LAWRENCE D. TONINI 1945-2024
Junior Grand Warden 1984

When he was elected Junior Grand Warden of the Grand Lodge in 1984, an article in the TROWEL, introducing R. W. Brother Tonini to the brethren, called him "the most west-to-east-traveled member of the Grand Lodge official family." It was a very accurate statement: as a lifelong resident of West Stockbridge, Brother Tonini could scarcely be further away from the center of Massachusetts Masonic activities, our Grand Lodge in Boston. But during an active year under the leadership of Grand Master David Richardson, he was the very definition of a traveling man, attending all of the many special communications of the Grand Lodge held that year, as close as Springfield and as far away as Newton. He was an admirable representative of the western part of our jurisdiction.

Brother Larry Tonini's life, both in and beyond Masonry, was one of service. He was a member of the West Stockbridge Volunteer Fire Department, and was Fire Chief for the last twenty of those years. His work in improving infrastructure and developing training for the firefighters had significant effect on the town's insurance rates. He served three 3-year terms on the town's board of selectmen; in all of his public endeavors, he was a level-headed counselor, always seeking to make a difference, a truly Masonic virtue.

Rt. Wor. Brother Tonini began his journey in Masonry in Wisdom Lodge in West Stockbridge in 1970, serving two years in the East in 1977 and 1978. His excellent work was rewarded by an appointment as District Deputy Grand Master of the Pittsfield 16th Masonic District in 1980 and 1981, by appointment of M. W. Arthur Melanson and M. W. J. Philip Berquist, followed by his elevation as Junior Grand Warden in 1984. At the time of his passing, Brother Tonini was the most senior past Junior Grand Warden of our Grand Lodge. He was a regular attendee at the Grand Lodge quarterly communications, despite the distance from his home, and always took the time to visit the Samuel Crocker Lawrence Library.

He was a member of Mount Holyoke Chapter Royal Arch Masons, Holyoke Council Royal and Select Master Masons, and Northampton Commandery No. 30. He also belonged to Saint Matthew's Conclave, Red Cross of Constantine, South Hadley.

In 2023, Rt. Wor. Brother Christopher Tonini, Bro. Larry's son, was named as a candidate for Junior Grand Warden; during the 'non-campaign', son and father traveled together throughout the jurisdiction in order to get to know the brethren. Bro. Chris described that his father was well received wherever they went; when he was elected as Junior Grand Warden for 2024, forty years after 1984, his father could not be more proud. We have very few such legacies in our Grand Lodge, and this is a notable one – two generations in the same office.

Many of us are fathers, and we hope for the best for our children – and we seek to impart to them our values and our principles. We want our sons, and indeed our daughters as well, to take these things to heart. It sets a standard, sometimes a high bar, but it is because we hold those values and principles so dear – and we are confident that they will meet that bar, and be the men and women we know they can be. It can be stated with great confidence that Rt. Wor. Chris will live up to the expectations that were set by our dear Brother Rt. Wor. Larry.