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John J. Percy, III,  
Chairman, Grand Lodge Trustees  
5841 Laurel Street  
Mays Landing, NJ 08330

RE: DUTIES and POWERS OF GRAND LODGE TRUSTEES

Dear Jack:

Thank you for your courtesy in sending me a copy of the letter from the Committee on Masonic Jurisprudence addressed to Ray Bellini under date of June 20, 2000. I am sorry that I could not reply to your inquiry sooner, but as I believe you are aware I was under the weather for a couple of weeks, and then left for a brief visit to my daughter and granddaughters in Colorado.

As much as I respect the opinions of my learned brethren on the Jurisprudence Committee (and I have, of course, been associated with all of them for a number of years) I must respectfully disagree with their conclusion.

It all depends on the interpretation of Section 3-71 which was enacted in 1988 to clarify the duties of the Grand Lodge Trustees, and hinges upon the extent to which the phrase "with the concurrence of the Grand Master" modifies that which follows it in the said By-Law. I interpret it to modify only the phrase which immediately follows, i.e. "employ the management personnel required for the efficient execution of all matters pertaining to the finances and property of the Grand Lodge."

I know that it is not a popular stance to undermine or question the authority of the Grand Master, and I have no doubt that the Grand Master is, and should be, supreme in all matters pertaining to ritual, membership, Masonic conduct, protocol, fraternal relations, etc., but I believe that the reason we provide for elected trustees to "control the business of Grand Lodge" is to provide for a separation of powers as in the United States Constitution. I cannot interpret the Grand Lodge By-Laws which spell out the various authorities of the Trustees as requiring the Trustees to be merely a "rubber-stamp" for the Grand Master, or unable to function without his express or implied "concurrence".

I hope my opinion is of some value to you. Please call me if there is any further question.

Cordially and fraternally,

  
ALVIN H. FRANKEL