

A.E.A.O.N.M.S.

What Is A Shriner?

He is many things to many people. To the general public, who sees him only in his lighter moments of fun, he is a laughing prankster who seems to be always on a merry holiday.

To the burned, crippled and sick children in the hospitals across this nation and overseas and to those students in colleges, universities, and other institutions of higher learning, he is the man in the funny hat who has extended a helping hand in time of trouble so that they may be where they are. To the parents of these children, he is hope in pain, love in suffering, and a helper in time of financial need.

To the healthy children who sit on the side of the road as he parades by, he is a clown, a marcher and a happy noise maker who likes to make them happy and smile.

To his fellow Prince Hall Mason, he is one of the Prince Hall Masonic Lodge members who has advanced to a higher degree in the Scottish Rite or York Rite bodies and then added participation in a Prince Hall Shrine Temple which, among other things is dedicated to *fun, fellowship, and philanthropy*.

To his family, he is husband, father and provider, who believes that it is his duty to do what he can as an individual to make the world a better and happier place for all.

To himself, the Prince Hall Shriner is simply that—a Prince Hall Shriner—which is many things indeed.

The Imperial Potentate

The Imperial Potentate of the Ancient Egyptian Arabic Order Nobles of Mystic Shrine (Prince Hall Affiliation) is the Honorable Earl H. Gray of Richmond, Virginia. And, true to the commitment of the Shriners, Dr. Gray not only has been among the strong supporters...but also—because of his able and dedicated leadership, was chosen unanimously to be one of the two national co-chairpersons of the AOIP illiteracy-eradication coalition of more than 90 national Black-led organizations. He has been very active in fraternal life for many years. He has served as the Imperial Director of Regions, A.E.A.O.N.M.S.; Illustrious Potentate of Mocha Temple #7; Master, Capital City Lodge #107, F&A.M. (P.H.A.);

High Priest, Richmond Chapter #7, Royal Arch Masons (P.H.A.); Imminent Commander, Mount Olivet Commandery #2, Knight Templar (P.H.A.); Commander-in-Chief, Richmond Consistory #22, A.A.S.R. (P.H.A.) to name only a few.

He is currently Chairman of the Budget/Internal Audit Committee of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge Jurisdiction of Virginia (P.H.A.), member of the Board of Directors of the Richmond Gold Bowl Sponsors, member of the Phylaxis Society and a member of the Military Retirees Club of Richmond.

Mr. Gray is also a life member of the NAACP and still is a co-chair of the National Board of Directors of the Assault On Illiteracy Program (AOIP).

He has devoted significant periods of his life to teaching, community involvement and working with the disadvantaged. His personal interests are swimming, boating, horseback riding, golfing and reading.

The Imperial Divan

The elected officers of the Imperial Council are known collectively as the Imperial Divan. Serving with the Imperial Potentate are David L. Holliman, Deputy Imperial Potentate; Roy M. Moore, Imperial Chief Rabban; Arthur T. Shack, Imperial Assistant Rabban; William T. Pratt, Imperial High Priest and Prophet; Charles H. Harris, Imperial Treasurer; Marion Cheatham, Imperial Recorder; Ivory M. Buck Jr., Imperial Oriental Guide; James E. Poe, Imperial 1st Ceremonial Master; Edward B. Damell, Imperial 2nd Ceremonial Master; William F. Crocket, Imperial Captain of the Guard; Ralph Slaughter, Imperial Outer Guard; LeRoy Nichols, Imperial Auditor; Wilbert West, Imperial Auditor; and Thomas G. Waldon Jr., Imperial Auditor.

Distinguished Roll Call

Some of America's most outstanding and influential Black leaders are Prince Hall Masons and Prince Hall Shriners. *EBONY* magazine recently listed the "100 Most Influential Blacks in America." A fourth of those named are Prince Hall Shriners.

Heading the list is Earl H. Gray, Imperial Potentate, Ancient Egyptian Arabic Order Nobles of Mystic Shrine,

Richmond, Virginia. The list continues with Andrew J. Young, Mayor, Atlanta, Georgia; Marion Barry, Mayor, Washington, D.C.; Thomas J. Bradley, Mayor, Los Angeles, California; Dr. I.H. Clayborn, Sovereign Grand Commander, United Supreme Council, Southern Jurisdiction, Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, Prince Hall Affiliation; Booker T. Alexander, Sovereign Grand Commander, United Supreme Council, Northern Jurisdiction, A.A.S.R., P.H.A.; Dr. Benjamin L. Hooks, Executive Director, NAACP; Rev. Theodore J. Jemison, President, National Baptist Convention, USA; John H. Johnson, President, Johnson Publishing Company; Thurgood Marshall, Associate Justice, U.S. Supreme Court; Coleman A. Young, Mayor, Detroit, Michigan; Kenneth A. Gibson, former Mayor, Newark, New Jersey; Charles B. Rangel, U.S. Congressman (New York); Percy E. Sutton, Chairman, Inner City Broadcasting Corp.; Louis Stokes, U.S. Congressman (Ohio); Mark Stepp, Vice President, United Auto Workers, Chrysler Division; William L. Hart, Chief of Police, Detroit, Michigan; and the late Harold Washington, Mayor, Chicago, Illinois.

Other Prince Hall Masons and Prince Hall Shriners who have received national acclaim for their outstanding performance of duty and contributions to the fraternal order over the past years include the late Count Basie; Johnny Ford, Mayor, Tuskegee, Alabama; former Mayor Charles H. Harris, Danville, Virginia; Mayor Henry Marsh III, Richmond, Virginia; Lionel Hampton; Al Green; Whitman Mayo; Richard Pryor; Walter E. Fauntroy, U.S. Congressman (D.C.); John H. Sengstacke, Publisher; William "Bill" Richardson (VP of Johnny Walker & Hennessy Brands); Dr. Aaron O. Wells; Charles C. Teamer; L. Douglass Wilder, Lt. Governor of Virginia; George Crockett Jr.; Clark Terry; Jerry Butler; Joe Williams; Rear Admiral Benjamin T. Hacker, U.S. Navy, and a host of others.

Charity—The Main Concern

In recent years, Prince Hall Shriners have presented financial aid grants, education scholarships, and Prince Hall Shrine Health and Medical Research Foundation awards in the millions to individuals, organizations, and units throughout the United States and overseas.

The Imperial Potentate made the donations in person to many civic and fraternal groups, colleges, hospitals, and

universities in order to assist in upgrading the education of students already in schools, assist students about to enter institutions of higher learning for the first time, and to aid in financing special programs and projects on medical research and foundations, and to improve on and/or eliminate many of the dreaded diseases commonly known that affect all people.

Many of the awards were made with a stipulation that funds received would be earmarked to purchase much needed items of equipment and supplies, and to enhance ongoing programs of medical research at colleges, universities, and foundations.

"The need of funding sources seeking higher education and organizations needing our money...is more acute now than at any other time in the history of our fraternal order," the Imperial Potentate said.

AOIP Closest to Hearts

Both Imperial Potentate Earl Gray and his heir apparent—David L. Holliman—feel that closest to their hearts would have to be the AOIP approach of building our communities through togetherness, into such secure, such value-laden, such productive and such hope-filled entities that all therein would be motivated to want to learn.

According to David L. Holliman, "this thrust—even though not called AOIP—has been our focus for many years. Since it addresses the 'uplifting' needs of 'the least of these' among us, AOIP surely would have to be closest to our hearts...and my tenure after that of Dr. Gray surely will continue that legacy of leadership along AOIP lines."

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(To Be Continued)