

Tributes To MWB Edwin E. Elser

Past Grand Master

E. E. ELSEER — EXEMPLAR OF OF AMERICAN LEGACY TO PHILIPPINE NATION — BUILDING

By MWB. CONRADO BENITEZ
Past Grand Master

On this solemn occasion when we are gathered to pay tribute to the memory of Bro. E. E. Elser, it is proper and fitting that we should relate his life to the great movement stirring the world during his time. I refer to the unique experiment in international relations undertaken with the joint cooperation of the American and Filipino peoples.

Already a Freemason since 1897, and coming to Manila in 1902, the historic year when the Organic Act of the U.S. Congress extended to Filipinos the same basic human rights that were embodied in our Malolos Constitution of 1898, — Bro. Elser was well prepared to exemplify the vital and essential role of civic-minded private citizen in a Democratic Society. This role he played most creditably— to the great honor of his mother country. — America.

In this brief eulogy I can mention only a few of Bro. Elser's pioneering achievements known to me personally. They are in my estimation truly symbolic of America's legacy to Philippine democratic nation-building.

Being Worshipful Master of Corregidor — Southern Cross Lodge No. 3 in 1914, and M. W. Grand Master of the Philippines in 1921, Bro. Elser was one of the far-sighted leaders of Freemasonry in those days who worked for and achieved the historic Unification of Masonry in the Philippines — thereby binding closely American and Filipino Freemasons, and ushering in an era of unprecedented goodwill and understanding between the two peoples. When confronted by the challenge of the Brotherhood of Man — the basic tenet of both Freemasonry and Christianity, as well as of the other great religions of mankind, — American and Filipino masons were not found wanting. Their achievement has ever been a source of inspiration in the Free World.

In the realm of voluntary civic participation in Community affairs— so essential in a Democratic Society — the pioneering example of Bro. Elser paved the way for Key American institutions which helped and are still helping to strengthen Free Enterprise in this country. One of these is the Rotary Club of Manila, of which he was one of the organizers and past president.

In the realm of philanthropy, Bro. Elser practiced the Masonic virtue of charity and followed Christ's injunction that "it is more blessed to give than to receive," by

being one of the organizers of the Masonic Hospital for Crippled Children — a worthy project serving still to perpetuate the memory and the vision of its founders. In this connection, mention may be made also of Bro. Elser's interest in the Philippine-American Guardian Association.

In the field of business, Bro. Elser was one of a small group of pioneers who in 1904 founded a financial institution — the first of its kind in the Philippines — intended to encourage thrift and saving as the way to ownership of a home; and as the only sound source of capital formation in a System of Free Enterprise. The Manila Building & Loan Association stands today as a monument to Bro. Elser and his associates. An evidence of how Bro. Elser contributed to Philippine Nation-building through his constructive business policy was the reaction of the President of the Philippine Women's University to the news that he had passed away. To perpetuate

his memory she recommended the creation of scholarships to be known as "E. E. Elser Scholarships" explaining to the Trustees the valuable advice and assistance extended by the then President of that financial institution during the early life of the University.

Thus, illustrious Bro. E. E. Elser, — Past grand Master of the Philippines, and Active Grand Inspector General of the Supreme Council of the Thirty-Third Degree Scottish Rite of Freemasonry of the Republic of the Philippines — by exemplifying the ideals of America as a Masonic, Civic, and business leader, contributed greatly to the growth of Democracy as a world movement headed by the United States. Let us the living perpetuate his memory by deeds worthy of his example. (Eulogy delivered by Sovereign Grand Commander Conrado Benitez, 33^o, Supreme Council of the Thirty-Third and last Degree, Scottish Rite Freemasonry, Republic of the Philippines, September 18, 1962. Plaridel Temple).



EDWIN E. ELSER, THE BIG-HEARTED

By MWB FRANCISCO A. DELGADO
Past Grand Master

Having had the privilege of being a life long friend and treated by him as almost a true blood brother, I consider it a great privilege to be able to dedicate a few words of praise to the great Mason and Gentleman, Edwin E. Elser.

While he started his masonry in the United States, it was in the different Rites, Lodges and Orders in the Philippines, as his masonic biography shows, that he showed his rare talent for leadership in the masonic world and elsewhere, having been a presiding officer of everyone of them.

When in the twenties dissension produced confusion and animosity

among the masons here, it took the patience, affability and ability of Brother Elser to pave the way for the unification of all of them. History will regard him as one of the truly main pillars of the unification of Masonry in the Philippines.

His charity and friendship knew no bounds. He proffered a helping hand to everyone in need.

His memory will live forever in the hearts of his brother Masons and friends everywhere. In the words of the poet, for him

"There is no death! the stars go down

To rise upon some other shore,

They shine for ever more."

And bright in Heaven's jeweled crown.

Edwin E. Elser will shine ever more in the hearts of his fellow Masons and his innumerable friends.



LOVE SOLVES HARD PROBLEMS

They were building a great bridge across a river and the structure was carried from both sides to meet in the middle. But when the central span was swung into place they found that it did not fit; it fell short by two inches and no ingenuity could bridge that little space. In dismay they telegraphed the designer of the bridge, and in great impatience awaited his reply. When the reply came it was enigmatical, for it merely said, "Wait till tomorrow noon." Next day at noon the mystified beholders found that the sun's rays had expanded the metal so that, section to section, it precisely matched, and there was no crack at all — the bridge was one. — *Amos R. Wells*

So does the warmth of love bring together and bind strongly those who otherwise would be separated and apart and, incidentally, make possible the solution of many a hard problem in life.

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