

The Order of Ikhamanga

The beautiful and unique ikhamanga flower (more commonly known as the strelitzia, crane or bird of paradise flower) has become one of the world's most well-known flowers. Perhaps less known is the fact that it is indigenous to South Africa where it grows wild in the Eastern Cape. The ikhamanga is the central motif of the Order of Ikhamanga and symbolises the unique beauty of the achievements of South Africans in the creative fields of arts, culture, literature, music, journalism and sport.

At the centre of this design is depicted one of the Lydenburg Heads - ancient terracotta masks found near the town of Lydenburg. Masks are traditional symbols of theatre and denote the visual, creative and performing arts. Below the mask is an illustration of the drum, which is also a universal representation of the arts, here symbolising excellence in communication and cultural expression.

Above the mask is the stylised crest revealing the rays of the sun. The crest exemplifies a feathered headdress worn by performers, royalty and respected people, while the rays of the sun denote power, glory, illumination and vitality. Both interpretations symbolise the achievements of performers in the arts.

The central image is partially circumscribed by concentric circles signifying veneration of sporting achievement, and symbolising the acknowledgement of exceptional achievement in various sporting and cultural activities.

To the sides of the drum at the base of the central image are two roads disappearing into the horizon suggesting that all roads lead to and from Africa, the Cradle of Humanity. They symbolise the long, hard road to achievement, excellence and success.

An award of the Order of Ikhamanga comprises three elements: a neck badge (a gold, silver or bronze medallion on a neck band); a miniature (a miniature gold, silver or bronze medallion for wearing as a brooch or on the breast pocket) and a lapel rosette (also in gold, silver or bronze).

Awardees of this Order are entitled to indicate that they have received the award in the relevant category through the use of the following post-nominal letters:

- OIG for recipients of the Order of Ikhamanga (gold)
- OIS for recipients of the Order of Ikhamanga (silver)
- OIB for recipients of the Order of Ikhamanga (bronze).

The Order of Ikhamanga is awarded to South African citizens who have excelled in the fields of arts, culture, literature, music, journalism or sport. This award is made in three categories. For exceptional achievement, the Order is awarded in gold. It is awarded in silver for excellent achievement, and in bronze for outstanding achievement.



Neck badge



Lapel rosette



Miniature

The Order of Mapungubwe

The central motif for this Order is Mapungubwe. A millennium ago, the amazing Kingdom of Mapungubwe existed in the northern corner of South Africa. It comprised a sophisticated state system, with highly developed agriculture, mining and metallurgy industries. The Kingdom traded with countries as far afield as China. According to the Archaeology Department at the University of the Witwatersrand, Mapungubwe represented 'the most complex society in southern Africa'. It is reputed to be the origin of the people, culture and foundation for the achievements of Great Zimbabwe.

Mapungubwe Hill is a sandstone hill located on a mudstone deposit in the northern part of the Limpopo province, known for its arid subtropical climate and erratic summer rains. Out of this seeming barrenness, like an oasis in the desert, there blossomed the complexed and highly developed state and culture, centred around a thriving town built on and around Mapungubwe Hill, which served as the capital of the ancient Mapungubwe Kingdom.

The artefacts found on Mapungubwe Hill serve as further design elements for the Order named after it. Foregrounded on Mapungubwe Hill is the famous Mapungubwe rhino, a figurine made of high-quality gold foil formed around a soft core (probably sculpted wood), which was found on the Hill and is treasured at the University of Pretoria.

The bottom segment of the design represents the skill and craft of smelting, smithing, pottery and ceramics. At the base of this segment is a fire representing the furnace used to purify and temper metal and fire pottery. The furnace also evokes the life-sustaining properties of fire, harnessed by humankind since the Iron Age to provide warmth and sustenance. Fire thus represents the advancement of humankind.

Above the furnace, at the centre of the lower segment, is a decorated and overflowing urn representing the pots used to melt gold or iron ore. The urn overflows and divides symmetrically to merge into two ornately turned Mapungubwe sceptres - based on real artefacts found on the Hill - which hem the urn in on both sides.

The overflow of the urn symbolises abundance of wealth, excellence, the earliest achievements in metallurgy and the first advances in science and artistic expression.

The sheer opulence and majesty of the shape of the Mapungubwe sceptre and the extremely delicate craftsmanship of the Mapungubwe rhino reflect remarkable workmanship, very rare by the standards of the time. Arising as it did from application and knowledge, the message is that South Africa and its people can prosper, regardless of the conditions in which they find themselves.

Awardees of this Order receive three elements: a neck badge (a platinum, gold, silver or bronze medallion on a neck band); a miniature (a miniature platinum, gold, silver or bronze medallion for wearing as a brooch or on the breast pocket); and a platinum, gold, silver or bronze lapel rosette.

Recipients of the Order are entitled to indicate that they have been invested with the relevant category of the Order by the use of the following post-nominal letters:

- OMP for recipients of the Order of Mapungubwe (platinum)
- OMG for recipients of the Order of Mapungubwe (gold)
- OMS for recipients of the Order of Mapungubwe (silver)
- OMB for recipients of the Order of Mapungubwe (bronze).

