THE NEW MACE

The new Mace of Xavier University of Louisiana is of cast bronze with oxidized copper, likened to the signature green roofs of Xavier buildings. The polished hardwood shaft, symbolizing the institution’s grounding in the earth, takes the mace to a height of roughly 42 inches with a weight of 27 pounds.

In polished bronze, the head of the mace features an interpretation of the university seal which was designed in 1950 by Sr. M. Lurana Neely, S.B.S. It includes the university motto “DEO ADJUVANTE NON TIMENDUM” (As God is with us, we have nothing to fear). The head is also adorned with a crescent, a dual symbol of the Virgin Mother of God and of the City of New Orleans; along with a blade of wheat alluding to the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament who founded and nourished Xavier. A minor relic from St. Katharine Drexel is ensconced in the mace’s crown.

The overall design of the mace parallels a royal Ashanti staff from West Africa, also a symbol of authority. It includes an Ashanti saying “NEA ONNIM NO SUA A, OHU” (He who does not know can know from learning) which espouses the acquisition of knowledge, life-long learning enlivened by Xavier.

Other decorative motifs include the medicine man’s eye, the Native American symbol for wisdom and the fleur de lis, the national flower of France that has become a ubiquitous symbol of Louisiana’s French heritage. The seal of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament is also included.

Spanning more than a year from design to construction, the mace is the result of a collaborative effort through Xavier’s Art Department. It was designed by Mr. Ron Bechet, the Victor H. Labat Endowed Professor in Fine Arts. Along with Mr. Bechet, several artists and craftsmen assisted with the mace’s construction including art students and faculty from Xavier, alums Kimberly Dummons, and Martin Payton, and community members Elijah Sprols and woodworker, Mr. Calvin Moret.