

# Creative philanthropist Dr Ivan May passes away

Dr Ivan May - widely known and respected in South Africa and abroad for his work in the environment and marketing fields - has died at the age of 63 after a five-month battle with cancer. He passed away in the Donald Gordon Medical Centre in Johannesburg on Friday, 31 December 2010.



Dr. Ivan May

He was a philanthropist who provided his skills, expertise and creativity to numerous non-governmental and charitable organisations.

Born in Johannesburg on 23 August 1947, he attended the King Edward VII School in Johannesburg before going to the University of the Witwatersrand, from which institution he graduated with five degrees including a Doctorate of Philosophy in 1974. He also held an associate professorship in the Faculty of Science.

At the time of his death, he was president of the Convocation of the University of the Witwatersrand, whose 100 000 members are spread throughout the world.

## Philanthropic activities

His philanthropic activities saw him contributing in a seminal way to the advancement of many institutions. He was chairperson of the Advisory Board of The Salvation Army, Chairperson of Charities Aid Foundation Southern Africa (CAFSA), and a former vice-chancellor of the Order of St John, of which Order he was also a knight. He was responsible for bringing the CowParade to South Africa, through which a substantial amount was raised for the Childhood Cancer Foundation South Africa (CHOC).

At the time of his death, among others he was the chief executive of 1485 Radio Today, a non-executive director of the Vodacom Foundation, a member of the Council of the University of Witwatersrand, a non-executive director of the Advertising Standards Authority of South Africa, and a member of the King 3 Committee on Corporate Governance.

Dr May's contribution in the field of marketing was groundbreaking. He was the creative mind and driving force behind the creation of a number of affinity products launched by his then employer, Nedbank, and was a founder and board member of a number of trusts established concurrently with the green, arts and culture and sports affinity products in the 1990s.

## **Awards and accolades**

He was a founder of the Green Trust and a member of its board from 1990 to 2003, a founder of the Arts and Culture Trust and a member of its board from 1995 to 2003, and a founder and serving member of the board of the Sports Trust.

Dr May received dozens of awards and accolades during his lifetime. He was a Fellow of the Institute of Marketing Management, a World Fellow of the Duke of Edinburgh Award, and a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, amongst others. His awards included a Gold Medal from the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF), the Captain Scott Memorial Medal from the South African Biological Society, and the Exceptional Service Award from the Advertising Standards Authority.

## **"A remarkable man"**

Commenting on his death, the territorial commander of the Salvation Army, Commissioner Andre Cox, said: "Ivan May was a truly remarkable man who touched the lives and hearts of so many people from all walks of life. With his passing, South Africa has lost one of its great sons. The Salvation Army has lost a true friend and great supporter. Ivan will be missed by many. May we be inspired to live lives that are as worthwhile as his was."

Chairman of the Vodacom Foundation, Mthobi Tyamzashe, said: "To the Vodacom Foundation, Ivan's death means more than just the loss of a fellow trustee. His death also deprives us of a hard worker, a thoughtleader, problem-solver, conscience, and a brother whose generosity knew no bounds."

Friend and publicist Theo Coggin said: "Dr May celebrated Christmas quietly with some of his closest friends who enjoyed his usual lively and creative discourse, and were struck by his commitment to a diary for 2011 that, in the true Ivan May tradition, was already brimful of appointments, all aimed at serving those in society whom he loved and respected.

"Many people in South Africa will bear tribute to his gift of mentoring, and his generosity in sharing his considerable knowledge and skills. Through his own generosity, he called forth generosity in others. Dr May died peacefully, surrounded by his closest and dearest friends, including Sechaba Kitleli, and members of his extended family, including his cousin Rosemary van Zyl."

Dr May will be cremated in a private ceremony. A public memorial service will be held at a date and venue to be announced.

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