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The ICAN Crest

By
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As the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN) glides towards its 40th Anniversary, it is imperative to consider its trademarks that stand it out as the flagship of professional bodies in the country and in the sub-region. One of such trademarks is its crest.

A crest is a formal picture or emblem that is used by an organisation or nation as its particular symbol of identity. As a trademark, many organisations invest a lot of resources in its design and defence, because it represents its unique identity and hallmark of excellence. The ICAN crest, which is more like a typical school badge, carries its motto, of "accuracy and integrity." In my view, there is more to it than just the motto which is its firm base considering what the accountancy profession and chartered accountants stand for in the country, and indeed, globally. It was the quest for greater meaning that prompted this investigation.

After exhaustive verification of the ICAN Council records since 1965 when the Institute was established and journals since 1974, there was no place where reference was made to or any reason offered for the adoption of the current crest. What is, however, known is that a student of Yaba College of Technology designed the present one in the Council Chamber in 1989. It is this latest design that is carried by the Institute's documents and publications. The following meaning can be adduced to its components:-

- The green background clearly shows a fertile ground for ideas and knowledge; a productive professional body whose members are committed to value and wealth creation in all facets of human endeavour.

- The palm tree is known to be a tree of all seasons: ICAN is a fountain that never dries; an enduring, resilient institution that has weathered all storms; the Institute is constantly re-engineering its processes making it the most innovative professional body in the country today. For instance, the mandatory continuing professional education programme it introduced in 1996 with resounding success is being copied today by other professional bodies with varying degrees of "success."

- The scale shows accuracy of information disseminated by members whose integrity is beyond reproach; this integrity is brought to play when members in practice certify financial statements they have audited.

- The scale also represents an equal opportunity or non-discriminatory professional body whose disciplinary processes are founded on the basis of fairness, equity and justice. Its processes are not only fair, they are seen to be fair by all members; today about 20% of the membership is made up of female chartered accountants while four out of the 40 presidents so far produced by the Institute are women.

- The blue colour in the crest signifies benevolence of the Institute to distressed members as well as a commitment to its social responsibility to other stakeholders; The Institute has launched both a Benevolent and Educational Trust Fund as well as an Employment Bureau for its members.

Accounting, like history, begins with recording of transactions. Feathers were the writing tools of the early merchants and philosophers/priests who needed to keep accurate records of their transactions. Besides, the use of feathers to write was a special skill practised only by the nobles and priests of old. Thus, the ability to use feather to write was a mark of excellence. Hence, the feather in the crest can be construed as a symbol that affirms the historical nature of accounting and the excellence/expertise of its practitioners who were mainly accountants. Accountancy, therefore, as represented by the Institute, is a value-driven profession of excellence comprising men and women who are noble in character and skill. ■

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