

The Story of the Zonta Emblem

“Zonta” is derived from a Lakhota (Teton Dakota), a language of the Native-American Sioux peoples, word meaning honest and trustworthy. It was adopted in 1919 to symbolize the combined qualities of honesty and trust, inspiration and the ability to work together for service and world understanding.

The emblem is not simply a decorative design. It is an adaptation and composite of several Sioux Indian symbols which when superimposed take on a special significance for Zontians.



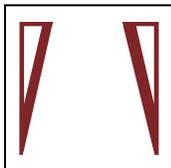
What appears to be the letter "Z" is actually the Sioux symbol for "ray of light," "sunshine" or "flash of radiance"- and so "inspiration." The entire Zonta movement is an inspiration, and that inspiration stems from the “radiance” of each individual Zontian- and so this symbol means to us “ALL of Zonta” and “each individual member of ZONTA,” and becomes the focal point of the emblem.



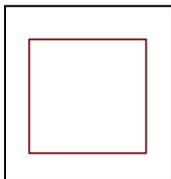
This Sioux symbol means "to band together for a purpose" or "to stand together"- in a word, "loyalty." With loyalty, individual members band together into clubs, clubs into districts and districts into Zonta International. So “loyalty” surrounds the “radiance” and “inspiration” as we begin to see a familiar pattern.



This is the Sioux way of saying "to carry together." Carrying together is a most important ingredient for the accomplishment of Zonta's purpose: to work for the advancement of women worldwide through a global fellowship of business executives and professionals. This symbol has been conventionalized to lend itself to the total pattern and slips over the “inspiration” and the “loyalty” to draw us closer together.



This is the Sioux symbol for "shelter." Zonta's many service projects are a shelter for those in need. This symbol therefore lends itself importantly in significance and design, embodying Zonta's aims and aspirations.



The symbolism of the square is not exclusively Sioux, nor is it exclusively Native American. It perhaps dates back even further than all of these other symbols in its representation of "honesty" and "trust.”



This symbol—composed of many symbols—became Zonta's emblem signifying a radiant group of successful business executives and professionals who are loyal, honest, trustworthy and inspired to advance the status of women worldwide.



During the 1996-1998 Biennium the Zonta International Board voted to have the words "Zonta International" incorporated into the emblem to standardize its appearance and enhance recognition of Zonta International throughout the world.