

# Outstanding Nobles Receive 2007 Award of Merit

**I**MPERIAL Potentate Nick Thomas recognized three Nobles for their exceptional lifetime achievements during Shriners of North America's 133rd Imperial Council Session, held in Anaheim, Calif., July 1-5.

The Imperial Potentate's Award of Merit, created in 1997, can be given to up to five deserving

Shriners each year. The award acknowledges Nobles who have made extraordinary contributions to Shriners of North America and Shriners Hospitals for Children. In the Shriners Fraternity, there is no greater honor.

The following nobles are the 2007 recipients of the Award of Merit:



## William W. "Bill" Hooper

Illustrious Sir Bill Hooper was raised a Master Mason in 1955, created a Shriner in 1966, and received his 33rd Degree from the Scottish Rite in 1993. Hooper is a Past Potentate of Egypt Shriners in Tampa, Fla., and also has served as Recorder and House Committee Chairman for the Temple. He is a recipient of the Honorary Legion of Honor Degree from the DeMolay Supreme Council.

Hooper is a past president and Director General of the Shrine Directors Association and served as the association's Deputy Secretary/Treasurer for 17 years. He also has served as president of the Florida Shrine Directors Association and the Florida Shrine Association. Since 1983, Hooper has served as an Imperial Marshal's Aide. He is an Emeritus Representative of Shriners Hospitals for Children, and an Emeritus member of the Board of Governors for Shriners Hospitals for Children—Tampa.



## William G. "Bill" Selsam

Illustrious Sir Bill Selsam was raised a Master Mason in 1962 and created a Shriner two years later. He is a Past Potentate of Aladdin Shriners in Columbus, Ohio, and also served as Recorder. Selsam is an Emeritus Representative to the Imperial Council; a member of the Imperial Committee on Dispensations and Charters; a member of the Imperial Education Seminars Committee; and he also served on the Imperial Membership Committee. Selsam also authored the leadership manual "So You're Going to be a Potentate – A Handbook for Shrine Divan Officers."

Selsam has been actively involved with Shriners Hospitals for Children — Lexington. In 2006, he became an Emeritus member of the hospital's Board of Governors, for which he served as secretary for several years.

A veteran of the United States Air Force, Selsam is the semi-retired owner of Selsam Management, an association-management and state government-relations consulting firm.

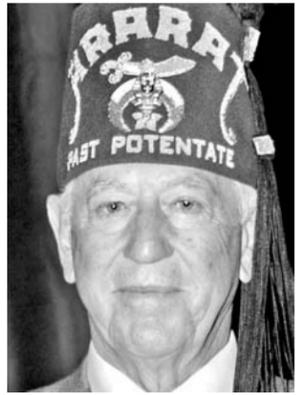


## Howard R. McHenry

Illustrious Sir Howard McHenry was raised a Master Mason and created a Shriner in 1951. While Potentate of Ararat Shriners in Kansas City, Mo., in 1978, McHenry activated an aggressive membership program that resulted in a 6.5 percent membership gain — 1,000 new Nobles — and he has continued to work tirelessly on membership development since that time.

McHenry served on the Imperial Membership Committee for more than a decade and is currently serving as a Temple Review and Counsel (T.R.A.C.) specialist and administrator for that program. He is the director of an all-Shriner Dixieland band that has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for Ararat Shriners, Shriners of North America and Shriners Hospitals for Children.

A past mayor of Harrisonville, Mo., McHenry owned automobile dealerships for more than two decades and also created a community development agency that evaluates small towns in the U.S. and Canada.



## The Most Worshipful Grand Master, Jeffrey Black Hodgdon Masonry's Make-It-Happen Man

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the Senior Grand Warden of Maine, R. W. **George Pulkkinen**. The ceremony would take place in United Lodge #8 in Brunswick.

The then Grand Master of Massachusetts, M. W. Albert T. Ames, came with a distinguished suite of his officers to witness my very moving ceremony. My brother was officially and bountifully raised!"

In addition to all of Hodgdon's other first's and foremost's, let me add a list of miscellany: chairman of the Board of Masonic Health System; president of the Masonic Education and Charitable Trust; reserve deputy sheriff; member and past president of the Rotary Club of Lexington; member of the Hundred Club of Massachusetts; member, Touch-down Club of Arlington; Past President of the Massachusetts Automobile Dealers Association; Aircraft Owners and Pilots' Association; American Bonanza Society; and Lexington Lodge of Elks, to name a few.

We asked about his education. "While at Bryant University (Bryant College at the time), I earned my Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration; my major was in Marketing and my minor in Economics." We have seen his skills as past chairman of the Shriners' Rodeo, among other things. "After graduation, I was so gung-ho to be a pilot that I applied for both the Navy and Air Force pilot's program and was accepted by both. I opted for the Navy because my older brother, Walter, already was a Naval Aviator. For five years I was active flying jets, beginning on July 29, 1969. I continued serving in the Naval Reserve for the rest of my career, eventually retiring on December 1, 1990."

