

DeMolays Salute Missouri Master Masons

Whether or not you believe Freemasonry has a direct line of evolution from the Knights Templar, it undoubtedly has a spiritual lineage - a tradition passed on through the hearts and minds of those who knew and understood the Truth and Light, a notion once thought to have died with the barbarous condemnation of Jacques DeMolay, the order's last Grand Master. For hundreds of years, the only evidence was the truth itself in a moment in time, sealed in the hearts of those who knew it, echoing across the historical landscape as a new world of information, liberty and human progress finally unveiled what was once thought to be surely lost.



Jacques DeMolay was faithful unto death to the trust reposed in him, and through years of brutal torture and persecution, the warrior-monk remained loyal to his

comrades, loyal to his God, and loyal to the Truth. The traditions and values the Knights Templar espoused were sacred and timeless. It is their legacy of Christ-mindedness and sacrifice that has rippled throughout time to create a world that enjoys freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of thought, and freedom of conscience. In the year 2007, a truth that was carried through the ages in the hearts of all Master Masons exploded back into history, when official documents and court proceedings were rediscovered deep in the Vatican archives, exonerating and effectively clearing Jacques DeMolay and the Knights Templar of all false claims and charges by the King and Church, forever tilting the historical narrative in favor of a Truth once lost, but never forgotten.

In the DeMolay ceremonies it is stated that without the freedom to worship God according to the dictates of our own consciences, our freedom would be a mockery. Religious and Spiritual freedom is the paramount liberty afforded to all humankind. It is the truth Jacques DeMolay carried with him to a burning stake, and it is what we, not only as DeMolays and Master Masons, but as human beings, are eternally grateful for, when we remember his legacy and sacrifice. He didn't just die for his friends; he died so that his friends could carry on a

message in danger of being perpetually stamped out of existence, which would have left behind a cold, stark world of complete and total oppression and tyranny. These were enlightened men who knew that the secret to defeating such evil subjugating powers was universal freedom of thought and liberty of consciousness - an unalienable birthright of all people, and the blazing torch of truth carried by the Master Masons who eventually founded our great country. They were men who understood that where there is the spirit of the Lord, there is Freedom.

Missouri DeMolay would like to thank the Master Masons of this jurisdiction for carrying on a tradition so profoundly steeped in historical and philosophical value. Your involvement in the craft is one that will never be given enough credit, and your tenacity to uphold its great and eternal wisdom in the face of adversity and ignorance is nothing short of courageous and worthy of being looked up to by younger generations. And that's what it's really all about: Our youth.



We are the inheritors of decades, centuries, millennia of successfully lived lives; and now the challenge falls to us, the living, that the yet to be born have a place to put their feet and a sky to walk under. It's not about me. It's not about you. It's not even about us. It's about legacy, and what we choose to leave behind for future generations.

Missouri DeMolay is blessed to have such devoted Master Masons who not only sponsor our Chapters in the Lodges, but actively participate as advisors and mentors to the youth. The time, energy and financial resources afforded to the youth make



positive differences in the lives of the members of Missouri DeMolay every day.



There is a DeMolay Chapter open somewhere in Missouri every day of the week and in it young men are learning universal Masonic ideals, bettering themselves, becoming stronger and more confident leaders, and influencing our society one family at a time. The testimonies we receive at a state level from families involved with Missouri DeMolay are ripe with the potential to shake the world, and through self-exploration, empowerment and hope, our members are encouraged to carve out their own destinies while living in God's eternal grace and love. It is a way of life that should be shared with more.



Missouri DeMolay's annual summer Leadership Training Camp, The University of DeMolay, is a week-long conference where young men from all over Missouri and surrounding states come together in brotherhood, inspiration and personal development. Divided into separate Chapters, the young men choose their leaders, take charge of their own activities, and are given the responsibility to succeed by their own merits and strengths.

Through teamwork, critical thinking, exercising personal power, discipline and courage, they are given the opportunity to truly see what they are each made of, all while in the presence of those great principles and virtues of DeMolay which reflect the greater Masonic

light. The University of DeMolay is a safe haven for our members of many different backgrounds to come together united around the common truth that we are all one.



The summer youth camp not only offers our members a rigorously stacked schedule of activities, leadership training seminars, and unique opportunities to excel, but also gives them a place for self-reflection, personal spiritual growth, and discovering who they are, in a safe and welcoming environment with their friends and brothers. It's a place where our members learn by doing, by taking action, by jumping in and making decisions for themselves, rather than playing follow the leader. It's a place where the youth leave inspired to pave their own way and ready to chase their own dreams with their own God-given talents and hopes; and it's a place where they are able to sharpen their public speaking skills, use reason and logic in open-minded discourse, and prepare for adulthood in a fun yet sanctimonious way.



Aside from all this, however, it is a place where they learn Masonic history, where they study Jacques DeMolay and the Knights Templars, so that they may carry a tradition worth carrying in their hearts.

The University of DeMolay is a cherished legacy, and would not be possible without the love and support of our sponsoring body, Missouri Freemasonry. What has

made a real difference in the hearts and minds of our members is knowing that each and every Master Mason in Missouri supports them and their personal development into young-adulthood as a DeMolay.



Through the annual contribution implemented in your dues, even if you are not actively involved as a Missouri DeMolay advisor or sponsor, the message sent to the young men is one of overwhelming and all-encompassing support; and the added up financial benefit to the youth programs is insurmountable and deeply appreciated by all of our young men.



Parker Hastings, Country Music prodigy and National Thumbpicker's Hall of Fame inductee, joined Missouri DeMolay at the 2016 University of DeMolay (www.parkerhastingsguitar.com)



It is such an honor to have our own Worshipful Master Richard L. Smith, who started his Masonic career as a DeMolay and now supports the youth in all its endeavors, as a great friend and advocate of Missouri DeMolay. His is surely a legacy which will go down in the Book of Life as one of generosity, courage and kindness.

For all your love and support, the DeMolay legacy will continue in the hearts of many around the world, and will have positive influences in the lives of children, rippling throughout time unseen, so that when they take the mantle of leadership in the world, what was once lost shall be inexorably found and carried on into the future. Pray we shall always remember the great stories of liberation, and never be afraid to cling to the same hope that once inspired a man and his friends to go through hell in order for future generations to enjoy freedom. It is the greatest story never told, and it is worth hearing, even if it's just a faint echo in our time.

Respectfully Submitted,
Ryan M. Cockerham, 32°
Past State Master Councilor
Missouri DeMolay

