

# EMPLOYMENT STRATEGIES FOR THE RESTORATION ARTS

## Craft Training in the Service of Historic Preservation



Symposium Report

WORLD MONUMENTS FUND

**EMPLOYMENT STRATEGIES  
FOR THE RESTORATION ARTS**

**Craft Training in the Service of Historic Preservation**

**Report of a Symposium Organized by the  
WORLD MONUMENTS FUND July 26-28, 1993**

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*cover: Ivan Myjer, Director of Restoration for Cathedral Stoneworks, leading tour of the stone cutting workshop.*

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## I. Conference Rationale

From July 26-28, 1993, the World Monuments Fund (WMF) -- with support from the Vincent Astor Foundation and the Samuel H. Kress Foundation -- sponsored the conference "Employment Strategies for the Restoration Arts: Craft Training in the Service of Historic Preservation." Through site visits, presentations of case studies, and discussions, participants examined how this country's youth might be trained and provided jobs in the restoration arts, and they considered the impact such a strategy could have on preserving historic architectural fabric and on rescuing disappearing crafts. Opportunities for job retraining were also addressed. (See Appendix A for the agenda of the conference; Appendix B for the list of participants.)

This report is a record of the conference and the thinking that emerged from it, as well as a record of the proceedings of the conference itself. It is important to document both aspects of the proceedings because the conference was only a first step in a longer process. The World Monuments Fund, as catalyst, initiated this effort in order to identify, develop and implement a program in training and historic preservation that will have the potential to make a national impact.

Active for 28 years in historic preservation efforts -- with some 100 projects in 26 countries around the world -- WMF is well known in U.S. preservation circles for its support of training and restoration at The Church of St. Ann and the Holy Trinity in Brooklyn Heights and for its support of a project to conserve adobe churches and revitalize adobe craftsmanship in New Mexico.

The present effort is an attempt to address three issues together: the continuing erosion of the historic fabric of New York City; the continuing loss of the craft skills that produced the architectural legacy of the city; and the growing disintegration of the social fabric of the city.

These issues are all in urgent need of attention. Certainly youth unemployment and lack of opportunity -- especially among minorities -- is acute. Certainly in New York and other major cities around the country -- particularly in these difficult economic times -- there is a sore need for housing as well as for funding to restore and maintain historic structures important to civic life. And certainly the crafts that contributed to our rich architectural legacy are less in demand and so are dying. With them die not only the possibility of saving some of the country's most precious

architecture, but also aspects of human skill and excellence that enrich the life and potential of the individual, the community, and the nation.

The political climate appears inviting to solutions. Individuals sympathetic to historic preservation have been elevated to positions of influence at the U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. National Park Service and the Department of Housing and Urban Development. There is hope that the new administration in Washington is committed to putting people back to work and would be willing to provide serious funding for training efforts. Is it possible to capture a part of this political will and bend it to the service of craft training and job creation in the restoration arts?

The question calls to mind what was made possible in the 1930s by the Works Progress Administration and other agencies and programs that emerged during the New Deal. In those years, Central Park benefited from the labor of no less than 80,000 individuals who were provided an opportunity to be useful. An example of a current initiative conceived on a similarly grand scale is Spain's Escuelas Taller program, developed by the Fundación para la Ecología y la Protección de la Media Ambiente and funded generously by the Ministry of Labor. Escuelas Taller has developed over 700 work sites to train unemployed youths between the ages of 18 and 25. Project sites include historic sites as well as parks and urban districts.

Inspired in part by this example, preservationists, architects, and representatives from government agencies, foundations and existing building craft training programs were thus invited to meet in New York for three days to consider these issues. In the course of the discussions, the group missed the presence and perspective that union representatives and craftsmen could have added. Despite this lack, the group surveyed the problems and possibilities posed by training in the restoration arts, bringing to bear an impressive level of knowledge, experience and accomplishment. They framed questions, identified problems, and formulated serious proposals which the World Monuments Fund hopes will provide the basis for the development of an appropriate and useful project.

## Acknowledgments

The World Monuments Fund would like to acknowledge the Samuel H. Kress Foundation and The Vincent Astor Foundation, whose generous financial support made this program possible. WMF also thanks the Institute of Fine Arts of New York University, which generously donated the use of its facilities for the workshop sub-groups and the closing reception. Mr. J. Jackson Walter, former President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, served enthusiastically as the chairman of the symposium. WMF also acknowledges the collaboration and cooperation of colleagues and friends throughout New York City who were instrumental in organizing site visits and getting the word out about the conference: Mr. Michael Adlerstein, Chief Architect with the U.S. National Park Service; Ms. Ethel Bates of the Marcus Garvey Park Conservancy; the City of New York Department of Parks and Recreation; Mr. David Korman of The St. Ann Center for Restoration and the Arts, Inc.; Mr. Ivan Myjer of Cathedral Stoneworks; and Ms. Nanette Smith, Special Assistant to Deputy Mayor Barbara Fife.

These proceedings were prepared by Mr. David Sassoon and produced in-house by the World Monuments Fund. Symposium logistics were administered and managed by Rebecca Anderson, Program Administrator of the World Monuments Fund and Sheila McInerney, Program Administrator of the Samuel H. Kress Foundation.

## **II. Conference Summary**

### **A. Site Visits and Case Studies**

The first day of the conference was devoted to site visits and presentations of case studies. In their variety and uniqueness, each of the programs that was examined highlighted issues that would inform subsequent discussions.

The volunteer effort to reclaim Marcus Garvey Park in Harlem and restore its one-of-a-kind cast-iron fire watchtower demonstrated the difficulties of undertaking such work in a neglected and uninformed community. Not far away at Cathedral Stoneworks, located on the heights overlooking Harlem, preservationists and artisans are hoping the twin engines of high technology and commerce will provide the answers that will save the stone-cutting craft from extinction. In the Brooklyn Heights Historic District, at the Church of St. Ann and the Holy Trinity, 28 teenagers are demonstrated what can be accomplished in a short time through a summer employment program that is giving them a taste of craft training and on-site work.

The group also heard about other training and restoration projects. The Youth Action/YouthBuild program is gutting and restoring abandoned buildings in Harlem and making them available for occupancy by homeless families. They are training high school dropouts in construction trades and providing remedial classroom education and leadership training in the process. In Indianapolis and Chicago, African-American communities have organized to reclaim and restore buildings important to the history of their communities. In New Mexico, the "Churches: Symbols of Community" program of the Santa Fe-based New Mexico Community Foundation is promoting community development through the restoration and protection of traditional adobe churches. Unemployed and marginalized youth are being trained to work with adobe, revitalizing a dying craft and reviving depressed communities.

## **B. Basic Questions**

These projects provided a backdrop to the following a full day of discussions which addressed a number of basic questions:

- Is it possible to train people with highly specialized skills in the restoration arts? Will the job market support and sustain individuals skilled in restoration arts?
- Who should be trained, and for what skills?
- What criteria/standards should be set for the training? Is an accreditation mechanism necessary? Is education in the humanities also a necessary part of such training?
- Would such training programs contribute to the restoration of the historic fabric of the city?
- How can potential funders, decision makers and the public be educated about the need and the benefits of training and historic preservation?

Conference participants broke up into three groups to discuss these questions in relation to administration and funding, education, and technology.

## **C. Working Session: Problems**

The first meeting of the sub-groups was devoted to identifying problems. The sub-groups identified difficulties in a number of common areas.

The design of training programs requires sensitivity and sophistication. Different trainees have different needs which must be taken into consideration. Unions, which have a powerful role in the job market, remain uninvolved in training programs.

The field also suffers from a lack of definition and coordination. Information about the market for skilled craftsmen remains scattered. Securing funding for training programs is hampered by the lack of clarity on questions of job availability. There is also no support system or network for skilled craftsmen, and in general they suffer from earning lower wages than comparably skilled workers served by a union.

The field of historic preservation also suffers from a negative public image as being elitist, costly and impractical. In the education and guidance counseling fields, crafts are not regarded as career options, and in general craft occupations are not well-respected professions.

#### **D. Recommendations**

The discussion and identification of these primary problems set the stage for a second meeting of the sub-groups to propose solutions and make recommendations. The recommendations fall into four broad categories: research, lobbying and coordination, training and education, and specific initiatives. They suggest the different directions that simultaneously need to be followed to establish training programs for the restoration arts.

Crucial questions about the job market, labor needs, existing levels of deferred maintenance, and economic trends can be answered by research. Arguments showing the benefits -- especially the economic benefits -- of training and restoration must be constructed and delivered to gain the cooperation of unions, public and private funding agencies and legislators, and to change the image that historic preservation now has of being an elitist concern. Training programs need to be tailored to cater to the complex needs of different kinds of people: children, students, drop-outs, the unemployed, and those out of work because of military down-sizing and other structural adjustments. Finally, specific initiatives exhibiting a variety of approaches can begin to provide solutions and attract attention and support to their effort at hand.

#### **E. Responses**

The following day, public officials and private individuals with long experience in historic preservation came to the conference to hear the recommendations, to offer their responses, and to engage in a dialogue. All were encouraging of the plans and prospects the conference group outlined, and advised the group on ways to focus their energies to achieve their goals.

