

2016 J. Ned Culler Award

Searching for Light in Masonry is very personal quest to become more knowledgeable about the Craft, our world, and our inner self. The J. Ned Culler Award is bestowed upon a Brother who has attained a high degree of excellence in our ritual, Masonic Education, service to his Lodge, and has dedicated his Masonic life to the betterment of the Lodge and brother Masons through education, demonstrated mentoring, and furthering of the lofty goals of our Ancient Craft.

In every generation there appear among us those who are seen as outstanding men...those who shape and alter the world around us in a highly positive way. We at Tuckahoe Lodge believe J. Ned Culler was one of those men. He helped and nurtured Masons who firmly believe in the value of Masonic Education and the effect that education has on leadership. Brother Ned's life was centered on the precepts that are so eloquently put forth in our Masonic ritual.

Rt. Wor. James Ned Culler lived out this creed with the utmost humility and distinction. He brought to light the essence of Freemasonry. He was generous in many ways...with his time, his resources, and something we all probably miss the most, his spirit. Despite all of this, Ned was indeed a very humble person. His very presence was such a strong part of this Lodge. He was a mentor, and without question, he was a true friend. Whether you knew Ned casually or very well, you knew that he was a good, decent man, someone who exemplified what it meant to be a Mason, and like all of us who call ourselves Masons, he was a good man trying to become a better man.

Right Worshipful James Ned Culler, a dedicated 40 year member of Tuckahoe Lodge, passed away on May 2, 2010 after a brief illness. Because of all that Ned meant to us, individually and as a band of brothers, the officers and members of Tuckahoe Lodge created this award of recognition to honor Ned's legacy.

This year we bestow this high honor on a very deserving Mason who through his hard work for Craft Masonry, his friendship and brotherly love, best exemplified all that Ned Culler stood for. In following Ned's example, the award is presented not only to a brother who sought Light in Masonry, but to one who focused his light along the path for those who followed, helping them to be better Masons, helping the Craft and Tuckahoe Lodge to be stronger.

We are honored and proud to present the J. Ned Culler Award to a member of Tuckahoe Lodge who has served as a fine example of 'a just and upright Mason' to each of us. Throughout his life, our beloved Brother,

Rt. Wor. William Young Roper, III,

strove to embody those attributes in his family life, his community and Masonic activities, while being strictly loyal to his own Christian principles.

Bro. Bill received all of his degrees...and recited all of the catechisms...in Tuckahoe Lodge, during the month of November of 1969. He was raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason on November 2 of that year. He was Worshipful Master of our Lodge in 1975, and again in 2014, served as DDGM for district 15-C in 1983. He also served as Master of South Hill Lodge No. 297 in 2006 during the time when he and his family were living in Southern Virginia. Bro. Bill was a mentor and coach to numerous brethren, and taught the catechisms of the three degrees to countless numbers of candidates over the last 47 years.

Bro. Bill went above and beyond the call of duty as a mentor. He laid out a plan for those he was teaching, stuck with that plan, praised them and when necessary admonished them, all the while exceeding the expectations that define what a real Mason should be. Bill Roper entered the Celestial Lodge on August 25th, 2016, and at the time of his passing was our Lodge Instructor of Work, directing our ritual classes and assisting our Sr. Warden to prepare for the examination to receive his Warden's Certificate of Proficiency.

He joined the Scottish Rite Valley of Richmond in 1978 and served in many capacities over the years. Bill received the rank and decoration of KCCH in 1989, served as Venerable Master in 1992, and was coroneted a 33rd degree Inspector General Honorary in 1993. He also served the ACCA Shrine as a member of their ceremonial cast.

In addition to the long list of Masonic activities, he was married to Virginia for 46 years. They met in 1968 while both were working at the Sears store on Broad Street near VCU. Bill was attending Virginia Tech, and she was a student at VCU. Bill would tell people 'I got her right out of the Sears Catalog - satisfaction guaranteed or your money back'. They were married in 1970, and had one daughter, Jennifer, who is married to John O'Keeffe. They were members of Westhampton Baptist Church. Many years ago Wor. Al Wright invited them to visit the church; they joined, and kept their membership there even when they lived in South Hill.

Virginia recently shared this about Bill, and his devotion to the Lodge: 'One thing that comes to mind regarding Tuckahoe Lodge is that Bill so enjoyed coming back and jumping in again. When he told me that the lodge really needed some help and that he was considering being Master again, I told him it was ok with me. First time he was Master was the year Jen was born, it was truly a long haul for me. He also loved teaching. The night of his visitation and Memorial Service, several of the newer members told me how much he meant to them, and thanked me for sharing him'.

An outstanding characteristic of Bro. Bill was the caring manner and friendliness that he extended to those he met in his community, church, and Masonic activities. His Masonic legacy will be remembered as one we should all strive to emulate. We are indeed proud and honored to add the name of Rt. Wor. William Young Roper, III to the list those who have received Tuckahoe's coveted J. Ned Culler Award for Masonic Excellence.



Rt. Wor. William Young Roper, III - recipient of the 2016 J. Ned Culler Award for Masonic Excellence.