General Federation of Women's Clubs of Massachusetts

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Knowledge is Power ~ Protocol Empowers ~
Knowledge of Protocol Enhances Effectiveness

Protocol is defined as the customs and regulations dealing with diplomatic formality, procedure and etiquette. Protocol encompasses all the niceties and courtesies which a host extends to create friendliness and mutual understanding. Correct observance of Protocol will add to the success and enjoyment of any meeting and assures proper recognition of those whose position warrants special consideration.

RANK OF OFFICERS:

Officers of an organization/club are ranked according to their order in the bylaws:

- President
- First Vice President (President-elect)
- Second Vice President
- Recording Secretary
- Corresponding Secretary
- Treasurer

The president holds the highest rank in her own organization. She is the presiding officer for its meetings and other events. The president is the official representative of the organization and all statements, messages, materials should have her approval. It is respect for the office and a courtesy to stand when the state president or international president is presented to speak or in a processional.

PROTOCOL FOR PRESIDENT (PRESIDING OFFICER):

The presiding officer:

- Begins meetings on time.
- Prepares an agenda
- Presides impartially and speaks clearly so all may understand.
- Remains impersonal in attitude and remarks.
- Requests a seating chart from the protocol chairman or program chairman to check the correct spelling and pronunciation of those to be introduced.

If many are to be honored formally, they may be introduced by categories:
state officers, past presidents, directors, chairmen, club presidents, etc.
May request that applause be withheld in each category until all introductions have been made.

- Communicates with chairmen and/or others, before meeting begins, to be sure they are prepared to give a report. Does not ask, "Does anyone wish to report?" This is pre-planned - an important part of the agenda.
- Requests those giving a report be seated at the front of the room.

- Does not wear a corsage if guest(s) have not been given one.
- Consults with the parliamentarian when advice is needed or requested.
- Asks parliamentarian to explain or interpret a point of order to members if necessary.
- If a President holds a state position her highest position is recognized for presentation and uses her state credential delegate card at state meetings.

PROTOCOL FOR MEMBERS:

- Give full attention to the presiding officer on tap of gavel.
- Address presiding officer to gain recognition, to make presentation or give a report. The presiding officer may be the president, chairman or director. It is proper to say, "Madam President - Madam Chairman - Madam Director".
- Refrain from using a litany of acknowledgements.
- Sit at the front of the room, stand and face members when making a presentation or giving a report.
- Report should be in writing and a copy given to the recording secretary.
- Avoid walking between presiding officer and audience.
- Refrain from disturbing the meeting through whispering and restless behavior.
- Refrain from approaching those seated at the head table/platform during a meeting.
- Give messages for those seated at head table/platform to President's Assistant or pages.
- Refrain from doing needlework when guest speaker is making presentation.
- Remain seated during meeting unless asked to distribute material.
- Be discrete in bringing bottles of water or tonic to head table/platform. Pour contents in glass provided.
- Wear delegate nametag at State meetings.
- If a member holds a state position they register at state meetings with the state credential/delegate card.

INTRODUCTIONS:

- The presiding officer presents members and guests at the head table/platform. Never use the phrase, "Introduce the "head table/platform"
- Introductions start from the left to the center and then right to center.
- The presiding officer always introduces state and national officers - never the program chairman or someone else.
- The highest ranking officer is introduced first and goes down the line. If each officer is to speak, the lowest ranking officer speaks first thus the last words from the highest ranking officer/guest.
- The presiding officer presents the program chairman - she does NOT "turn the meeting over to... "
- Avoid delaying meal service to make introductions.
- If time becomes an issue wait until all have been served to make introductions or until the end of the meal.

INTRODUCTION OF SPEAKER:

- Present to the assembly any person the members may know. Introduce someone not known to the members.
- The purpose of a introduction is to establish the credibility of the speaker on the chosen subject.

- The speaker should be advised, in advance, how much time has been allotted for the presentation
- The introduction should be brief, honoring time allotted the speaker.
- Avoid the use of flowery words or personal views as to the qualifications of the speaker.
- It should be decided before the event who will introduce and thank the speaker.