They advised that preservation projects be cast and publicized in terms of their potential for job creation and for their economic benefits. Such arguments would be particularly persuasive in public agencies endowed with significant funds for training programs. They advised focusing energies on the housing market. Huge numbers of buildings in all urban

areas -- not just New York -- stand in need of rehabilitation. The work requires, more than anything else, vast pools of labor. Preservationists would find receptive partners if they aimed to provide jobs and housing while restoring historic fabric, and at the same time they would contribute to transforming the elitist stereotype associated with preservation. They further advised that ways be found to create a responsive network of craftsmen (who are by temperament and circumstance generally isolated) able to provide training. Unions, too, must be included and convinced to cooperate in training programs even as they are finding difficulty securing jobs for their own members. Respondents advised that preservation efforts capitalize upon the potential latent in community pride and community development, and proposed the creation of a Preservation High School in the New York City school system. The Board of Education is in the process of developing 10 theme-oriented high schools.

## **F. Next Steps**

The Executive Director of the World Monuments Fund, Bonnie Burnham, brought the proceedings to a conclusion and described her vision of a year-long process she hopes the conference has set in motion. The first steps require the preparation, dissemination and discussion of this report; and research to help elaborate convincing arguments to private funders and the government that this country needs craftspeople and that preservation of historic architectural fabric is a vital economic and social activity. Pilot projects also need to be identified, and finally plans made, funding secured and implementation begun on a major training project. Ms. Burnham gave an open invitation for help and suggestions.

### III. Visit to Ellis Island

The morning of July 23, prior to the final working session with respondents, the group had the opportunity to reflect upon their efforts during a trip to Ellis Island. John Stubbs, Program Director of the World Monuments Fund and the principal author of the 11-volume Historic Structure Report of Ellis Island, led a tour of the unrestored southern half of the island and guided a quick visit through the restored Registry Building.

The Ellis Island restoration, carried out by the New York firm of Beyer Blinder Belle and which cost \$230 million, is the most expensive restoration project in this country. All the work was accomplished using union labor and was executed very quickly -- in less than four years. The site attracts an estimated 2.5 million visitors a year and remains an immensely popular tourist destination. The group noted, however, a deficiency in the exhibition installations there. The section describing the process of restoration is small and rather remotely placed on the third floor; and no corner of the building has been left in an unrestored state to be viewed by the visiting public.

The southern half of the island has tremendous potential. There stands a complex of buildings once used to treat, quarantine and incarcerate immigrants with illnesses, contagious diseases and questionable politics. The function of many of the rooms is recognizable: hospital rooms, kitchen, laundry, examination rooms, crematorium and boiler room, autopsy theater and morgue. The structures have been abandoned since the 1950s and the interiors are in a decrepit state. Weeds are growing in through broken windows and on walls and floors. Paint and plaster are flaking. Dozens of ideas have been floated about what to do with these buildings. Certainly it could provide a suitable location for a variety of training programs.



Site visit to Marcus Garvey Park: symposium participants on the Acropolis.

## IV. Conference Proceedings

### A. Site Visits and Case Studies

The first day of the conference was devoted to a series of site visits and presentations of case studies.

#### 1. *Marcus Garvey Park - Site Visit*

(120-124th Street, from Madison Avenue to Mt. Morris Park West)

Ethel Bates, Executive Director of the Marcus Garvey Park Conservancy, led a tour of the park and discussed its restoration program. Atop the highest point in the park, known as the Acropolis, rises a landmarked cast iron fire watchtower which needs, according to one estimate, an \$800,000 restoration. Much of it may have to be recast because of the corroded condition of the iron. The fire tower once contained a room from which watchmen surveyed the neighborhood using a spyglass to spot fires. They alerted firemen by ringing the bell in the watchtower. The number of rings directed firefighters to specific locations. The watchtower (1856 -- Julius Kroehl, engineer) is the only surviving one of its kind.

Four years ago, Marcus Garvey Park was a neglected property, overgrown with weeds and frequented primarily by drug addicts and dealers. Today, it is beginning to be used again by children and the elderly and becoming a focal point of community life in this historic Harlem neighborhood. This year Ethel Bates received the Steuben Crystal Apple from the Municipal Arts Society for being the driving force behind the transformation. Clean-up, repair, and basic construction work has been provided through volunteers, who also provide a security patrol. The Conservancy has initiated an ongoing training program which has included participants from the state prison work release program. Now that the Conservancy has reclaimed much of the park, it is in need of expertise unavailable in its own community. For example, workers need to be trained to reset large capstones on walls surrounding the Acropolis.

Lack of funding, a completely voluntary labor force, an uninformed community, and decades of marginalization are problems the Conservancy must tackle in its efforts to reclaim and restore a community park that contains a valuable and unique city landmark.

## 2. *Cathedral Stoneworks - Site Visit*

(1047 Amsterdam Avenue at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine.)

Ivan Myjer, Director of Restoration, led a tour of Cathedral Stoneworks and discussed its genesis as a commercial business and its training program. The Stoneworks represents an attempt to apply 20th-century technology to stone-cutting to make it a viable craft that can be put in the service of restoration work as well as new building with stone. (There were 20,000 stonecutters in the United States at the turn of the century. Now, there are only a mere handful.)

Established in 1989 in cooperation with the Stoneyard Institute of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Cathedral Stoneworks offers a comprehensive array of professional stone restoration services and houses an academic training program in stone masonry and restoration. Presently, there are few trainees because funding, secured through the non-profit arm of the operation and from commercial earnings of the Stoneworks, has been scarce. It costs between \$60,000 - \$70,000 to provide training to one individual for a year. The apprenticeship program is 4 years in length. Trainees receive a starting salary of \$6 an hour, and eventually can earn between \$18 and \$25 an hour. Dropout rates over the years have been high. Most trainees have come from the neighborhood immediately surrounding the Cathedral. Graduates of the program -- about 100 now -- have also moved into other industries. The skills they acquire enable them to enter the commercial restoration field, as well as faddish niche markets that emerge, such as grotto construction for wealthy homeowners in Texas.

The Stoneworks has invested heavily in high technology equipment. It has pioneered new techniques in computer-assisted drafting, and has created computer software to precision-drive industrial stone-cutting and polishing machinery. While involved in many restoration projects, Cathedral Stoneworks is able to survive as a commercial entity through the production of carved stone and other types of fabrications for new constructions. (For more information, see *Historic Preservation*, September/October 1992.)

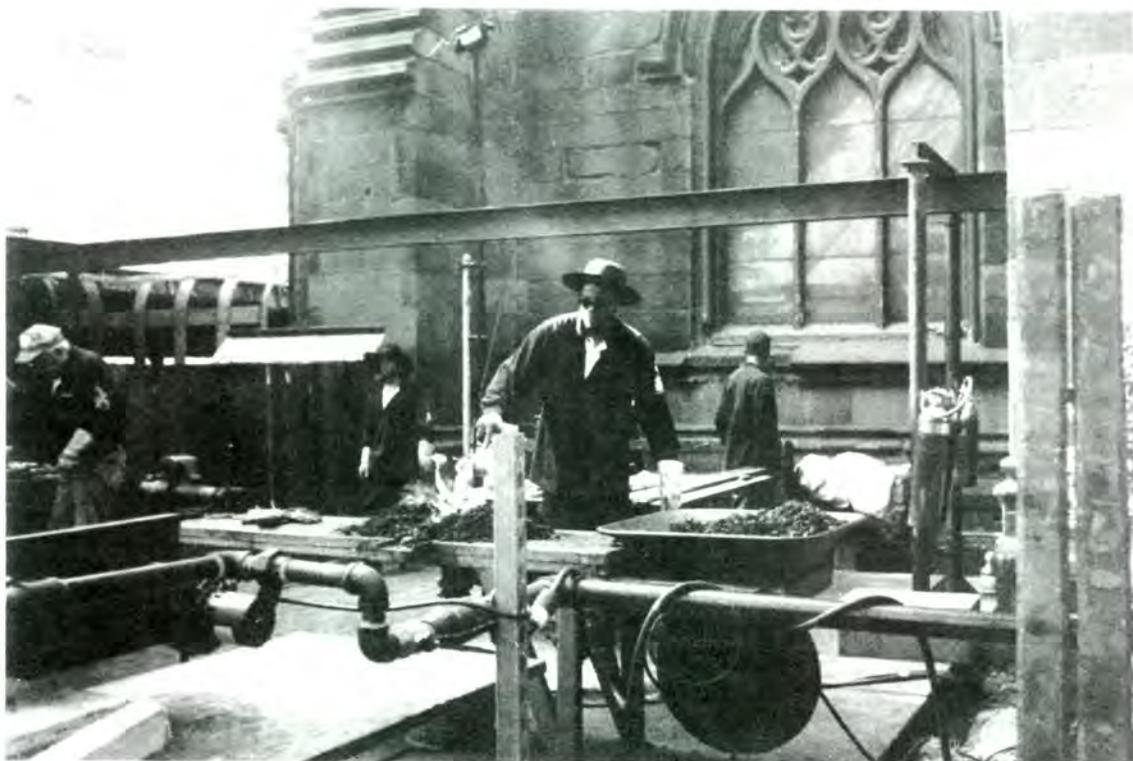
## 3. *Church of St. Ann and the Holy Trinity - Site Visit*

(Corner of Clinton and Montague Streets, Brooklyn Heights)

Located in the Brooklyn Heights Historic District, the Church of St. Ann and the Holy Trinity was designated a National Historic Landmark in

1987. In 1983, The St. Ann Center for Restoration and the Arts, Inc. was established to manage a program of performing arts and restoration, giving an important boost to the survival of the church which was lacking a vibrant congregation. The World Monuments Fund selected St. Ann's as its first major restoration effort in the United States in 1988, and has assisted in structuring, funding, and publicizing the conservation of the stained glass, wood window tracery, sandstone facade, and iron fence.

