

History of the SASA branding and SASA crest.

The South African Society of Anaesthetists was formed during the 2nd World War, in August 1943. In that year there were only 26 anaesthetists on the SAMDC register compared with a total of 266 specialists who might need the services of an anaesthetist. (Surgeons 73, Gynaecologists 40, and surgical specialties 153). Anaesthesia was not a popular specialty due to the high morbidity & mortality at that time, low status and poor remuneration. The Royal College of Surgeons had only introduced the Diploma in Anaesthesia as a specialist qualification in 1935 and SA doctors had to travel overseas to obtain a specialist qualification. The outbreak of the war in September 1939 provided the stimulus for change, as anaesthetists were urgently needed in the Armed Forces. Many doctors volunteered for the South African Medical Corps and were drafted into anaesthesia.

The concept of forming a National Society stemmed from a suggestion by Major RA Moore-Dyk at one of the regular informal meetings held in private homes in Johannesburg at which anaesthetists came together, usually with an invited speaker to discuss various topics. A provisional committee was formed, and a date set for the inaugural meeting at which all practicing anaesthetists in SA, including volunteer anaesthetists, were invited to attend.

At the inaugural meeting held at the Johannesburg Hospital on 1st August, Dr Benjamin Weinbren, an honorary anaesthetist at the hospital, was elected SASA's first President. Other elected Councillors were: Dr RA Moore-Dyke, Secretary - Treasurer (Cape Province); Dr Royden-Muir (Cape Province), Dr H Grant-Whyte (Natal); Major C Becker (Transvaal); and Dr D Crawford (Transvaal).



At the meeting, Dr Weinbren set out the aims of the new Society, viz. to improve the remuneration and status of anaesthetists and to ensure that anaesthesia in South Africa kept abreast of scientific advances. In 1993 the Society voted in favour of changing the name to from the SA Society of Anaesthetists to the SA Society of Anaesthesiologists.

This was done to provide the public with an opportunity to distinguish between anaesthesiologists who were specialists and anaesthetists who were persons administering anaesthetics but who were not specialists. The new terminology also kept SA in line with the terminology used by the World Federation of Societies of Anaesthesiology, of whom we were founder members in 1955.

The idea of designing of a crest and coat-of-arms to identify the Society had its beginnings in 1962 when the SASA Executive decided that a cash prize of R50, together with a certificate, to be known as "The South African Society of Anaesthetists Memorial Prize" should be awarded to the registrar with the best paper at the bi-annual congress. A motive for the certificate with a poppy and a snake and the motto "In Somno Securitas" was used on the certificate. The search for a suitable design for a Society Crest and Motto continued for a further 5 years.



In Dec 1963 a SASA Council Subcommittee consisting of Drs JF Dippenaar, DLF Jeffes and OVS Kok was asked by Council to investigate possible designs and a suitable motto for the crest. At the next Council Meeting in April 1964, various mottos were proposed and discussed and Professor Arthur Bull's suggestion, "Sapientia et Arte Custodimus" (We guard with skill and knowledge) was accepted.

At the Council Meeting held in Nov 1965, the desirability of a SASA tie incorporating the Society SASA crest was raised and a sub-committee consisting of Drs Rodseth, JF Cilliers, AB Bull and SV Potgieter was appointed to investigate.

On 23rd April 1966 Council decided that once a suitable crest had been chosen it should be registered with the South African Bureau of Heraldry. Dr Peter Jenkins, who had taken over from Arthur Bull as Cape Western Branch Representative asked Mr Frank Waller, a graphic artist in Cape Town to come up with designs for a crest. The design incorporating the Atherstone family crest was chosen by Council and approved by members at the SASA AGM held in the Claridge's Hotel on 16th July 1967. [Footnote¹](#)

The background of the Coat-of-Arms was the Atherstone family crest consisting of red piles on a gold background across which there was a flash containing 3 poppies on a background of black and silver representing night and day or the sleeping and waking state. The wreath and mantling of the Atherstone arms were not included in the design of the badge submitted for registration with the Bureau of Heraldry.

Five years after it was first mooted, the Society's badge/crest was officially unveiled by the wife of the State President, Mrs. JJ Fouche during the 25th Anniversary of the founding of the Society, in Bloemfontein on 6th July 1968. At the AGM that year, the President Dr Michael Kramer "expressed the appreciation of all members to Drs. Jenkin, Cilliers and Potgieter for the successful culmination of their very hard work extending over some years in the eventual production of such satisfactory and suitable designs for the ties, scarves and emblems of the Society".

After 25 years of existence the Society now had an emblem that it could use to identify itself on official correspondence, documents, publications and for marketing itself. The illuminated certificate of the Crest and the official Coat-of-Arms of the Society are housed in the Adler Museum at the University of the Witwatersrand Medical School in Johannesburg.

The workload of SASA Councillors has steadily increased over the years. As far back as May 1993, the Hon Secretary Prof DF Morrell had motivated for a fulltime Liaison Officer to promote the image of the Society by way of liaison with its members, the public and other organizations, (particularly the Medical Association of SA and the South African Medical and Dental Council), and to enhance the efficiency of the operation of the Society.

¹In June 1847, Dr WG Atherstone, in Grahamstown, became the first Dr in South Africa to administer an anaesthetic for major surgery. He was also a renowned geologist and palaeontologist. In March 1867 he was sent an unusual stone that had picked up on a farm near Hopetown in the Northern Cape. Atherstone identified the stone as being a diamond thereby triggering the Kimberly diamond rush. At the De Beers Centenary Exhibition in 1968 a model of the 21-carat diamond was manufactured for display purposes. At the conclusion of the Exhibition De Beers presented the model to SASA and it has been incorporated into the Society's Presidential Chain of Office.



Ten years later, in 2013, the increasing workload on Councillors led Council under President Hyla Klyts to consider appointing a fulltime Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Council members Jannie Strydom assisted by Dirk van Zijl did the groundwork in assessing the feasibility and drawing up a job description for the CEO post. At the 2014 SASA AGM, held at Sun City, the motion to appoint a CEO was accepted by an overwhelming majority of members. After a rigorous selection process Ms Natalie Zimmelman was appointed as SASA's first CEO on 1st November 2014.

One of the key responsibilities outlined in the new CEO's job description was to review and enhance the marketing and communication strategies for the Society. She soon realized that the Society, and the profession as whole, in fact, had a limited public profile. There was also considerable variation in branding across the Society's Business Units, Special Interest Groups and Branches, where branding even existed.

This meant that there was considerable work being undertaken within the Society that was not effectively recognised as part of the overall Society's offering to its members and the public in general. In order to drive a new communication and marketing strategy, Ms. Zimmelman devised a new look and feel for the SASA. This new look and feel was in the form of a Brand family, which included brands for the Society generally, as well as the Business Units, Branches and a format for Congresses. The new Brand family took into account the history of the SASA brand and crest and retained many of the features of the crest, including the motto, the shield format and the poppies. This Brand family was presented to the SASA Council on the 31st of January 2015, where it was approved.

Following a meeting with all the Special Interest Groups at the SASA Congress in Durban in March 2015, it was also agreed that the Special Interest Group logos would be amended to be more visually in-line with the SASA Brand family. The new logos for the Special Interest Groups were finalized with each of the Special Interest Groups by the end of June 2015.

Based on the new Brand family, SASA revamped the SASA website and ensured the availability of a new SASA Corporate Identity Manual and all stationery was updated. This new and refreshed look and feel, taking into account and respectful of the rich history of SASA, can now be seen throughout SASA's communication and marketing efforts.