



## Initiation Ceremonies

Quill and Scroll makes no requirement regarding the initiation of new members. This is left entirely to the local chapter. The initiation services are suggested rituals that any chapter may use as printed or may revise to suit its particular situation.

The Board of Trustees believes that a formal program carried out with dignity and meaning will help establish Quill and Scroll on a high level in any school. An impressive ceremony not only gives the individual candidate a sense of the importance of membership but also brings prestige to the organization within the school and the community.

Chapters may conduct initiations several times a year as candidates become eligible. Some chapters conduct initiations at the close of each semester. Others hold only one initiation in the spring as a part of the school's honor assembly program.

The initiation ceremony is not secret and may be conducted before the entire student body or held in connection with an annual publications banquet. Frequently chapter initiation programs are formal evening affairs with school officials, parents, professional journalists and prominent citizens as guests.

Although initiation ceremonies are optional with the local chapter, Quill and Scroll recommends that each chapter adopt some type of initiation that will be impressive, dignified and of lasting value to those who take part in it.

In 2020, as a response to the global pandemic, chapters started holding virtual ceremonies, and these scripts can be adapted for a virtual setting.

**Three suggested forms of initiation ceremonies are presented in this document. Chapters may select any form, or they may develop their own using these as templates.**

1. Initiation Ritual (1) is a medium-length traditional ritual for use with more elaborate programs and celebrations. It does NOT outline and eight lights of Quill and Scroll. The setting is a larger hall or auditorium with dignitaries seated on a stage.
2. Initiation Ritual (2) is the long-form traditional ritual in which all eight lights are recited and explained. The setting is informal and makes most elaborate use of candles
3. Initiation Ritual (3) is another medium-length ritual, but it is newer and explains the Society's eight lights in more modern terms. It uses candles, ideally, and has been used in virtual settings.

### **Initiation Ritual (1)**

*Note: At the front of the hall where the initiation is to take place will be the adviser, the president of the local chapter, the secretary of the chapter and as many of the following people as space and scheduling will allow: the principal of the high school, the superintendent of schools and other chapter officers, The chapter secretary, president, or adviser, or the school principal may serve as Master of Ceremonies can be any of those people or someone designated by the chapter.*

### **Master of Ceremonies**

We are about to conduct an initiation of candidates for membership in Quill and Scroll, the International Honorary Society for High School Journalists. (Give full name of adviser), adviser of the work in journalism at (give full name of high school), will begin the ceremony by outlining the aims and the purpose of Quill and Scroll Society.

**Adviser or Designated Speaker** *(The speech may include whatever the adviser thinks is fitting, with reference to the work in journalism at the high school and to the reasons for placing a chapter there. The speech should end substantially as it is given here.)*

Quill and Scroll, the International Honorary Society for High School Journalists, was founded at the University of Iowa, April 10, 1926, by a group of teachers of journalism who wished to recognize and to reward worthy high school journalists.

To become a member of the Society, students must meet five qualifications:

- They must be of junior or senior classification;
- They must be scholastically in the upper third of their high school class;
- They must have done superior work in some phase of high school journalism;
- They must be recommended by the adviser of journalistic work in their high school or by a professional who oversees the students' work in a professional media outlet; AND
- They must be approved as being worthy of membership by the Society's executive director.

Quill and Scroll desires to make membership an honor in recognition of high school journalistic achievement.

Today we are receiving (*give number*) candidates from (*Name of School*) into membership in the Society. As I read their names, will they please come forward and take their places facing the rostrum.

*(The candidates come forward and take their places facing the adviser with their backs to the assembly.)*

### **Adviser**

You have been called here because you have demonstrated your worthiness for membership in Quill and Scroll. The ability that you have displayed in your work promises much for you whether you choose to enter the profession of journalism.

But talent means little if it is not accompanied by industry. Membership in Quill and Scroll involves a responsibility which you must not forget – the

duty to devote yourself to the welfare of the school, and to any other group or community to which you may belong.

Remember that to be a leader in a real sense, you must acquire a background for judging and interpreting the events of the day. In but a few years this obligation of leadership will fall to you. Make certain that you are fully prepared and fully qualified to assume responsibility.

### **Adviser (or President)**

The badge of Quill and Scroll Society with which you are being entrusted is symbolic of the painstaking efforts of the scribes of old to record the events of their time in permanent form. We of today owe the same duty to posterity.

