

The Care Givers

There's an expectation about family: That it'll always be there for you. For Robert*, age 93, this has always proven true, even after his last surviving relative passed away. He has always had his brothers at Santa Barbara Lodge No. 192.

Three brothers, in particular: Don Goldberg, Ray Holgate, and Bill Taylor – who, at age 90, himself has been one of the lodge's most devoted outreach leaders. For the better part of the last decade, these three have taken turns helping Robert, driving him to and from medical appointments, working with his doctors and health care providers, and bringing him Masonic events so he can stay active in the lodge he loves. When his health began declining a few years ago, they assumed an active role in his day-to-day care, helping him install a medical alert system in his home and hiring caregivers to assist him.. They sat down with him to talk about his wishes for end-of-life care, and all three signed up to be his attorney agents so they can advocate for his current and future needs. In sum, they have acted on Robert's behalf as any family members would. For Robert, their presence has been not just a source of fraternity and fellowship, but safety and support.

This commitment to outreach is increasingly important as our Masonic family ages – including many members who, like Robert, could all too easily become isolated from their lodges and other sources of support. When Robert suffered a fall and major injury, it was his lodge brothers who visited him in the hospital. It was his lodge brothers who broached the topic of moving him into assisted living, and who located the small, family-managed residential care facility where he resides happily today.

This hands-on approach to lodge outreach always takes place with the backing of Masonic Outreach Services (MOS), just a phone call away.

"MOS helps not only financially, but by providing connections to vital resources," says Don Goldberg. As head of the lodge's Visitation Committee, he has led outreach for a number of members including Robert. "At the lodge level, it's our job to connect MOS and fraternal family members who need help."

It's critical for all lodge members to be on alert for vulnerable brothers and widows, and to communicate any concerns with lodge outreach leaders and MOS.

"If we're not aware of a brother in need, we can't assist him," Don says. "Sometimes all it takes is a phone call or a visit. That's the first domino to finding out if someone needs help." And then, like any family would, the fraternity can step in.

**Names have been changed to protect client privacy.*

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