

MOST WORSHIPFUL PRINCE HALL GRAND LODGE
FREE & ACCEPTED MASONS OF PENNSYLVANIA

ACCEPTANCE ADDRESS
& PROCLAMATION NO. 1

OF THE HONORABLE

ERIC WILLIAMS NO. 23

MOST WORSHIPFUL GRAND MASTER

OCTOBER 13, 2026



LEGACY OF JOHN S. WATSON

NO. 23



Robert N. Davis No. 23
MWGM 1983 - 1985



Earl C. Abrams No. 23
MWGM 2004 - 2006



Eric Williams No. 23
MWGM 2026

ACCEPTANCE ADDRESS

ERIC WILLIAMS, NO. 23
108TH MOST WORSHIPFUL GRAND MASTER
MOST WORSHIPFUL PRINCE HALL GRAND LODGE OF PENNSYLVANIA

“so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.”

Romans 12-5

First giving honor to GOD.

To the Right Worshipful Deputy Grand Master, Robert G. Bonds, Jr., No. 47
Right Worshipful Senior Grand Warden, Colin L. Mitchell, No. 39
Right Worshipful Junior Grand Warden
Past Most Worshipful Grand Masters
Right Worshipful Elected Grand Lodge Officers, Past and Present
Worshipful Appointed Grand Lodge Officers
Worshipful Masters, Senior and Junior Wardens, Past Masters and my Brethren all;

Greetings,

When I petitioned John S. Watson Lodge No. 23 in 2003, I had no idea what I was getting into. However, the moment I was raised on the third degree, to a Master Mason, something changed within my life. I began to look at the world differently. My relationships with God and my family grew stronger. My perception of giving back through charity and my personal time changed. But most importantly, the thing I love about Masonry is the brotherhood. I have befriended brothers of all ages, professions and from all walks of life. Each of you have helped shape me to the man I am today. All of you have contributed to my success.

I want to thank my dear Brother, Past Master Eric Fisher No. 23, for introducing me to this ancient and honorable order. We have been very close friends for over 40 years and, although we are thousands of miles apart, you are always near and dear to my heart. We are FAMILY. Words cannot express the gratitude I have for you bringing me in. To all my brothers of John S. Watson No. 23, I really do appreciate the love and support you have given me since I joined. I often think back to the many conversations and interactions I have had with each of you.

To the lovely Mrs. Monica Williams, my high-school sweetheart, who accepted my hand in marriage when I was Worshipful Master, I love you with all of my heart. Moni had no idea what she was signing up for and neither did I. When I came out the chair in

2010, I thought I was done. I didn't realize that God had a plan for me and my journey had just begun.

Thank you to all of my brothers of the craft. The friendships forged and the relationships that fell apart are a unique, yet integral part of the Masonic culture. It's important that we continue to push and challenge each other to do better. I accept that whole-heartedly. This is how we survived for over 250 years. This is how we will survive the next 250 years. Always remember, we can agree to disagree.

Prince Hall Masonry was founded during a time when our nation was in turmoil and African Americans were at a huge disadvantage. It was during this time people of color weren't allowed to meet and were barred from other existing Lodges. So, what did we do? We started our own Lodge, African Lodge No. 459. Many would say this was the beginning of civil rights, equal opportunity, education and community engagement. Now, fast forward to October 2026, this present time in our history. Today, we are welcomed with open arms to sit in Right Worshipful Lodges and attend their social functions with mutual recognition. However, now we refuse to recognize each other. Recognition (or lack thereof) was the very reason we were formed. I'm not one to debate who should or who shouldn't be recognized, I am merely suggesting that there be a mutual respect. That is what Prince Hall would want.

We need to focus on educating our members and embracing our history. Let's do more in supporting our communities, especially our youth, while setting our personal opinions aside. Let's also help one another instead of putting each other down. The following items are just a few key opportunities of this administration that I believe we can focus on for Prince Hall Masonry.

EDUCATION

Educating our Craft is extremely important to our success. It weeds out the weak and uninformed which builds a stronger organization. I believe that educating our brothers will also increase opportunities, which assures us we are elevating our best. This administration is committed to taking Prince Hall Masonry to the next level through seminars, workshops and open forums to gain warranted feedback and shared knowledge. The Grand Lodge will host an educational seminar on November 28, 2026, to roll out our expectations for the upcoming Masonic year. Additionally, we will follow up with a scheduled, multi-jurisdiction seminar on May 1, 2027, and offer workshops to every District.

We will also look at ways to improve our leadership by attending workshops and trainings. Right Worshipful Deputy Grand Master Robert G. Bonds, Jr., has been participating in this endeavor for a few years now and it is an excellent opportunity for

improvement and leadership development of the Elected Line and Fiscal Officers. Improvement has to start from the top down and continued learning keeps us sharp and up to speed with our ever changing world.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / PARTNERSHIPS

The Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC) is a Philadelphia based organization committed to creating a brighter future for our youth and communities. The organization was founded in 1964 by the late Reverend Dr. Leon Sullivan who was a Prince Hall Mason. Since its inception, OIC Philadelphia has been transforming lives and communities by providing tens of thousands of individuals with work skills for over six decades. We have formed a partnership with OIC and have already supported several events. It is my plan to ramp up this support primarily because their vision closely aligns with ours.

