



Protocol

GFWC Club Manual / Club Management

Protocol, like many customs, can change with the times. However, no matter what changes occur with time, manners, common sense, and courtesy remain the same. It is good practice for each organization to adopt rules of protocol that best suit its needs. Following are protocol tips for GFWC meetings and functions.

PROTOCOL—RULES OF ETIQUETTE AND CEREMONY

Protocol, defined as rules of etiquette and ceremony, is an important factor in the success of all organizations. It is the practice of social graces, simple amenities, common courtesy, tact, and diplomacy that will create a positive and lasting impression. The presiding officer is generally responsible for directing the application of protocol within her organization, which will reflect favorably on her leadership ability when properly carried out. She may appoint a chairman to implement the plans.

Overview

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Thoughtful, organized protocol is an art rather than a science. It is the expression of good manners, friendliness, and politeness that gives proper recognition and respect to officers, members, and guests. Many of the “correct answers” are not found in books or guides, but are based on common sense and the Golden Rule. When in doubt, think, “What would I like?”

INVITATIONS AND CARE OF GUESTS

Your guest will want to understand his/her exact responsibilities during your meeting. Invitations to your guests and speakers should include the following information:

- Type of meeting
- Date, time, and location of engagement
- Schedule of engagement
- Any honorarium or donation
- Travel information
- Appropriate attire

Appoint a member to host or meet and greet your guest at your meeting location. This person can assist with any audiovisual needs, ensure the guest knows where to sit, and is provided with information about amenities or services s/he might need while onsite.

When GFWC Officers are invited to attend a meeting, the invitation should describe their responsibilities at that meeting. A GFWC Officer is the State Federation’s responsibility from her arrival to the airport to her return to the airport, including all arrangements and expense of lodging, meals, and transportation. When the GFWC International President and GFWC President-elect attend a GFWC Region Conference, they are likewise the GFWC Region’s responsibility for lodging, meals, and local transportation arrangements, but their lodging and meal expenses are paid by GFWC.

- She should be transported to and from the airport by a member who is friendly and knowledgeable about the organization, knows the shortest route between the airport and the hotel, and is physically able to assist with luggage.
- The GFWC guest should be told who her host will be and where to meet her at the airport (curbside or baggage claim). The vehicle should be clean and prepared to transport the guest without delay. Hotel shuttles may be used as long as the hostess can ride along.
- Provide for a GFWC Officer’s comfort as if a guest in your home. Gifts should be small, inexpensive, and packable. The guest room should include complimentary bottled water. Fruit and small snacks are also nice room gifts.
- A president should never wear a corsage unless one is provided for the honored guest.

For more information about inviting GFWC Officers and national chairmen to speak at your club or State Federation event, review the GFWC Invitation Confirmation & Guest Information Form at www.GFWC.org/GFWCMembers under Forms.

PROTOCOL FOR OPENING CEREMONIES

Prayers, Invocations, and Expressions of Thanks

GFWC is an international organization with members of many different cultural backgrounds and religions. Care must always be given not to offend any group in using grace or expressions of thanks or prayer in meetings or other functions. It is appropriate to offer prayers to an authority or being considered greater or more supreme than mortal man. Who or what that being or reference may be is determined by the belief or non-belief of the individual listener. It is inappropriate to refer to any specific deity. All GFWC prayers should end with a simple “Amen.”

- Grace is an expression of thanks before or after a meal. Grace or saying grace is practiced in Christian, Jewish, Islam, and Hindu religions, and in cultures throughout the world. If one is not religious and the rest of the table is saying grace, it is considered to be polite and culturally appropriate to quietly observe or just bow one’s head. It is often considered impolite or incorrect to start eating before grace has been said and completed.
- An Invocation or call for divine guidance at the beginning of a meeting is always given before the Posting of Colors or Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America. The rule is: God before country.

