

# Old-world sculptor makes rock come alive

By ANGIE MANGIACASALE

A Rockwell print hangs just above the desk in the office of Canadian Art Memorials. In the print, a life-sized, stone-carved angel looks down upon its craftsman, carving tools in hand, bent over a slab of rock. The man squints through his glasses with concentration. He is balding, but what hair he has forms a white fringe from ear to ear. Under the print, sitting at the desk, the proprietor of the shop bears a startling resemblance to the framed figure above him.

Louis Temporale trained to become a sculptor in his native Italy and after he came to Canada in the late 1920s, he studied at the Ontario College of Art.

But in the depression years before the second World War, there wasn't a big demand for sculptors. So he and his brother, Mario, bought the old ice house that stood on the corner of Mississauga and Lakeshore Rds. and set up a business making grave stones. On the side, Louis kept sculpting.

At first, there were the odd jobs carving elaborate ornamental work on buildings which was an integral part of the architecture of the day. During the past 50 years, the shop has been expanded a couple of times, so Louis could accommodate some of the larger projects he was hired to handle.

Framed photographs of his carvings and sculptures jam the walls of the office. His works have gained him the reputation of being one of the best at his craft in the country according to his fellow members in the Ontario Society of Artists (OSA), the Sculpture Society of Canada, and the Monument Builders of North America Inc.

In 1974, he received one of the highest honors for an artist in this country when he was elected by his peers to the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts (RCAA).

Fellow-sculptor Rebecca Sisler, executive director of the RCAA, says, "as a carver, Louis is absolutely magnificent. He is the old country type of superior craftsman that isn't seen anymore."

He looks the part. His brown corduroy Levis are just as dusty as his brown jacket and so is the fedora he always wears around the shop. His are the rough, blackened

ringers of a man who works with his hands. In sculpting, Louis will tell you, it's the hands that express the thoughts of the mind.

"Sometimes I can look at a piece of marble and see — feel — I can get something specific out of it. Other times, I have something in my mind I want to carve and I adapt the idea to the piece of marble I have to work with," he explains.

"It all depends on who the piece is for. If it's for a customer, you have to give him what he wants. But if it's for me, I have to satisfy myself."

Modern sculpture, mostly abstract work, isn't a favorite with Louis. Over the past half-century, he has seen his artform lose its ornateness.

"Modern sculpture is very simple. It makes carving much easier. But, I don't like that style very much. It doesn't have the power of a

David. When I look at the works of Michelangelo, I get goosepimples."

Louis seems to want to generate the same sensation through his own work. His artist-friends say he achieves this with ease. Ontario Society of Artists president, Kemp Kieffer, says, "Louis is one of the most established sculptors around."

His list of credits, prove it. At Queen's Park, in the Thompson Block, is Temporale's granite carving of an Eskimo capturing a seal.

"When the piece of granite first came to me for that carving, it weighed about six tons," says Louis adding that the original smaller work was done by an Eskimo carver.

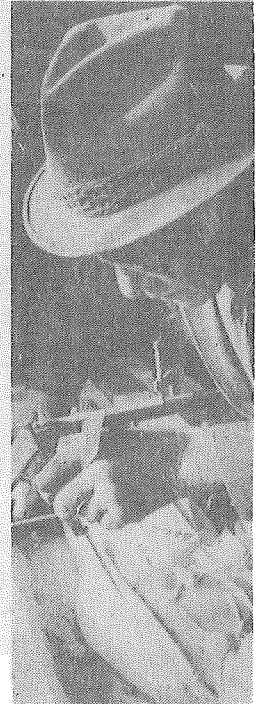
Louis had often been commissioned to enlarge for display the work of other artists. According to Rebecca Sisler, it's because he's "one of the few craftsmen who can do that sort of demanding

thing. He not only has the technical ability, but he also has the artistic eye to make the enlargement successful."

More than 15 years ago, Louis enlarged a clay sculpture of King George VI originally done by the late Elizabeth Wyn Wood. The sculpture of the king standing at attention in his royal garb had to be carved in three separate pieces and then put together because of its size.

"The bottom piece alone weighed seven tons when I got it. I carved each piece on its own and when we put it together I had to fix it up so everything matched."

The granite monument stands more than 10 feet tall and faces the American border from its place in Victoria Park at Niagara Falls.



Temporale at work.

This month, Louis plans to enter a 30-inch white marble abstract carving into the Ontario Society of Artists annual open-juried art show. From the 1,000 entries representing all artistic disciplines, 150 will be chosen to travel to galleries throughout the province.

On display at the Burlington Cultural Centre is a white marble carving of a milk bottle which Louis calls "a contemporary piece of art".

One white marble bust of a woman carved by Louis recently returned from a tour of European galleries.

In the office of Canadian Art Memorials are a number of Louis' works arranged in a window display. One is a plaster figure of a boxer in a gloves-ready-to-fight stance. He laughs when he explains how his brother Mario posed for the work. Today Louis runs the business mostly on his own since his brother's death almost five years ago.

Because of a sad twist of fate, Louis couldn't carve a monument for his brother's memorial stone. Monuments, he explains, are only allowed in the older sections of some cemeteries. In Italy, Roman Catholics are famous for elaborate grave stones.

