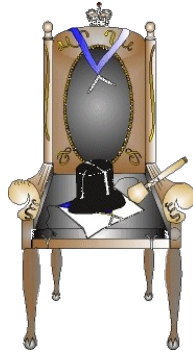


Grand Chapter State of New York

Royal Arch Masons

Past Master Degree Introduction Lecture



My Brother:

The Past Master Degree, in which you become a **Virtual Past Master**, is a necessary step in the York Rite Degrees. Therein you learn to govern a lodge and the secrets of the **Chair**. We, as Royal Arch Masons confer this degree, not only as a preliminary step, but also for the more important purpose of guarding against a breach of our Masonic obligation.

Originally, this degree was under the government of Symbolic lodges, in which the Royal Arch Degree was always conferred. It was a regulation that no one could receive the degree unless, he had previously presided as a Master of a lodge; and the restriction was made, because the Royal Arch was deemed too important a degree to be conferred on Master Masons. As the law still requires that the August Degree of the Royal Arch shall be restricted to Past Masters, our candidates are made to pass the Chair simply as a preparation and qualification toward being invested with the solemn instruction of the Royal Arch.

Receiving this degree confers upon you no official rank outside the Chapter. The honors and peculiar privileges belonging to the **Chair** of Symbolic lodges are confined exclusively to them. Those who have been duly elected to preside over and govern such lodges are called **Actual Past Masters**. Whereas, those who have received the degree in the Chapter are termed, **Virtual Past Masters**, for although they are invested with the secrets of the degree, yet they are not entitled to the rights and prerogatives of **Actual Past Masters**.

Enjoy the degree!

Produced by the Masonic Education Committee
R.:E.: Richard J. Kessler, Chairman

Special thanks to: E.: Alan Troland