

Donald Jamieson Gunn

Grand Master (1967 – 1969) of the Grand Lodge of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons of Canada in the Province of Ontario

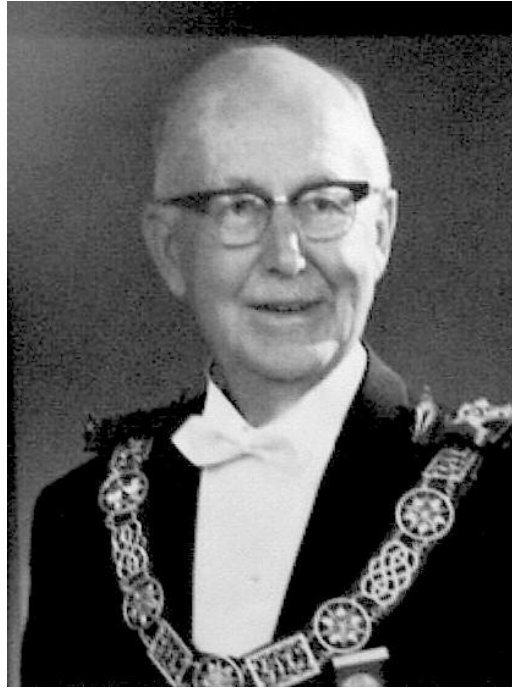


Photo from the Grand Lodge

(1896 – 1972)

Prepared by V.W. Bro. Marshall Kern.

Donald Jamieson Gunn was born in Bradford, Ontario, on May 13, 1896, the son of Donald Gunn, of Scottish ancestry and Selkirk settlers that went to Manitoba but then returned to settle in the counties of Grey, Bruce and Simcoe. His father was also a Mason and had been Worshipful Master of Manitoba Lodge No. 236, Cookstown. His grandfather, W. R. Jamieson had been a member of Simcoe Lodge No. 79, Bradford.

Donald Jamieson Gunn attended the local elementary and secondary schools and moved to Toronto with his widowed mother in his early teens, continuing his studies at Humber College.

Donald Jamieson Gunn was almost 22 when he was drafted under the Military Service Act of 1917 for the 69th Battery of the Canadian Expeditionary Forces. Although he passed the initial physical exam, a pre-existing hernia condition caused him to be found 'unfit for service' and he was discharged on August 12, 1918, after only a few months of training in Canada.



Following high school, he joined the Dominion Rubber Company, one of the country's largest rubber companies and remained for seventeen years. In 1935 he became the Secretary-Treasurer of Monarch Brass Co. Ltd., a wholesale plumbing and heating company, of which he became the President and General Manager. He retired from this position in 1969.

He was active in the Canadian Institute of Plumbing & Heating for manufacturers and wholesalers in the plumbing and heating industry. He was elected the national President for 1951 - 1952.

He was an ardent golfer and a member of the Islington Golf Club for many years, of which he was President for three years.

He married Jean Leask (1894 - 1983) on July 18, 1922, and they had two daughters. The family were members of Kingsway-Lambton United Church.

M.W. Bro. Donald Jamieson Gunn died on September 5, 1972, in Toronto. Over 200 brethren attended the Masonic Memorial service prior to the funeral. Leaders from the Grand Lodge, the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch, and Scottish Rite attended. M.W. Bro. Donald J. Gunn is buried in Park Lawn Cemetery, 2845 Bloor St West, Toronto. The monument marking his final resting place shows the Square & Compasses logo, but no inscription showing his rank in our Fraternity. His wife is interred beside him.

Masonic Career

Mr. Donald Jamieson Gunn was initiated into Temple Lodge No. 525, Toronto on April 25, 1922, and was passed on May 23, 1922, and raised on June 27, 1922. Thus, he became the third generation of his family to become a Mason. He was installed as Worshipful Master on December 27, 1932, and served for the 1933 term. On October 14, 1992, Temple Lodge No. 525, Toronto, amalgamated with Kilwinning Lodge No. 565, Toronto, and surrendered Warrant No. 525. The amalgamated Lodge is still operating under the name and number of Kilwinning Lodge No. 565 and meets at the Annette Street Masonic Temple.

He was a charter member of Kingsway Lodge No. 655, Etobicoke at its formation in 1934. He was elected as District Deputy Grand Master of Toronto District A in 1944. DDGM Gunn had twenty lodges under his care. During his visits he emphasized the importance of conferring degrees on candidates in an impressive manner "so that each new brother should receive the proper impression of the Craft in his early contacts with it." Services of thanksgiving after V-E Day were held with large attendance and impressive conduct.

He was appointed to the Board of General Purposes in 1952 and elected to the Board for the years 1954 through 1964, serving as chairman of the Committees on the



Condition of Freemasonry, Fraternal Dead and Benevolence. In 1965 he was elected as Deputy Grand Master.

M.W. Bro. Donald Jamieson Gunn was elected in 1967 to the office of Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of A.F. & A.M. of Canada in the Province of Ontario for a two-year term.

In Capitular Masonry he was exalted in Shekinah Chapter No. 138, Toronto.

