

# DISCOURSE

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## “Keep the Dream Alive”

Dear Brother

I want to share with you the story of a man with a vision, a dream and how his perseverance, courage and faith carried him to seeing his dream come true.

A decade short of the turn of the century a man of mettle joins the newly chartered Punta Gorda No. 115 F & A.M. He is initiated on April 26, 1890, Passed May 7, 1890 and Raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason on May 24, 1890.

His profession was that of a civil engineer, and he worked with the railroad's engineering and surveying teams, which headed south just ahead of the southbound expansion of the railroad system. When he reached the new town of Punta Gorda, he decides to make this new town his home. He engages in real estate investments and development business, becomes an orange grower, and enters the political arena.

In politics, he serves several terms in the House of Representatives in 1893, 1895, 1903 and 1905 when he also serves as Speaker of the House in Florida. If this was not enough to keep a man busy this Brother was also a Brigadier General in the State Militia until 1898. When the USS Maine was blown in Havana Harbor, Cuba on February 15, 1898, he waited for his unit to be called into active duty and when this did not materialize, he resigned his command. Immediately enlisting as a private in company C of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Regiment of the United States Volunteer Army Infantry at age 40, where he served his country during the Spanish-American War rising through the ranks to achieve Acting Major when he was mustered out on May 1, 1899.

This Brother was elected the 20<sup>th</sup> Governor of Florida and was sworn into Office on January 5, 1909 serving his term until 1913. During his term as Governor, the counties of Palm Beach, Pinellas, Seminole and Bay were created. The Overseas Railroad was completed after 8 years, connecting the mainland with the city of Key West. He also endorsed the following legislation for the creation of Montverde Industrial School, Tuberculosis Sanitarium, Pure Food Law, Healthier Conditions for State Prisoners, and a Hospital for Impoverish Cripple Children. Could this have been the result of his Masonic Teachings of helping his fellowmen.

While this Brother had a very busy and successful business and political career he never forgot the little Lodge he joined back in 1890 as he is immediately put to work as Marshal of his Lodge in 1891, 92 and 93, something that seemed to follow him in his Masonic career. He went on to serve his Lodge as the elected Junior Warden in 1894, Senior Warden in 1895 and served as Worshipful Master in 1896.

As an achiever, he was immediately tapped and placed into service at the Grand Lodge level as Grand Pursuivant in 1892, and Grand Marshal for five consecutive years 1894 – 1898. In 1905 he was elected Junior Grand Warden and served two years as it was customary then. In 1907 & 1908 he was elected and served as Senior Grand Warden, 1909 & 1910 was elected and served as Deputy Grand Master. In 1911, this distinguished Brother was elected to serve a two-year term as our Most Worshipful Grand Master, all of this while serving as Governor of the State of Florida and overseeing his business affairs.

Presently this Most Worshipful Brother has a County and a Bridge named after him and has been named as Florida's Progressive Governor. A man of character, who left Florida Masonry a great legacy, he brought his dream to fruition, while elusive at times, he chased his dream for 17 years of his life, with the conviction and courage that only a man of character can endure. The perseverance and dedication to a dream to help others represents the

best in Masonry, this Brother is one of the giants of Florida Masonry and example for men to emulate the world over.

His dream began shortly after he became a Master Mason when during the Seventy Third Annual Grand Communication held in Jacksonville on January 21, 1902, he presented a Resolution, which said as follows. "Resolved that a Masonic Orphanage and Home shall be built in the State of Florida and that the Grand Master shall appoint a committee to formulate some plan for effective carrying out the same. This committee shall determine a suitable location, approximate costs and report to the next Annual Communication."

The following year the Trustees for the Home and Orphanage Fund were appointed, there were three Brothers appointed one for three years one for two and one for one year thus this Brother serves as member of the Board of Trustees until he crossed the eternal river to that House not made with hands eternal in the heavens.

During the 84<sup>th</sup> Annual Grand Communications and this, Most Worshipful Brother's second term in office as Grand Master it was reported by the Masonic Home and Orphanage Trustees that the fund had reached a total of \$19,563.06 with the Order of the Eastern Star contributing \$1,026.55 of the total. During his last term of office, it was reported that we were composed of 206 Lodges and over ten thousand Masons and the Fund had reached \$23,094.16.

