

John Lawless was initiated into Haverstraw Lodge #877, 33 years ago on December 8, 1992. Early on, he worked on many committees in the Lodge until he was able to find the time around his career and family obligations to serve as a Lodge Officer. John was appointed Lodge Esquire in 2009 and subsequently elected into the chairs before becoming the Exalted Ruler in 2013. After his year as Exalted Ruler, he returned to the Loyal Knight position to fill in for an Officer who could not fulfill his duties. In the following year, 2015, John was elected Lodge Secretary, a position he still holds.

John descends from a rich family history at the Haverstraw Elks Lodge. His great uncle James Finnegan was a Charter member of the Lodge in 1903, and his family has maintained a continuous presence in the Lodge ever since. Family life instilled within John, at an early age, that the Elks are a team. Family members coached that each Elk lives, sleeps, eats and serves as part of that team.

At Haverstraw Lodge, John has chaired or served on every Lodge Committee, taking particular interest in the ENF and Membership Committees, both of which he continues to chair. In his Membership Chair role, John has worked hard and significantly increased Haverstraw Lodge's membership to over 1,500 members. John has earned numerous awards, certificates and recognition for his hard work from the Grand Lodge, NYSEA and the Hudson Valley District for his roles as both Membership and ENF Chair's and consistently achieves an over 80 percent membership support and retention rate for ENF donations.

As a District Representative, John has served as Membership, ENF, and Training Chairman as well as serving as a Grand Lodge Special Representative for Lodges requiring assistance, both in the Hudson Valley District and adjacent districts. He has served on the teams of 7 State Vice-Presidents as well as 5 District Deputies. In the past few years, John has been assisting Past State President Joseph Petriello with District Sponsor responsibilities and obligations.

On the State level, John was elected NY State Trustee, serving from 2016 through 2019, and he was then elected as the Hudson Valley State Vice-President in 2019. John was further honored to serve as the NYSEA Elks Memorial Day Chairman from 2019-2023.

John's Grand Lodge service includes two terms as District Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler in 2021-2022 & 2022-2023 attending the respective Grand Lodge Conventions in Tampa, Fl. and Atlanta, Ga. John also attended Grand Lodge Sessions in 2013, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024.

John served as a volunteer fireman in his hometown for over 30 years. He is a Veteran of the U.S. Army, having served in Operations Dessert Shield / Storm. He is a retired Town of Haverstraw Police Sergeant, also having worked for the Rockland County Sheriff's Department and the Rockland County District Attorney's Office Narcotics Task Force. In 2000, John received the New York State Police Officer of the Year Award, New York State's highest award for bravery in the line of duty, for his heroic actions while saving numerous residents, including infant children during a massive fast spreading apartment complex fire, risking his own life multiple times. The award was presented by Governor George Pataki, a fellow Elk and member of Peekskill Lodge #744.

John currently resides in the North Rockland area which comprises the Towns of Haverstraw and Stony Point. John is in a relationship with his long-time partner Maureen. Between them they have 5 grown adult children, as well as one beautiful granddaughter and a grandson on the way.