

T.S. Akers, K.T.C.H.
Right Eminent Grand Commander

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Sir Knights,

As we enter the month of May, we find ourselves in a season rich with reflection, remembrance, and renewal. It is a time when the labors of spring bring new life to the world around us, whilst also calling us to pause and honor those who have gone before us.

There exists within our broader cultural inheritance a deeply meaningful tradition tied to this time of year. *Flowering Sunday*, originating in Southern Wales and neighboring parts of England, was observed on Palm Sunday as a day when families would adorn the graves of their loved ones with flowers. This custom is believed to have traveled with settlers into Southern Appalachia, where it became known as *Decoration Day*, typically observed throughout the month of May. As migration continued westward, this practice followed, taking root even here in eastern Oklahoma.

A traditional Decoration Day is not merely ceremonial—it is participatory and communal. Families and congregations gather, often beginning with the cleaning of cemeteries, removing the encroachments of time and nature, and preparing the grounds with care and reverence. This labor is followed by the placing of flowers upon graves and the holding of memorial services. In many ways, it bears the character of an extended family reunion, binding together generations in shared remembrance.

In 1971, Decoration Day was formally recognized at the national level as Memorial Day. Whilst the two are now often spoken of interchangeably, there remains a distinction worth preserving. Memorial Day is dedicated specifically to honoring those who made the ultimate sacrifice in military service to our nation. Decoration Day, by contrast, is a broader observance—an occasion for families and communities to remember all their departed loved ones, gathering in reflection, gratitude, and continuity.

I would ask each of you, Sir Knights, to take time this month to remember our demised Sir Knights, and especially those who have borne the mantle of leadership among us—our Past Grand Commanders. Their labors, sacrifices, and devotion to the Order have shaped the Grand Commandery we inherit today. Though they are no longer present in our ranks, they remain present in our legacy.

To aid in this remembrance, a virtual cemetery has been established, cataloging the final resting places of our Past Grand Commanders. I encourage you to visit it, reflect upon their lives, and perhaps even make a personal pilgrimage where possible.

“Every Christian Mason should be A Knight Templar”

May we approach this month not merely as a passage of days, but as a sacred opportunity—to remember, to honor, and to reaffirm the bonds that unite us across time.

Fraternally,
T.S. Akers, KTCH
Right Eminent Grand Commander



[The Grand Commanders of Knights Templar of Oklahoma: Their Final Resting Places](#)



The final resting place of DeForest D. Leach, Grand Commander 1897-1898. Located at Fairlawn Cemetery of Oklahoma City.

The epitaph reads "Beautiful life is that whose span is spent in duty to God and Man."

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