In July 1993, with support from the New York City Department of Employment/Summer Youth Employment Program, WMF and the St. Ann Center hired 28 interns between the ages of 15 and 21 to assist in the restoration of the church and to learn the traditional building crafts of blacksmithing, masonry, stained glass restoration, and wood conservation. The blacksmith workshop, erected in full view of passers-by, attracted a lot of community attention and coverage in the city's print and broadcast media. The blacksmith interns will complete restoration of the iron fence before the program ends. Although the program was small and short and although there are no plans for follow-up training at present, the effort demonstrated the potential and popularity of craft training for the city's youth.



The forge at St. Ann and the Holy Trinity, where 1993 Summer Youth Employment Program interns learned blacksmithing while restoring the landmark's wrought iron fence.

#### 4. *The Monuments of Central Park - Case Study Presentation*

Jonathan Kuhn, Curator of Monuments and Park Historian, New York City Department of Parks and Recreation.

The Monuments Division, created in the 1930s with federal relief funds, is responsible for the conservation, maintenance and installation of what could generally be termed "fine art" in New York City parks -- statues, tablets, steles, fountains, etc. While the current staffing of the division is drastically below historical levels, a permanent in-house maintenance crew provides the most cost-effective means of preserving outdoor monuments. Capital investment, private funding mechanisms and contractual labor also contribute to conservation efforts. Still, there are not enough permanent on-site crew members to care for monuments. The use of trainees and apprentices is being explored, but the investment of training time and expense cannot be justified without some sort of guarantee that trainees will be employed. In the past, trained employees have transferred to other parts of the Parks Department, or left the agency altogether.

#### 5. *Youth Action/YouthBuild - Case Study Presentation*

Andrew Baer, Project Director

Youth Action/YouthBuild is a national training and urban renewal program active in a number of cities. It trains high school dropouts -- aged 17-22 years -- in construction trades. The New York program -- the focus of this presentation -- has renovated three abandoned buildings on Second Avenue and 119th Street and made them available for occupancy by homeless families while at the same time reclaiming young lives. The program not only provides on-site training in building trades, but also has an academic component requiring attendance at remedial reading, writing and math classes leading to a Graduate Equivalency Diploma. YouthBuild also provides counseling. The organization actively works to combat the low self-esteem characteristic of their trainees through leadership exercises. Trainees take part in project guidance and decision-making and have a say in curriculum and staffing decisions. (For more information see *Historic Preservation*, May/June 1993).

6. *National Trust for Historic Preservation - Case Study Presentation*  
Benjamin Handy, Field Representative, Midwest Regional Office

Benjamin Handy presented two case studies of historic preservation efforts in African-American communities in the Midwest. In Indianapolis, a city-sponsored canal redevelopment scheme threatened to demolish the few original African-American homes that still survived in the city. Residents successfully fought the redevelopment scheme, proposed their own plan, and succeeded in saving the historic structures. Mr. Handy also described preservation efforts in Chicago that were aided by Floyd Butler of the Chicago Bears football team, whose popularity and influence among African-Americans helped to mobilize action. Both cases demonstrated the passion and energy that surround issues of heritage ownership and preservation, and the importance of making these issues public, particularly in minority communities suffering from marginalization, unaware of the richness of their heritage and having little experience in the preservation movement.

7) *"Churches: Symbols of Community Program" - Case Study Presentation*  
Sam Baca, Director

Administered through the New Mexico Community Foundation, the "Churches: Symbols of Community" program promotes community development state-wide through the restoration and protection of traditional adobe churches. The churches are the center of community life and the only public buildings in small communities. Their vernacular architecture is an important link to the history of the region. The survival of these buildings depended on seasonal maintenance provided by the community, and skills in working with adobe were passed down from generation to generation. With the failure of the rural subsistence economy and the migration of youth to the cities, the survival of both the churches and traditional adobe craft skills was endangered.

The "Churches: Symbols of Community" program has been revitalizing these skills and restoring churches by providing technical assistance and organizing community volunteers. Saturday work days draw community volunteers and college students who lend their effort to re-mudding structures and other necessary restoration tasks. The techniques are easy to learn and are inexpensive, and have given trained youth more options in securing work, especially in Santa Fe which has spawned an upscale market for adobe construction. At any time the program may have a

dozen projects running concurrently. These projects have trained gang kids, drop-outs, unemployed youth and others.

WMF has been the program's major donor over the last two and a half years. Critical to future plans of the program is continued and expanded training of youth.

## **B. Basic Questions**

The projects outlined above provided a backdrop to the following day of subject-specific discussions which addressed the fundamental questions:

- Is it possible to train people with highly specialized skills in the restoration arts? Will the job market sustain them?
- Who should be trained, and for what skills?
- What criteria/standards should be set for the training? Is an accreditation mechanism necessary? Is education in the humanities also a necessary part of such training?
- Would such training programs contribute to the restoration of the historic fabric of the city?
- What is the market for workers skilled in restoration arts?
- How can potential funders, decision makers and the public be educated about the need and the benefits of training and historic preservation?

The conference broke up into three sub-groups to discuss these questions in relation to administration and funding, education, and technology.

### C. Working Session: Problems

The first meeting of the sub-groups was devoted to identifying the problems that need to be addressed in the design of any major training project in the restoration arts. After a period of discussion, the sub-groups shared the results of their deliberations with each other. Below are summaries of their comments.

**Administration and Funding.** The Administration and Funding sub-group identified the following problems:

- Training poses a number of challenges. If the target group is unskilled and/or marginalized, in addition to vocational instruction trainees may require remedial reading and arithmetic education, as well as emotional and life-skill counseling. If the target group is skilled, or are workers laid-off mid-career in a downsize adjustment, they will require financial support while in programs that generally pay only minimum wages. Union cooperation will also be required, particularly when trying to determine whether to train people in a single restoration craft or a number of crafts. Unions generally prefer their members to have a single occupation. Multi-skilled individuals, however, have a greater chance of making a career.
- The market for workers skilled in the restoration arts is obscure. Sufficient information on the market exists, but it must be collected, digested and analyzed. What are the different markets? Homeowners? Institutions? The government? Their relative size? Access to them? Until this basic research is conducted, the field will continue to suffer from a lack of coordination. At the same time, a trend is emerging in government funding for training programs: funds are being made contingent upon long-term job retention. In short, funding agencies are interested in jobs more than the training. These funds, which are significant, will not be available for training programs in the restoration arts unless the agencies are satisfied that there is a job market for the trainees. Again, research can help elaborate the argument.
- There are few sources of funding for training programs. There is an urgent need to diversify the sources. This will require coalescing a constituency and lobbying to influence decisions. It is a long-term process that will require building powerful

alliances or earning a popular mandate. Funders need to be educated about different types of trainees and different kinds of restoration needs.

**Education.** The Education sub-group identified the following problems:

- Finding people to be trained. Few young people consider the potential of crafts as a career option and guidance counselors are similarly unaware. Vocational schools are also in decline.
- Preservation education programs are currently oriented toward administration and high technology. They offer little craft training or appreciation.
- There is a lack of readily accessible factual information about the existing programs and curricula.
- Craft workers suffer from a negative image. They are not in well-respected occupations.
- Unions are at present uninvolved in craft training.
- There is a lack of qualified trainers. Trainers themselves need to be trained in educational methods.

**Technology.** The Technology sub-group identified the following problems:

- There is no perceived availability of specialized restoration arts skills, and therefore no demand. Historic preservation is perceived as an elitist, separatist world.
- There is neither a social mechanism nor a centralizing force to mobilize or inform workers of jobs, or clients of available skills.
- Outside of the training systems that exist, there is no support system. An individual may undergo 5-10 years of specialized training, and end up earning only a moderate wage. Wage scales are low compared to unionized occupations.

- The burden for training skilled workers is often put on contractors who are already squeezed to provide the lowest competitive bids to secure contracts.
- The lack of certification and lack of knowledge on the part of clients and architects both obscures the value of craft skills, and contributes to a lack of demand for them.

#### **D. Working Session: Recommendations**

The discussion and identification of these primary problems set the stage for a second meeting of the sub-groups to propose solutions and make recommendations. Again, after a period of discussion, the sub-groups shared the results of their deliberations with each other. Below are summaries of their comments.

**Administration and Funding.** The Administration and Funding sub-group proposed the following:

- Involve unions in the development and implementation of training and retraining programs in the restoration arts.
- Identify and inventory under-utilized resources. Plant and equipment of governmental agencies; existing training programs; existing specialists already on the payroll.
- Expand summer jobs programs to train and employ more youth in restoration crafts. Create lines for crafts jobs in government agencies.
- Lobby lawmakers for tax incentives.
- Demand that the city be scrupulous about following landmark guidelines in its own buildings and contracts.
- Tie funding for capital projects to the use of trainees.
- Identify and capture the skills of workers in different neighborhoods and among immigrant groups.
- Avoid duplication in training programs.
- Share specially skilled workers among government agencies.
- Implement a project and apply diverse solutions to the same restoration situation. For example, restore four similar abandoned properties in Harlem. Have one restored by a private owner; one by the city; one by the unions; and one by the an organization such as the Landmarks Conservancy.

