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THE ROLE OF A CLAN OR FAMILY COMMANDER

The position of Commander – and also of Chief – is less about Status and more about Service.

Traditionally, where a hereditary Chief was unable to lead the Clan in battle for reasons of health, age, infirmity, unavailability and so forth, a Commander or *Ceann-Cath* would be appointed. In modern times, the Clan Commander provides leadership and a rallying-point for a Clan where there is no hereditary Chief.

The procedure for finding a Commander is for members of a Clan to Petition the Lord Lyon King of Arms requesting that he authorise a Family Convention where nominees will be considered. The Lord Lyon will appoint a Supervising Officer – usually an Officer of Arms of the Lyon Court – to oversee the process and to report formally to the Lord Lyon on the person whom the Convention agrees would be suitable to occupy the position.

The nominee should emerge from a consensus. This is not an election process depending on a majority. Candidates should be sought as widely as possible. The role of Commander is different from that of, say, a Clan Society President. The Clan is every one of the surname and cognate names worldwide. Being a part of the Clan does not hinge on membership of any particular Clan organisation, society or association. Of course, such bodies can provide useful structure and organisational help, and should work closely together in a cooperative way to support the Clan overall.

There is no formal job description as such for a Clan Commander. Nominees should be knowledgeable about the Clan's history, heritage and heartlands. They should also have the time, energy, resources and passion to attend Games and Gatherings and other public and private events worldwide to promote the Clan, to be the Clan's ambassador, and to help secure its future by, for example, working to identify a suitable candidate for Chiefship. It is preferable although not required that someone seeking nomination as Commander should live fairly locally to the ancient Clan lands so that he or she can help Clan members visiting the area and provide local information and guidance on matters of Clan interest.

A Commander would be expected to work closely with the Clan Associations and Societies wherever they be based, to be closely aware and involved in Clan Gatherings and AGMs, and generally to lead, guide, promote and present a positive view of the Clan. This means a nominee for Commander must be outgoing and articulate, and capable of providing strong advice and governance to Clan members as required.

While it is in no way guaranteed that a Commander will eventually become Chief, the person nominated should be capable of fulfilling that position.

Any dispute will be resolved according to the law of Scotland and the Scottish courts have sole jurisdiction.

An example - Clan MacGillivray

Dunmaglas, some six miles east of Inverfarigaig in Inverness-shire, and nearby Dalcrombie, were held by the MacGillivrays at least as far back as the 16th Century. The last MacGillivray chief to live at Dunmaglass was the 13th Laird, Captain John William MacGillivray. He had to sell his estate and died without an heir in 1914. The chiefship had passed to a cousin of his, John Farquhar MacGillivray living in Toronto, Ontario, Canada who was chief for 32 years but died in 1942 without an heir.

Dr Angus MacGillivray tried to claim the chieftainship but was unable to prove his lineage, and died in 1947. Colonel George B. MacGillivray, also Canadian, petitioned the Lord Lyon three times between 1953 and 1989 to be recognised as chief, but each successive Lyon was not satisfied with the proofs submitted. However, Colonel MacGillivray was commissioned as Commander and served for five years until his death in 1994.

That is where things stood until 2016, when a Family Convention was organised by the Clan MacGillivray International Association along with the clan MacGillivray Societies of America, Australia, Canada and the Netherlands.

The 29-year-old farmer and champion piper Iain MacGillivray from Calrossie, near Tain in Easter Ross .was nominated for the role of Clan Commander, which the Lord Lyon accepted.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bruce Durie', with a stylized flourish at the end.