

BIOGRAPHY

Robert Grafton

GRAND EXALTED RULER

Robert Grafton is a member of North Palm Beach, Florida Lodge No. 2069, which is the closest Lodge to his residence in Lake Park, Florida. The Lodge is located on the East Coast of Florida about 75 miles north of Miami.

Brother Grafton was born in Cleveland, Ohio on March 5, 1927. His family moved to Florida in 1931 and in 1936 settled in West Palm Beach where he graduated from St. Ann's High School in 1944. After a short period of service in the Navy, he entered college late in 1945 and graduated from the Law College of the University of Florida in June of 1950, with an LLB (Juris Doctor) Degree.

Subsequent to graduation from college, he returned to West Palm Beach and opened his own law office. In addition he was appointed City Prosecutor and later became Municipal Judge of West Palm Beach.

In 1956 he became associated as Counsel for the Central and Southern Florida Flood Control District (now known as South Florida Water Management District), becoming Chief Counsel in 1959, and continuing in that position to the present time. His field of interest is primarily water law, eminent domain, administrative and contract law. Under his guidance a land acquisition program was conducted to acquire rights of way for canals and levees to build a project for water control in a part of central and southern Florida about the size of the states of Maine and Connecticut combined. That program, which entailed the expenditure of approximately 50 million dollars, was successful and canals, levees and water control structures costing over 350 million dollars were constructed for the benefit of the area.

His interest in sports was manifested by competition on the football, basketball and baseball teams in high school and after graduation from college, he played shortstop for a number of years on City Champion fast pitch softball teams. His active sports interest today is golf, for which his acknowledged handicap is 17.

In addition to his work in Elksdom, the City of Riviera Beach, Florida benefited from his service on its Planning Board and the Zoning Board of Appeals (10 years as Chairman). Shortly after college, he coached the West Palm Beach Elks Little League baseball team for a period of nine years.

In 1968 he was elected Chairman of the Southern Water Resources Conference, an organization composed of water administrators, water lawyers, and others interested in Water Resources in 18 states.

From 1957 to 1978 he attended every session of the Florida Legislature to assist and give advice on matters related to Water Resources.

He is a member of the Palm Beach County, State of Florida, and American Bar Associations, American Judicature Society, American Legion and Sierra Club.

Brother Grafton began his career in Elksdom through initiation in Gainesville, Florida Lodge No. 990 for West Palm Beach, Florida Lodge No. 1352 in July of 1948. His service in West Palm Beach commenced upon his return from college and he was Exalted Ruler in 1957-58. Later he demitted from West Palm Beach to North Palm Beach, Florida Lodge No. 2069, where he served as Exalted Ruler in 1962-63.

Ritual was an area of interest almost from the beginning of his service as an Officer. He was All-State Exalted Ruler on a West Palm Beach team, which won the State Championship and finished fifth in the National Contest, which was before it was split into the Eastern and Western Divisions. Later he coached two teams to second place in the Eastern Division in Grand Lodge contests and was a Certified Judge from 1958 to 1977.

He served as State Vice President, and then as District Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler for Grand Exalted Ruler R. Leonard Bush; his Lodge voted him an Honorary Life Membership in January of 1966. Later he served as State Director, State President, Member of the Major Projects Board and a Trustee of Harry-Anna Trust Fund of the Florida State Elks Association, and as Special Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler.

In 1970 he was appointed to the Grand Lodge Judiciary Committee, where he served until 1974, at which time he was elected to the Board of Grand Trustees for a four year term. His service on the Board included two years as Pension Member, one year as Home Member and one year as Chairman. In 1978 he was appointed to a five-year term on the Grand Forum.

Brother Grafton is married to the former Patricia Weiland. They are the parents of three children, Beth, a recent Graduate of Florida State University, Mary, a Junior at that same institution, and John, a senior in high school.

Elksdom is a family matter for Brother Grafton. His grandfather and father were Elks, his brother is an Elk and four of his brothers-in-law are Elks.