**Education.** The Education sub-group proposed the following:

- Gather more information and demonstrate the economic imperative behind craft training in the restoration arts.
- Create an educational process, beginning in kindergarten and ending in graduate study, through which people are educated about historic preservation and trained in crafts, and provide job opportunities at different levels along this educational ladder -- for laborers, apprentices, masters, contractors, architects etc.
- Lobby lawmakers and agencies to fund training programs for both disadvantaged youth and laid-off workers in other industries. One opportunity is now developing through the Legacy Project, initiated to turn former military installations into cultural resources. It is a potential place to train people and/or involve them in national service.
- Elaborate and communicate the cost effectiveness of preventive maintenance and ongoing restoration, and create a market for services.

**Technology.** The Technology sub-group proposed the following:

- Provide education in historic preservation through the existing educational system, beginning in elementary school and continuing through college.
- Explore and establish tuition apprenticeship programs. Charge trainees tuition to be a part of a certified and accredited program.
- Train clients and professionals in the business. Provide more hands-on preservation training in architecture schools, as well as on site. Provide workshops for owners and clients to improve communication and understanding.
- Plan strategies to focus historic preservation in places such as business improvement districts.
- Include cultural awareness, identity and social concerns in training programs for local youth.

- Insert a preservation component in the programs and exhibitions of existing cultural institutions.
- Establish a Conservation Center to house artifacts and act as a networking and information center.

**Religious Properties.** A small sub-group also met to consider religious properties and proposed the following:

- Identify buildings in the context of their communities, and draw upon community resources. Develop and train a large cadre of volunteers.
- Include and get the help of the diocese and local regions. Coordinate and share surveys, training, expertise, and other resources.
- Train workers in two tiers: one tier to conduct restoration work, the other tier to provide maintenance.

## E. Working Session: Responses

Public officials and private individuals with long experience in historic preservation were invited to attend the closing session of the symposium to hear the recommendations, offer their responses, and to engage in a dialogue with the participants.

The respondents were: Mr. Kent Barwick, President of the Municipal Art Society of New York; The Hon. Laurie Beckelman, Chair of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission; Mr. Joe Bresnan, Vice President of Remco Maintenance Corporation, formerly in charge of monuments for the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation; Ms. Adele Chatfield-Taylor, President of the American Academy in Rome; City Councilman Ken Fisher of Brooklyn; and Mr. Frank Sanchis III, Vice President, Stewardship of Historic Properties, National Trust for Historic Preservation.

The respondents called attention to three primary problems:

- The paucity of funds from the Federal Government that can be put to community development through building restoration. Thousands of buildings in all neighborhoods across the city could be restored and put to use.
- The lack of appreciation in many communities of the value and meaning of existing architectural fabric. Renovations frequently gut and destroy fixtures and details worthy of restoration.
- The isolation and lack of organization among craftsmen. The National Trust for Historic Preservation has been trying to encourage the growth of a leadership caucus, but it has yet to develop.
- Notwithstanding the audience's interest in training, the constraints posed by day-to-day crisis management and administrative gridlock has unintentionally placed training in the background. The need for government agencies at all levels to work around cutbacks only exacerbates the situation.

The respondents also advised respondents in the following directions:

- Learn to guide available training funds to the restoration arts. There is a significant amount of money available through different governmental agencies for training. Tap existing mechanisms, such as the Job Corps. Focus on youth and the unskilled.
- Call attention to housing and lobby public officials to solve the problem of homelessness by rehabilitating existing fabric. There is an enormous infrastructure of many vintages in all of New York's boroughs, and all are deteriorating. They need primarily vast pools of labor to restore. Programs can put a dent in both unemployment and homelessness, and also counter the elitist image of historic preservation.
- Involve the whole citizenry in all the various activities of historic preservation. The citizenry is way ahead of the government, and there is tremendous potential latent in a change of values that is only beginning to be expressed in public life. Tap the potential of community pride to promote wider participation. Counter prevailing cynicism toward public life.
- Make a deal with the unions somehow to involve them in training and job creation. Make them a stakeholder in historic preservation.
- Elaborate and communicate arguments for historic preservation in terms of job creation and economic value. For example, research and elaborate arguments showing the relative stability of property values in historic districts.
- In many states, every county has an agricultural extension agent. Why not an authority on preservation in every county?
- Create a high school whose curriculum is centered around historic preservation. The Board of Education is now planning for 10 theme-oriented high schools. Preservation could be one of the themes.

## F. Next Steps

Bonnie Burnham, Executive Director of the World Monuments Fund, closed the proceedings with a description of her vision of a year-long process that she hopes the conference has set in motion. The first step requires the preparation, dissemination and discussion of this report, and consideration of the recommendations of the working groups. It is still too early to make a persuasive presentation to the federal government about the need for craftsmen and the economic benefits of preservation. High tech alternatives are generally the preferred solutions. First, research is needed and arguments must be elaborated to demonstrate the importance and utility of craftsmen. Similarly, there is a need for another argument -- one that demonstrates that the preservation of historic architectural fabric is a vital economic and social activity. Pilot projects also need to be identified, and finally plans made, funding secured and implementation begun on a major training project. The Executive Director gave an open invitation for help and suggestions.

## **Appendix A - Conference Agenda**

### **EMPLOYMENT STRATEGIES FOR THE RESTORATION ARTS Crafts Training in the Service of Historic Preservation**

Monday, July 21, 1993

#### **Site Visits and Orientation**

##### **9:00 am**

Meet at 174 East 80th Street for coffee and bus to Marcus Garvey Park.

##### **10:00 - 11:00**

Ethel Bates, Executive Director of the Marcus Garvey Park Conservancy, will lead a tour of Marcus Garvey Park (120-124th Street, from Madison Avenue to Mt. Morris Park West, renamed from Mt. Morris Park in 1973, originally Mt. Morris Square) and discuss its restoration program.

Established in 1989, the Marcus Garvey Park Conservancy is a community-based not-for-profit organization dedicated to preserving and maintaining Marcus Garvey Park. At its Centennial Meeting this past June, The Municipal Art Society presented the Steuben Crystal Apple to Ethel Bates.

The landmarked fire watchtower (1856) on the Acropolis, once one of many such structures, is New York's only surviving watchtower and is in need of restoration. To preserve the Acropolis, the Conservancy has been assembling volunteers to: repair stone masonry, paving and bricks; set stones; and assist with basic construction. The Conservancy has initiated an ongoing training program, which has included participants in the state prison work release program as well as interested professionals who have volunteered their services.

##### **11:15 am - 12:15 pm**

Ivan Myjer, Director of Restoration, leads a tour of Cathedral Stoneworks (1047 Amsterdam Avenue). Established in 1989 in cooperation with The Stoneyard Institute at the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine, Cathedral Stoneworks offers a comprehensive array of professional stone restoration services and houses an on-premises academic training program in stone masonry and restoration. Through the apprenticeship program (initiated by The Stoneyard Institute in 1985), Cathedral Stoneworks manages activities for community training and employment. Approximately 75% of the apprentices come from the neighborhood immediately surrounding the cathedral.

Cathedral Stoneworks undertakes restoration, construction and stone fabrication projects. Its most recently completed project is the facade of the restored Jewish Museum.

**12:15 - 1:00**

Lunch at the Cathedral House, St. John the Divine.

**2:00 - 3:00 pm**

Tour of restoration work at the Church of St. Ann and the Holy Trinity: in-house stained glass restoration studio, sandstone conservation, wood tracery conservation and blacksmith workshop.

Located in the Brooklyn Heights Historic District, St. Ann's was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1987. In 1983, The St. Ann Center for Restoration and the Arts, Inc. was established to manage the performing arts and restoration programs. WMF selected the project as its first major restoration effort in the United States in 1988, and has assisted in structuring, funding and publicizing the conservation of the stained glass, wood window tracery, sandstone facade and historic iron fence.

In July 1993, with support from the New York City Department of Employment -- Summer Youth Employment Program WMF and The St. Ann Center hired twenty-eight young interns to assist in the restoration of the church while learning the traditional building crafts of blacksmithing, masonry, stained glass restoration and wood conservation.

**3:00 - 5:30**

(St. Ann's, Guild Room, 122 Pierrepoint Street) Program Introduction and brief presentations by program participants concerning efforts in restoration craft training.

Presentations by:

Sam Baca, "Churches: Symbols of Community" program, New Mexico Community Foundation

Andrew Baer, Youth Action/Youth Build

Benjamin Handy, National Trust for Historic Preservation, Midwest Regional Office

Jonathan Kuhn, Department of Parks and Recreation, N.Y.C.

**5:30**

Cocktail reception in St. Ann's Parish Hall.

Tuesday, July 27, 1993

**All-day working session at the Institute of Fine Arts, 1 East 78th Street**

**9:00 - 9:30 am**

Introduction

**9:30 - 10:30**

Defining the Problems: Meetings of affinity groups, comprising administrators; technicians; educators; and funders.

**10:50 - 11:30**

Synthesis I - Presentation of the results of the previous workshops.

**11:30 - 1:00 pm**

Buffet luncheon at the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, 174 East 80th Street

**1:00 - 3:30**

Workshops - Groups convene to compose recommendations for specific projects/issues.

