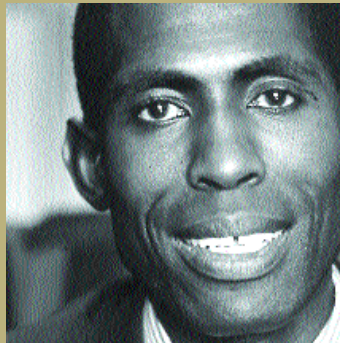


Sydney Maree (1956 –)

THE ORDER OF IKHAMANGA IN SILVER



**AWARDED TO
SYDNEY MAREE
FOR OUTSTANDING
ACHIEVEMENT IN THE FIELD
OF ATHLETICS AND
CONTRIBUTION TO
NON-RACIAL SPORT**

Sydney Maree was born in 1956 in the dusty mining town of Cullinan, east of Pretoria. His life was inextricably linked with the struggle against oppression and racism in South Africa.

In 1977, at the age of 18, he boarded a plane for Villanova University, near Philadelphia (Pennsylvania), for what turned out to be a stay of 20 years in the United States (US). Maree broke onto the scene in November 1976, when in Port Elizabeth he became the first, and only sub four-minute mile schoolboy in the history of South African athletics (3:57,9), second only to the American high-school sensation Jim Ryan (3:56).

Maree's victory in the inaugural 5th Avenue Mile in New York, where he missed breaking Sebastian Coe's world mile track record by five hundredths of a second, placed him firmly on the international athletics map and remains unsurpassed.

In Cologne, Germany on 28 August 1983, he broke Steve Ovett's world 1 500 m record in 3:31,24. He went on to break the magical 3:30 barrier for the distance, running 3:29,77 – which is still the American metric mile record.

In 1981, he became the first black athlete to receive the South African Athlete of the Year award.

Two weeks before the start of the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics for which Sydney Maree qualified for a place on the US team, he suffered a hamstring injury.