Let the Quill represent in your minds the meticulous care which must be put forth to turn thoughts into proper language; let the Scroll represent the permanent quality of good journalism.

### **Adviser (or President)**

It is now necessary for you, before being declared members of Quill and Scroll, and before receiving the Society's badge, to assume an obligation to the Society.

- Do you solemnly pledge in the presence of these people here assembled that you will be true to the ideals of the Society?
- In whatever field you choose to enter, will you always painstakingly seek the truth?
- Will you earnestly strive to aid the best interests of the community?
- Will you be faithful to your colleagues and mentors, and at all times be a reliable co-worker?
- Do you pledge to do all in your power to aid in the cause of better journalism?

If you assume these responsibilities, answer, "I do." (Pause.)

### **Adviser (or President)**

By the authority vested in me by the International Executive Director, I hereby declare you members of Quill and Scroll Society, with all the rights, with all the privileges and with all the duties that pertain to membership in this

Society. May you ever prove worthy of the faith the Society has shown in you today. I congratulate each of you on receiving this honor. As I call your names you will step forward and receive your badge of membership.

*(Initiates may receive their pins and membership cards from the principal, the adviser or the president of the chapter. Each new member is extended congratulations with a handshake.)*

**Master of Ceremonies.** Congratulations to all new members of the Quill and Scroll International Honor Society for High School Journalists.

This completes our initiation ceremony.

## **Candle-Lighting Initiation Ritual (2)**

*On a table is a single holder containing one large candle. Behind this is a candelabrum holding seven smaller candles. On the table in front of the candelabrum lies one white candle for each candidate to be initiated. Eight people who are to participate in the initiation form a semicircle behind the table, facing the audience, with the leader (or president or adviser) in the center. Candidates are seated facing the table. Battery powered candles can be used as substitutes. The leader steps forward and begins the ritual.*

*Note: The Leader can be filled by the adviser, the chapter president, a representative of Quill and Scroll, or an alumnus of the Quill and Scroll chapter.*

### **Leader**

We are here tonight to initiate new members into Quill and Scroll, the International Honorary Society for High School Journalists. Quill and Scroll chapters include in their membership students who have excelled in journalism in their high school media or in professional media— be it yearbook, newspaper, magazine, digital media, broadcast news or a community media outlet – and whose scholarship places them in the upper third of their respective classes.

Journalism is far reaching in its aims. Its followers carry obligations to society, so tonight I light the candle of TRUTH symbolic of our aims and aspirations for the world in which we live and that finer world of tomorrow toward which we strive.

*(Leader lights single large candle which is symbolic of Truth)*

### **Leader**

I light the light of TRUTH which signifies sincerity in character, action and speech. It should serve as a guiding light to which all the world may turn. It must be believed in and upheld at all times if justice and liberty are to prevail. Individuals should place Truth and the search for Truth above all other ideals.

It is the duty of Quill and Scroll members to take an active part in the search for Truth by maintaining a high standard for journalistic ethics. Quill and Scroll desires to make membership an honor that will stand everywhere for the highest type of journalistic achievement.

From the light of Truth, Quill and Scroll first took its ideals in 1926 when it was organized by a group of high school advisers. This light has spread to more than 11,500 chapters located in every state of the Union and in 30 countries around the world.

From the candle of Truth, then, we will light our tapers of journalistic endeavor.

*SECOND LIGHT steps forward, picks up candle and lights it from Truth. Holds candle while talking. After finishing, places candle in candelabrum.*

From Truth, I light the candle of LEARNING.

Literature, history, music and the fine arts form a background that enriches life. For the journalist who is interpreting life in the light of modern understanding, it is absolutely essential to comprehend those things which have enriched life for people in times past.

*THIRD LIGHT steps forward, picks up candle and lights it from Truth. Holds candle while talking. After finishing, places candle in candelabrum.*

From Truth, I light the candle of LEADERSHIP.

It is necessary that those trained in journalistic work should be leaders themselves. They should possess the personality to attract followers, to state facts clearly and concisely, to portray truth, to act wisely in times of stress and through it all to lead without dictating – to guide, but not to drive.

*FOURTH LIGHT steps forward, picks up candle and lights it from Truth. Holds candle while talking. After finishing, places candle in candelabrum.*

From Truth, I light the candle of LOYALTY.