Respect for the Flag of the United States of America

After the Invocation, the order is:

- Posting of the Colors
- National Anthem (if used)
- Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America

All present in uniform are to render the military salute. Members of the Armed Forces and veterans who are not in uniform may also render the military salute. All others present should face the flag and stand at attention with their right hand over the heart, or if applicable, remove their headdresses with their right hands and hold the at their left shoulders, hands being over hearts. Non-citizens stand at attention during ceremonies of other countries as a sign of respect.

- The above salutes are given during *Posting the Colors*, the *National Anthem*, and the *Pledge of Allegiance*. These salutes are separate and dropped between each ceremony, but may be held if there is no break. Here is when you salute during each of these ceremonial events:
 - *Posting the Colors*: When the flags are being brought in, face the flag and start the salute

when the flag comes into view within six paces and hold it until the flag passes by six paces or from view. Those at the head table may start the salute when the flag is beginning its journey up the aisle, and hold the salute while the flag is posted and the *National Anthem* begins.

- *National Anthem*: Face the flag (or the music, if no flag). Render the salute at the first note of music and hold it until the last note.
- *Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America*: Face the flag. Salute at the first word and hold it until the last word.

PROTOCOL FOR ORDER OF RANK

Establishing Rank

Establishing rank of the participants is the first rule of protocol. Officers of an organization are ranked according to their listing in the organization's bylaws. A president holds the highest rank within her own region, state, district, or club organization. Following that, the established order of rank is:

GFWC International President, GFWC Director of Junior Clubs

Ranking Government Official

Speaker of the Day

Other GFWC Officers, other GFWC Junior Officers

State Presidents, State Directors of Junior Clubs

Region Presidents

State Officers, State Junior Officers

Region Officers

GFWC Chairmen and Committee Members

State Federation's District Officers, District Junior Officers

State Federation's District Chairmen, District Junior Chairmen

State Federation's County Officers

Club President

Club Officers

Club Chairmen

Rank within the above groupings depends upon the specific occasion, and sometimes upon the listed order of an office or other position in an organization's bylaws. 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. At district meetings and club events, the GFWC International President and state governor should rank higher than the state president. An out-of-state guest of "equal rank" as an in-state guest is given the higher rank as a courtesy. Among "equals," higher rank is accorded those traveling the greater distance.

- GFWC International Past Presidents should be extended every courtesy at all times.
- As a respect for the office, the audience should rise when the GFWC International President is

introduced for the first time and after giving a speech. The same courtesy should be shown for the GFWC Director of Junior Clubs, State Presidents, State Directors of Junior Clubs, and GFWC Region Presidents at their meetings.

Processionals

Line up by rank from lowest to highest, with the presiding president entering last. Reserved seating, with place cards, should be placed at the appropriate tables for those who are in the processional to ensure their seating and provide processional participants with information regarding where they will be seated prior to the event. Past officers serving the earliest dates usually precede those serving more recently.

Receiving Lines

Keep receiving lines as short as possible without offending anyone. Line up by rank, from highest to lowest. If there are several dignitaries, place officers between them to eliminate the necessity of one dignitary presenting a guest to another dignitary. A host with a clear voice should be at the beginning of the line to present or introduce guests to the president, who will introduce each to the honored guest next in line.

PROTOCOL FOR HEAD TABLES AND RESERVED SEATING

Place cards should be used at all tables reserved for special guests. The presiding officer always sits to her right of the lectern, or in the center if no lectern is used. The ranking guest sits to the president's right. Others, in order of rank, are alternately seated to the left and right of the president. If there are several guests, they may be placed between officers of the organization.

- The head table should usually not exceed 12. If space is limited, ranking guests may be seated at a table in front of the head table. None of lesser rank should be seated at the head table while those of higher rank are not, unless they are program participants.
- Guests should be informed ahead of time if they are to be seated at the head or reserved tables. They should be met on arrival and escorted to the table to deposit personal belongings, then taken around the room for introductions if time permits. If there is no formal processional, have those at the head table gather at one side of the room to walk in together in order of their place cards. The audience should rise as they proceed to the head table.
- Those giving the invocation or expression of thanks and/or presenting the program should be seated close to the lectern, either at the head table or at a nearby reserved table.
- State and GFWC Officers should be seated at the head table for meals at their club or district events.
- Persons seated at the head table should not leave their seats except when absolutely necessary.

