

Protocol And Courtesy

Protocol, originally a code of diplomatic or military etiquette and precedence, embodies the idea of extending courtesy to honorees, guests, and/or participants in the order of their relative rank.

Today, protocol is an important factor in all organizations. It promotes orderly procedures following the rules of etiquette. Personal friendships, likes and dislikes are not considered. The office is honored - not the person.

The presiding officer is generally responsible for directing the application of the principles of protocol within the organization which, properly carried out, will reflect favorably upon her leadership ability. She may appoint a Protocol Chairman to implement the plans for processing, seating, etc.

Rank - The first principle of protocol is to establish the rank of the participants. The following guidelines are for the order of rank at various levels within a State Federation.

The President holds the highest rank in her own organization - i.e., the local club, the district, or GFWC-NC. She is the presiding officer or hostess for functions in her organization.

Except for the GFWC President and the Governor, the Speaker of the Day holds the highest rank below the president of the organization.

At district and local club meetings, only the GFWC President has precedence over the GFWC-NC President.

The guests of the organization are presented according to their rank as follows:

- The GFWC President (except in her own state where she would yield to her Governor)
- The State Governor
- The State Federation President
- Elected members of Congress...Senators, then Representatives
- Representatives of state, county, or city governments.
- The officers of the organization are ranked according to their order in the organization's bylaws. Members of the Board of Trustees follow them in rank, where applicable.
- Former presidents (Past State Presidents, Past Directors of Juniors, etc.) may be presented according to the custom of the organization. As a rule, presidents serving the earliest dates precede those serving more recently in processions, etc. The same order is followed for former Directors of Juniors.
- For those fitting into more than one category, assign their "highest rank." For example, a club officer who is the Speaker of the Day would assume the higher rank as speaker.
- An out-of-state guest of "equal rank" as an in-state guest is given the higher rank as a courtesy to a visitor. For example, a North Carolina U.S. Senator would yield to a visiting U.S. Senator. Similarly, among "equals," higher rank is accorded those traveling the greater distance.

Processionals -The participants having been identified by rank, the processional is organized from the lowest to the highest, with the President entering last. Reserved seating must be planned for everyone in a processional. The following is the order for a typical District Annual Meeting Processional:

Club Presidents

Chaplain

Parliamentarian

District Treasurer

District Secretary

District Junior Director

District 2nd Vice President

GFWC-NC Director of Juniors

GFWC-NC 2nd Vice President

District Vice President

GFWC-NC President (GFWC-NC 1st Vice President)

District President

Pages may be included as needed.

Any other officers or chairman should be included at the rank they assume for this meeting..

Head Tables - Meals

The presiding officer sits to the right of the lectern, or in the center if no lectern is used.

The ranking guest or speaker sits to the president's right.

Other guests and officers are seated by rank alternately to the left and right of the president. If there are several guests, they may be placed between the officers of the organization.

The size of the head table should be determined by the size and capacity of the room, usually not to exceed 12. If space at the head table is limited, ranking guests may be seated at a table in front of the head table either as a second "head table" or at one or more reserved tables. None of lesser rank should be seated at the head table while those of higher rank are not, unless they are program participants.

Place cards should be used at the head table(s).

Introductions should be made from the lower rank up to the ranking guest. This may involve introducing the lower table first, then moving to the head table. It is now accepted practice to introduce those to the left of the presiding officer first, starting with the lowest rank followed by those on her right.

Introduction of the speaker should be postponed until the time of the speech, but the name should be given with a statement that the guest "will be introduced formally a little later."

The following is a typical head table-seating plan for a District Annual Meeting

Head Table - Seating

Hostess Club President

Chaplain

District Treasurer

District Junior Director

District 2nd Vice President

GFWC-NC Director of Juniors

(GFWC-NC 2nd Vice President)

.....AUDIENCE

District President

GFWC-NC President (GFWC-NC President-elect, GFWC-NC First Vice President)

District Vice President

District Secretary

Parliamentarian

Hostess Club President

When there is a state officer residing in a district, she would always be seated at the Head Table for meals. Her state office would determine her place.

