

## Helen Keller Induction Ceremony

We are about to begin the induction ceremony which will welcome (a) new member(s) to the \_\_\_\_\_ Lions Club. This is an important occasion for this/these new member(s) and I sincerely request the attention and silence of the membership during the ceremony.

(lights off please)

I will call the name(s) of the new member(s) and the(ir) sponsor and the candidate(s) will enter and stand before the membership. (names) you have been brought into this room blindfolded and guided by your sponsor, for the purpose of showing you what Lionism is about the aiding of the blind and afflicted. You now know what it is to be blind and to have to be dependent on someone else. You are experiencing blindness for just a few minutes, many others are blind for life. You have just done something the sightless do every day of their lives. I've asked you to spend a few moments in darkness because this symbolizes the life of the blind and hopefully this will be the only time you spend in darkness. Lion \_\_\_\_\_ will now read the Code of Ethics. Lion \_\_\_\_\_ will now read the International Purposes. Lion \_\_\_\_\_ is now going to say a few words about darkness. Lions International was founded by Melvin Jones in 1917, some \_\_\_ years ago, and today it is the world's largest service organization. The reason we became the largest has a lot to do with the blindfold(s) you are now wearing.

Originally there was no particular direction for Lions to go, no special cause, but in 1925, eight years after being founded, a blind and deaf woman, Helen Keller, asked permission to speak before our international convention. She asked the Lions to pick up her crusade and adopt sight conservation as a major project of Lions International. She was dealing with a small group of men from the western hemisphere at that time. She did not realize what was going to happen when she asked, ‘Gentlemen, would you be my knights of the blind? We have many problems to overcome and we cannot do them alone, we need help.’ Twenty-five years later, after Helen Keller went on to become one of the most famous women in American history, she came back to the Lions convention with tears in her eyes and said, ‘Thank you, my knights of the blind. Little did I realize 25 years ago when I asked you to take my cause that I would find Lions not only in America, but in China, Africa and all the other free countries of the world, all working for one goal to eradicate the dreaded disease of blindness.’

Before you, we have lit a candle to represent the International Association of Lions Clubs. You obviously cannot see its flame. Many sightless people throughout the world have never seen what this simple flame even looks like. Please remove your blindfold(s). Welcome back to the world of light. Hopefully in your lifetime, you will never have to spend moments in darkness beyond those you just did.

I would ask you at this time, do you still desire to be a member of the Lions club? (response) Please take this candle and light it from the international flame as an indication of your membership in this lions club. This is the light we hope you will shed on all those in need and that look for your help.

(lights on please)

You will please answer the following questions by saying I do or I will. Do you accept membership in the Lions Club of \_\_\_\_\_ knowing that such membership obligates you to participate in all functions of the club? (response) To the best of your ability, will you abide by the Lions Code of Ethics, Lions International Purposes, attend meetings regularly, accept such assignments as are given you, and contribute your share to the programs of your Club, District and Lions Clubs International. (response) You are now (a) member(s) of the Lions Club of \_\_\_\_\_. Your sponsor(s) will now place upon your left lapel(s) the Lions emblem which signifies this membership. Wear it proudly, as you are officially a member of the world's largest service organization. The emblem being pinned on you has great significance to the Lions throughout the free world. The large letter 'L' stands for law, liberty, labour, loyalty, love and life. The letter 'L' is placed within a circle, representing the unity of each individual member with each local club, with Lions International and with all Lions throughout the world.

The letter 'L' and the circle of unity are set against a background of purple signifying loyalty, loyalty to country, to friends, to one's self and to the integrity of mind and heart. Surrounding the purple circle is an exterior of gold, signifying sincerity of purpose, liberality in judgement, purity in life, and generosity in mind, heart and purse toward our fellow man. Last, but by no means least, in the exterior circle of gold, you will find the heads of two lions. One looks back, reflecting on our many accomplishments. The other looks forward, indicating our constant readiness to seize the future and make it our own. You will be assigned to active committees and be given additional opportunities for orientation regarding Lionism. Remember, there are no barriers in Lionism, no levels, we are all equal as symbolized by the Lions toast, 'not above you, not beneath you, but with you.'

I want to especially congratulate you and your sponsor(s). More members mean more eyes to see the need and more hands to serve. Lions, please join with me in welcoming Lion(s)

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