Head Tables at Business Meetings

Elected officers are usually seated at a head table by rank during the business meeting. The presiding officer sits to the right of the podium or lectern, with the parliamentarian seated either next to the president or to

the left of the podium or lectern. If space does not permit, the president and recording secretary should be provided adequate table space for their papers, with the parliamentarian assigned a seat next to the president. It is not necessary to re-introduce the officers seated at the head table unless there are those present who might not know them, but all other dignitaries should be introduced or acknowledged in order of rank, beginning with the lowest ranking guest.

Introductions

Introduce only those officers and guests who were not already presented in the processional.

- Introductions should be made from the lowest to highest ranking guests, with those at a lower head table introduced before those at the head table. Following that, introductions of others seated in reserved seating takes place.
- It is acceptable, when no processional, for those sitting at the head table to be introduced beginning on the speaker's far left to the center, then on her right to center.
- Postpone formal introduction of the speaker until time of the speech, giving only the name and that the guest will be introduced formally a little later.

Banquet Etiquette

It is not usually considered good form to bring drinks with you to the banquet table. The head table is to be served first, followed by others of rank. Always wait for the presiding officer to lift her fork before you start to eat, drink, or ask for food to be passed. Food is correctly passed from left to right (counterclockwise).

- Just remember BMW to know which is your bread plate and water glass:
Bread on the left, your Meal in the middle, and your Water, coffee cup and saucer on the right!
- Pay attention and avoid talking or whispering during presentations and special entertainment.

PROTOCOL FOR PRESIDING OFFICERS

The etiquette of the presiding officer establishes the reputation, effectiveness, and success of the organization. She sets an example in fairness, courtesy, and operation under the rules for her organization, showing partiality for none and justice for all.

- Learn and follow the rules of protocol and parliamentary procedures.
- Always be prompt, punctual, and organized.
- Set the example. Pay attention to speakers at ALL times—no whispering to others at the head table.
- Be prepared to assist the officers and chairmen in the performance of their duties.
- Be optimistic, friendly, enthusiastic, creative, and open to new ideas.

PROTOCOL FOR DELEGATES

When representing your organization as a voting delegate or because of your office, there are established procedures to be followed before, during, and after the meeting.

- Before the meeting: Study the Call. Discuss the issues and be prepared to vote as best represents your organization, not necessarily your personal choice.
- During the meeting: Be on time and attend all possible meetings, seminars and events. Take part in discussions—ask questions, share ideas, and express concerns. Make as many new GFWC friends as possible and exercise good judgment during unstructured “free” time.
- After the meeting: Be prepared to report back to your organization regarding the actions taken on issues, the gist of the speeches, addresses, and seminars or workshops, plus a thumbnail sketch of the banquets and social activities.

PROTOCOL FOR ALL MEMBERS

Actively support programs and projects whenever possible. Join willingly in the work but don't try to take over. Your ability will be seen and quickly put to use. After accepting a job, keep records of procedures for future reference and make concise, to the point reports. If you are unable to carry out a task in a dependable manner, ask to be excused from the duty.

- Give full attention to the chair on rap of gavel and refrain from disturbing the meeting through whispering or restless behavior.
- Address the chair to gain recognition (obtain the floor) before addressing the assembly.
- Address all remarks through the chair and confine them to the merits of the pending question.
- Learn basic parliamentary procedures and observe the rules of debate.
- Avoid walking between the presiding officer and audience.
- Be respectful of club obligations and rules. Be friendly and loyal to officers and members.

Information adapted from previous editions of the *GFWC Club Manual* and materials provided by 2010-2012 GFWC Protocol Chairman Shirley Phipps.