- Religious Properties
- Government Properties (Federal, State and local)
- Districts, Streetscapes (public/private)

**3:50 - 5:30**

Synthesis II - Conclusion

Wednesday, July 28, 1993

**Site Visit and Closing Session**

**9:30 am - 1:00 pm**

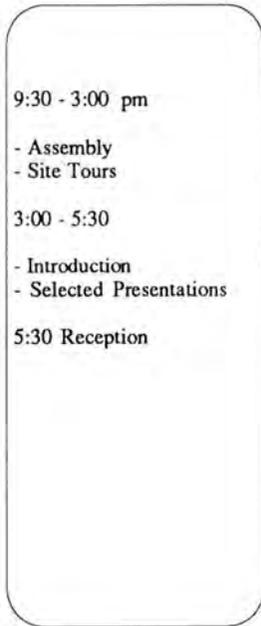
WMF Program Director John Stubbs, author of the 11-volume Historic Structure Report of Ellis Island, will lead a tour of the south half of Ellis Island, which is at present off-limits to the general public. The tour will conclude with a brief walk-through of the Ellis Registry Building to see exhibits and discuss its recent restoration.

**2:30 - 5:45**

Closing Session, with guests and respondents, at Institute of Fine Arts, 1 East 78th Street. Reception follows in the Oak Room.

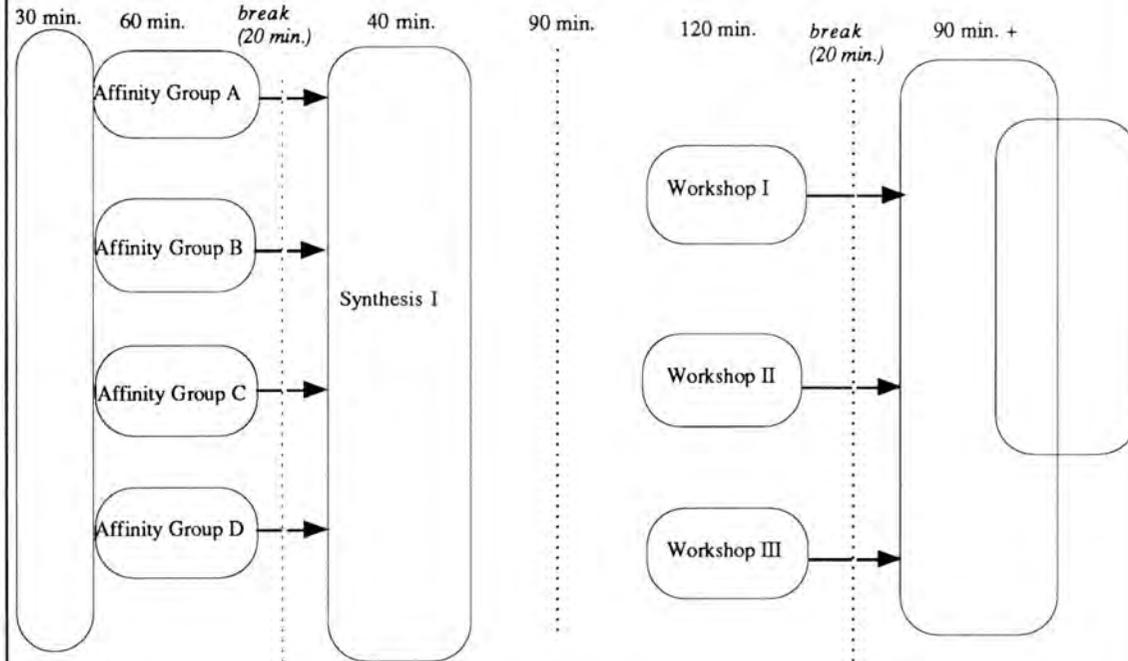
**Employment Strategies in the Restoration Arts**  
**July 26 - 28, 1993**

**Monday 7/26**



- General**
- Orientation
  - Background

**Tuesday 7/27**

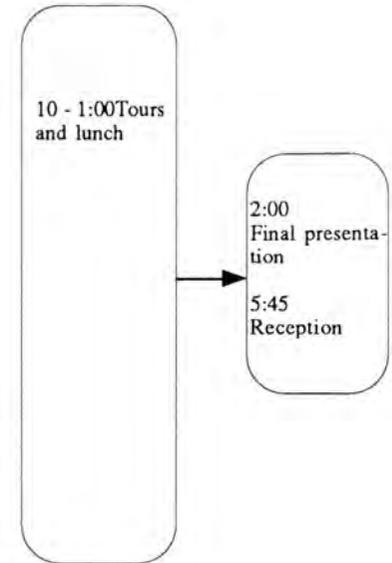


- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <b>General</b>   | <b>Work Groups</b>  | <b>General</b>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assemble</li> <li>• Reintroduce work plan</li> <li>• Assign groups</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formulate list of issues by professional discipline</li> <li>• Start list of possible resources</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of issues and opportunities</li> <li>• Establish mandate for afternoon session</li> </ul> |

Lunch

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Work Groups</b>  | <b>General</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of program(s) for these project types:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Religious properties</li> <li>2. Public architecture</li> <li>3. Private architecture</li> <li>4. Other?</li> </ol> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program presentations</li> <li>• Discussion</li> <li>• Adjust solutions</li> <li>• Establish final presentation formats.</li> </ul> |

**Wednesday 7/28**



- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>General</b>  | <b>General</b>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tour(s) of public architecture project types (lunch in between)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of symposium conclusions; responses, etc.</li> <li>• Reception</li> </ul> |

revised 7/23/93

## Appendix B

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## Appendix C - Reprints of Program Related Articles

"We need love, we need support, we need attention, we need skills, we need training, we need education... : YouthBuild nurtures young people into mainstream employment as they rehabilitate inner-city buildings." By Allen Freeman. *Historic Preservation*, May/June 1993.

"Stepping Stones: Block by Block Cathedral Stoneworks brings a National Landmark Nearer Completion and a Staff of Artisans to a Path of Skill and Reward." By Stanley Abercrombie. *Historic Preservation*, September/October 1992.

**'WE NEED LOVE, WE NEED  
SUPPORT, WE NEED  
ATTENTION, WE NEED  
SKILLS, WE NEED  
TRAINING, WE  
NEED EDUCATION...WE  
NEED INSPIRATION...  
WE NEED WHAT WE  
HAVEN'T HAD.'**



*A program called YouthBuild nurtures young people into mainstream employment as they rehabilitate inner-city buildings.* **BY ALLEN FREEMAN**



**Y**outhBuild Boston trainees, above, are reclaiming the end building in a row with the fronts on Washington Street, opposite the city's Roxbury Courthouse. Clockwise from top left: Jose Bracamonte, Daniel White, Juan Del Valle, Jose Smith, Campbell, Anthony Green, and John Galva.



WITH THE MATURATION OF THE  
PRESERVATION MOVEMENT  
COMES RECOGNITION OF  
THE IMPORTANCE OF SHARED  
COMMUNITY VALUES.



**I**f the rehabilitation of any community requires long, hard work on the part of many people, the resurrection of an impoverished inner-city community seems a task so arduous as to border on the impossible—especially if gentrification, the involuntary displacement of residents, is to be avoided. But in the inner cities of Boston, San Francisco, St. Louis, and eleven other American locations a movement has taken root that reclaims both old buildings, primarily for low-income residents, and young lives.

The movement, called YouthBuild, implements a handful of pragmatic, commonsense ideas, many of which have been used in other efforts to help inner-city youths. The program's demonstrated effectiveness derives from its programmatic mix. It combines a half-time alternative school with on-the-job instruction in vocational skills and with what YouthBuild calls leadership training, which is a blend of personal and group counseling, peer support, and trainee self-governance. Participants aged sixteen to twenty-four spend approximately a year earning high-school-equivalency diplomas while learning the fundamentals of the construction trades—carpentry, painting, plumbing, and electrical wiring—as well as the personal habits and qualities that contractors seek when hiring workers at the entry, or preapprentice, level.

With the maturation of the American preservation movement comes recognition of the importance of the physical and

shared values that the notion of the community implies. The problems of community restoration involve nurturing and restoring balance to the building fabric as well as to individual lives, and YouthBuild seems to have some answers. Building by building, person by person, YouthBuild restores.

Earlier this year on South Twelfth Street in the historic Soulard neighborhood just south of downtown St. Louis, YouthBuild trainees were gut-rehabbing two adjacent 1890s houses. When the rehabilitations are complete each house will contain two rental units, finished to prevailing construction standards, for low-income residents. Because the handsome brick street facades will remain unchanged, the houses will continue to contribute to the character of the densely built, ethnically, racially, and economically diverse neighborhood, which has been listed in the National Register of Historic Places since 1972.

Meanwhile, in Boston's inner-city Roxbury section, YouthBuild participants



**I**n San Francisco, YouthBuild trainees, left, have gutted one level of a former high school gymnasium, above. The young workers are, from left to right: seated, Dominic Trinidad and Martin Gonzalez; second row, Alonzo Scott, Miles Markham, Catina Johnson, Pros San, Tanya Washington, and Camilo Rios; and standing at the rear of the group, José Martínez, Bobby Try, and Carl Lewis.

were gutting a five-story 1870s brick row building. The structure, vacant for at least twenty years, will become transitional housing for YouthBuild trainees and graduates. The Boston Redevelopment Authority has designated YouthBuild as the property developer and will transfer ownership of the building to the Boston program. YouthBuild's work will include

rebuilding the mansard roof, almost lost to neglect, on the Washington Street facade and reconstructing the 6,000-square-foot interior to create a living room, a dining room, a kitchen, and rooms for thirteen residents.