"I was stationed at the South Weymouth Naval Air Station in a unit called NS Rota, named for Rota, Spain, an augmentation unit for the Naval Station there. It so happened that my brother and I ended up on active duty in Rota at the same time. We broke an old military rule flying a mission together in one of my brother's squadron planes! By the way, I love playing golf, and I hit the balls on the course of the Naval Air Station in Rota, an awful dry course!"

We continued our interview at the Hodgdon-Noyes Buick-Pontiac-GMC Dealership in Arlington. Jeff is founder and chief executive officer. Hanging on his office wall are: autographed photos of **Tiger Woods**; **Mike Weir**, southpaw Englishman; and **Payne Stewart** in knickers, killed in a tragic plane crash. All, of course, golfers.

He went on to describe his current re-vitalization

of the Grand Lodge in Boston and the new spaces on the third floor. One of the rooms can only be opened exclusively by past Grand Masters or by the current Grand Master. "This special room is going to be called the Harbor Room and is dedicated to the living and current Grand Master. On display are photos of the portraits of each living Grand Master and his memorabilia. When a Grand Master dies, the portrait and memory items are to be delivered to his widow."

His own portrait, which is to be hung in Ionic Hall with all the other Grand Masters, is still being completed by his nephew, **Charles Moody**, who has studied art in Boston and has also studied and shown at galleries in Italy.

He went on: "Year after year I've had the honor of marching in the Boston parades with the Ancient & Honorable Artillery Company of Massachusetts. BGEN **Joseph A. Milano**, Chief of Staff and owner of the Union Oyster House, has often been the host of me and my staff. Last year I purchased at auction a print of the Medal of Honor winners, which is to be hung in the new Board Room at Grand Lodge. The funds for that purchase were donated to the U.S.O. in Boston."

We wondered about his ancestry. "Look in Maine phone books and find more Hodgsons than Johnsons! I am English and a little Dutch. My beloved wife **Carolee Johnson**, is English. She is a graduate of Emerson College and Mt. Ida. Her family and mine came to the USA, mine by way of Nova Scotia, Carolee's by way of Canada.

Carolee was chair of the Wine Tasting fund-raiser at the Scottish Rite Mansion this past September. Her first year on the job, she raised more than \$11,000, a huge record for the event! She will serve again as chair this year in Lexington on September 14."

We remember well his "Grand Master's One-Day Class last April 23, dedicated to recruiting candidates for membership in the Fraternity, an organization of men who have shaped and are shaping this country. Fifteen US presidents, including George Washington, **Harry Truman**, and **Gerald Ford**; Paul Revere and **Ben Franklin**; Supreme Court Justice **Thurgood Marshall**; astronauts **John Glenn** and **Buzz Aldrin**; and other notables including **J.C. Penny** and **Arnold Palmer**.

With his mind fervently motivated by goals for the Fraternity, and the constituent bodies including the Shriners', future, Jeff NEVER uses notes for his lectures. "Like Joe McKertich, I say what

comes to mind. If I believe it, I can talk all day long. I recall a guy who came up after one of my lectures seeking a copy. I asked, "Have you a tape recorder?"

Do you ever watch TV or read? "Haven't much time, but I hate reality shows; Carolee loves them. I watch Fox TV News and films like "Titanic" and "Search for Red October."

He remembered three years ago when he was preparing for being Grand Master. "I met with some advertising people to help me think up a message fitting my goals to recruit as Masons, people, young and old. In the end, I phrased my own: "Is there greatness in you? Be a Mason first and a great man later!"

"I met with leaders of Freemasonry, the Masonic Leadership Institute, dedicated to improving the skills of the individual as well as the strength of the Fraternity. I asked them all to come forward with new and leading ideas to achieve these goals, as well as our membership numbers. Our recruitment in 1986 was only 17 for the MLL; our next class will number 85!"

"My frosting on the cake recently happened in Wilmington at the first Grand Master's Picnic. Overlook was in disarray because of construction; the picnic outside was superb! Then at the Grand Master's Ball, attendance was in the hundreds! I like being a catalyst, getting everyone to step up to the plate." There he goes again with sports words!

Jeff has endless good deeds, back and forth from first to third year as Grand Master. Remember his September, 2005, "Homecoming Month," for Masonry with a requisite "Pass-It-On application? Or his September 24th "Square and Compass Day? Or his June Quarterly Message ? "It's In Your Hands?"

He said, "We are at a critical fork in the road for Masonry in Massachusetts, and we must go in the right direction. One road will lead to disaster, while the other will lead to a bright, rewarding future." He continued: "As Grand Master of Masons, I serve the entire Masonic Fraternity, and, of course, the Shrine."

Regrettably, we had to close our interview. We recall **Jack Maloney**, owner of Arlex Oil Corporation, who said, "He just never says no and he's always there to help!"

Off and away our Grand Master flew. He had Board members waiting and letters to write. We could not resist wondering: Who will be the next Grand Master? Will he continue Jeff's Firsts and Foremosts, while creating a few of his own?

