

April Masonic Minutes – Meeting One

How would your lodge like some recognition for the work you do throughout the year? Or a best practices model of specific goals that has the potential to become your lodge tradition. What if that recognition came in the form of a frameable certificate to be displayed in your lodge and a medal for the Worshipful Master, both presented at a banquet during the *Annual Grand Lodge Communication*?

Many of you will recognize the name of this program as the Grand Lodge Achievement Award, yet barely over 50% of Missouri lodges will submit the form and participate in this program, even though most would qualify with the minimum 500 points necessary. You say it's too hard or too much work? Most of you have already completed the basic requirements. For example, did your lodge confer all three degrees on a candidate this year? That's 70 points. Did a top elected officer attend your area meeting? That is another 15 points **for each one**. Did you host any special lodge events such as an Open Installation or Family Night? Attach a brief description of the function and you have another 50 points for each event. Even submitting the form electronically is worth an extra 10 points. So what are you waiting for? Oh...as Worshipful Master you don't have time to keep track of all those accumulating points? Well, this is the perfect job for an advancing line officer such as a Junior Deacon or Senior Warden. In the process of charting your point accumulation they will learn about the program and develop some ideas of what your lodge can do to generate excitement among your members and give them a reason to stay engaged in lodge activities.

Started in 1975 under the Grand Lodge Education Committee, the achievement award was designed to encourage members to participate in Area and Regional meetings and was referred to as "the most precious jewel in the crown" of education. In its inaugural year 12 lodges qualified and were recognized for their efforts at the Annual Grand Lodge Communication. To this day 8 of those 12 have received this award **CONSECUTIVELY** since its inception, which by the way, consecutive achievement is worth 150 points.

So how do you get started you ask? Well its simple, your lodge Secretary has the form, or you can get one from your District Deputy Grand Master (DDGM), or simply log onto www.momason.org, click on the Programs tab at the top of the page, on the right is a list of forms in PDF format that can be downloaded and printed anytime. Start adding up your points and as soon as you hit 500, give the form along with your lodge's copy of IRS form 990 (This is crucial and no points for hidden offshore bank accounts, sorry!) to your DDGM, and you've secured your spot with a select group of honor lodges. Want to raise the bar? After completing the basic requirements there are no limitations to amount of points you acquire so you can start earning additional points and when you reach 1250 you then qualify for the Honor Lodge with Distinction Award. If you want you can do the following four things and qualify for the Truman Honor Lodge Award.

- Hold a family function where the men serve the ladies
- Have a Lodge Program on Appendant and Adoptive Bodies and Lodge Membership
- Have a Lodge Program on Masonic Charities
- Have members that brought in at least one member into the following:

1. Eastern Star
2. Shrine
3. Scottish Rite
4. York Rite
5. Bringing a member into a youth organization may be substituted.

Or, just amass 3000 points and you are done!

So when is the deadline for filing? Technically, as soon as you have earned enough points for the award, but the committee will accept them up to 30 days past the installation of the new officers, or 30 days after the Master has been out of term. And finally, don't let the mandatory requirements such as having the Master or Wardens attend Grand Lodge stop you from filling in your points, yes this is a crucial part meant to incentivize lodge representation at Grand Lodge, but if you are unable to go simply attach a letter stating your legitimate reason for missing and the committee will take up your situation for review. So get your forms today and see how many points you can earn, you just might surprise yourselves!