And in San Francisco, near the southeast corner of Golden Gate Park, YouthBuild trainees were gutting the lower level of a 1937 girls' gymnasium, one of two remaining structures of the city's former Polytechnic High School campus. Trainees removed a warren of showers and locker rooms to create storage space for YouthBuild's construction equipment and materials. The next task was to convert space within an old building in the city's South of Market area into class-



**I**n St. Louis's Soulard Historic District, YouthBuild trainees, right, are gut-rehabbing a century-old house, above, for low-income residents. Shown inside the house are, from left to right, James Walker, Craig Burton, Thomas Johnson, Marlon Little, Antione Roberts, Darrell Lane, and Moeun Moeung.

rooms and offices for the YouthBuild San Francisco program.

YouthBuild San Francisco's construction-site supervisor, Marvelin Rance, points out that young people take it upon themselves to enroll in YouthBuild. "They realize that they need certain skills, and many of them realize their shortcomings," he says. "Even though they get into tiffs with you, when you sit down and talk with them, they understand." The YouthBuild trainees I met in St. Louis, Boston, and San Francisco seemed bright,

enthusiastic, self-assured, focused on the YouthBuild training, and free of any sense of entitlement.

Twenty-year-old Catina Johnson, a trainee in San Francisco, was placed in a group home at the age of twelve and now has a one-and-a-half-year-old son of her own to support. She is sure and pragmatic about what she wants out of YouthBuild: entrée into the plumbing trade. "Plumbing is an inside job and one of the highest-paying trades in construction," she says, adding, "You can't do anything if you don't try. You'll only fail yourself."

In St. Louis, James Walker, who is also twenty years old and wants to be a professional painter, places high value on the high-school-equivalency diploma. "My father used to tell me that if I dropped out of school I would have a hard time for the rest of my life because I wouldn't have an education. Once I get my diploma I can work full-time doing work that I like."

In Boston, twenty-three-year-old David Medina, who dropped out of high school in the ninth grade, hopes that his year in YouthBuild will earn him the credentials to become an apprentice electrician. He also plans to attend a vocational school.

Medina has accepted the program's image of itself as "a family thing. It is 'each one teach one,'" he says. "If I help you, you can help the next person." Not all youths succeed in the program, he believes, because "some people are not ready to commit themselves. But for those who are willing to make a sacrifice and grow into a better person, it's great." YouthBuild accepts people the way they are, he says, works with them, and teaches them to change their bad habits, among which Medina lists laziness, ignorance, and selfishness. "That's where the leadership training comes in because it helps people one-on-one. You can't change people in a day."

The parent organization of YouthBuild St. Louis, Youth Education and Health in Soulard (YEHS), has sponsored a number of work-experience programs during its twenty-one years as a community-based service organization. These programs have employed young people as clerical workers, aides to senior citizens, and workers on beautification projects and vacant-lot



LEADERSHIP IS DEFINED BY YOUTHBUILD AS  
TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOURSELF, FOR  
YOUR FAMILY, FOR YOUR COMMUNITY.



cleanup projects. But the most popular work has been building rehabilitation, says Joyce Sonn, YouthBuild St. Louis's director. "Working with their hands and building something creates a sense of accomplishment that contributes to self-esteem. People who may not have been very successful in school can learn how very successful they can be." She qualifies this statement, however, by noting that "these rehab work programs lasted only eight to twelve weeks—not long enough for them to learn enough skills or to really accomplish anything, and they lacked the aspect of cultural identity and learning about your community and neighborhood," which is the part of YouthBuild that is brought out by its leadership program.

It is the leadership aspect that most obviously distinguishes YouthBuild from other youth-training programs. Sonn realized the importance of such training, coupled with a curriculum that is relevant to the lives of the trainees, during a national YouthBuild seminar in 1989. "Subconsciously I had known something was lacking [in previous programs], but I couldn't put my finger on it," she says. "The YouthBuild definition of leadership is taking responsibility on different levels," she says, "first taking it for yourself, then for your family, and then for your community. When I learned the YouthBuild approach, I said, 'Ah, yes, that's what has been missing.'"

The young people who come to YouthBuild are encouraged to leave their "imperfect" pasts behind them, says Juanita Carr, the YouthBuild St. Louis counselor. One of her counterparts on the East Coast is Wesley "Brother Wes" Green, a former street-gang member who is now the counselor/coordinator for YouthBuild Boston. Green reveals an intense empathy and respect for the trainees as he describes the process by which some of them let go of their pasts. "It's hard to give up survival techniques that you've learned over fifteen or twenty years," he says. "First the counselor has to establish trust, and that takes time. A lot of the trainees are going to come in with facades, and you won't begin to see the real person until a couple of months down the road. Others, feeling a sense of trust with their counselors and the rest of the staff, will expose themselves quicker.

"Once they come to an agreement with themselves [to let go of old defenses] they start [testing] to see who is trustworthy, and usually when that happens you get a whole load of stuff. When they do open

up and expose themselves, they react to that because it is like giving up a part of themselves, and you have to keep reassuring them to the point where they get in balance with themselves. That is done in one-on-one and group counseling.

"Our [group-counseling sessions] are intense—gang members opening up and crying, eventually coming to the conclusion that they don't like doing what they did but understanding that they had to survive. This program forces you to deal with these issues. You cannot hide here. When you have opened up and feel secure with that, then you can learn to be taught."

Counselors also help trainees deal with the everyday problems that any young person has. These range from family relationships and child care to obtaining a driver's license, writing a resume, going on a job interview, or just showing up for work on time. "We enact employer/employee relationships," says Carr of the St. Louis program, "so that they can see from both sides what it is like to be an employer and be responsible for employees and what expectations an employer might have.

"I speak directly to any problem, any issue. I don't buttercoat it. When compassion needs to be there, I give compassion, but when a kick in the rear is needed, I don't hesitate to do that either. . . . YouthBuild's leadership component is critical because from the very beginning of the program it puts responsibility of success on the student/trainee."

San Francisco's Rance observes that the trainees have a very keen sense of what is right and what is wrong—as it applies to the program and to life in general. "Although their lives don't always bear it out, if you were to examine their political outlooks, you would be surprised by how conservative they are, how traditional," he says.

Perhaps it is not so surprising that bright young people whose lives have lacked stability and continuity—the qualities that come from steady and meaningful work, from a nurturing family life, and from a supportive community—should aspire to traditional values. The genius of YouthBuild is to recognize those needs and provide for them.

Although YouthBuild is a confederation of independently managed and financed local programs, each bears the strong conceptual imprint of Dorothy Stoneman, a soft-spoken, cheerful, fifty-one-year-old woman who possesses an undergraduate degree from Harvard and a master's in early-childhood education from the Bank Street College of Education

in New York City. In 1988, with twenty-four years of experience in primary education and community organizing in Manhattan's Harlem and East Harlem, Stoneman obtained funding from the Ford Foundation and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation to set up the YouthBuild prototype project in the Boston suburb of Belmont. YouthBuild USA, as the parent organization is called, is now based in another Boston suburb, Somerville.

In fewer than five years YouthBuild has grown to fourteen community-based programs. Taking into consideration the current level of start-up activity, Stoneman expects that number to double by the end of next year. Approximately 240 community groups have asked YouthBuild USA for help, and roughly ninety of those have paid for representatives to attend YouthBuild seminars to investigate the possibility of starting new programs. A portion of the YouthBuild staff in Somerville has organized the YouthBuild Coalition. Members include the American Friends Service Committee, the National Urban League, the Children's Defense Fund, and more than 300 local service organizations nationwide. The purpose is to persuade the federal government to allocate funds for YouthBuild programs, and last year the Coalition met with success when it obtained a congressional appropriation, part of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1992, for a 1993 set-aside of between \$17.5 and \$40 million.

In addition to conducting seminars, YouthBuild USA offers advice and technical assistance to local programs, and, as an intermediary of the Mott Foundation, some operational funding. YouthBuild St. Louis, for instance, received YouthBuild USA grants to fund the counselor's position and to hire one of its program graduates to counsel other YouthBuild St. Louis graduates.

Stoneman is convinced of the importance of making follow-up counseling for graduates an integral part of YouthBuild programs. Asked to distinguish between offering support and becoming a crutch, Stoneman first defends the idea of helping YouthBuild graduates, but then her thoughts evolve into an eloquent, expansive view of the support people derive from a community.

"I have never known a person who used a crutch after their leg has healed," she says. "Our society has an excessive concern about dependency and encouraging dependency, so much so that we force children to be independent long before they

are ready. . . . Americans' push to make people independent tends to make people dependent because they have an unfulfilled need for dependency that plays itself out in a lot of different ways. I think that becoming dependent allows people to become supportive. This is how I raised my children, allowing them to be fully independent and fully dependent as they need. I don't say they should be less dependent and more independent.

"It is the same thing in the communities. Young people are saying, 'we need love, we need support, we need attention, we need skills, we need training, we need education, we need a community, we need a context, we need inspiration, we need role

models, we need mentors. We need what we haven't had.'

