

A. D. Leon Gray Retiring After 27 Years at Oxford

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that he must depend upon all of them. Hercin abides my career as Superintendent of Oxford Orphanage.

It has been a long life but never a dull one. Years of days filled with growth and development in the heart of Masonry in North Carolina. A mystical union of many facets of life, abound together by unique spiritual ties. Herein are involved children of many ages who live or have lived "under the oaks", along with thousands of members of our large Masonic family; where abideth beauty beyond compare.

There is great trauma involved in laying down my working tools. I know that I have trod three giant steps that are allotted to me. I may wish to remain, because the job is not complete, but it cannot be so long as there is a child in need and a heart pure enough to meet the need. So now I stand aside to be absorbed in reflections: memories of beauty shared, tender as a budding flower, yet as glorious as the rising sun and as majestic as the setting of the same.

Born in Brighton, Alabama August 1, 1908, Leon Gray married Saralee Willis of Carteret County August 17, 1941. They have one daughter and two grand-daughters.

His early education was in Birmingham, Alabama and he received his A.B. degree from Birmingham - Southern College. He later received the M. Div. degree from Duke University Divinity School.

Gray joined the North Carolina Methodist Conference in 1941 and served pastorates in Jacksonville (1941-45) and Snow Hill (1945-46) before coming to Oxford in November, 1946.

During his tenure as Oxford Superintendent he has served as president of North Carolina Child Care Association, Southeastern Child Care Association, and Masonic Homes Executives Association of the United States.

Leon became a Master Mason December 27, 1938 in Brighton Lodge 595 (Brighton, Alabama), later demitting to Oxford Lodge 122 and becoming Master of this lodge in 1952. Grand Master Robert L. Pugh awarded him the Joseph Montfort Medal in 1955 and during 1956-57-58 he was Grand Chaplain of the Grand Lodge. He has also served numerous terms as Assistant Grand Chaplain.

An active York Rite Mason, Gray has served as High Priest of his Chapter, as Master of his Council, and as Commander of his Commandery, receiving distinguished awards in all three bodies. He has served as General Grand Chaplain of the General Grand Chapter and several terms as Grand Chaplain and Grand Prelate of the North Carolina Grand York Rite Bodies. In 1964-65 he was Grand Commander of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of North Carolina.

A member of the New Bern Scottish Rite Bodies, he served many years as assistant class lecturer and then class lecturer for those bodies. In 1955 the Supreme Council invested him with the rank and decoration of Knight Commander of the Court of Honour.

Gray became a member of Sudan Shrine Temple in 1944 and in 1947 was its first chaplain. Potentate Charles A. Harris appointed him to the Divan in 1963 and, having advanced through the chairs, in 1972 he was elected and installed Potentate of Sudan Temple.

He is a member of nine appendant orders,

DeMolay 50th Anniversary Conclave Held in Charlotte

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The Downtowner East was headquarters for this event, registration began there on Thursday. After lunch at Oasis Shrine Temple there was an eight-hour junket to Carowinds.

Registration continued on Friday and there was athletic competition before and after lunch, which was at Steele Creek Lodge 737. The evening meal was served at Mecklenburg County Shrine Club, on the outskirts of the city.

The Business session was held on Saturday morning at the Masonic Temple, followed by lunch at Oasis Temple. After lunch there was DeMolay Degree competition, Flower Talk competition, and Chevalier Investiture. The final banquet was at the Downtowner and the Sweethearts' Ball was held in Oasis Temple.

On Sunday delegates attended churches of their choice, said their farewells, and wended their many ways homeward.

Howard Pickett, of Cary, was elected State Master Councilor to succeed Tim Grooms of Gastonia. Howard, 19, is a sophomore at N. C. State, majoring in economics.

Raleigh's Craig Lewis, 18, was elected State Senior Councilor. Craig will be a freshman at N. C. State this fall, also majoring in economics.

David Southcomb, 17, of Grantsboro (member of New Bern Chapter), was elected State Junior Councilor. David will enter St. Andrews Presbyterian College this fall to study history and political science.

