

## IN THE FAIRBANKS TRADITION: LIVES WELL LIVED

Prior Palmer C. Hamilton, KStJ, has invited two very special guests to attend the 2019 Weekend of Investiture and Rededication in Charleston, S.C., Colonel Anthony Fairbanks Weston, TD, CStJ, DL, VR, and Benjie Fairbanks Weston, Esq., together with Anthony's wife Clare. Anthony and Benjie are the grandson and great-grandson of the legendary Douglas Fairbanks Jr., a founder of the Priory in the U.S. As tribute to the Fairbanks' family's long involvement with the Priory in the U.S., Benjie will carry its banner at the Investiture Service.

Born in the U.S. in 1909, Douglas Fairbanks Jr. earned three stars on the Hollywood Walk of Fame – one for motion pictures, one for radio, and one for television – and remains on the International Best-Dressed Hall of Fame list. According to his IMDb biography, he was "handsome, distinguished and extremely bright." A painter and sculptor, he succeeded in the businesses of film production, hotel management, mining, bowling alleys and popcorn manufacturing. Fairbanks was a highly decorated WWII naval hero, with honors from the U.S., U.K., France, Italy, Belgium, Chile and Brazil.

Already an Associate Knight of Justice of the Order of St John in the U.K., Douglas Fairbanks Jr., in 1956, suggested to a group of other prominent Americans the idea of creating a U.S. presence for the Order called the American Society of the Order of St John, which later became the current Priory.



*Douglas Fairbanks Jr., KBE, DSC, KStJ*

to meet him at the home of the Lord Mayor of London. When I presented myself to the security staff and explained why I was there, one of the staff asked me to sign an autograph!"

Anthony goes on, "I have always been immensely conscious of his many achievements and of carrying on the Fairbanks name, yet I have always striven to be my own man. This was also important to my grandfather as the son of Douglas Fairbanks Sr., himself an illustrious film star, co-founder of United Artists and, really, the founder of Hollywood as we know it. Both had noble and inspirational values and these have shaped my own life and career."

Anthony grew up in Suffolk, England, where he still lives with his wife of 25 years, and their three sons – Benjie, Hugo and Alfie. Following his graduation from the Rugby School, Anthony demonstrated an independent (and adventurous) streak by spending nine months as a cowboy in Montana. He found his calling in the British Army, retiring as a Lieutenant

Colonel after being involved with operations in Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Kurdistan, as well as Afghanistan, alongside U.S. Forces. He continues in the Reserves as Chairman of Suffolk's Reserve Forces and Cadets' Association, and Honorary Colonel of Suffolk Army Cadet Force.

After Army service, Anthony created a second career in business restructuring and turnaround. An active participant in St John Ambulance and their local Suffolk Council, he is the holder of the St John Service Medal with three bars, indicative of service that is beyond what is required for the award.

Of the Fairbanks' great-grandsons, Benjie has inherited the St John gene, following in his father's footsteps as an Esquire to The Priory of England and the Islands in 2018, and participating in the Order's Ceremonial Staff. Like his father, he carries the U.S. banner at Investitures in London and, he says, "would be honored to continue to do so." Benjie is also heir to his father's enthusiasm for St John Ambulance, saying "I have been on the receiving end of St John Ambulance volunteers' work when they have patched me up after various rugby games."

Benjie graduated from Cirencester Royal Agricultural University in 2018 and now works as a Land Agent in North Yorkshire. Following Anthony's example, he is joining the Army Reserves, which will, he says, "allow me to continue my day job as well as have a career in the military, something that has always been of great interest to me."

An ardent student of family history, Benjie says, "Although meeting my great-grandfather at an age when I was too young to remember, I have read parts of his autobiographies and heard anecdotes from all my family." He adds, "Although my great-grandfather did not directly shape my life, I have always been very proud to be related to someone everyone describes so fondly!"

Both Anthony and Benjie treasure the seminal role Douglas Fairbanks Jr. played in the creation of the Priory in the USA of the Order of St John. With great enthusiasm, they look forward to meeting latter-day U.S. Confrères at the Investiture Weekend. Since 2019 is the year of Benjie's Investiture, the events will have a special meaning.

*Karen Miller Lamb, DStJ*



*Anthony Fairbanks Weston, Palmer C. Hamilton, and Benjie Fairbanks Weston at the Service of Rededication in St Paul's Cathedral.*

### CONFRÈRES DEPARTED

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