

# Criteria for a Vigil Honor Candidate

(From the Order of the Arrow Handbook)

Any member of the Order of the Arrow registered in Scouting and in good standing (dues paid) in a regularly chartered lodge is eligible for recommendation to the **National Order of the Arrow Committee** for elevation to the *Vigil Honor*, provided that, at the time of recommendation, the individual has been a **Brotherhood** member for a minimum of two years. Because the Order of the Arrow is primarily an organization for youth, it is suggested that, in recommending candidates for the *Vigil Honor*, preference be given to those who became members of the order as Scouts rather than to those who were inducted into the order as adult's volunteers or professional Scouts. *Arrowmen* don't need to make enormous sacrifices of time, money, or their whole social life, but the willingness to sacrifice should be there. It is the quiet, sometimes unsuspecting person that gets the *Vigil*, because he has, in his own silent and efficient way, given the sacrifice necessary to do an exceptional job beyond his immediate responsibilities.

The *Vigil Honor* is a high mark of distinction and *recognition* that *is reserved* for those *Arrowmen* who, by reason of exceptional service and *unselfish interest*, have made distinguished contributions beyond the immediate responsibilities of their position or office to one or more of the following: their lodge, the Order of the Arrow, Scouting or their Scout Camp.

*To help in identifying those to be called, these definitions for the key phrases above may help:*

**RECOGNITION** - Remember that the *Vigil Honor* membership is not earned. You become recognized by your dedication, exceptional service, personal effort, and unselfish interest. A *Vigil Honor* member, if he truly is worthy of the Honor in the first place, will definitely be five times more worthy of his *Vigil* membership after he receives it. He does not sit back or fade away saying, "Well, I finally got it - my *Vigil*." Why? Because he did not try to earn it, it came as a token for what he was already doing. He was recognized for his dedication, *exceptional service*, personal effort, and *unselfish interest*.

**RESERVED** - Remember that the *Vigil Honor* membership is not a handout. The *Vigil Honor* should never be given to someone because "I'd like to see them have *Vigil*". The Eagle Award can be earned, but the *Vigil Honor* is bestowed. We should never make the mistake of giving the *Vigil Honor* to someone to elevate his status, because, when that is done, instead of elevating that person's status, we have lowered the *Vigil Honor*. When considering *Vigil* candidates, you should ask, "Has this candidate truly exhibited the qualities of the *Vigil Honor*?" If not, "Will he exhibit those qualities of the *Vigil Honor* if he becomes *Vigil*?"

***UNSELFISH INTEREST*** - When considering *Vigil* candidates, their interest in the **OA** should be diagnosed. Why are they active? Why do they want to do this or that? What do they get out of it that makes them do more? People who hold lodge offices, participate in ceremonial teams, dance, or just participate, have an interest in the **OA**, otherwise they would be inactive. But when considering candidates for the *Vigil*, their ulterior motives should be questioned. Does he serve as a chapter officer because his **OA** buddies have been officers? Or is it because he sees that the **Order of the Arrow** is a program, which officers' service, and he wants to improve that service? Is he an active member because he likes Indian dancing? Or is it because he sees that Indian dancing can be a means for promoting the **OA**, serving the community and perpetuating the Indian culture.

***BY REASON OF EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE*** - Remember that all **OA** members are expected to give service. We should not ask whether the *Vigil* candidate has given service, but whether the service rendered has been exceptional. When a member becomes **Brotherhood**, his obligations entail dedication and service to the lodge. He is expected to fulfill his obligations. Therefore, regular service to the lodge is not a criterion for giving the *Vigil Honor*. There is a unique situation in the **Order of the Arrow**. When you live up to your obligation as a Scout, you may be elected into the **OA**. When you live up to your **Ordeal** obligation, you may go on and get **Brotherhood**. But this is not the case with the *Vigil*, because you do not earn it, like the **Ordeal** or **Brotherhood** member. You must live the *Vigil Honor* standard and obligations, as put forth in the *Vigil Honor* ceremony, before you can be recognized by its high distinction.

***DISTINGUISHED CONTRIBUTIONS*** - Many people contribute ideas, ways and means of doing things, time and money to the **OA**. The *Vigil Honor* candidate should be analyzed as to whether he made contributions that are not just okay, but contributions on which he has spent a lot of time, effort, and sacrifice. These contributions require his dedication and self-denial. This is what makes a contribution "distinguished." The same rule of *exceptional service* applies *distinguished contributions*; *Arrowmen* are expected to do service and contribute, but it must be distinguished and exceptional to qualify for the *Vigil Honor*.

As you consider nominating brothers to call to their *Vigil*, remember that the **Order of the Arrow** was set up as an aid to Scouting, and not unto itself. Many people sometimes have the impression that if a member does not make distinguished contributions to the **OA**, he is not to be considered for the *Vigil*. Someone may be an *Arrowman* who has no great service rendered to the **OA**, but he may have rendered great and worthy service to Scouting on a district or council level, or to a Scout camp.