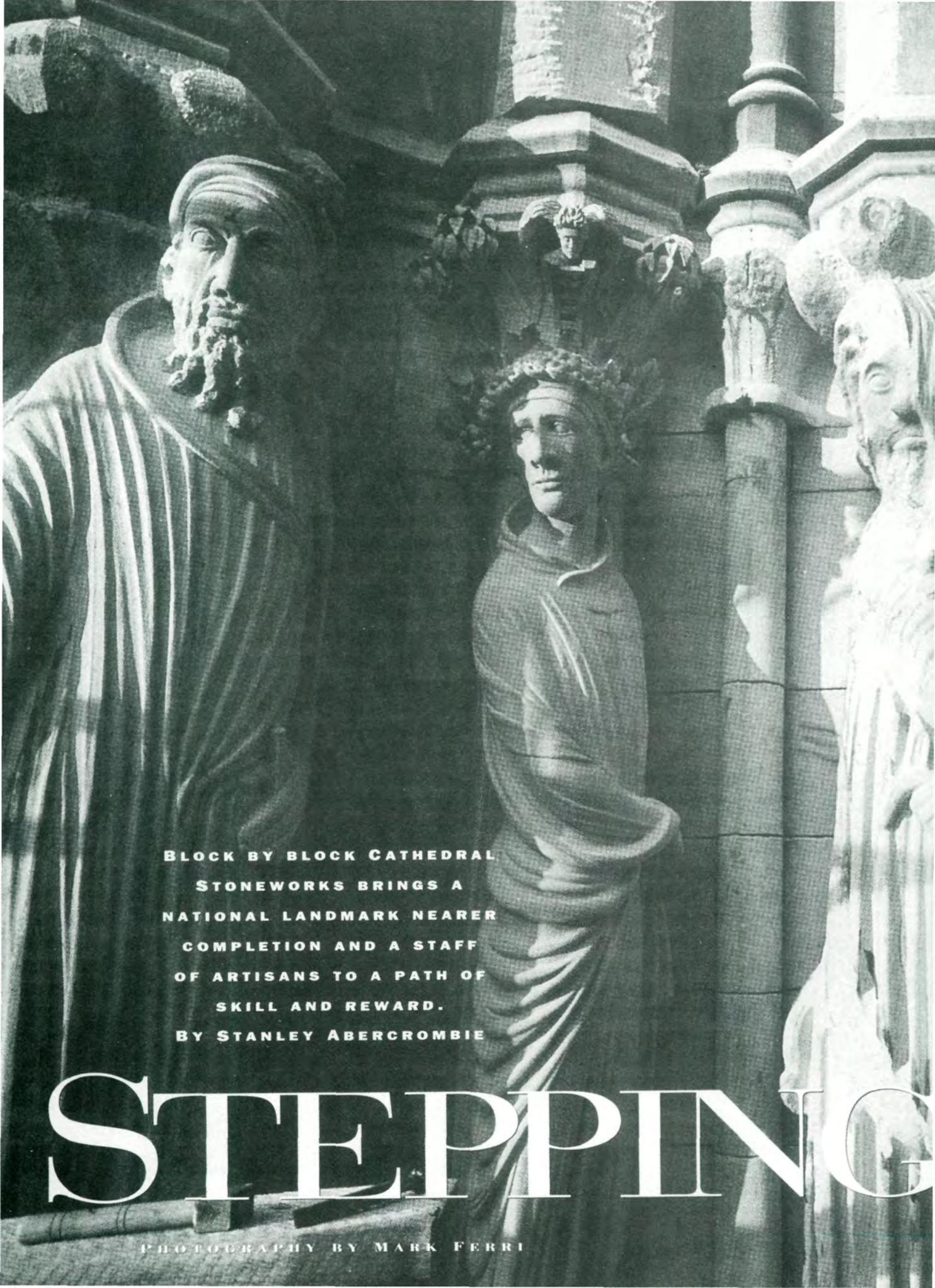
"The government's perspective is the short term. You have a bad situation and you provide short-term intervention, getting someone out of alienation into the mainstream in a way that is basically obedient. But you need a community in which people can grow up, that has values and aspirations and support systems and opportunity systems. Instead we have communities in which institutions are not working, and so the people who survive are the exceptions. It is not that a few people have deficits and therefore they can't make it and they need productive programs. It is that most of the people are not getting

what they need from their community. Therefore we need to rebuild communities in which people can grow up in a healthy context." Building by building . . . person by person. ▼

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*In addition to Boston, St. Louis, and San Francisco, YouthBuild programs are operating in Cleveland; DeKalb County, Georgia (metropolitan Atlanta); Gary and Indianapolis, Indiana; Tallahassee and Gadsden County, Florida; Atlantic City; Milwaukee; Philadelphia; Pittsburgh; and New York City. YouthBuild USA is located at 58 Day Street, Somerville, Massachusetts 02144, (617) 623-9900. For more information, see back page.*

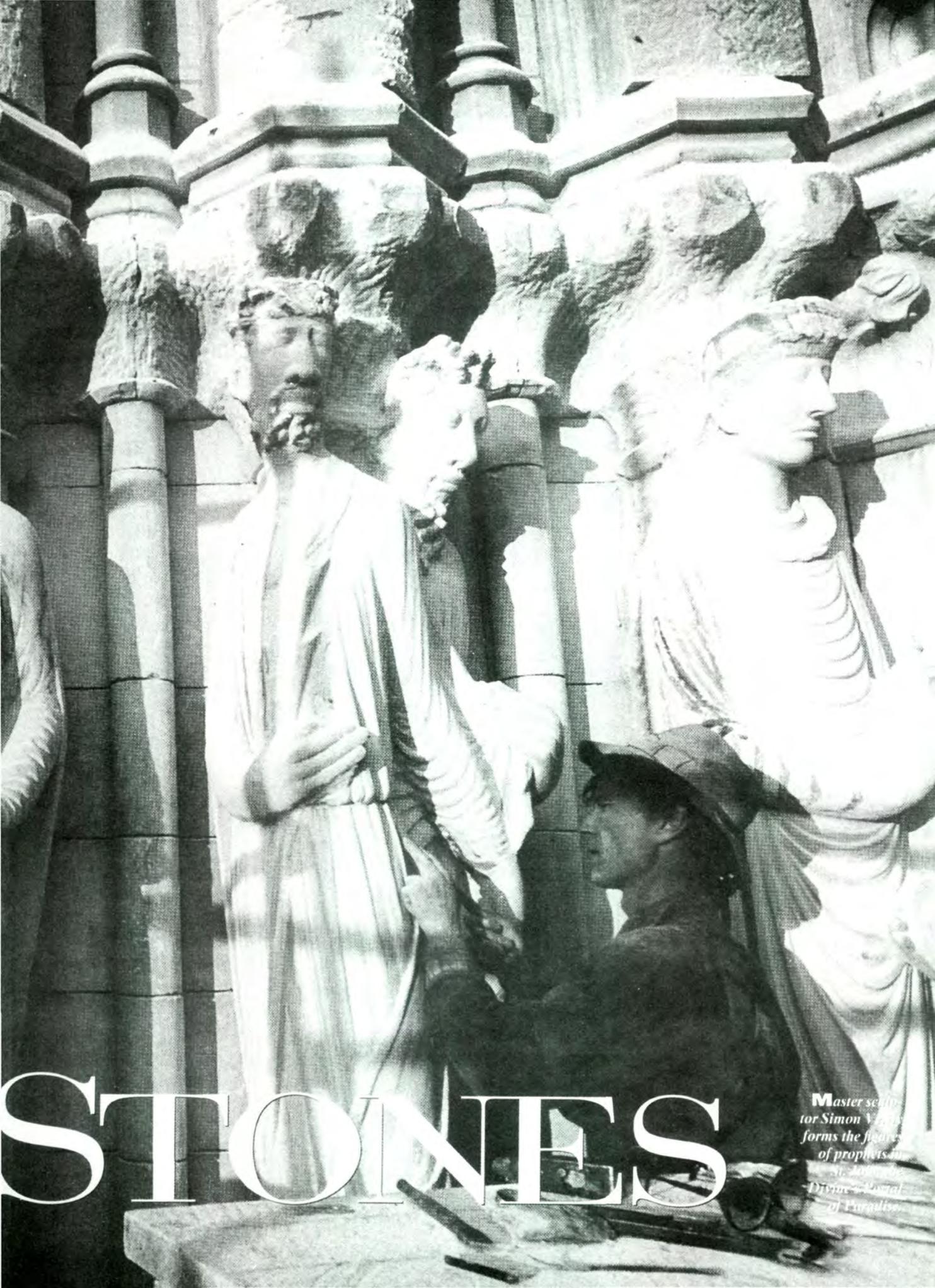
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**BLOCK BY BLOCK CATHEDRAL  
STONEWORKS BRINGS A  
NATIONAL LANDMARK NEARER  
COMPLETION AND A STAFF  
OF ARTISANS TO A PATH OF  
SKILL AND REWARD.  
BY STANLEY ABERCROMBIE**

# STEPPING

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARK FERRI



# STONES

Master sculptor Simon Vermeir forms the figures of prophets in the Divine Portal of Paradise.



