

HONOURS AND AWARDS 2019 NATIONAL ORDER OF MERIT

COMPANION

KARMENU VELLA KOM

Born in Zurrieq in 1950, Karmenu Vella graduated in Architecture and Civil Engineering from the University of Malta, and later obtained a Master of Science in Tourism Management from the University of Sheffield.

Vella served and contributed to the Maltese democratic process for over four decades. He was first elected to Parliament in 1976 and continued to be re-elected in the elections that followed, for nine consecutive times. During his political career he has been appointed Minister for Public Works, Minister for Industry and Minister for Tourism twice. Karmenu Vella vacated his parliamentary seat in 2014, following his nomination as European Commissioner. During his term in office as European Commissioner responsible for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Vella addressed some of the most pressing environmental issues of our time and thus helped improving the well-being of our citizens and our planet. Under his leadership, the European Union adopted and implemented in full the Circular Economy Action Plan, adopted new rules to reduce single-use plastic products, updated the EU's waste legislation and stepped up action to improve air quality across Europe and made concrete progress in halting the decline of the EU's biodiversity.

During his mandate, Karmenu Vella also developed a leading international role for the European Union in the field of ocean governance, promoted the blue economy including through increased investment, and worked to improve the environmental, economic and social sustainability of fisheries in Europe and around the world.

HONORARY OFFICER

PROF. JOVAN KURBALIJA UOM

Prof. Jovan Kurbalija has a professional and academic background in international law, diplomacy, and information technology. He has been a pioneer in the field of cyber diplomacy since 1992 when he established the Unit for Information Technology and Diplomacy at the Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies in Malta.

Prof. Kurbalija is the Founding Director of DiploFoundation and the Head of the Geneva Internet Platform. The DiploFoundation has been a pioneer in research and capacity development programmes in digital technology for over 15 years, promoting the development, dissemination, and use of information technology in the field of diplomacy and international relations. Under the leadership of Prof Kurbalija and through the joint support and sponsorship of Malta and Switzerland, this foundation has progressively established itself as a valid and important actor on the international scene with a recognised role in both the development as well as the dissemination of ideas related to issues of digital policy and internet governance.

Since 1997, Prof. Kurbalija's research and articles on cyber diplomacy have shaped research and policy discussion on the impact of the Internet on diplomacy and international relations. Prof. Kurbalija lectures on e-diplomacy and Internet governance in academic and training institutions in many countries, including Austria, Belgium, Switzerland, the United States and Malta.

PROF. RAYMOND MANGION MOM

Raymond Mangion was born in Hamrun in 1959. He was a script-writer for rediffusion and radio at a very young age. In 1978, he was the first person in the history of broadcasting in Malta to initiate a long series about the Maltese towns and villages and about Maltese biographies.

In 1981, he started criss-crossing Malta to conserve for posterity the Maltese nation's collective memory. His work now consists in the conservation of hundreds of memories. In the same year, he assisted the then President of Malta Dr Anton Buttigieg in the writing of his auto- biography 'Il-Mingel tal-Gwerra'.

In 1997, Raymond carried out intensive research in the Archives of Palermo, Sicily, and managed to trace a copy of the Capitula and Constitutions of Apulus of Sicily (1497) that applied to Malta in the Late Middle Age. In the same year, with the permission of the Malta House of Representatives, he transcribed the Minutes of the first Malta Council of Government (1835-1849). He ensured the conservation of a document of great historical importance.

Raymond is a graduate in Law, History, Patristics, Linguistics, Literature and Communication Studies. He was awarded a scholarship by the University of Malta to proceed with his studies at the University of Oxford, UK, from where he earned his second Doctor in Law with focus on the History of Legislation. He is a writer and editor of several books and was the first person to publish a comprehensive History of Legislation in Malta under British Rule (1814-1964). He also embarked on the codification of the Rulings by the Speakers of the Maltese Parliament (1921-1964).

Raymond Mangion is currently a Professor of Law and Legal History at the Faculty of Laws, University of Malta.

TONY ZAHRA MOM

Tony Zahra was born in Sliema in 1945 and he is currently the President of the Malta Hotels and Restaurants Association.

Zahra is considered one of the pioneers of the Maltese tourism industry and throughout his career he has owned and managed tour operating companies in the UK and Holland, a Destination Management company, hotels and other accommodations in Malta.

He started his business career at the age of 18, investing in a car hire company. This coincided with the emergence in Malta of a fledgling tourism industry. In 1995 when the Financial services industry was in its early development, he set up Fexserv Financial Services, a company dealing with foreign exchange and money transfer. Over the years this financial services activity has expanded to include Fund Management, Fund Administration, and more recently, Pensions.

