

Free Market Award

The 21st Free Market Award was presented to Johann Rupert on 13 October 1999 at a luncheon at the Johannesburg Country Club. Professor Themba Sono acted as Master of Ceremonies.

Johann Rupert has had a distinguished career. He is the scion of the Rupert family and head of a giant organisation that celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1998. Its achievements have been phenomenal.

He received the award, in part, for championing the policies and principles on which free markets are based. This is something major business personalities are often loathe to do but something that is essential for the preservation of human liberty and economic freedoms. Mr Rupert propagates and in his personal and business life exemplifies the view that freedom as a moral principle and as a practical precondition for prosperity coincides fortuitously in the real world. Mr Rupert has called on government to:

- Maintain the rule of law in South Africa.
- Refrain from adopting laws or decrees that undermine law and order.
- Accept the primary role of the private sector as the engine of wealth creation.
- Limit its intervention in the role of business.
- Reject the social engineering frequently proposed by failed ideologists.

However, the most important reason why he received the award is that Johann Rupert is a profit-seeker and not a rent-seeker. Rent-seekers are those who seek special privileges, protection, monopolies and subsidies from government at the expense of taxpayers and consumers. Profit-seekers are people who seek to earn profits by providing goods and services to customers and who rely on the excellence of their service for their rewards. All they want from government is an orderly environment in which they can focus on running their businesses. Johann Rupert, throughout his distinguished career, and the Rembrandt Group, throughout its history, have been profit-seekers.

The founders of the Rembrandt Group, Dr Anton Rupert and the late Mr Dirk Hertzog, also happen to have been involved in the founding of the Free Market Foundation 25 years ago. Dr Anton Rupert has served as a Patron since the Foundation's inception whilst Mr Hertzog re-constituted it, persuaded the major business organisations to support it, and served as a Council Member and President for many years.

The Free Market Foundation honoured Johann Rupert for his great commitment to the principles and practice of freedom in the market place. It is through the exertions and entrepreneurial flair of the Johann Ruperts that wealth is created. In short, he received the 1999 Free Market Award for his exceptional contribution to the cause of economic freedom.