Loyalty is the essence of well-placed trust. People can betray their conscience, their friends, their employers and still be considered by the world at large as useful citizens. No one but you yourself can define your loyalty. Be loyal to your news medium and its audience. Keep the confidence of those for whom you work.

*FIFTH LIGHT steps forward, picks up candle and lights it from Truth. Holds candle while talking. After finishing, places candle in candelabrum.*

From Truth, I light the candle of INITIATIVE.

Without initiative people today would be in a state little better than savagery. The urge to push on; to try new experiments; to create new aims; to rise above the trivial, the sordid, and the common place has been bestowed on society to lead individuals on to greater things.

*SIXTH LIGHT steps forward, picks up candle and lights it from Truth. Holds candle while talking. After finishing, places candle in candelabrum.*

From the candle of Truth, I light the candle of INTEGRITY.

Integrity is to a journalist what honor is to a soldier or probity is to a judge. A free press could not exist without this ingredient in the character of its journalists. No director can assail a journalist's integrity, no venal politician can impugn it. It is inviolate and must be, if democracy is to survive and flourish and aid in freeing all persons from the shackles of ancient evils.

*SEVENTH LIGHT steps forward, picks up candle and lights it from Truth. Holds candle while talking. After finishing, places candle in candelabrum.*

From the candle of Truth, I light the candle of JUDGMENT.

Learning and personal integrity are of little value to us if we lack good judg-



ment. All journalists must possess sound judgment if their work and ideas are to serve their people and community properly and purposefully.

*EIGHTH LIGHT steps forward, picks up candle and lights it from Truth. Holds candle while talking. After finishing, places candle in candelabrum.*

From Truth, I light the candle of FRIENDSHIP.

Friendship is the link that binds humanity. But friendship must be fostered by understanding, by sympathy, by some kindred yearning that can withstand distrust and even betrayal. Journalists must be broad-minded enough to respect another's point of view even though it may differ from their own.

Perhaps the long dreamed-of world peace may be hastened by the student journalists of today, when tomorrow they assume the duties of leaders and meet their friends who are linked to them by the time-honored symbol of the Quill and Scroll.

Secretary. Will those who are to be initiated please come forward as your names are called and form a semicircle facing the table?

*Secretary calls the roll. When all have taken their places, the leader gives each a small white taper.*

### **Leader**

You who are to be initiated into the fellowship of Quill and Scroll will light your candles from the candle of Truth, then resume your places in the semicircle.

*Initiates step forward one at a time and light their tapers from the candle of Truth, then resume their places in the semicircle.*

You, as candidates, are ready to be welcomed into Quill and Scroll:

- Each of you has achieved academically according to the standards of the Society;

- Each of you has done superior work in some journalistic and/or creative field;
- Each of you has been recommended by the adviser of journalistic work in your high school or community media;
- Each of you has been approved by the executive director of the Society.

The badge of Quill and Scroll with which you are to be entrusted is symbolic of the painstaking efforts of the scribes of old to record the events and thoughts of their time in permanent form.

We of today owe the same duty to prosperity. Let the Quill represent in your minds the meticulous care that must be put forth to turn thoughts into proper language; let the Scroll represent the permanent quality of good journalism.

And now, as a token of your loyalty to Quill and Scroll, to which I welcome you, will you raise your right hand and repeat after me this pledge:

- I do pledge myself
- To do all in my power
- To work for the advancement of my community,
- To be loyal to my superiors,
- To live up to the ideals of true journalism,
- And to be impartial in my interpretation of Truth.

You may extinguish your candles.

It is now my pleasure to welcome each of you to membership in the (*Name of Chapter*) Chapter of Quill and Scroll. In all of your endeavors, may you always hold high the light of Truth. As the secretary calls your name, please step forward to receive your badge of membership.

*As the names are read, all candidates come forward to receive their pins and membership card from the leader, who congratulates each with a handshake or other appropriate acknowledgement of friendship.*

Congratulations to all new members of the Quill and Scroll International Honor Society for High School Journalists.

This concludes the initiation ceremony.