Zahra has had interests in manufacturing and was the Vice President of the Federation of Industries during the period 1981 – 1984. In 1976, Tony was appointed as Director on the board of the then Malta Development Corporation which is now known as the Malta Enterprise. He was also Director of the then government owned Malta International Airport, a Director of Air Malta, Chairman of Malta Industrial Parks and more recently on the advisory board of Malta National Development and Social Fund. He is a founder member for the Mediterranean Tourism Foundation, bringing together stakeholders from many Mediterranean countries to cooperate in the field of Tourism.

In 1994, Tony Zahra was appointed as Hon Consul General for the Republic of Lithuania. He is currently the President of the Malta Tourism Foundation and forms part of the Lisa Maria foundation which is a non-governmental, non-profit organisation, set up specifically to safeguard children and young adults from harm.

HONORARY MEMBER

PROF. JOSEPH A BUTTIGIEG MOM (POSTHUMOUS)

Born in Hamrun in 1947, Professor Joseph A. Buttigieg completed his undergraduate work and a master's degree at the University of Malta. He earned a second postgraduate degree, a B.Phil from Heythrop College in Oxford, England and then migrated to the United States in order to pursue his Doctorate in English at the State University of New York where he earned his Ph.D in 1976 with a dissertation on aesthetics in James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. That same year he moved to Las Cruces, New Mexico, to teach at New Mexico State University. In 1979 he was naturalized as a US citizen.

Buttigieg specialized in modern European literature and theory publishing numerous articles, essays and books. He also translated and edited the three-volume English edition of Antonio Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*. He was also a founding member and President of the International Gramsci Society.

At Notre Dame University (Indiana), Buttigieg held many leadership and administrative roles, including as Chair of the Department of English, Director of the London Program, and Director of the Hesburgh- Yusko Scholars Program, where he mentored some of the college's most promising undergraduate students, with an emphasis on service and leadership.

MIDALJA GHALL-QADI TAR-REPUBBLIKA

ANTHONY BEZZINA MQR

Anthony Bezzina was born in Paola, in 1948. He is a renowned entrepreneur and considered as a local leader in maritime affairs. He is highly respected in his locality for his contributions in the social and philanthropic spheres.

After completing his studies, Bezzina joined his father in the family business. Showing initiative and maturity well beyond his years, he advanced through the ranks currently occupying the position of Director of all the companies forming part of Bezzina Group. This Group is formed of 4 corporations namely, Salv Bezzina and Sons Ltd, Bezzina Maritime Services Ltd, Bezzina Ship Repair Yard Ltd, and Bezzina Steel Fabrications Ltd.

For the past 38 years, Anthony Bezzina has been President of Hibernians FC. Under his stewardship, Hibernians FC launched a football nursery where children from the locality and its surroundings would improve the technical abilities in football in a sound environment.

FR ĠANMARI CAUCHI MQR

Can John Mary Cauchi, better known as Fr Ġanmari Cauchi was born in 1942 in Għarb, Gozo. In 1963, when he was 21 years of age, he moved to Brazil to pursue his studies in Theology.

Archbishop José Maria Pires ordained Father Ġanmari Cauchi as a priest in the diocese of Paraíba in 1967 where he gave service for around 50 years. Father Cauchi was the Bishop of various parishes and he assisted farmers through an organization of the Brazilian Catholic Church known as the Land Pastoral Commission whose aim is to help poor farming families to acquire a piece of land, often having lived on it for several years. His work was not always accepted especially by the land owners and there were occasions where he was also threatened with a firearm.

When he reached 75 years of age and after having spent 50 years as a priest in Brazil, he decided to return to the island of Gozo where he is still giving service at the Ta' Pinu Sanctuary and the Pompeii Home for the Elderly.

JOE GRECH MQR

Born in 1934 in Cospicua, Joe Grech is renowned for introducing songs in the Maltese Language to an international audience.

Grech won the first Malta Song Festival in 1960 which was held at the Radio City Opera House in Hamrun with his own composition “Vola Uccellino”. In 1962, he won again in the same Festival with the song “Żgħażaġh Rebbieha”.

In 1965, he was chosen to represent Malta in the Italian Festival of the town, Martina Franca. In 1967, Joe managed to establish himself as one of Malta’s most popular pop singers with songs like “Il-Kaccatur”, “Il-Festa Tagħna”, “Ku Klu Ku Klu”, “Il-Lejla tal-Vitorja” and “Nhar San Girgor”. Joe Grech managed to record four consecutive 45rpm records in less than two years. These records continued to increase the popularity of Joe both in Malta and amongst Maltese migrants abroad.

