliff Pranke on receiving the Winston-Salem Scottish Rite Lifetime Meritorious Award for this year. Thank-you for all you have done, and continue to do for our Valley.



Meritorious Award 1 (Ill. Joseph Transou, 33° and Ill. Cliff Pranke, 33° being presented the Lifetime Meritorious Award by Valley Ill. Secretary Michael Fischer, 33° and Personal Representative Ill. George Kalamaras, 33°.

### Valley of Winston-Salem

Ill. George Kalmaras, 33°, Personal Representative  
Ill. Michael Fischer, 33°, General Secretary  
(919) 795-8505

WinstonSalemScottishRite.org

Join the *SCOTTISH RITE* Valley of Raleigh

APRIL 25 & 26

## 2025 OFFICERS INSTALLED

The 2025 Officers were Installed at the January meeting. Those serving are: Marcus Orr, 32° KCCH, Venerable Master of the James W. Cortland Lodge of Perfection; Mike Daniels, 33°, Commander of the Greensboro Council of Kadosh; Currie Pendleton, 32° KCCH, Wise Master of the Guilford Chapter Rose Croix No. 6; and Tim Taylor, 32° KCCH, Master of Kadosh of the Greensboro Consistory. The outgoing officers were recognized for their service to the valley.



PHOTOGRAPH by Matt Cockman

## SPRING 2025 REUNION DATES SET

The Valley will host the Spring 2025 Reunion on April 26, 2025 and May 14, 2025. Day One will present the 4th, 14th, 18th, 30th, and 31st degrees. The other degrees will be communicated. Day two, at the May stated meeting, the 32nd degree will be presented.

Join the *SCOTTISH RITE* Valley of Greensboro

**APRIL 26 & MAY 14**

**Valley of Greensboro**

Ill. Shaun Bradshaw, 33°, Personal Representative

Ill. Gary Handy, 33°, General Secretary  
(336) 275-3579

[GreensboroScottishRite.org](http://GreensboroScottishRite.org)

## MAKING A GOOD FIRST IMPRESSION

The Valley of Fayetteville's fifth reunion in 19 months marked a big change in what was offered to candidates. For the first time, the Valley brethren staged the 5th Degree, and – in its bid to earn a charter as a Chapter of Rose Croix – it put on the 18th Degree.

The candidates were a local brother, Joe Evans, who is a dual member of Phoenix 8 and Fort Bragg 667, and a courtesy candidate in Bryan Buchanan, a member of Waynesville 259.

Evans retired from the U.S. Army in 2007 after 22 years of service. A proficient Blue Lodge ritualist and a Master Mason for nearly eight years, Evans found the five-degree reunion “pretty neat because it was different. You could tell the people (in the cast) knew what they were saying.”

Buchanan left Fayetteville with the 4th through 18th degrees completed, and he will finish his Scottish Rite degree work at home in the Valley of Asheville. His experience was such that he intends to join the Valley of Fayetteville as a dual member.

“I didn't really know what to expect, but I can tell you that this day was one of the most rewarding experiences that I have ever had in my Masonic journey,” Buchanan said. “From the

time I arrived, every one of the brethren that I encountered this day were helpful and made me feel right at home. I immediately felt like a part of their family.”

Given that the theme for the reunion was “Rebuilding Western N.C.,” Buchanan was also the perfect guest speaker at lunch. A shift captain at Upper Hominy Fire and Rescue near Asheville, the 37-year fireman gave an update on recovery updates following the devastation of Hurricane Helene. He's also a member of the Saunook VFD, and is the Western Director of the North Carolina Society of Fire Rescue Instructors.

Fayetteville is hopeful of receiving a charter as a Chapter of Rose Croix at the Biennial in August. Its next reunion will be held Sept. 27, with the addition of the 7th Degree in the works.



The candidates for Fayetteville's fifth reunion -- and first as the Marquis de Lafayette Chapter of Rose Croix (Letters Temporary) were, front left and center, Joe Evans of Phoenix 8/Fort Bragg 667 and Bryan Buchanan of Waynesville 259

Join the *SCOTTISH RITE* Valley of Fayetteville

**FEBRUARY 1**

North Carolina *SCOTTISH RITE* Newsletter Valley Editor: Inquire for Open Position(s) Available

## Valley of Fayetteville

Ill. Thomas Pope, 33°, Personal Representative

James Pugsley, 32°, General Secretary

(910) 574-1005

ScottishRiteFayettevilleNC.com

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March/April 2025

VALLEY OF FRANKLIN PRESENTS  
NCSRMF CHECK TO WESTERN  
CAROLINA UNIVERSITY IN SUPPORT  
OF CAMP LEAD

By: Drew Norton, 32° KCCH, General Secretary

Members of the Valley of Franklin recently met with staff and students at the Western Carolina University College of Health and Human Sciences to present a \$13,000.00 award from the North Carolina Scottish Rite Masonic Foundation in support of the upcoming Camp LEAD program, presented through the WCU Speech and Hearing clinic each summer.