## Initiation Ritual with Eight Principles and a Single Candle (3)

**IF IN PERSON:** *On a table is a single holder containing one large, lit candle and pins/charms for new initiates.*

**IF VIRTUAL:** *Each student may hold a candle. If not, the leader should have a candle or some other light.*

*Note: The Leader can be filled by the adviser, the chapter president, a representative of Quill and Scroll, or an alumnus of the Quill and Scroll chapter.*

### ADVISER

Good Evening, and welcome to the Quill and Scroll initiation for SCHOOL NAME's outstanding student journalists.

I am \_\_\_\_\_, the journalism adviser for publications/broadcast/etc. Tonight we will initiate new members into Quill and Scroll, the International Honorary Society for High School Journalists. We will also honor our graduating seniors who have dedicated countless hours to their journalism staff. With us today to lead the ceremony is \_\_\_\_\_. (*Introduce leader*)

### LEADER

Quill and Scroll chapters include students who have excelled in the editorial, literary, business and multimedia departments of their high school media, and whose scholarship places them in the top levels of their respective classes.

Journalism is far-reaching in its aim. Its followers carry obligations to society, represented by the candle of TRUTH, symbolic of our aims and aspirations for the world in which we live – and the finer world of tomorrow, toward which we strive.

We will now begin the initiation portion of tonight's ceremony.

From the light of Truth, Quill and Scroll first took its ideals in 1926 when it was organized by a group of high school advisers. This light has spread to more

than 11,500 chapters located in every state and in 30 countries around the world.

We seek the TRUTH in what we do, and if we learn at some point that we were wrong, we'll apologize and correct that error.

To that end, we are always LEARNING about the world around us. We will not be so arrogant as to think we have the answers to anything until we do the required research and investigation.

We embrace our LEADERSHIP role in our schools and in our communities, and we take seriously the work that we do to help people make sense of their lives and the world around them.

We have LOYALTY, but not to a political philosophy or any individual person, but to the democratic ideal that free people use news to make informed decisions.

We take INITIATIVE in order to develop our stories, learning from our fellow citizens and others about the issues that trouble and delight them.

We practice INTEGRITY in our news gathering and presentation, leaning on established professional codes of ethics and staff policies to guide us.

We use our best JUDGMENT about both what to publish and what not to publish, making sure that we understand the stories that will keep our neighbors informed.

And we remember that FRIENDSHIP is our ultimate goal, creating a better community, one in which its members embrace each other's humanity while rejecting prejudice and hatred.

Candidates, having heard the guiding principles of Quill and Scroll, you are now ready to accept your pins and be welcomed as members.

## **ADVISER**

We will now recognize initiates from SCHOOL NAME.

*(ADVISER Reads list of names. If in person, the adviser distributes pins. If virtual, students who have received pins may affix them to their shirt, jacket or blouse.)*

## **LEADER**

The badge of Quill and Scroll with which you have been entrusted is symbolic of the painstaking efforts of the scribes of old to record the events and thoughts of their time. We of today owe the same duty to posterity.

New members, please stand. As a token of your loyalty to Quill and Scroll and the ideals of journalism, please raise your right hand and repeat this pledge:

I do pledge myself —

To do all in my power —

To work for the advancement of my community, —

To be loyal to my superiors, —

To live up to the ideals of true journalism, —

And to be impartial in my interpretation of truth.

In the preamble to the pledge you just took, we use the word “loyalty,” and, to be honest, that’s a pretty loaded word these days. But when we discuss loyalty as journalists — and as residents of our country, whatever our role — we must think first and foremost of that first light you pledged to earlier — TRUTH. We must seek out truth and report it as our first obligation in any profession, in any academic endeavor, in any political venue. If you take nothing else from your time as a high school journalist, I hope that you value the search for and the sincere expression of truth. Best wishes from me and from the more than 500-hundred-thousand members of Quill and Scroll around the world who have been inducted into this society since 1926.

## **ADVISER**

At this point, we will celebrate the accomplishments and applaud the efforts of our seniors who have each uniquely contributed to our student media.

*(This is the adviser's chance to make a short speech thanking all their students for their hard work.)*

**ADVISER**

And now it's time to hear from our editor(s).

*(EDITOR(S) and/or PRODUCERS/STATION MANAGERS may give a short speech to recognize outstanding work.)*

**LEADER**

It is my pleasure to welcome each of our new initiates into Quill and Scroll. I would also like to congratulate the seniors for all of their accomplishments. In all of your endeavors, may all of you always hold high the light of Truth. This concludes our Quill and Scroll initiation. Thank you for attending, and have a great evening.