PERSONAL INTRODUCTIONS:

- A man is introduced to a woman (except chiefs of staff)
- A guest is introduced to the presiding officer or chairman of the host group.
- A person without a title is introduced to one with a title.
- A person to whom one makes the introduction is the person one wishes to honor. Best "rule of thumb" is to say the first name of the person honored. Follow this by - "May I introduce ..."

HOSTESS DUTIES:

A vice president, protocol chairman, program chairman or a member may be appointed by the president as a hostess for an important guest. If there are several guests the president may appoint a chairman of hostesses who will assign duties to other members.Hostess duties include:

- Arrive at the meeting place at least 30 minutes before guest.
- Become familiar with the facilities: meeting room, coat room, rest room, etc.
- Present guest/speaker with name card and program
- Escort guest to seat.
- Introduce guest/speaker to members.
- Assist guest/speaker with materials, if necessary.
- Be prepared to discuss club programs and projects.
- Serve guest/speaker refreshments or place them at the head of the line.
- Remain at the meeting until guest/speaker has left.

HEAD TABLE/SEATING:

The number to be seated at a head table is determined by:

- Purpose of the meeting
- Size of the room
- Anticipated audience
- Number of persons to be honored.

If the audience is relatively small a head table of 5-8 is appropriate. Others may be seated at side tables adjacent to the head table or directly in front. At large meetings a subhead table may be added. The program chairman, in consultation with the president, decides proper seating arrangements.

Head Table/Platform seating:

- The presiding officer sits to the right of the podium as it faces the audience.
- If a parliamentarian is engaged for the meeting she may sit to the right or the left of the presiding officer (at the convenience of the presiding officer.)
- The most important guest sits to the right of the presiding officer.
- The state federation uses alternate seating. With this procedure the highest ranking officer sits to the right of the presiding officer, the second highest to her left alternating until all are seated.

- When presenting/introducing those seated at the head table, the presiding officer begins at the far left to the center then at the far right to the center presenting/introducing the highest ranking officer last. see INTRODUCTIONS
- Invited guests should have reserved seating
- There should be reserved seating for everyone in a processional.
- Place cards should be used at head tables and guest tables.

INVITATIONS:

Verbal invitations should always be confirmed on official letterhead stationery and envelope of the organization.

- Informal note paper or preprinted invitation cards are acceptable for special events such as President's Day, Anniversaries, etc.
- It is important that the club name appear on whatever stationery is used.
- Carefully check the full name, title and address of the person to receive the invitation.
- Send as soon as possible after the event is scheduled. Include:
    - All details of the event: place, date, time, type of meeting (Luncheon/Business/Special Occasion), number of attendees, directions, parking.
    - Appropriate dress - formal or business attire.
    - What you are inviting the guest to do.
    - If a speech is to be given, indicate the topic to whom.
    - Name of hostess.
    - Any honorarium, remuneration for travel or fee agreed to.
    - A telephone number, cell phone number or e-mail address that guest may contact.
    - A request for a response by a certain date. If there is no response by the date requested follow up with another letter or telephone call.

FLAG ETIQUETTE:

- The Flag of the United States of America is accorded the place of honor and is positioned to the right of the presiding officer.
- The Flag of the United States of America should always be in the center and at the highest point of the group when a number of flags from states, societies, etc are grouped for display.
- When displaying the Flag against the wall, vertically or horizontally, the flags union (stars) should be at the top, to the Flag's own right, and to the observer's left.
- The Flag should never be used as drapery for a head table or podium. Bunting is used for patriotic decoration.
- The correct words are "Pledge Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America".
- We "Pledge Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America" by freeing our hands and placing our right hand over our heart.
- We keep our hand over our heart saying the "Pledge" and while singing the *National Anthem.*
- When the Flag is in a parade or processional we place our right hand over our heart when the Flag is six (6) paces away from us and remain in that position until the Flag has passed by us six (6) paces.
- The Flag may be displayed from sunrise to sunset on Buildings or flag staffs in the open on all days that the weather permits.
- The Flag may be displayed 24 hours if illuminated during the hours of darkness.