Twelve years after this fund was established it was reported, at the Eighty fifth Annual Grand Communication that the Masonic Home Fund had received \$24,888.59. At the next Annual Grand Communication, the Masonic Home Fund Trustees headed by this Brother presented the resolution and the Brethren adopted it. "It is hereby declared the duty of each Worshipful Master, to appoint a special committee to solicit contributions to the fund for a Masonic Home and Orphanage in this Grand Jurisdiction." During the same session a motion was made and carried that each Lodge shall be assessed annually, in the amount of fifty cents (\$10.85 "2011") per capita, for the Masonic Home and Orphanage Fund.

By 1918, it was reported a total of \$45,902.69 were available in the Masonic Home and Orphanage Fund, and the same Brothers were still members of this committee.

On the Ninetieth Annual Grand Communication in January 21, 1919, it was reported that the closing of the Southland Hotel Property had been completed on July 2, 1918. The property, which included about ten acres of land, consisted of a fireproof structure of concrete, of about one hundred rooms, of which fifty were finished and furnished and the building was otherwise ready for occupancy.

Thus, a giant of a man and Mason's dream became a reality not just for him but also for the benefit of many children and adults that have benefited from the services provided by the Masonic Home of Florida since 1918.

The Love of Fraternity, his Faith in his God that helped him endure the long haul always focusing on his dream, the Perseverance of never wavering from the pursuit of that dream, the endless hours of Dedication and Commitment while involved in all of the government and personal business affairs, demonstrates his ability to Prioritize.

Most of all he left us a "Tradition of Caring", even to the end of this Brother's beautiful life he showed his love for this Masonic Home by leaving the balance of his estate to the Masonic Home of Florida, which had always been his dream and love for this Fraternity. This Brother never benefited from the Masonic Home himself but he cherishes the fact that his Brothers and their families would have a haven retreat for them to enjoy.

This Great Statesman, Soldier, Businessman and Mason was none other than Most Worshipful Albert Waller Gilchrist. Not only a DREAM BUILDER he was also a DREAM CATCHER.

Now I ask you my Brother, can you assist me in making sure that the Masonic Home Dream continues through this century? That we as a Fraternity show the same dedication and commitment of caring that M.:W.: Brother Gilchrist showed. That we convey his message of Love of Brotherhood by carrying his message to all of those Brothers, Wives, Widows and Mothers that may be able to use the services of this Five Star facility, which is exclusively maintained and operated for the sole use of the Masonic Family.

This Home, we are very proud to say has been a home to Children from their infancy to adulthood, and we have them return back home in their twilight years not because they had to, but because their experiences where such that this was like returning home once again. This demonstrates the highest of standards and experiences, which led these Brothers on a pilgrimage home and speaks volumes to our Tradition of Caring.

This facility based on Masonic Principle of Brotherly Love is definitely a cut above the rest. Allow me to share with you some statistics; our Masonic Home is one of two facilities in Pinellas County that had zero deficiencies and one of twenty in the State of Florida with zero deficiencies out of 673 nursing homes according to the 2009 State of Florida estimates.

Our Masonic Home is home to many Florida Masons in Lifecare and Private Pay plans, as well as Sojourning Brothers and Spouses under the Private Pay plan. There are many which would like to live in a Masonic Community and have the absolute best care available to them. We are very proud to say that the relatives of the members of the Masonic Family that have made an in-depth research on nursing facilities have come to determine that our care and facility is second to none. Where money was no object, the conclusion was the same that no amount of money could buy better care and exclusivity than is offered at the Masonic Home, and the icing on the cake is the fact that the Masonic Home is run on Masonic Principles and way of life.

Now my Brothers after you have made the commitment of keeping this DREAM ALIVE for the second century, in honor of M.:W.: Brother Gilchrist and the members of the Grand Lodge of Florida we have committed to help, aid and assist by providing a place where peace and tranquility reigns to enjoy their twilight years. We need to perform one more duty, and that is to personally contact every Brother, Wife or Widow to let them know that we have a Five Star Home waiting for them when they so desire to join this Masonic Community.

My Brother can you make this a reality this year. Help us help those Brothers and Sisters that need assistance to live a full, enjoyable and worry free life.

May the Blessings of God be with you and your family. "KEEP THE DREAM ALIVE"

Respectfully and Fraternal Submitted, I remain your most humble servant

Jorge L. Aladro  
Deputy Grand Master

***If you would like to receive, these newsletters make request at email below if you would like to forward to your list of friends you have my permission and thank you in advance.***

*"My Brothers, the newsletters are intended to be thought provoking, to get you to think creatively, to get you thinking what if?, to dare you to improve yourself and your Lodge."*

***Note: If you would, like to have any of these presentations made at your Lodge or District Associations feel free to call.***

***"Masons always rise to the occasion"***

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