

Eastern Star Training Awards for Religious Leadership.

The General Grand Chapter and the Grand Jurisdiction of North Dakota's number one project is ESTARL, Eastern Star Training Awards for Religious Leadership. The program is identifying us all over the world, and it is touching not only lives but countless millions even beyond earth's remotest bounds. What could be closer to the teachings of our Order than helping others to follow in His steps.

The General Grand Chapter instituted ESTARL in 1952. The word is composed of the first letters of the main words in the name of the project. It was prompted by a growing consciousness that our Order should be more nearly fulfilling its mission as an organization dedicated to Christian principles.

ESTARL represents one of the most worthwhile projects undertaken by the Order of the Eastern Star in encouraging youth to enter fields of service to humanity. We should strongly support ESTARL because of the shortage of religious leaders and because it affords another opportunity for us to share in promoting God's kingdom on earth. You, as Eastern Star members, are truly taking a part in the future of generations of Christians to come - by seeking to aid in the education of Christian Leadership and preserving our Christian principles. This molding of character cannot be put aside to be considered tomorrow. Now is the time to help our young people.

I want you to know a little about the beginning of ESTARL. Sister Ruth Jones, Most Worthy Grand Matron of General Grand Chapter (1952-55) wanted a continuing and challenging project for all Eastern Star members. Thousand of churches were closing because of lack of young people in the church so she proposed this plan of religious education. She felt that giving scholarships to young men and women who have the love of God in their hearts and that by training them we can give our best.

Sister Gerbrude Wineman, worthy grand matron in 1953-54, was requested by General Grand Chapter to put into effect ESTARL. She in turn requested the Educational Loan Fund Committee to be responsible for informing the chapters of this project by sending out informational pamphlets and letters. On this first committee were Solveig Ravnsborg, P.G.M., chairman, Ina Grimson, P.G.M. and Henry Sausker, P.G.P. They reported that \$1,319.30 had been contributed that first year in our Grand Jurisdiction. The first two ESTARL awards were given to Charles Henley and Leonard Dahl.

Since 1954, twenty-five years ago, the Grand Chapter of North Dakota has given a total of \$93,040.39 to 300 recipients of ESTARL awards. The money is sent directly to the seminary or college and is for education in a field of Christian service, not for general education.

This year 1978 - 79, the subordinate chapters have been asked by the ESTARL committee to join a campaign to reach a goal of \$100,000.00.

"Let us be ever ready for deeds that are kind,
Ready to help, to heal or to be kind.
Let our feet never tire by night or by day
Of helping God's weaker ones over life's way.
In the depths of our eyes let there linger a smile,
Seeing through love only good things worthwhile;
Hearts ever ready with comfort for others,
Let these be our service, dear members, for others."

Our work in ESTARL is a work of FAITH. It is our faith in God which gives us faith in ourselves and others. Our nation founded on faith, grew strong and great. It is our responsibility to guard this faith and pass it on to others. This faith we repose in our ESTARL Awardees. We know that they will carry it forward in their lives and work.

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The Bible says, "Go ye into the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." Mark 16:15. To support ESTARL we are helping to fulfill that commandment by securing trained minds and dedicated hearts to His service

What greater heritage can we offer the youth of the future, than well-trained religious leaders spreading the love of our Heavenly Father by teaching others about God? The young people whom we help now are our greatest assests of tomorrow.

Turn to 1978 proceedings, Pages 153 and 154.

Read names of 1978 ESTARL recipients.

For these young people, I have a short prayer.

"Oh God, who are the only source of light and life, without whom our labor is lost; prosper, we beseech Thee, the work of these young people. May Thy word be a lamp unto their feet and a light unto their path. Grant each of us wisdom to discern Thy teachings and patience to apply them and such sincerity of heart that our deeds shall never shame our highest purposes. Guide our young people and give them a right judgment in all things; enlighten their minds who seek to learn; that receiving the seed in good ground they may bring forth fruit for Thy Honor. This we pray in Thy name. Amen.

Sarah Love Christianson, P.G.M.

The Order of the Eastern Star.

The Order of the Eastern Star is international in scope and is the largest fraternal organization in the world for both men and women. It has over 3 million members and 14,000 chapters. Grand Chapter sessions are held each year. In the United States the first honored guest is the American flag, followed by the presentation of the State, Christian, and Eastern Star flags. In states along our northern border, the flag of our neighbor, Canada, is also presented.

The Order was founded in 1850 by Dr. Robert Morris who had become a Master Mason in Oxford, Mississippi, in 1849. He was so interested in the idea that the female relatives of Master Masons share some of their benefits that he wrote a ritual for the Order of the Eastern Star. The first landmark is a belief in the existence of a Supreme Being. The Holy Bible, a symbol of the Word of God, is reverently placed upon the altar of all chapters. This beneficent Order has lived up to its purpose of bringing Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth to all mankind.

Those eligible for membership are Master Masons and the wives, mothers, daughters, widows, sisters, step-mothers, step-daughters, grand daughters, step-sisters and half-sisters of Master Masons. They must be 18 years old or over.

The General Grand Chapter of which we are a part, maintain headquarters in the International Temple in Washington, D.C. All members of the Order are welcome to visit this beautiful building. It houses the office of the Right Worthy Grand Secretary. The library contains the history of every Chapter. General Grand Chapter has jurisdiction over 56 Grand Chapters in the United States, Canada, Puerto Rico, and Direct supervision over Subordinate Chapters throughout the world. The oldest grand chapter is Michigan and Ohio has the largest membership. Texas has the largest number of Chapters and Puerto Rico has the smallest. Members are encouraged to visit all chapters and grand jurisdictions. These visits promote loving and lasting ties of friendship. We here in North Dakota have a picnic each year at the International Peace Garden with the members in Canada. A no-denominational worship service is held in the Peace Chapel which was built by General Grand Chapter and was dedicated July 18, 1970. This promotes a deeper friendship between these two countries.

The free world has suffered many setbacks. Formerly there were chapters in China, East Germany, Cuba and Italy, but where the communistic form of government takes over, Masonry and the Eastern Star are destroyed, their properties confiscated, and members sometimes persecuted.

The Order of the Eastern Star is primarily a benovolent one and this is well demonstrated by the millions of dollars that are contributed annually to others. The chief project of General Grand Chapter is the Eastern Star Training Award for Religious leaders, known as ESTARL. It is a scholarship given to train much needed religious leaders, young men and young women who are dedicating their lives to Christian service, furthering the cause of peace and love to the far corners of the globe. We are investing in our nation's valuable asset, the youth, who are heeding the Master Teacher who said, "Go, ye, and preach." The Grand Chapter of North Dakota gave its first award in 1954 and to date (1978) 300 scholarships awards, amounting to over \$93,039.00. *have been given*.

The benivolent work of our Order is worthy of the highest praise. Our Worthy Grand Matron and Worthy Grand Patron have chosen as projects this year; Heart Foundation, Shriners Hospitals for Crippled Children, Rainbow Girls, DeMolay for boys, good neighbor projects of aiding young and old, The Pathfinder visitation program, and two at the Peace Garden. They are the Overlook Picnic Shelter sanitation project and Monetary donations to the Masonic Project "76" Auditorium.

The Order of the Eastern Star is known for its willingness to be of service to others and to contribute something worthwhile to the world in which we live.