He was a member and Past Most Wise Sovereign of Toronto Chapter of Rose Croix and a member of Moore Sovereign Consistory. He was elected as an Honorary Inspector General 33° in 1960.

He was a member of the Royal Order of Scotland.

By the time he completed his term as Grand Master, M.W. Bro. Donald Jamieson Gunn had received honorary memberships in St. Andrew's Lodge No. 16, Toronto, in Fidelity Lodge No. 575, Toronto, and in Dentonia Lodge No. 651, Toronto.

As Grand Master

During his term as our 53rd Grand Master, M.W. Bro. Donald Jamieson Gunn had the sad task of announcing that M.W. Bro. Joseph Alonzo Hearn, who was serving as Grand Treasurer, had suffered a severe stroke in early March of 1967. He only slightly recovered, and passed away on Christmas Day, December 25, 1968. M.W. Bro. Donald J. Gunn eulogized M.W. Bro. Hearn by sharing "He was a man of splendid intellect and ability, whose genial personality won for him a host of friends and admirers wherever he was known. These qualities, as well as his devotion to the Craft, made him an outstanding figure during his many years of service."

M.W. Bro. Donald J. Gunn reported that the Masonic Foundation of Ontario had given 59 bursaries to students at 12 universities in Ontario. "The Masonic Foundation of Ontario has already received recognition for its good works throughout the Province, and we can believe that in the future, as its invested capital increases, it will be an important factor in creating a widespread public impression of the laudable activities of the Craft."

After commenting on the rate of inflation in Canada, M.W. Bro. Gunn directed his attention to the Fraternity. He encouraged "In the financial climate in which we are now living, I would strongly urge both lodges and temple corporations to observe a cautious policy in financial matters during the present and prospective inflationary period."

He continued in this vein: "I would strongly recommend to all D.D.G.M.'s that they require a full report from their District Secretaries on the night of their official visits as

to the finances of a lodge, and where a lodge or group of lodges own a Masonic Hall or Temple, information as to their capital debt if any and such other financial data that seems pertinent.”

Grand Master Donald J. Gunn was the Chairman of the Grand Master’s and Grand Secretaries’ Conferences for 1968. At the Conference there was discussion about the number of demits, resignations, and suspensions for non-payment of dues. He shared this: “The problem of Suspensions for N.P.D. is a matter of great concern, not only to the Grand Masters of this Jurisdiction but to many others as well. ... the advisability of every Worshipful Master in this Jurisdiction taking a personal interest in the matter of outstanding dues. I would Strongly urge all Worshipful Masters to appoint one or more brethren to investigate each case thoroughly and report back to him before drastic action becomes necessary. I am sure that by this method our Suspensions for N.P.D. would be substantially reduced. I also strongly recommend that requests for demits from brethren still living in the jurisdiction of their lodge should be personally contacted by the same or a similar committee before the demit is granted.”

After receiving many requests and appeals, M.W. Bro. Donald J. Gunn addressed a concern that the prohibition on any alcohol on any Masonic property was preventing some Masonic halls being rented for weddings and other non-Masonic events. This was denying the Masonic halls a source of income. He issued a ruling to amend and ease the prohibition on alcohol use on lodge premises so that banquet and other rooms could be rented to non-Masonic organizations.

In each of his Addresses to the Grand Lodge Communication, M.W. Bro. Donald J. Gunn spoke of a Masonic way of life. He said: “We live in an age when older institutions are being questioned and challenged by the younger generation as perhaps never before in modern history. No human institution can afford to be complacent because of past achievements. Those of us who have been Masons for many years strongly believe that we have inherited a philosophy as valid for our time as we know it has been in previous decades and, indeed, centuries. It is my firm belief that our Masonic forefathers were truly inspired in giving to their descendants what we know as the Masonic way of life. All of us, who are trying to steadily reduce the rough edges of our personalities and endeavour to acquire some faint resemblance to what our Craft expects of us, fervently believe in its challenging teaching. It is no easy task to achieve the proper balance between the heart and the head, between our own opinions and convictions, and yet to treat those of our fellow men who differ from us with tolerance and respect.”

“It is my firm conviction, and also that of tens of thousands of our brethren, that the Masonic way of life is as valid for 1969 and beyond as it was several hundred years ago and that the teachings of our Craft were never more important than they are in the world of today and of tomorrow. The image of Masonry is presented to the world by



the lives and actions of all of us who are members of our Order and strive to live by its precepts. It is a constant challenge to each of us to endeavour to enhance that image that our great institution may not fail in the difficult years ahead. Finally my brethren – GIVE YOUR LOYAL SUPPORT AT ALL TIMES TO YOUR OWN LODGE. THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE.”

As Past Grand Master

In 1970 the Masons of Toronto District No. 1 furnished four rooms in the Toronto Hospital for Sick Children as recreation rooms. A cheque for \$5,000.00 was also presented to start the Donald J. Gunn Fund to add to or maintain these rooms. This was done in the name of M.W. Bro. D. J. Gunn in recognition of his contribution to Masonry in our jurisdiction.

Sources:

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