

**Phillip Weiss
Box 82
149 East 23rd Street
New York, NY 10010**

WORSHIPFUL SAMUEL WEISS – A MASONIC CAREER

By Brother Phillip W. Weiss

Worshipful Samuel Weiss was born and raised in New York City. During his life he married, raised a family (he had two sons and a daughter), and was hardworking man, a law-abiding citizen, a good friend, and a loving father.

In addition, Samuel Weiss was a Mason.

Brother Weiss was raised in Arcana Lodge on March 25, 1947. This date marks the start of what was to be an outstanding Masonic career.

On December 14, 1954, after nearly seven years of study, preparation, and work, Brother Weiss became the recipient of one the single most prestigious honors that a Lodge can ever bestow upon one of its Brothers - he was elected Master of Arcana Lodge. The Brother

responded with gratitude and appreciation at being so honored. On January 4, 1955, in his first official communication as Master, the now Worshipful Brother wrote:

From the bottom of my heart I thank the Brothers for their confidence in me, in electing me as Master for the year 1955. It is an honor I have dreamt about, little daring to hope that I would ever be so fortunate as to have it bestowed upon me.

His numerous accomplishments as Master are recorded in the collection of Lodge notifications entitled 1955 Communications – Arcana Lodge No. 246.

Serving as Master was an experience that filled Brother Weiss with immense joy. Shortly after his first meeting as Master, he reported:

Arcana Lodge is fortunate to have so many unselfish and active Brethren. That's why it is
ARCANA – GOD BLESS ARCANA LODGE AND
ALL ITS BROTHERS.

These plaudits were not mere gratuitous expressions of praise. Rather, they were motivated by profound feelings of fraternal affection that Brother Weiss felt for his fellow Masonic brethren, and his sincere happiness with being part of an organization that afforded him the opportunity to serve others, contribute to the advancement of Freemasonry, and actualize his potential as a Mason.

For Brother Weiss, Freemasonry was not just a collection of esoteric words and symbols or a series of interesting historical anecdotes, but rather was a practical guide for building a better Lodge. Accordingly, through application of the lessons he learned while working his way up

through the ranks of the Lodge, Brother Weiss, during his term as Master, succeeded brilliantly in his efforts to create within the Lodge a Masonic environment that would reflect the highest and most sublime principles of the Craft. R.: W.: George Tanz later reported:

W.: Sam Weiss bequeathed to his successor a Lodge where peace and harmony reigned supreme. No greater gift can be bestowed to any successor.

Despite the awesome responsibilities associated with being Master, and the supreme authority vested in him as the chief presiding officer of a large fraternal organization (which in 1955 had 565 members), Brother Weiss conducted himself with the utmost humility. By setting such an example, he inspired other Brothers to strengthen their own fraternal bonds, thereby producing an even stronger and more cohesive Lodge.

R.: W.: George Tanz later reported:

This Brother's determination to further promote the tenets of Brotherly Love and Affection, resulted in an even greater fusing of friendships and warmth among the Brethren of our Lodge.

For Brother Weiss, the Masonic tenet of "meeting on the level" had real meaning, and served as a guiding principle for him throughout his entire Masonic career.

Five years after having successfully served as Master, Brother Weiss's Masonic career entered a new phase. On February 7, 1961, Arcana's Master, W.: Peter A. Leonforte, appointed the Brother as acting

secretary, succeeding W.: Sol S. Schatzburg who had served as Secretary for fourteen years. One month later, on March 7, 1961, W.: Samuel Weiss was elected Secretary of Arcana Lodge. He was to serve as Secretary for the next twenty years.

Soon after becoming secretary, Brother Weiss began earning words of praise. On February 21, 1961, the Master, W.: Peter J. Leonforte, commenting on the Brother's performance thus far, reported:

The thanks of the Lodge goes to W.: Sam Weiss who is doing an outstanding job as acting secretary. His performance is that of a seasoned and most efficient secretary.

Brother Weiss would continue to perform his secretarial duties with a proficiency and dedication that would reap huge benefits to the Lodge, solidify his place as a Masonic knight, and earn him further honors.

The years went by. Different Masters graced the East. New members were raised, others became less active. And sadly, but inevitably, some members departed the Lodge to join their Maker. But while these changes were occurring, the brethren of Arcana Lodge could rest assured that W.: Samuel Weiss would be at his station, conscientiously performing his secretarial duties.

Yet even the secretary's chair could not resist forever the inexorable tide of change. In 1981, after twenty years of dedicated and diligent service, encompassing the incumbency of twenty different Masters, Brother Weiss decided that it was time for him to put down the pen, put

away the ledger book, and retire. The Lodge responded by declaring November 24, 1981, as Sam Weiss Night. That night the Brethren expressed their gratitude and appreciation for the years of service W.: Samuel Weiss had rendered on behalf of the Lodge. The Master, W.: Laurence Austin, later commented:

It was heartwarming, indeed, to see so many of our brethren turn out for the farewell dinner tendered to our retiring Secretary, Wor. Sam Weiss. He will be sorely missed by all of us in Arcana Lodge. It is truly said that any organization, to operate smoothly and effectively, must have an efficient Secretary. We are blessed – and we count our blessings in having had the secretarial services of so competent a person as Sam Weiss. I can assure you that his “act” will be a difficult one to follow.

I know that all my brethren join me in wishing Sammy and his wife, Lillian, a wonderful and happy retirement. May good health and happiness be their lot for many years to come!

After a short business meeting, devoted to the reading of the Lodge’s reports, the balance of the evening was devoted to brethren of the Lodge and of the Third Manhattan District saying their farewells to Sam Weiss.

Three years, two months and twelve days later, on February 6, 1985, W.: Samuel Weiss was reunited with the Great Architect of the Universe. The brethren of Arcana Lodge were profoundly saddened by the loss of their longtime Secretary, Brother, and Friend. Later that month the Lodge published a memorial in his honor. The memorial read as follows:

In Memoriam

Worshipful Samuel Weiss

Raised March 25, 1947 Died February 6, 1985

May His Soul Rest In Eternal Peace

Our late Wor. Samuel Weiss, Secretary of Arcana Lodge for many years, leaves us with saddened hearts – the acts of goodness he performed in and out of the Lodge will long be remembered. Our heartfelt sympathies to his wife, Lily, and to his family.

Thus concludes this compendium of the life and Masonic career of one of the most highly esteemed and beloved brothers in the history of Arcana Lodge – Worshipful Samuel Weiss.

SOURCES

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