

SYMBOLISM OF THE VOORTREKKER MONUMENT

The Monument was built as a tribute to the Voortrekker who brought their culture to the interior. Order, geometrical precision and symmetry are therefore basic to its design. The symbolism is as follows:

Gate:

The assegais represent the power of Dingane.

Laager wall:

A laager of 64 wagons provides symbolic protection to the Monument.

Corner figures:

The four corner figures, namely Piet Retief, Andries Pretorius, Hendrik Potgieter and the Unknown Voortrekker Leader, form a symbolic guard of honour.

Statue of mother and children:

The statue symbolizes the culture and Christianity that was maintained and developed by the women during the Great Trek.

Black Wildebeest:

Symbolize Dingane's warriors.

Triangular cornice:

Around the top of the Monument is a cornice in a zig-zag pattern. This symbolizes fertility. The cultural heritage of the Voortrekkers must grow.

Buffalo head:

The buffalo is the most dangerous wild animal in South Africa. This buffalo head symbolically defends the Monument against any onslaught from outside.

Cenotaph:

(Kenos = empty, taphos = tomb). Symbolizes the resting place of Piet Retief and all the Voortrekkers who perished during the Great Trek.

Ray of sunlight:

In the Monument's upper dome is an opening through which the sun shines. Every year at 12 o'clock on 16 December (the Day of the Covenant – see panel 20), the ray of sunlight falls on the inscription "Ons vir jou Suid-Afrika" (We for thee South Africa). The words are taken from the National Anthem. The ray of sunlight symbolizes God's blessing in the work and aspirations of the Voortrekkers.

Floor:

The floor of the Hall of Heroes is lined with ever widening rings of marble with the cenotaph as its centre. The design, which represents ripples of water after a stone has been cast into it, becomes progressively wider until it fills the entire building. It symbolizes the dispersion of the spirit of sacrifice that was generated by the Voortrekkers and that which eventually spread throughout the entire country.

Domes:

Above the Hall of Heroes is a dome with a large round opening in the middle and this is topped with a second dome. If the lines of this dome were to be extended they would enclose the entire Monument in one immense circle.

Flame:

Symbolizes the flame of civilization in South Africa.