In 1971, Joe was the first Maltese singer to represent Malta in the Eurovision Song Contest with the Song “Marija l-Maltija” which was composed by himself and lyrics written by Charles Mifsud. This song was translated into Swedish and was included in the repertoire of the Swedish singer Lasse Berghagen. In the 70s, Joe successfully toured in many places around the world with his songs and it was during one of these tours that he, under the management of Joe Stafrace, recorded a Long Playing Album “Sahha Malta with Joe Grech”. The song “Eviva l-Maltin” was composed by Joe himself and was dedicated to the several thousands of Maltese living in Australia. In 1976, Joe performed at the Royal Ballroom of Melbourne, and on the 12th of March 1977, he gave a spectacular show at the Sydney Opera House.

LINO GRECH MQR (POSTHUMOUS)

Born in 1930 in Sliema, Lino Grech was a distinguished Maltese actor, director and writer of theatre works. Through his initiative, a number of drama schools were set up in Malta and he dedicated his life to promote drama and theatre.

He was renowned for various script writing namely, 'F'Baħar Wieħed', 'Ipokriti', 'Ingroppi', 'Simpatici', 'Tgħannieqa', and 'Kristu tal- Kerrejja'. The screenplay 'F'Baħar Wieħed' was the first tele series in Maltese broadcasted on Xandir Malta. He also wrote other scripts based on the lives of religious persons such as 'Madre Margerita', 'Padre Pio', 'Mons De Piro', 'Adeodata Pisani', 'Dun Ġoġ Preca', 'Maria Goretti' and 'Bernardette of Lourdes'. Amongst his various productions, one can find numerous TV programmes such as 'Il-Familja Grech', 'Haddieħor' and 'Sejjaħtli'. Other theatrical works include 'Min qatel lil Ġanni?', 'It-Tlettax il-Kmandament', 'Meta Jintefa' d-Dawl', 'Divorzju bi Prova', 'Għoqda fuq l-Istonku' and ' Friefet u Barrin'.

ALFRED C. SANT MQR

Alfred C. Sant was born in Mosta in 1945. He has always shown a keen interest in culture particularly in contemporary music.

Over a period of fifty years, together with composer Ray Agius, Sant wrote a number of renowned pieces which became part of the Maltese folklore, namely 'L-Ewwel Tfajla li Habbajt', 'Computer', 'Sal-Aħħar', 'Fjura fil-Kantina', 'Fejn Thobb il-Qalb' and 'Dak Kien Żmien'.

Other songs penned by Sant also left a popular impact and were then associated with their singers amongst which we find, 'Il-Qalb ta' Kampanjol' performed by the late Toni Gauci, 'L-Għannej' by Tony Camilleri, 'Il-Kuġin Ġiljan' which remained synonymous with Joe George Micallef and 'L-Aħhar Bidwi f'Wied il-Għasel' (written together with Paul Abela) which brings back memories of Sammy Bartolo.

Sant participated in several contests abroad with his songs including Australia, Japan, Chile and other European Countries. In 1995 and 1996, he also took part in the Eurovision Song Contest with 'Keep me in Mind' (with Ray Agius) and 'In a Woman's Heart' (with Paul Abela), respectively.

Alfred also wrote and produced a number of musicals like, 'L-Għarusa tal-Mosta' that was enacted at the Mediterranean Conference Centre, 'Toni Bajjada-Eroj minn Naxxar' and 'Qalb il-Kampanjol'. As a dramatist, his written work was played at the Manoel Theatre, Saint James Cavalier, on television and he even wrote several productions for radio broadcasted on Radju Malta.

ATHLETES OF SPECIAL OLYMPICS MALTA MQR

The 28 athletes of Special Olympics Malta, who participated with different challenges in this year's Special Olympics held in Abu Dhabi, won 40 medals, 12 gold, 13 silver and 14 bronze in 9 different sport disciplines.

These athletes that had to train intensively with continuous sacrifice, commitment, discipline and dedication for the past three years with the assistance of their coaches and relatives managed to achieve great results.

The athletes that participated in these Olympics are an inspiration to other persons with special needs and the society in general and have demonstrated that no one should let personal challenges hold them back.

Through their success, these athletes confirmed that they have all the necessary skills to compete with other athletes from around the world.

LORANNE VELLA ZAHRA MQR

Loranne Vella Zahra was born in Gozo in 1971. During her undergraduate project research in 1994, she isolated, identified and named a novel bacterium belonging to the genus Salmonella - abbreviated as Salmonella Gozo - in honour of the island where it was first isolated. She subsequently graduated with first class honours in pharmacy from the University of Malta's Faculty of Medicine and Surgery.

