BANQUET SPEECH

FOR

ROBERT PARSONS

Hello everyone and thank you for sharing in this very grand and special occasion. As Freemasons, we have a long and rich history of honoring our traditions, preserving and reliving our age-old ceremonies, and acknowledging our partnerships and brotherhood within each lodge and our extended Freemason network. To be able to welcome all of you, our distinguished visitors, many of whom have traveled from far and wide to be here with us to partake in these festivities really inspires us. Being with all of you tonight really brings to life the true essence of what it means to be a Freemason. Although we are connected in so many ways symbolically, actually sharing this space and time with all of you, including our distinguished visitors, is almost overwhelming in its significance to this organization and to each one of its members. Throughout the year, while we may plot and plan our course of how we will find the ways to positively impact our neighbors and our communities and those that need our support the most, seeing all of you Grand Masters representing so many states throughout Australia and New Zealand is, well, almost overwhelming!! Talk about a social network!! Facebook has **NOTHING** on us!! **WE** practically **INVENTED** the concept!!! Let’s see how Mark Zuckerberg is doing in about 2,000 years… (**Wait for the laugh**)….and don’t forget-Facebook only has one special symbol…let’s give a “**THUMBS UP**” to all of our icons and how they guide us and remind us to live a life devoted to integrity, responsibility, and fellowship!!

I would like to congratulate our new Grand Master, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and welcome him to take his place in the history of this lodge and of the entire Brotherhood of Freemasons. It’s a privilege to witness the continuity inspired by this installation and let’s face it, do any of you here tonight know of a better reason to raise a glass and share a toast? I don’t know about you, but these installations tend to make me a little thirsty! (**Wait for the laugh**).

To all of the visitors that have graced us tonight with your presence, we are thrilled that you are here. We welcome you inside our doors and into our home and tonight our home is yours too. It is no secret that our organization tends to attract thoughts that privileged information is shared by way of our symbols and icons, and all I can say that I haven’t already said, is **LOL**!!! (**Means “laugh out loud.”)** (**Wait for the laugh**). I mean think about how symbols have **always** been shorthand to teach us valuable lessons. From cave painting and hieroglyphics to graffiti and the abbreviations used by today’s youth, symbols and logos teach us lessons at a glance. Our Masonic brothers that lived hundreds and maybe thousands of years ago used our symbols to guide them to live a meaningful life whether they were or were not literate. Our symbols are our very own ancient “emoticons,” and what is so ironic about the modernization of our culture is that everyone seems to be reverting back to a language that is comprised of universally understood symbols. As the world becomes smaller and smaller, all of us, Freemasons and friends alike, learn the significance of a language we can all understand as a unified culture on this planet. Once again-we’re ahead of our time!! (**Wait for the laugh**).

I have been inspired by a fellow mason, Wor. Bro. R. Raymond of Baden Powell Lodge 505 of UGL of QLD Australia (**I don’t know if you know this person-if so, then acknowledge him further**), who chose to express his thoughts in limerick form. He once wrote:

**There once was a Freemason called Mitchell**

**Who had trouble remembering his ritual**

**The Master said, Son,**

**The learning’s not done,**

**Until it becomes habitual!”** (**Wait for the laugh**)

It sounded so catchy that I thought I would try my hand at a little limerick as well, so here’s one for all of **YOU**:

**Freemasons are brothers to all**

**We welcome you to our Grand Lodge Hall**

**This banquet is sweet**

**That toast was a treat**

**Congrats as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (name the new grand master) picks up the ball!**

To \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (**Name the new Grand Master)** may your tenure be as inspiring, productive and full of integrity as you are. Thank you for being our new leader. And to all of you, **THANK YOU!!**