I would like to see us increase our partnerships with more of our local churches by attending and engaging with them and participating in their activities. We will attend church services throughout the Commonwealth, not for recognition, but to show support and make our presence known. I'm suggesting that we find ways to partner and support the many activities that our local churches already have in place. Our heritage is rooted in these places of worship, and I feel it's time to get back to basics.

I would like for us to partner with our sisters of Deborah Grand Chapter, Order of Eastern Star, Inc., PHA, PA, and participate in walks, marches, parades, etc., to demonstrate that we care collectively. These collaborations will give us exposure, increase visibility across the Jurisdiction and ultimately lead to increased membership. In the West, there will be a Masonic artifacts museum donation on November 5, 2026. We also plan to have a Children's Festival in the Central area in the Summer of 2027.

I'm extremely excited to announce our plans to host an exhibit at the African American Museum of Philadelphia (AAMP) in 2028. The African American Museum of Philadelphia was founded in 1976 to exhibit the heritage of Blacks and depict our profound impact on the city and the country. Its mission is to bring communities together to appreciate the black experience through the arts, culture and historical witness. I think this is a great opportunity for us to display the history of Prince Hall Masonry at African American Museum of Philadelphia and demonstrate to the world our significant contributions to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and to the formation of this country. I am encouraging all members to support the African American Museum of Philadelphia and all of these partnerships.

I am proud to announce that the Mayor of Philadelphia, the Honorable Cherelle L. Parker, has selected me as Co-Chairman of Philadelphia's Pan-Hellenic, HBCU and

Fraternal Organizations Engagement Committee. I was selected because of my leadership role in Prince Hall Masonry. Our mission is to connect leaders from local service organizations with city government to foster unity, empowerment and economic opportunity for all. These organizations all have rich legacies in service, leadership and education which closely align with our morals. Mayor Parker started this office to lead initiatives that support community needs. Her vision is to empower young Philadelphians by working to create positive change throughout the city. The sub-committees I oversee include education, mental health and wellness, financial literacy, safety, cleaner and greener, food insecurity and mentorship. The Prince Hall Family is already providing many of these services on an annual basis.

I strongly believe these partnerships and collaborations will not only elevate our visibility across the jurisdiction but strengthen us internally and position us as a strategic partner in the community with other organizations that share likeminded goals and objectives.

FINANCES

Finances are a key to our long term viability. Recognizing that dues make up a significant portion of operating income, we must ensure lodges can effectively support their financial obligations to both themselves and the Grand Lodge. I believe the first step is to educate and share information on resource control and financial management. It's not how much money you bring in, it's what you do with the money you have. We will help lodges with balancing and managing their accounts so that they budget for their expenses. There are lodges that do not have this issue and we will be asking them to share their strategies. We are also going to look at ways to improve the Grand Lodge's financial portfolio both short and long term. I am confident that we can find ways to reduce spending and cut costs. With the Grand Lodge as your leader and Constituent Lodges as the workers, we can make smart choices and weigh costs before picking a path. This mindset can influence us to make sound financial decisions which benefit everyone.

OUR YOUTH

Our youth are another key to the future of Prince Hall Masonry because they bring new creative ideas, energy and innovation needed for progress and positive change. We shouldn't think of them as just the next generation, but as vital pieces to help transform our organization and today's world. We must explore ways to embrace our younger members and support our youth organizations. I strongly believe that if we invest in our youth, the dividends will pay forward for generations to come. On the other hand, if we continue to exclude them, we miss out on potential and talents that many of our seasoned

members do not possess. We will focus on supporting our youth financially, lending time and giving direction. Our youth are a living message to a future we will never see.

SUCCESSION PLANNING

Succession planning is a strategic process used by organizations to identify, develop and prepare internal employees to step into key leadership or critical roles when they become vacant. Prince Hall Masonry here in Pennsylvania will begin to adopt this philosophy. We will meet to identify key roles for our organization to function more efficiently. We will look for members who demonstrate high performance and leadership qualities. Lastly, we will provide training, coaching and mentoring to individuals that we see fit to help at the next level. I believe succession planning can also relate to strategizing future ideas. Let's talk about the future of this Grand Lodge starting today. From this day forward, I'm giving our Right Worshipful Deputy Grand Master, Right Worshipful Senior and Right Worshipful Junior Grand Wardens full cooperation to render their ideas and plans. Let's start now and get the ball rolling. Time is of the essence and there is only so much that can be accomplished in two years.

CHARITY OF CHOICE

This administration will support individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities focusing on Mental Health and Autism Awareness.

In closing, I want to leave you all with a quote from Nelson Henderson, "I don't mind planting the seed for a tree I won't sit under and enjoy the shade." It speaks to doing work that benefits people and leaders who may come after you – even when you don't get to enjoy the full results.

Through our partnerships, internal improvements and collaborations, the motto for this administration will be **"Together We Rise"** and the theme will be **"Focus"**

Fraternally submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Eric Williams", written in a cursive style.

Eric Williams, No 23
108th Most Worshipful Grand Master
Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania