

# Brother Joshua Berry

Initiated: January 21, 2008  
Passed: March 17, 2008  
Raised: May 19, 2008

6500 Fitzgerald Street  
Fort Worth, TX 76179



Tommy Guest  
Grand Lodge of Texas, AF&AM  
PO Box 446  
Waco, TX 76703

Subject: Removal of membership from the Grand Lodge of Texas, AF&AM

Dear Sir,

At this present time I would like to request my membership/affiliation be withdrawn from the Grand Lodge of Texas, AF&AM due to the current direction the Grand Lodge organization and officers have chosen to lead this once beloved organization.

During my few years I have personally seen ineffectivity at the leadership level of this organization. When I choose to ask questions at Grand Lodge supported events, such as Secretary School or MWSA events, I am shunned as an opponent of Masonry or made to feel like a "trouble maker". The disrespect that I have been made to feel is not necessary and not tolerated.

I had come into this organization fired up and looking forward to joining the organization that my grandfather sat, the night that he died, and expressed to me how great it was. I personally made a commitment to make the most of my journey for his memory. I learned work in all the degrees and even conferred an EA degree at one time. I traveled to many Lodges around the State but I soon realized that there was a dark side to our fraternity. Racism hit our Lodge and we were isolated by Grand Lodge and on several occasions were told that we needed "to figure it out on our own" and when we did we were ridiculed or "reprimanded" by Grand Lodge. Why not the Grand Lodge of Texas put a rebel flag on the cover of the Texas Mason Magazine that month. From that point on I saw a side of the Grand Lodge of Texas that many people don't see. The thing that struck me the greatest was the ignorance of its own procedures. I have taken the time to learn the law to the point I am the point of contact by many elders on law and procedures but I cannot continue to support an organization that chooses to follow their own system when it benefits them. I have personally, time and time again, been told incorrect information by the Grand Secretaries office when I was Lodge Secretary, many times coming from the Grand Secretary himself. It does not stop with the Grand Secretary but DDGMs have given incorrect information in open Lodge on many occasions. It is embarrassing that an organization that pretends to pride themselves of "great" men cannot have educated and professional people in their positions so they may represent the organization as they think it needs to be represented. It is your system and the people that you have chosen to enforce the system don't know what is even written in the law book. I



have been reprimanded for having a Motorcycle Club sponsor a car show because of the connotation and image they may give us because they are thought of as “partiers and drinkers.” This reprimand coming from the same Grand Lodge that is selling SHOT GLASSES in the current Texas Magazine. The funny thing is I remember growing up and my mom saying that, “Masons are a bunch of drunks.”

My family is very rich in this organization and by leaving I have spoken to many friends and family and much to my surprise the response that I have received has been overwhelming, “I don’t blame you.” This is coming from not just Master Masons but a current District Instructor, a Past DDGM, and a past Grand Lodge Officer. This is the status of YOUR organization. It is flawed, heavily. Yet year after year you appoint and elect people to offices and positions that they don’t have any experience or knowledge at that position. Committees are formed just so people can be introduced and golden trowels are presented because it is their “turn” to receive it. Worshipful Masters and Wardens are elected not because they are the most prepared but because they are next in line. Lodges suffer because of lack of leadership and the answer is not by flexing Grand Lodge Muscle like I have seen DDGM and DDGM do but by guidance. This type of guidance that does not exist at the Grand Lodge level. You have to swallow ego to give this type of guidance. It is not something that will happen in one year but year after year and many traditions will have to fall. Traditions that some may get their feelings hurt but as Masons we are taught to help others when our lives may be on the line.

During my time of meditation on this I thought, “If I do this I will no longer be a Mason,” but I soon realized that it is truly the internal not the external qualification that makes the man a Mason. It is not the color of his skin or the holy book he reads that makes the man a Mason. It is not the dues card holds or the color of velvet around his neck that makes the man a Mason. I will forever be a Master Mason at heart. I will continue to live my life in the uprightness of character and I will continue to pray for those too scared to speak their voice, because it is them the silent majority within the Grand Lodge of Texas, AF&AM that has to act as one and change a tradition of ineffectiveness. It has too or this system will suffer.

It pains me to right the next sentence but I have come to the conclusion that I must, due to the many reasons above and others not listed. I, Joshua W Berry, of my own free will and accord chose to remove my membership with the Grand Lodge of Texas, AF&AM effective immediately.

Fraternally,  
(Signature on File)

Joshua W Berry