The Order of Mapungubwe is awarded to South African citizens for achievements that have impacted internationally and served the interests of the Republic of South Africa. The first and highest category of this Order is awarded in platinum for unique and exceptional achievement, while the second-highest category is gold, awarded for exceptional achievement. The third category in this order is silver, awarded for excellent achievement. The fourth category in this order is bronze for outstanding achievement.



Neck badge



Lapel rosette



Miniature

The Order of the Companions of O. R. Tambo

The late Oliver Reginald Tambo played a central role in the freedom struggle against Apartheid, and remains a true icon of our liberation history.

From an early age, Tambo rose through the ranks of the liberation movement. He was a founder member of the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL) in 1944. In 1948, he was elected President of the Transvaal ANCYL and national Vice-President of the ANCYL in 1949. In 1955, when the then Secretary General, the late Walter Sisulu, was banned in terms of the Suppression of Communism Act, it was Tambo who was appointed to fill his post. In 1958, Tambo was elected to the post of Deputy President of the ANC. Finally, in 1967, after the death of ANC President General Chief Albert Luthuli, Tambo was appointed acting President of the ANC, an appointment confirmed by the Morogoro Conference in 1969. He held this position until 1991 when he had to relinquish it due to ill health.

Tambo dedicated his life to overthrowing the Apartheid regime by mobilising fellow citizens to resist the Apartheid Government and relentlessly mobilising world opinion against the odious Apartheid ideology and regime.

Tambo was known in the liberation movement for his gentle character and compassionate qualities. His benevolence and personal concern for the plight of freedom fighters and their conditions in the field endeared him to thousands of liberation fighters.

It is thus appropriate that the central motif of the design of the Order named after O R Tambo is the majola (mole snake), which, in African mythology, visits babies in a spirit of benevolence. The snake comes as a friend and protector to prepare the baby for a successful and safe adult life, and it is said that the only non-threatening way to drive it away is for the mother to squirt it with her own breastmilk.

Although the mole snake can be aggressive when cornered and can give painful bites, it is non-venomous. The African myth interprets the snake as a friend and a member of a dynamic ecology. The majola's visitation is thus seen less as a benign demonstration of goodwill, and more as an active expression of solidarity and support, encouraging long-term success of the young and, by extension, the human race. In the design of the main badge of this Order, the enveloping and watchful eye of the majola, with fangs extending from both the top and bottom, symbolises the active expression of solidarity and support for South Africa. In the centre is a tomoye of four sections, inspired by the universal ying and yang that speak of a meeting point for diverse spiritual energies. This is enclosed by north and south pointers representing the relationship between countries of the north and countries of the south.

The Order of the Companions of O R Tambo comprises four elements: a neck badge (a gold, silver or bronze medallion on a neck band); a miniature (a miniature gold, silver or bronze medallion for wearing as a brooch or on the breast pocket); a lapel rosette (also in gold, silver or bronze) and a wooden ceremonial staff incorporating an entwined mole snake. The stick, carved out of dark, indigenous wood, symbolises appreciation for the support and solidarity shown, and also symbolising a commitment to support and stand by the recipient in return.

Recipients of the Order are entitled to indicate that they have been invested with the relevant category of the Order by the use of the following post-nominal letters:

- SCOT for recipients of the Supreme Companion of O R Tambo (gold)
- GCOT for recipients of the Grand Companion of O R Tambo (silver)
- COT for recipients of the Companion of O R Tambo (bronze).

The Order of the Companions of O R Tambo is awarded in three categories to eminent foreign nationals and other foreign dignitaries for friendship shown to South Africa. It is therefore concerned primarily with matters of peace, co-operation, international solidarity and support and is integral to the execution of South Africa's international and multilateral relations. The Supreme Companion of O R Tambo in gold, is awarded to those who have actively promoted the interests and aspirations of South Africa through excellent co-operation and active expression of solidarity and support. The Grand Companion of O R Tambo in silver, is awarded to those who have actively promoted the interests and aspirations of South Africa through outstanding co-operation, solidarity and support. The Companion of O R Tambo in bronze is awarded to those who have actively promoted the interests and aspirations of the Republic through co-operation, solidarity and support.



Walking Stick



Neck badge



Lapel rosette



Miniature

National Anthem

Nkosi sikelel' iAfrika

Maluphakanyisw' uphondo lwayo,

Yizwa imithandazo yethu,

Nkosi sikelela, thina lusapho lwayo.

Morena boloka setjhaba sa heso,

O fedise dintwa le matshwenyeho,

O se boloke, O se boloke setjhaba sa heso,

Setjhaba sa South Afrika – South Afrika.

Uit die blou van onse hemel

Uit die diepte van ons see,

Oor ons ewige gebergtes,

Waar die kranse antwoord gee,

Sounds the call to come together,

And united we shall stand,

Let us live and strive for freedom,

In South Africa our land.