"But, around here, none are allowed in Catholic cemeteries — they only get bronze markers with the name engraved on them. That's what Mario has.

The regulations haven't caused any drop in business. Louis makes bronze markers, too.

When he first studied the art of making grave stones in Italy, Louis thought he'd "never get used to the idea. But after a while you realize it really is an art."

He loves his work and says he'll keep doing it while he's well.

"Haven't you heard that people die off after they retire," he says laughing.

Besides, he has a lot of work to do. Stone slabs with historic engravings from Niagara Falls are waiting at the back of the shop to be repaired.



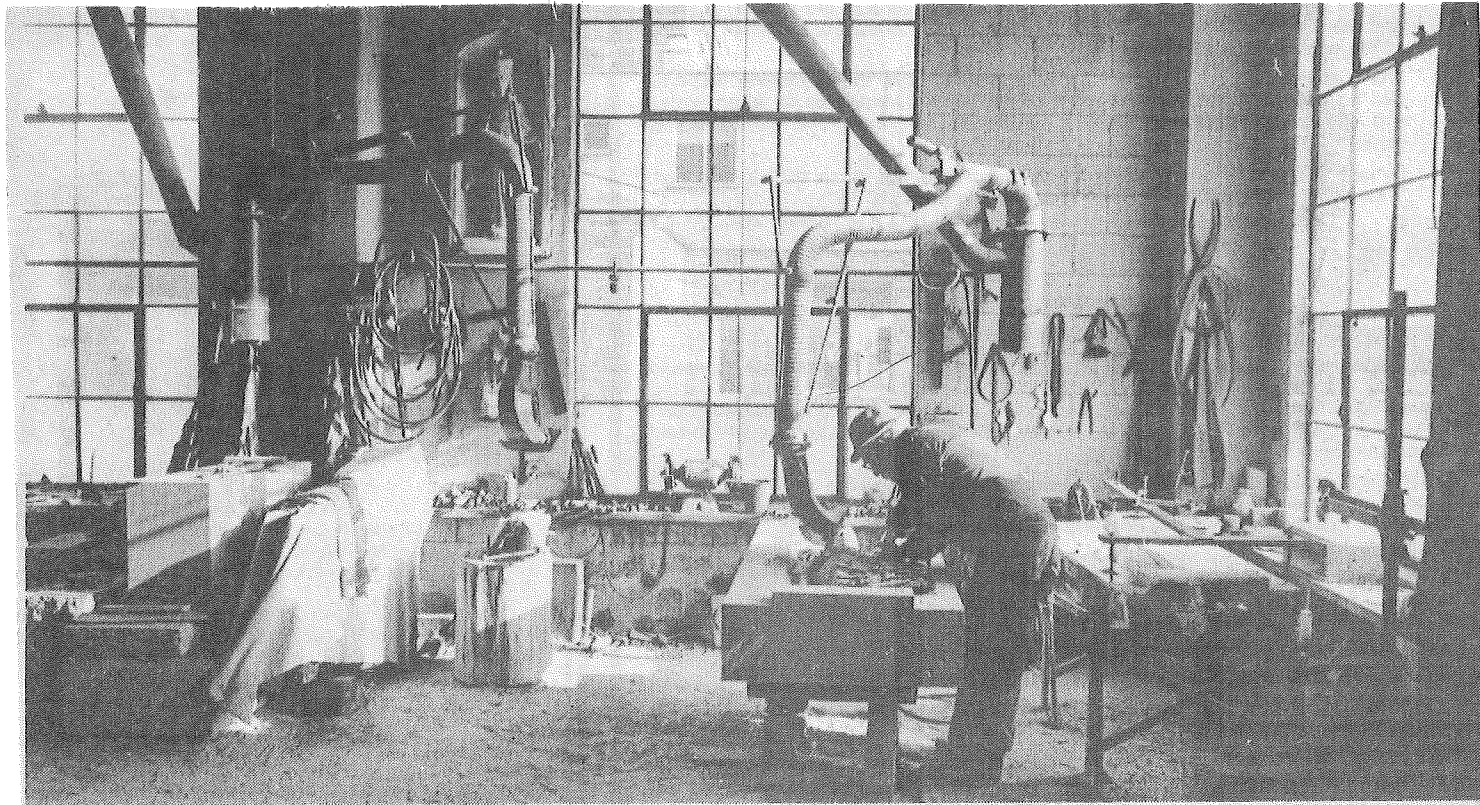
Working with large pieces of granite or marble can be strenuous work. But Temporale enjoys every minute of it.



According to his peers, Temporale is one of the most established craftsmen of his kind in the country. He employs different styles in his carvings (below left).

Paul Bigog. Br.

November 21, 1979  
MJD



In the work rooms of the Canadian Art Memorials shop which he has been running since the 1940s, Temporale often works carvings commissioned by everyone from private citizens to the government.

TEMPORALE, LOUIS



Louis Temporale (above) puts the finishing touches on an abstract white marble carving entered in an open-juried art show of the Ontario Society of Artists this month.