The program, christened Camp LEAD (Language/Literacy Engagement and Development) began in 2021 following a previous grant from the NCSRMF of \$5,000.00 that enabled the clinic to start the program. Camp LEAD is a four-week summer program designed to support school-age children with speech, language or reading impairments, including dyslexia. WCU's College of Health and Human Sciences relies upon private contributions to help meet its mission of offering quality academic experiences to students, and critical health care evaluations and treatments to underserved members of the surrounding community.

The camp is an in-person clinic program and there is no fee for attendees, to be held in the

Join the *SCOTTISH RITE* Valley of Franklin

MARCH 8

North Carolina *SCOTTISH RITE* Newsletter Valley Editor: Inquire for Open Position(s) Available

Health and Human Sciences Building on the west campus of WCU. The program offers graduate student clinicians an opportunity to work intensively with a group of clients over the course of a month, providing students with valuable hands-on learning experiences in a clinical setting.

“We are truly grateful for the support of individuals and organizations such as the N.C. Scottish Rite Masonic Foundation,” said the college’s Dean, Lori Anderson. “The generosity of these partners provides scholarship assistance to our students, funding for innovative learning opportunities and the additional resources necessary to expand the services provided to the people of our region by the clinics in our college.”

For more information on Camp LEAD, contact WCU’s Speech and Hearing Clinic at 828-227-7251.



Pictured: Jack Williams, Personal Representative to the Valley of Franklin, Andrew Norton, NC RiteCare Liaison to WCU, Stan Bevers 32 KCCH, with staff and faculty of the WCU Speech and Hearing Clinic.

Valley of Franklin

Jack Williams, 32° KCCH, Personal Representative  
Drew Norton, 32° KCCH, General Secretary  
(828) 226-1976  
FranklinScottishRite.org

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March/April 2025



## WHO WAS JOHNSTON BLAKELY?

### THE NAMESAKE FOR THE JOHNSTON BLAKELY LODGE OF PERFECTION

BY: MATT MOORE, 32° KCCH, GENERAL SECRETARY

Wilmington's Lodge of Perfection was established in 1909 by a group of brethren who saw the need for a Scottish Rite body in the port town. Deliberations were held on what to name this new Lodge of Perfection and tasked MWB W.B. McKoy, Past Grand Master (1912) to name it. He chose to name the new body after Johnston Blakely which prefaced his explanatory remarks with: "When you requested me to select a name for our Lodge of Perfection, I had no idea of what would be appropriate, but now associated with this task, I have a clearer view of what you require, and I hope you will not regret trusting to my choice. If my zeal has overstepped the privilege you would accord me, attribute it to my sincere desire to serve you. It is due that I should recall to you something of the history of Johnston Blakely, and I feel that you will then agree that his name is a fit selection". He then proceeded to give an address on the life and merit of our friend, Johnston Blakely:

"[Johnston Blakely] was the son of an Irish emigrant, John Blakeley and was born at Seaford, County Down, Ireland in October 1781. His father and mother settled in Charleston, South Carolina but soon after moved to Wilmington, North Carolina in 1789. John Blakely, his father, was elected to take the degrees of Masonry in

St. John's Lodge no. 1. He was raised February 12th, 1789, Henry Dayton Acting as Master. During the same year he was made Senior Deacon and Junior Warden. The lodge then held an election every six months. In January 1790, he was elected Senior Warden and filled the chairs frequently as Master. January 6th, 1792, he was made Worshipful Master and elected to attend the Grand Lodge at New Bern on September 2nd, 1792, with Past Master, Edward Jones (the brother of John Todd Jones, the Irish Patriot). In the earliest records of the Past and Master Masons lodges at Fayetteville, we find that he presided and conferred these degrees and directed the recording of the Marks of the newly made brethren. He died in 1795, and he and his wife lie buried in unmarked graves in St. James graveyard.

A strong attachment had grown up between Past Master, Edward Jones and John Blakely, and at the death of the latter, the son, Johnston Blakely then about 14 years of age, was adopted in the household of the Past Master, and brought up as his own son. Though he could ill afford the expense, his devotion to the father induced him to send the boy to the University of North Carolina.

Story to continue Next Issue...

Join the *SCOTTISH RITE* Valley of Wilmington

**MARCH 7 & 8**

### Valley of Wilmington

Ill. Earl Wells, 33°, Personal Representative  
Matt Moore, 32° KCCH, General Secretary  
(910) 762-6452

WilmingtonScottishRite.org



### AMERICANISM AWARD

During the OWLS meeting in Winston Salem on 30 January 2025 the Valley of New Bern was awarded the 2nd annual Americanism Award. This was the second time the Valley of New Bern has been awarded this award.

Winning this award has been a pleasure as we study our nation’s history and honor our Veterans. The Valley has several members of the Camp Lejune Chapter of National Sojourners that participate in Valley activities. It’s also a pleasure to visit our Veterans at the Veterans Home in Kinston,

Personal Rep Asa Buck, 33°

General Secretary Johnny C. Surles, 33°

Join the *SCOTTISH RITE* Valley of New Bern

**MARCH 14 & 15**

**Valley of New Bern**

Ill. Asa Buck, 33°, Personal Representative

Ill. Johnny Surles, 33°, General Secretary

(252) 638-4031

ScottishRiteNewBern.org

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