Head Tables - Business Meetings

Normally, the elected officers are seated at a head table during the business meeting. If space does not permit, the president and recording secretary should be provided adequate table space for their papers. The parliamentarian should be assigned a seat next to the president so as to be convenient for consultation in a low voice should the need occur.

The officers should then be assigned seats alternately to the right and left of the president.

Those seated at the head table need not be introduced unless there are those present who might not know them.

All other dignitaries would be introduced or acknowledged in the proper order of rank.

Receiving Lines

Receiving lines should be kept as short as possible without offending anyone.

Participants are lined up according to rank. If there are several dignitaries, it is acceptable to place club officers between the dignitaries to eliminate the necessity of a dignitary presenting a guest to another dignitary.

There should be a hostess with a clear voice to introduce guests to the official hostess (president) at the beginning of the line. The president then presents the guests to the honoree.

Special measures which can be used to expedite large functions include:

- The use of a second receiving line to include chairmen and guests of lesser rank.
- The use of hostesses to encourage the lines to keep moving. Comments in a receiving line should be brief.

General Guidelines

The audience should rise when a processional begins as a courtesy to their officers and guests.

As a courtesy, the audience should rise when the GFWC President and the GFWC-NC President are introduced. The same courtesy should be shown the GFWC and GFWC-NC Director of Juniors at Junior meetings.

When in doubt, use good judgment based on a gracious recognition of those involved and common sense.

Courtesy to Speakers

Although developed specifically for Federation guests, these guidelines are appropriate for all guests.

Extending the Invitation:

- If possible, give the guest or speaker two dates to consider.
- Include the following information in the invitation:
 - Time, place, type of meeting, (e.g. luncheon, dinner).
 - Dress
 - If speech is given - the topic to be covered and the time allowed.
 - If invited to conduct a ceremony (initiation, installation), give complete details.
 - If a theme is being used, mention that. Ask if there are arrangements she will require.
 - If spouse or traveling companion is invited.
- Offer overnight accommodations if guest is traveling a great distance.
- Supply specific information regarding expenses your group will pay; i.e., travel, motel accommodations, speaker's fees, . . . in short, all financial obligations that will be met by the club.

The Visit:

- Be sure your guest has clear directions to the meeting place.
- Be sure someone is there to meet the guest on her arrival.
- When meeting a guest at a plane or the train, take her first to a place where she can freshen up.
- If she is to be an overnight guest, first take her to her lodgings.
- Give her a copy of the printed program.
- If there is time before the meeting begins, introduce her to some of the members.
- Escort her to the proper seat and see that she is comfortable during the meeting.
- Never allow guests to stand in line for refreshments.
- Federation guests are also members of local clubs and are interested in club programs and projects. Don't eliminate all the club business and discussion.
- If a State or General Federation officer or chairman is to be the key speaker, no other program, other than a short musical one, should be planned.
- When a State or General Federation officer or chairman is invited as a guest of a club, it is a courtesy to invite Federation leaders living in the area, such as the District President, State Federation officers, or chairmen, etc. to attend the meeting.
- The presentation of a gift to a speaker or guest is a matter of club custom.
- Transportation should be arranged for the guests' departure, if needed.
- Don't forget the "thank you note" written as soon after the visit as possible.

Introduction of Speakers:

- A person known to the audience is PRESENTED, a stranger is INTRODUCED.
- The purpose of an introduction is to acquaint the audience with the speaker, as to her background, qualifications, and subject.
- Be brief, not more than one or two minutes.
- Include the reason for the talk at this time.
- Be factual, not gushy, to put both the speaker and the audience at ease.
- Mention the speaker's name at the end.

Newspaper Interviews or Pictures:

- Try to schedule these about 15-30 minutes preceding the meeting. Make sure that the speaker has been notified of the time.
- If pictures must be taken during the meeting, begin the meeting on time, complete the opening ceremonies, start the flow of business, then ask the Vice President to assume the chair and excuse yourself and guests for the pictures.
- Always inform guests of planned interviews, so that they may be prepared.
- Courtesy should be shown to members of the media at all times. Extend invitations to luncheons, special programs, etc., and if possible, provide complimentary tickets.