

Brother Cundiff and the Spirit of Christmas

Ray Soltis

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Editor's Note: Worshipful Olin B. Cundiff passed to the celestial Lodge above in 2007. During the funeral service, Brother Cundiff's son gave a stirring eulogy of his father. Submitted by Wor. Allen P. Cutchin, Sr., Lodge Educational Officer, Churchland No. 276.

His father approached him late one Christmas Eve and asked if he would be hurt or disappointed if Santa arrived a day late this year. Young Cundiff stated that he was puzzled by his father's question but replied that it would be OK.

Brother Cundiff soon disappeared into the night, not to return for several hours. Sure enough, on Christmas day, it was evident from the lack of presents that Santa did not stop at the Cundiff house. However, true to his father's word, Santa came the following night and left a bountiful supply of toys and gifts for his enjoyment.

Later in life, when he asked his father why Santa was a day late, Brother Cundiff explained that the neighbor's son, who lived behind them, would not receive anything from Santa that year. It appeared that the boy's father had a greater fondness for alcohol than for the welfare of his family. The neighbor's physical abuse of his wife had landed him in jail. He had not worked in some time, and the family's lack of funds prevented any hope of Christmas.

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Without hesitation, Brother Cundiff disappeared into the night to purchase food. He then promptly delivered the food, along with the toys that were intended for his son, to the neighbor and her son.

This act of kindness displayed by Worshipful Cundiff will most likely not be forgotten by the destitute neighbor; chances are, she did not know that he was a Mason. As Masons, we are taught to go about our relief of another human being quietly and without expecting praises or accolades; all people have a claim upon our kind offerings. Neither I, nor any other Brother, ever heard Brother Cundiff mention this episode of his act of kindness to his back neighbor. It was not in his character to boast.

In keeping with the season's spirit, let us remember Brother Cundiff's kindness as an example of how we, as Masons, should take our obligations to our fellow creatures seriously. By his benevolence, we are reminded of the teaching of faith, hope, and charity, as illustrated in the Entered Apprentice Degree, that the most important of these is charity, as it extends beyond the grave throughout the boundless realms of eternity.