

Bro. Clarence Atmore

Recipient of the William Mercer Wilson Medal.



Bro. Clarence Atmore was described by those who knew him as ‘a real gentleman’, and ‘a great guy’. He was tall, thin, and calm in his manner. And he was a dedicated Mason of Victoria Lodge No. 56.

Bro. Atmore was born 14 February 1899 in what was then West Williams Township, near Parkhill. His parents were Alonzo Byron Atmore and Catherine “Kate” (Wilson) Atmore. He had an older brother Byron, and a younger brother Wilson. Unfortunately, Clarence’s father died in November 1904, when Clarence was just 5.

The family moved to Sarnia. As an adult, Bro. Atmore worked at Imperial Oil. And he married. Just before Thanksgiving, on October 6 1928, Blossom Beatrice Hillier and Clarence Atmore exchanged vows and were married.

Being more established in his life, Bro. Atmore was welcomed into Freemasonry early in 1952. It was a busy year with 25 Initiations. Both his brothers also became Masons, though not in Victoria Lodge No. 56.

Something that Bro. Atmore took on as a personal mission was visiting at the hospital. In that era it was normal for a book to be at the reception desk with a list of all the patients, and information about their religious affiliation and club memberships. Bro. Atmore would attend almost every day and visit Masons in Sarnia General Hospital. He also visited men who listed other club memberships: Knights of Columbus, Optimist, etc. Entertainment in the rooms at the hospital was not as it is now. So when Bro. Atmore would knock on the door and ask if a fellow would like to hear about the ball game or the hockey scores, he was readily welcomed in for a visit. He was described as a 'great visitor' and it seemed everybody knew him.

The Minutes of meetings of Victoria Lodge No. 56 of that era include the recurring statement "Bro. Clarence Atmore gave a report on the Lodge sick." That statement is present in the minutes for the Regular meeting of June 3, 1969. It was at that meeting that R.W. Bro. Keith Hart presented the William Mercer Wilson Medal to Bro. Clarence Atmore. The minutes record:

"The regular business of the evening being concluded, Wor. Bro. Purves turned the gavel over to D. of C. Ver. Wor. Bro. Harold Barnes. Bro. Clarence Atmore, Chaplain of Victoria Lodge was called to the East. Rt. Wor. Bro. Keith Hart D.D.G.M. Sarnia District and V. Wor. Bro. Harold Barnes presented Bro. Atmore with the William Mercer Wilson Medal on behalf of Grand Lodge. Wor. Bro. Doug Burwell gave a history of the Wm. Mercer Wilson award and the man it is named after. Wor. Bro. Jack Watson presented Bro. Atmore with a smoker and Life Membership in Victoria on behalf of the brethren in appreciation of his service to the Lodge. Bro. Atmore in his reply thanked the Lodge and those present for their tribute and hoped he would be able to continue for many more years."

A photograph of that event is on display in Sarnia Masonic Hall, together with that medal.

The William Mercer Wilson Medal is awarded to members who are not Past Masters, nor are ever likely to be, and could not be honored otherwise by Grand Lodge. It is presented for very outstanding Masonic service. In the case of Bro. Clarence Atmore, it was given in recognition of his commitment to the fundamental principle of brotherly love as demonstrated by his regular visits to Brethren and others at the hospital.

Bro. Clarence Atmore had two brothers. His older brother Byron Ray Atmore became a veterinarian. He served in WWI in the Army Veterinary Corps. In 1925 he married Frances "Marion" Thaxton. Dr. Byron Atmore was Worshipful Master of St. Paul Lodge No. 601 in 1945. Tragically he died at the end of July 1945 due to a motor vehicle accident.

His younger brother Wilson Victor Atmore was a pipefitter by trade and worked for several companies in and around Sarnia. In 1938 he married Florence Bailey. Wilson Atmore also became a Mason. Bro. Wilson Atmore died in 1965.

Bro. Clarence Atmore died May 9, 1984, at age 85. The published obituary in the local paper reflects his humility. The short notice gives only basic information and notes that he died at hospital. Surviving him are his wife Blossom, sister-in-law Florence Atmore, nephew Murray and niece Katherine. It is recorded that Victoria Lodge No. 56 held a memorial service at the funeral home.

Bro. Atmore is interred in Lakeview Cemetery, Sarnia. His wife Blossom died in 1993 at age 100, and is interred beside him.

The William Mercer Wilson medal awarded to Bro. Clarence Atmore is displayed at Sarnia Masonic Hall.



This short biography prepared by Wor. Bro. Marshall Kern of Victoria Lodge No. 56. Sources of information include interviews with RW Bro. Keith Hart, VW Bro. Earle Clysdale, family records located in Ancestry.com, obituary notice published in The Sarnia Observer, minute book of Victoria Lodge No. 56, Proceedings of Grand Lodge for 1969.