

Pike-Southport Retires Debt, Burns Mortgage in Ceremony October 26

By **Bruce A. Christianson, P.G.M.**
Master, Pike Lodge No. 355

In the beginning, God created the heaven and the Earth, but that was not the case for Pike Lodge.

Our Lodge is the mental offspring of essentially three men, all of Kenosha, all three Brothers and Doctors all, Gilbert and Harry Schwartz and Harold J. Woods.

These three conceived the idea of a third lodge in Kenosha, and, with the strong support of men such as, Past Masters John K. "Jack" Shannon and Sherman Sibley, their endeavors resulted in the formation of Pike Lodge No. 355, Free and Accepted Masons of Wisconsin.

We received dispensation to operate, or work, as a Lodge of Freemasons in 1958 and we received our Charter in 1959 with "Doc" Woods as our first Worshipful Master.

At present, I am honored to serve Pike lodge in its 38th year as a chartered lodge under the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Wisconsin.

Today, our Lodges, Pike and Southport, are able to celebrate what many men, our Brothers, worked long and hard to bring to fruition. A truly Masonic facility, debt free in our community, dedicated to the principles of "Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth"

Freemasonry is not a religion, but as you have already observed, we are religious. Every Mason must have a belief in God, His God, A monotheistic deity of his own belief, and must be a man of lawful age, and be recom-

mended by at least two Brother Masons for membership in this, the oldest Fraternity, or Brotherhood, known to man.

We would not be here today if it weren't for the commitment of the membership of both Pike and Southport Lodges, but under these circumstances, I will confine my remarks to those pertaining to Pike Lodge.

In all honesty, I could stand here today and recite the role of all who have been, and are still members of Pike Lodge, all who have contributed to our Masonic heritage, but we must pay homage where homage is due.

"Doc" Woods, PM, The instigator, the mentor, the driving force behind our Lodge and now deceased.

Doctor, or better yet, "Doc" Henry Evers, our Brother who passed away in 1975 and left a legacy for the financial security of our Lodge.

Earl Merritt, PM, also now deceased, who, as president of the then Brown Bank, was our overseer in handling all of our investments.

These three, with so many others, have brought us to this day. A special day for a very special occasion. A wonderful day, a great day.

In 1988, Pike Lodge petitioned the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Wisconsin for permission to sell their existing building at 1411 - 74th Street, here in Kenosha, for the express purpose of erecting a Masonic facility elsewhere. The Grand Master granted their request. I can personally vouch

for his approval, as I was that Grand Master.

Pike then met, in the interim, at the facility of Southport Lodge on 52nd Avenue. There a mutual bond of Fraternalism was established and when Pike Lodge extended the invitation to Southport Lodge to come into our building endeavor, as an equal partner, equal as a Lodge, but no demand as to equality dollarwise, Southport Lodge agreed, and here we are today.

Our Masonic facility is operated by the "Masonic Properties of Kenosha, Inc."

This organization, chartered as a corporation in Wisconsin, is composed of all of the members of both Lodges and the Board of Directors are the six trustees of each Lodge. Yes six apiece, as we feel if there should ever be a tie vote for any reason, it must be resolved by the vote of the Brethren in Lodge convened. We have, as Trustees, as members of the Board of Directors, never had any difficulty in performing our duties on behalf of the corporation nor to our Lodges. In my opinion, a true Masonic heritage.

Again, it is my privilege, as Worshipful Master of Pike Lodge, as a member of the Board of Directors of the "Masonic Properties of Kenosha, Incorporated" and as a Freemason in our community, to thank all of you here present, for joining with us as we celebrate the fulfillment of our indebtedness and our now, debt free, facility.

