

## History of the Moose Legion

The "Moose Legion" or "Degree of Service" was created by resolution during the annual convention of the Supreme Lodge in Cincinnati, Ohio, and adopted by the Supreme Council in 1913 as the Mooseheart Legion of the World". Initially, and continuing until 1931, women enjoyed full membership as an intricate part of the Mooseheart Legion of the World.

The first individual Moose Legion unit was chartered in 1914 - Western Pennsylvania No. 1, and established at Director General's James J. Davis's own Lodge, Pittsburg Moose Lodge # 46. Separate Officers for Moose Legion units were established – a presiding North Moose, a South, East and a West Moose, a Guiding Moose, a Custodian of the Heart, Argus of the Heart, Herder, and Treasurer. From 1914 until 1991, the annual presiding officer of the Moose Legion was known as the Grand North Moose; since 1991 he has been the International President of the Moose Legion of which Robert Maxey currently serves the position. Robert Maxey joined the Sandston, Virginia Moose Lodge #1937 in 1967, is a past President of the Virginia Moose Association (1994), and is an active member of Old Dominion Moose Legion #148. Rodney Brandon, the Moose Legion degree's first administrator carrying the title Grand Regent, devised the first emblem, which incorporated a moose head centered in a pyramid with the letters "F", "H", and "C" at its points superimposed over a heart, surrounded by a circle and containing the words "Alces" and "Machlis", all of which had individual meanings. The pyramid symbolized the core of our existence, Faith, Hope and Charity, while the heart symbolized heart of the fraternity, and the word "Alces" meaning moose or large beast and "Machlis" meaning leader. The emblem was used in conjunction with the Women of the Moose until 1991, when a change was made to give both the Moose Legion and the Women of the Moose specific logo identity. The year 1931 brought the formal organization of the Women of the Moose, and produced an amicable split from the men, as a separate and distinct unit of the fraternity. In the same year, the degree changed its name to "Legion of the Moose", and continued under this banner until early 1991, when the name changed once again, to "Moose Legion", with reference to the "Degree of Service".

Moose Legionnaires, initially committed to building a one-million dollar endowment fund, also recognized the needs of the newly created "Child City - Mooseheart". Extending their efforts, they provided the funds to purchase the first dairy herd and funded construction of the first major building, "Loyalty Hall" -1914 (now renovated and converted into a learning center). Added shortly thereafter were "West Legion Hall" - 1917, "East Legion Hall" - 1919 and "Fez Hall" - 1921. In addition, Moose Legionnaires have provided funds to help with every major project

on the Mooseheart campus, and individually have funded construction of the indoor swimming pool adjacent to the school (1965), construction and maintenance of the metric track located at the Illinois Memorial Stadium (1978 & 1994), renovation of Camp Ross Swimming pool (1999), purchase of more property, including a Bunk House (2001), and renovation of the House of God (2003). Development of Mooseheart's Camp Ross became a concern of the Moose Legion in its early years, and in addition to its obligation for the annual budget, the Moose Legion committed to a 5 year improvement program, which included the construction of a new Camp Director's cabin in 1995. Now, brought about by the volunteer efforts of the Moose Legions, Camp Ross is a full 12 month per year facility, providing a camping experience for Mooseheart children, as well as educational and retreat facilities for Moose International and Mooseheart staff and employees.

Even though the great amount of monies raised by the first Moose Legionnaires were of significant value to Mooseheart, these accomplishments are overshadowed by the commitments made to the "City of Contentment - Moosehaven". The Moose Legion provided the original funding available for the purchase of the 63 acre retirement community campus in Orange Park, Florida. (A little known fact ... for many years after the founding of Moosehaven, admission was open only to those holding the Moose Legion degree.) Traditional monetary support for Moosehaven continued and took on an added dimension in 1991, when Moose Legionnaires, adopted the "Moosehaven Seniors Medical Fund", wherein another major portion of annual dues is diverted directly to the Moosehaven budget for outside medical service of our seniors. This permanent project has provided for senior health care at Moosehaven in excess of three-million dollars. Lodges with active Moose Legion committees operate at a higher level in membership building and retention, profitability, and harmony among its membership. The Moose member, once elevated to the Moose Legion Degree and with an active committee through which to channel his fraternal desires, exhibits a strong desire to give of time, talents and leadership ability, thus contributing to Lodge progress.

Let's consider three known facts: first... of those Lodge members who are dropped for nonpayment of dues each year - 9 of every 10 are not Moose Legionnaires. Second... of those Moose members who achieve Lodge new members sponsor status each year - 8 of every 10 are Moose Legionnaires, and Third... ninety-eight cents of every dollar raised at the Lodge level by Moose Legionnaires finds its way back into the Lodge, in the form of a new or remodeled buildings, purchase of equipment, payment of insurance premiums or some special project. When we have an active Moose Legion Committee in our Lodges, we have individuals who accept projects and get things done in the Lodge. Considering the positive effect on our Lodges by Moose Legionnaires, it is imperative we place greater emphasis on Moose

Legion membership. We must bring those qualified for membership in the Moose Legion into our ranks, and then provide a schedule of activities and projects within the Lodge through an active Moose Legion Committee. This is accomplished by acquainting the Moose member with the Moose Legion, educating him on the value of Moose Legion membership, and elevating him to the Degree of Service. At this point, we will have added assets to our Lodge by including a member who will be more likely to remain a Moose member ... one who will sponsor his friends to membership and one who will be willing to dedicate his efforts through service to the Lodge, community and fraternity.

A Moose member who elevates his membership to the Degree of Service does so out of love for and dedication to the fraternity. He places the needs of his Lodge, District, State or Province, and the Fraternity ahead of his personal desire for recognition or advancement... he steps forward, pays his fee and dues, and then proudly announces..."I'm part of the future, use me to advance the cause of children and seniors!"