

Rainbow Gets Girls Ready for Life

Ray Soltis

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Rainbow Gets Girls Ready for Life . . . Are YOU Ready to Give Them Their Colors?

By Kaitlyn Reed, Grand Worthy Advisor of Virginia for 2021-2022

During 1917 to 1918, at McAlester, Oklahoma's Scottish Rite Temple, a Master Mason realized there was a need for something more. His name is Reverend W. Mark Sexson.

During World War I, the Temple gave permission to the Red Cross women to use the lobby and dining room for various activities. This, in turn, led to many of the daughters of lady volunteers to be in attendance, and, in his own words, Brother Sexson noted "It was my good fortune to know many of them". After the war, he continued to see many of them, leading him to the idea of taking the youth of our country and forming them into Assemblies, with the ideas of peace and beauty as their goal. From this simple beginning, the International Order of the Rainbow for Girls began to form. Working with the Grand Chapter of the Eastern Star of Oklahoma and the Grand Lodge of Oklahoma, and having the DeMolay come under his close study and

observations, he became more and more conscious of the fact that an Order for Girls setting forth some of the truths of Freemasonry would be an asset to our nation. On April 6, 1922, that realization of facts became a reality as the Rainbow degrees were exemplified for the first time for a class of young ladies, daughters of Master Masons and their friends.

How many times have you seen a young girl go in and out of your Lodge or institution? How many times have you seen this girl be so happy to talk and laugh with your members? Now, pause for a moment, and reflect. How many times have you tried to bring this young girl into an organization that you, as a Master Mason, hold close to your heart? It does not matter whether there was a Masonic youth group close by or far away. What matters is, she gained, even in some small way, some of the truths of Freemasonry that Brother Sexson recognized over 100 years ago.

The International Order of the Rainbow for Girls is a girl lead organization that strives to get our girls ready for life, just as Freemasonry strives to make good men better. Now, what do we mean by the phrase, "Get girls ready for life"? We mean to give them the confidence to excel in whatever they dream of. We teach them how to be leaders of their respective assemblies, giving them the proper guidance for working with each other and being role models for all others to emulate. We teach them how to give back to their communities and local charities in the hopes that they will help to make our world a better place. We teach these girls to reach for their goals and

aspirations, and make them realize that they can do anything they set their minds to.

Our lessons are based on the seven colors of the Rainbow through Love, Religion, Nature, Immortality, Fidelity, Patriotism, and Service, as well as God's Promise to the world he would never again destroy the world by flood. Many of our teachings you will find similar to that of Freemasonry, which Reverend Sexson based the Rainbow ritual work upon. This ritual work includes a special Lambskin Apron Lecture that our Masonic Dads present to the new initiates on her initiation day. The Lambskin Lecture includes all the symbolic points that tie our organizations together and emphasizes to the girls just how important Freemasonry's teachings are with our own Order. These include the ever presence of a Supreme Being, the four greater personal virtues that all Masons strive for (temperance, fortitude, prudence, and justice) and the seven liberal arts of sciences (grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy), along with the significance of the obligation we take before God.

On the boards of each assembly, we are required to have at least two Master Masons. We keep our Masonic Dads very involved in our Rainbow Order because of the special ritualistic and foundational tie we have to the Masonic Order.

When my mother was a Rainbow Girl, she was an active member of Norfolk Assembly No. 8, and the second Grand Worthy Advisor (state girl leader) of the newly formed and independent Virginia jurisdiction (formed in 1993). When her time ended as an active girl, the assembly had gone dark due to a loss of membership. Flash forward to 2014, when I became a Rainbow girl, and first experienced the ritual of initiation and the Lambskin Lecture. This experience set the foundation for me, a shy young girl, to aspire to pursue my own dreams. In 2015, I became a charter member with 12 other girls of the newly formed Norfolk Assembly No. 15, and was welcomed with open arms by the Masons of South Norfolk Lodge No. 339 as we brought Rainbow back to the South Hampton Roads region. I can't tell you how much support our South Norfolk Masons have given to us over the years, but I can say, they, in their own way, have experienced the initial vision of Reverend and Brother Sexson. They have attended our meetings, attended our events, allowed us to use their lodge room, and have been the first ones to congratulate our girls in all of our local and state wide accomplishments. They were there to support me when I became the Grand Worthy Advisor of Virginia for 2021-2022, and they supported me when selected to be the Acting Supreme Worthy Advisor of the entire International Order of the Rainbow for Girls during their 100th Centennial Anniversary convention in Oklahoma.

If you really want to know what established the foundation of every Rainbow girl you meet, it was a Freemason. It was that way in 1922 and it is the same

today. So, look back at that young girl in your lodge, and ask yourself, what, as a Freemason, are you going to do for her?

This article includes information and references found in "The International Order of the Rainbow for Girls 100 Years" Copyright 2022.