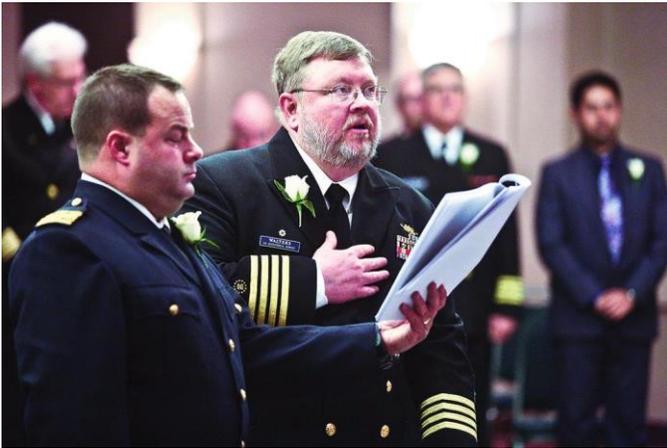


Washburn Capt. to Lead International Ship Masters Association



Duluth, MN - A knock at the door prompted the grand warden to say, "Mr. President, there's an alarm at the door."

The incoming officers of the International Ship Masters Association stood outside the door, waiting to be let in. Bagpipers then led the procession of officers around the room once the association's outgoing Grand Lodge

President Robert Schallip of Barbeau, Mich., gave the warden instructions to admit them into the room. Audience members bedecked in formal wear gave the salute of three sets of three claps, after which the Canadian and American national anthems were sung.

In a ceremony following 125 years of pageantry and tradition, Capt. Joe Walters of Washburn, Wis., was inducted as the national association's grand lodge president Friday during the association's annual Grand Lodge Convention.

Twin Ports Lodge 12 is hosting this year's convention at the Radisson, which started Thursday, for the first time since 2001.

"I pledge my sacred word of honor," Walters said, taking the oath of office with his right hand on his heart and his left hand on the Bible before a standing audience.

He was presented with the medal of the association's grand president and had the lodge's password whispered to him by Schallip before the gavel changed hands between the two presidents. Schallip handed over the grand lodge president's ring, telling Walters, "Wear it proudly."



It's an honor to be named grand lodge president, Walters said after the ceremony, adding, "I'm very humbled by it." He'll spend the year leading the association and representing it at various events.

Walters has spent decades on the waters of the Great Lakes and is currently working out of Ashland as the captain of the U.S. Geological Survey's vessel KIYI that researches fisheries for the Lake Superior Biological Station.

His career began when he joined the U.S. Coast Guard in 1979. He first worked as a seaman apprentice and plank owner on the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Bristol Bay in Detroit. A year later, he sailed the cutter Raritan out of Cleveland to Governors Island south of New York City. While later serving in Wisconsin's Sturgeon Bay, he sailed to and from Grenada. He went on to serve in Guam, Cleveland and Philadelphia before returning to the Great Lakes in 1994 to serve on the cutter Sundew in Duluth.

Before his retirement, he served on the cutter Sweetbrier in Cordova, Alaska.



He became a member of the International Ship Masters Association's Twin Ports Lodge 12 in 2005. He also serves on the Great Lakes Captains Association board of directors and on the steering committee for the Great Lakes Association of Science Ships.

The International Ship Masters Association consists of 16 lodges around the Great Lakes and is open to anyone involved in maritime operations. Members work on everything from the bigger ships that traverse the Great Lakes to tugboats, tour boats and research vessels, Walters explained.

The I.S.M.A. dates back to 1886 in Buffalo, N.Y., initially formed as a benevolent fraternal organization to assist spouses and families of vessel captains that were injured or had perished upon the Great Lakes. The Duluth-Superior Twin Ports Lodge 12 is one of the oldest chapters. Local captains had gathered and established an association chapter in 1911, in part, out of concern regarding a proposed Lake Superior to Mississippi River canal. Today, it advocates for maritime safety, workable environmental policy and greater comradery in the maritime trades. The I.S.M.A. also funds and grants scholarships to the several maritime academies, as well as the working mariner – Duluth News Tribune