Vella Zahra continued postgraduate research in medical microbiology at the University of Malta's Department of Pathology. Her work focused on clinical diagnosis of fungal infections, securing local project funding to support Maltese immuno-compromised patients with concomitant fungal disease. As a result, in 1995 she successfully established the first medical mycology laboratory for the clinical study, isolation and identification of pathogenic fungi. Her primary research into mycotic infections in Malta continued after her graduating MPhil with distinction in Pathology in 1997, publishing several papers in international peer-reviewed journals. She trained and mentored several Maltese BSc and Pharmacy students in their undergraduate projects, ensuring that mycology was firmly established in both the public and private clinical sectors. Before moving to the private sector, she also completed the new mycology laboratory design specification for Mater Dei Hospital.

In 2014, Loranne Vella Zahra successfully designed and led a global quality project for the IAG Group (British Airways and Iberia) making them the first cargo airline with a global airport network licensed for the safe international transportation of pharmaceuticals. She currently resides in the UK and now operates her own pharmaceutical quality consultancy.

JOHN ZAMMIT MQR

Born in 1948, John Zammit is the current president of The Malta Cycling Federation.

During his competitive career, not only did he represent Malta in some important events abroad, but he also had a three-year spell with Sicilian club GS Lampolet of Catania where he won numerous honours during those three years. However, he is also very much attached and dedicated to The BMX Malta Association, of which he is not just the president, but also the founder. Thanks to his initiative, Zammit has managed to attract thousands of youngsters to the sport over the years. He has also worked hard on the Tour of Malta, of which he is a co-founder.

After retiring from competitive cycling, he started coaching and, in 1991, he led the Malta national team at the Andorra Small Nations Games.

In March 2016 in Portugal, John Zammit was awarded the UEC (Union Européenne de Cyclisme) Merit Award during the 2016 Ordinary General Assembly and this year, 2019, in Yorkshire, he was awarded the highest international honour.

ON HONORARY BASIS

JOSÉ-MARÍA BALLESTER FERNANDEZ FONTES MQR

José-María Ballester Fernandez Fontes was, until 2005, director of Culture and Cultural and Natural Heritage of the Council of Europe. He has been responsible for the proclamation of the Camino de Santiago as the first European cultural itinerary.

Prior to joining the Council of Europe he was an advisor in the Office of the General Directorate of Fine Arts (1968-1970), Exhibitions Curator of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1969-1979), Director of the Centre for New Expressive Forms (Ministry of Culture, 1978–1979). In 1979, he then joined the Council of Europe where he held various positions related to Cultural Heritage.

José-María served as a member and vice president of the European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage/Europa Nostra Awards until 2012, when he was elected President. Between 1996 and 2008, he also served as an advisor to the Holy See for the Cultural Goods of the Church. He was instrumental in the setting up of the St John's Cathedral Foundation in Malta.

ON HONORARY BASIS

ROLAND ORESTE CASSAR MQR (POSTHUMOUS)

Roland Oreste Cassar, was born in Egypt in 1934 where he lived until he was seventeen.

At this young age, he left the country to pursue an aeronautical engineering degree in England. He stayed in Bristol for 13 years and there he was given an assignment to design the vertical tail section of the famous supersonic airplane, the Concorde. When McDonnell Douglas, a major American aerospace manufacturing corporation and defense contractor, went to England recruiting talented engineers with supersonic background experience, they offered Roland Cassar a coveted position in their Long Beach, California facility.

His command of many languages helped him to travel the world with the Boeing sales team, explaining and answering technical issues to potential customers. His direct boss at that time was Pete Conrad who was the third man to walk on the moon (Apollo 12) with whom he travelled throughout Africa on a sales tour.

He worked as Business Unit Manager at Boeing where he supervised 250 employees on the C-17 Globemaster III for structural stress testing, loads and fatigue along with overseeing the formal military and FAA certification process.

ON HONORARY BASIS

NATALIE LOUISA MARIA MUSCHAMP MQR

Natalie Muschamp is the managing director of Step up for Parkinson's. She originally studied dance in the Netherlands and has completed a Masters by research in dance studies in Malta. The first connection with Parkinson's disease (PD) was within Natalie's own family. In 2015, Muschamp became aware of the Dance for PD program in Brooklyn, New York and felt compelled to help People with Parkinson's disease through dance movement. She followed a course in the UK given by Dance for Parkinson's network UK and people dancing in partnership with English National Ballet, Plymouth Dance and Plymouth University, followed by an advanced training course with Dance for PD in Brooklyn. In 2016, she started a pilot study in Malta in collaboration with the Malta Parkinson's Disease Association and realised how these classes could benefit not only the person with Parkinson's disease, but also their caregiver.

In order to be able to host these classes free of charge, Muschamp applied for Funding and founded the Voluntary Organisation Step Up for Parkinson's. The organisation grew rapidly from 8 to 190 participants, hosting 9 classes per week in Malta and has eleven trained teachers working for the organisation. She aims to continually host these classes free of charge and to help people affected by this disease and their caregiver by unceasingly improving the methodology through research and development.