International Master Councilor Bill Heller of Hackensack, New Jersey was an honored guest of the Conclave. Bill, 20, is studying economics and pre-law at Rutgers University. He was elected to DeMolay's highest post during the International Congress held at St. Louis in May.

Elected to DeMolay's second highest post at that same Congress was North Carolina's State Master Councilor Tim Grooms. Tim is the new International Congress Secretary for the session to be held in Memphis next April.

holds honorary membership in twenty-six lodges, and is an honorary member of sixteen Masonic-related organizations.

As Orphanage Superintendent he has seen voluntary contributions reach all time highs to support an annual budget now approaching \$900,000.00 for the operation of a plant valued at more than \$4 million. More importantly, he has seen hundreds of bewildered children enter the Orphanage to experience the love, care and training here until, ultimately, they have gone back into the outer world to become useful and valuable citizens. Almost half of Oxford's graduates now go on to institutions of higher learning and still others pursue technical education or in other ways add to their training at Oxford.

The board of directors of Oxford Orphanage is preparing a resolution of thanks to Leon Gray and that will appear in a future issue of *The North Carolina Mason*.

Meanwhile Grand Master Nathaniel C. Dean, chairman of the Orphanage board, has expressed his regret concerning Gray's departure, stating: "The selection of his replacement will not be an easy task." The full text of the Grand Master's statement appears on page 4 of this issue.

Scottish Rite Fiesta

CHARLOTTE—On September 12 the Charlotte Scottish Rite Bodies will stage the Eleventh Annual Fiesta, an event which now attracts what is probably the largest gathering of Masons to assemble anywhere in North Carolina. Last September over 7,000 Masons and their ladies were in the Charlotte Coliseum for the ocaosoin and even more are expected this year.

The Charlotte Bodies stage the Fiesta as the annual event to which members may escort their ladies for an evening of total enjoyment at no cost. Also invited are those Masons (with ladies) who have petitioned to receive the Scottish Rite Degrees during the October Reunion, and Scottish Rite Masons who affiliate with the Charlotte Bodies.

Secretary Karl C. Miller has announced that this year's Program will include Ralph Smith, John Tanzy, Doug Mayes, Windell Cunningham, and Harris Potter. Professional entertainment for the affair consists of the Bavarian Festival Show Band and Texas Humorist Randy Brown.

So North Carolina DeMolay has distinguished itself internationally during the past few years; Dan Killian was international Master Councilor just a few years back. Sheri McGowan was DeMolay's first International Sweetheart just last year, and this year Tim is International Congress Secretary.

Another visitor at the Charlotte Conclave was South Carolina's incoming State Master Councilor, Jim Boland, of Charleston. Jim is 19, and is studying political science at Furman University.

Still another distinguished guest was New Hampshire's State Master Councilor, Ed Malone. Ed, 19 is a business administration major at the University of New Hampshire.

During the Saturday night banquet the Conclave was addressed by Deputy Grand Master William L. Mills, Jr., representing the Grand Lodge of North Carolina. Mills, a former Demolay, told the delegates he knew his DeMolay background was a significant factor in his rise in military rank during World War II.

State Legislator Joseph P. Huskins was presented the Honorary Legion of Honor by State Executive Officer John Verdery during the banquet. Huskins, a member of Statesville Lodge 27, publishes the *Statesville Record and Landmark*.

Lee Holland, member of Cary Chapter, received the "Lamp of Knowledge" Award. Lee is only the second recipient of this award, it having been won last year—when first instituted—by David Southcomb.

Don and Martha Blackmon, of Charlotte, were elected State Dad and State Mom for the coming year.

During purely recreational activities the chapter sweethearts followed the same schedule as did DeMolays, but special activities were provided for them during the hours that DeMolays were in business session or were engaged in the various competitions. The sweethearts presented a talent show and skits at the Shrine Club Friday night. Their big moment came at Saturday night's ball when Miss Ruth Harris of Statesville was named State Sweetheart for the ensuing year.

The next BIG DeMolay event will be the Grand Master's Class in Raleigh on January 12 and 13, but you can bet there will be a great variety of smaller activities in the interim.

NOTE: (When you have finished with this issue please give it to a DeMolay.)