

Nov. 8 WWI Veterans Monument Rededication at Central Park & 150th Anniversary commemoration of Knights of Pythias

The Grand Lodge of New York (KOPNY.org), Knights of Pythias joins public officials to rededicate a WWI-era Knights of Pythias Memorial Monument located in Central Park **Saturday, November 8, 11:00 a.m.** (Rain Date November 15). The ceremony will commemorate Veteran's Day as well as the 150th anniversary of the first ever fraternal order chartered by act of Congress (following the approval of President Lincoln). The monument is located on the eastern (5th Ave.) side of the park near the band shell at about 63rd Street. Access is from the 59th or 65th Street entrance. Please see the image and map below (from <http://www.nycgovparks.org/parks/central-park/monuments/874>). The program includes Brigadier General (Retired) Loree Sutton, MD., Commissioner, Mayor's Office of Veterans Affairs.

The [Knights of Pythias](#), an international fraternal organization, supports many charities. Its motto since its founding: Friendship, Charity, and Benevolence. Learn more on its history [here](#).

Grand Lodge sponsors a Servicemen and Women and Veterans [Committee](#) (chaired by Queens resident Joe Robinson) which also sends packages to soldiers in war zones.

New York Pythians, their Grand Lodge and local lodges support many [charities](#) and support summer camps for young people who might not otherwise receive such opportunities (In fact, Council Member I. Daneek Miller attended Pythian Camp and recalls it fondly in our conversations; Marty Markowitz attended Pythian Camp and Lew Fidler is a Pythian and member of a Brooklyn lodge).

For more information contact Deputy Supreme Chancellor [Roger Siegel](#) (845-321-3658), KGS (a Past Grand Chancellor of New York; Grand Lodge is led by an elected Grand Chancellor; local lodges are led by a Chancellor Commander) who is coordinating the program and will serve as the master of ceremonies.

307th Infantry Memorial

The Knights of Pythias an International Fraternal Organization founded in the City Of Washington February 19, 1864 has during it's 150 years been both a fraternal and patriotic organization. Formed from the ashes of the Civil War the members of the order have always enjoyed a patriotic fervor in their service to their members and to country. For many years a military branch known as the Uniform Rank of the Knights of Pythias enjoyed a most favorable place in our Order. During the Spanish American War the Rank offered a voluntary Brigade to President McKinley of over 10,000 officers and enlisted to participate as a fighting unit. So I was not surprised to find that members of the order served and gave their all during the First World War.

This grove of trees is a monument to the men of the 307th Infantry (77th Army Division) that gave their lives during the First World War. The monument originally included a boulder housing a large plaque with the names of the soldiers, a large boulder inscribed, "To the Dead of the 307th Infantry A.E.F., 500 Officers and Men 1917-1918," and 15 small plaques (one for each of the companies) mounted on stone markers at the base of the trees. An additional stone monument was added by the [Knights of Pythias](#) to commemorate ten members who were killed in the war.

Members of the 307th were notable for their participation in the battle later dubbed the "[Lost Battalion.](#)" On October 2, 1918, units of New York's 77th "Liberty" Division advanced into the Argonne Forest in France. They were surrounded by German troops and although they were low on ammunition and had very limited food, shelter and access to water, managed to hold on under intense enemy fire until reinforcements arrived six days later on October 8. Only around 200 of the 600 men survived and the heroism of the men resulted in numerous awards.

The Knights of Pythias Monument was dedicated October 23, 1921. The Mayor John Hylan and ex-Governor Charles S. Whitman were the principal speakers at a memorial service and tree planting ceremony. The dedication was under the auspices of the Knights of Pythias of Manhattan and the Bronx, and ten trees were planted in memory of their members who died in service during the war. "They died clean in heart, clean in mind, clean of hands and clean in action," said Mr. Whitman, "and they left a memory so precious that it will last as long as the Knights of Pythias exist. They were true representatives of American manhood, American traditions, American love of fair play and American love of freedom." Mayor Hylan was introduced by Morris A. Drucker, Grand Chancellor, who presided and presented the trees to the city.

"The dominant position of America today and the perpetuity of our free institutions has been made possible by our militant manhood," the Mayor said. "To them is due a debt of gratitude from every man, woman and child, a debt never to be forgotten and beyond human recompense."

"It is true that we enjoyed but small estimation in the eyes of other nations before our entrance into the last armed conflict. But what a change the heroism of our sturdy soldiers has wrought! Today, by a common impulse, the great nations of the earth make pilgrimages to our doors, court our friendship and eagerly solicit our support.

"This has all come to pass by the valor of those who did not flinch but valiantly entered the valley of the shadow of death."

The Ten Pythians in whose memory the trees were planted were:

Sidney U. Schwartz, Triangle Lodge 153
Morris Dickstein, Cosmopolitan Lodge 202
Louis I. Hirshfield, Cosmopolitan Lodge 202
Solomon D. Katz, Cosmopolitan Lodge 202
David Reisman, Nonpareil Lodge 214
Jerome Heine, Pinta Lodge 331
David M. Klein, Columbus Lodge 332
Jesse Steinthal, Sioux Lodge 357
Alexander Goldberg, Claremore Lodge 451
Emanuel Brode, Fancourt Lodge 452

May they continue to rest in peace