



RW. Bro Rodney Lister Bass, OBE died, aged 74 years, on Tuesday July 14th 2020 after a long battle with Lung Cancer. He had been Provincial Grand Master of Essex since September 2015 following a distinguished career in Banking (with HSBC) and in Local Government.

In his private life he was a senior Manager at HSBC Banking and his deep belief in service to the community service led to him following in his father's footsteps and joining Maldon Rural Council (later Maldon Council) in 1967, at which time he was the youngest Councillor in the country. He continued with them for the next 40 years and in 1997 he also became an Essex County Councillor and went on to be a Cabinet Member for Highways & Transportation between 2003-2007, Vice Chairman of Essex County Council between 2008-2009 and County Council Chairman between 2010-2012.

He then served again as Cabinet Member for Highways & Transportation between 2013-2015 and oversaw some of the council's largest capital projects and pushed for investment and improvement in the county's roads. He then focussed on Infrastructure until 2016, retiring after 50 years of public service in 2017.

In recognition of his service to the community he was elected an Honorary Alderman of Essex and honoured by HM the Queen in October 2017 when she invested him as an Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the Empire; the OBE.

He was initiated into Tollesbury Lodge No. 4738 in October 1978 and Exalted into Tollesbury Chapter in October 1981.

He was the Master of Tollesbury Lodge in 1992 and the MEZ of Tollesbury Chapter in 2002 and appointment as a Provincial Grand Steward in the Craft followed in 1994 and in the Royal Arch in 2003. He was appointed to Craft Grand Rank in 2010 and as an APGM in 2011. In 2015 he was invested as the RW Provincial Grand Master for and the Grand Superintendent in and Over Essex.

He had also been the Master of Woodrolfe Lodge No. 8354 in 2006 and the MEZ of Clapton Chapter (MetGL) in 2008 and went on to be the Master of the Bear & Ragged Staff Lodge No. 8527 in 2015, Essex Masters Lodge No. 3256 in 2016, Essex Provincial Grand Stewards Lodge No. 8665 in 2019 and the MEZ of Clapton Chapter for the 2nd and 3rd time in 2015 and 2018 and the MEZ of Essex First Principals Chapter No. 3256 in 2018 and Essex Provincial Grand Stewards Chapter in 2019.

He was passionate about his Mother Lodge, Tollesbury, where he continued to play an active role and where the whole Executive dropped in unexpectedly in 2018 to help him celebrate his 40th anniversary as a Freemason.

He also joined several Lodges and Chapters over the years and was made an honorary member of many others across the Province.

Under his leadership his Executive became more open and approachable and Essex Freemasons were encouraged to increase their community involvement, starting with an appeal that raised £160,000 to build a high wire and zip wire facility for Essex Scouts at Skreens Park, Chelmsford. His launch of a new Essex Freemasons Community Fund in 2019 has allowed significant funds to be made available to help hundreds of local charities and good causes across the county.

At the time of his appointment as PGM Freemasonry was shrinking nationally and in the five years before his appointment the Craft in Essex lost 1,431 members, a 13.6% drop, while the Royal Arch lost 423 members, a 10.7% drop. In the five years he held office the Craft losses were reduced to 783 (an 8.6% loss) and the Royal Arch 152 (a 4.3% loss).

He was a great supporter of the Additional Masonic Orders and was an active member of many of them including Mark, Royal Ark Mariners, Rose Croix, Knights Templar, Royal Order of Scotland, Royal & Select Masters and the Commemorative Order of Thomas of Acon.

Rodney Bass was a great man who was loved and respected by everyone who knew him. Essex Freemasonry will be the poorer for his passing. Since his appointment in 2015 he has transformed Freemasonry in Essex, instilling a spirit of openness and ensuring that our members strived to make a difference in their communities. He worked hard to forge greater links and mutual cooperation with the all of the Additional Orders and his contribution to the wider Masonic family will be a lasting legacy.

In April last year he was diagnosed with lung cancer, but he did not allow it to slow his commitment to Essex and Essex Freemasonry, a commitment that was only cut short by the sudden deterioration of his condition.

Rodney leaves a wife, Margaret and stepchildren Emilio and Lydia, brother W.Bro Henry Bass and sister Julia Peel. He was pre-deceased by his elder sister, Alison Gould.

Masonic Centres with a flag are asked to fly it at half-mast.