The fifth of preachy old John Ruskin's *Seven Lamps of Architecture* was "The Lamp of Life." In that chapter he proposed that "the right question to ask, respecting all ornament, is simply this: Was it done with enjoyment—was the carver happy while he was about it?" This has come to seem such a bizarre criterion for judging architecture that it is taken as proof, along with his wholesale proscription against restoring old buildings ("We have no right whatever to touch them.") of Ruskin's hopeless irrelevance today. Yet at this moment in New York City a monumental structure is being built by—of all things—happy carvers.

That building, the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine, is remarkable in other ways as well. An unquestioned landmark though still far from completion, it was begun in 1892, eight years before Ruskin's death, to Byzantine-Romanesque designs by Heins and LaFarge and converted to a more refined French Gothic style by Ralph Adams Cram, who directed the project from 1911 until his death in 1942. The design being followed today is a version that Cram produced in 1932.

Son of a Unitarian clergyman, founder of the Medieval Academy of America and of the journal *Christian Art*, author of two dozen books, and head of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's school of architecture, Cram was the preeminent Gothicism of his day, known to his contemporaries as "the American Ruskin," and St. John is his masterpiece. Unlike nearby Riverside Church, it is not of stone veneer hung on a modern steel frame; it is the real thing, built of stone upon authentic stone. Except for a hiatus for each of the two world wars, construction has continued here for a century, and "If it were ever finished," according to Paul Goldberger's guide to Manhattan architecture, "it would be the world's biggest cathedral." (Well, almost. St. John's nave is 601 feet long, its planned width at the transepts, 320 feet. For St. Peter's in Rome, the measurements are 613 and 450 feet, respectively.)

St. John is also remarkable for its siting. Perched at the crest of Manhattan's steepest cliff, it overlooks a precipitous drop—culturally and economically, as well as ge-

At this moment a  
monumental structure  
being built by—of all  
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ographically—from Morningside Heights, where it shares a “New Acropolis” with St. Luke’s Hospital and Columbia University, to the derelict buildings and thwarted lives in the plains of Harlem.

The church is very much aware of this situation and its consequent obligations. It is aware as well of problems in continuing the cathedral construction in its traditional manner, the 20,000 stone carvers working in the United States at the turn of the century having dwindled to a handful. And it is aware, too, of the construction project’s vast appetite for funds. With a unique institution called Cathedral Stoneworks, it seems to have discovered a way of attacking all three problems at once.

Back in 1979 the Very Reverend James Parks Morton, the dean of the cathedral (and a former architecture student at Har-

vard) had begun something called The Stoneyard Institute, bringing together a few master masons imported from Europe and some neighborhood youngsters who wanted to learn a trade, thus providing a trained work force for the cathedral. The program was a success on a modest level, and in 1990 Dean Morton called on

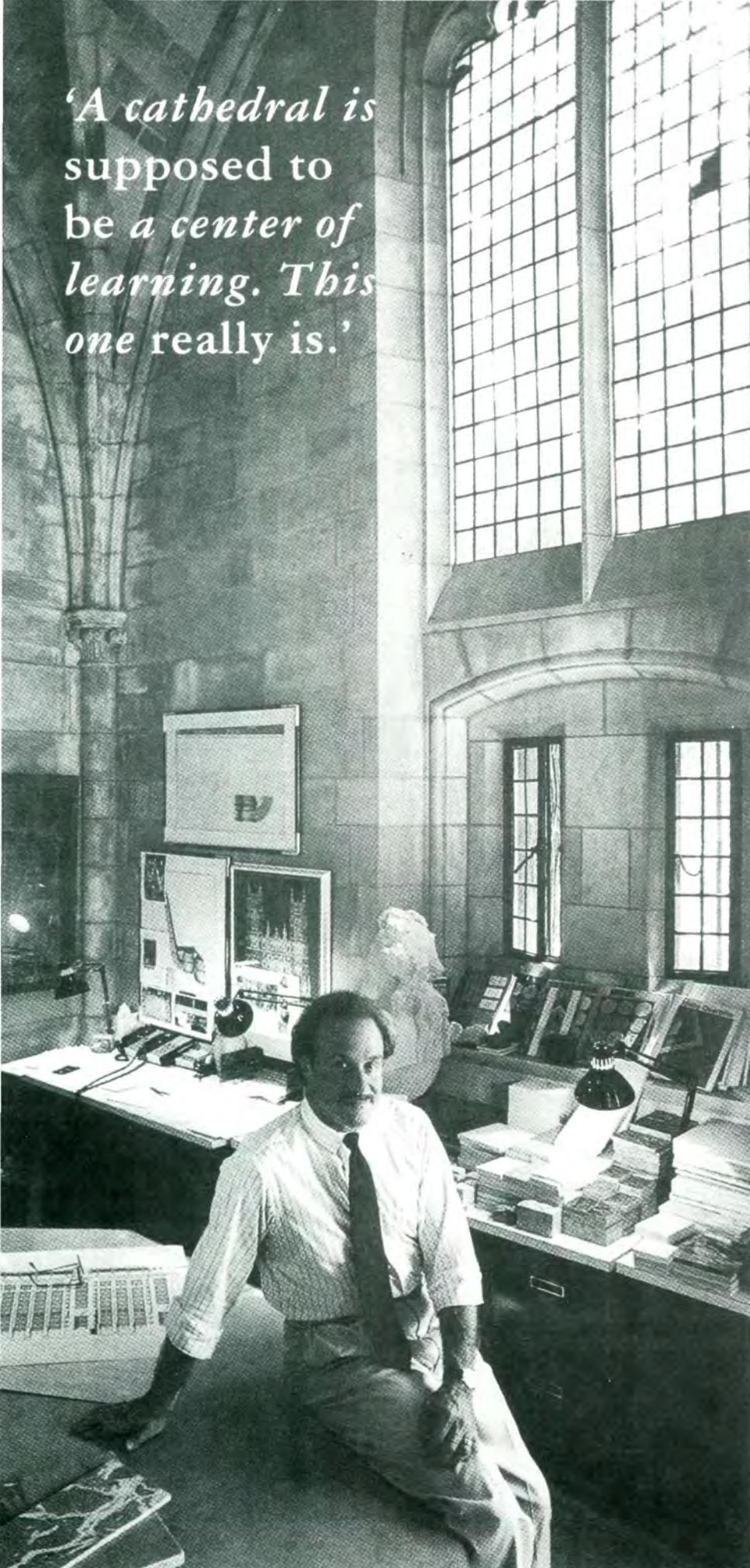
preservationist/developer David M. Teitelbaum to make a real business of it. Cathedral Stoneworks was established with Teitelbaum as the president, who was also tasked with the responsibility for managing The Stoneyard Institute.

Teitelbaum is a character—an accomplished one. Renovator of New York’s

**A** pair of stonecutters tool brownstone blocks with power chisels, above; delicate touches, applied by hand by such carvers as Amy Brier, opposite, finish intricate ornamentation, right.



*'A cathedral is supposed to be a center of learning. This one really is.'*



Barbizon Hotel, transformer of the same city's 1899 Federal Archives Building into a mixed-use development with 347 residential units, outspoken critic of St. Bartholomew's planned expansion and of Donald Trump's destruction of the Bonwit Teller murals, Teitelbaum had chosen at the age of forty-seven a quiet retirement that is now difficult to picture.

In jeans, a white shirt open at the neck, and lizard cowboy boots, Teitelbaum races a visitor through the busy stone yard adjoining the cathedral, points out a favorite gargoyle-in-progress, identifies a four-axis Stigma profiling saw, a six-axis router, a seventy-blade gang saw, and a Gregori bridge polisher, shouts sarcastic greetings to workers who seem genuinely glad to see him, and, all the while, conducts a rapid-fire self-interview.

"How can we operate this industry in a residential area, next to a church, next to a hospital?" he asks. "Because we are showing that land use is community based," he answers. "A cathedral is *supposed to be* a center of learning. This one *really is*."

The tour is interrupted by Eddie Pizarro, the stone yard manager, who wants Teitelbaum to see some test cuts made at varying blade speeds. Pizarro's history is typical of many of the workers here. A high-school dropout in Spanish Harlem, he could easily have succumbed, as did his father and many of his friends, to the oblivion of drugs. Instead, he is supervising cutters, tracking deliveries, keeping records of men and machinery, and still finding time for some personal carving projects for the cathedral: a Poets' Corner slate panel honoring Emily Dickinson, a limestone bust of Nelson Mandela.

There are other stories and other backgrounds here as well. Simon Verity is a name Dickens might have invented for a caricature ecclesiastic. But Verity is an artist, the building's so-called master sculptor, who came to the job from Great Britain four years ago after carving experience at Wells Cathedral, Canterbury Cathedral, and the Victoria and Albert Museum. At the moment, assisted by six apprentice carvers from the neighborhood, he is at work on figures of major and minor prophets in the Portal of Paradise, the cathedral's great west front entryway. Descending from the portal's scaffolding,

Verity looks like one of his own attenuated carvings, thin and pale, his clothes, his skin, his wild halo of spiked hair all coated with reflective stone dust. The illusion that he is glowing slightly is reinforced by his passionate description of work at the cathedral.

"The lovely thing here," Verity says, "is that what the dean set up is really happening. The stone yard is a real place for real people doing a real job. And when this is finished we will all be weeping with tears of joy." One does not question his sincerity.

Then there is Ivan Myjer, Cathedral Stoneworks' director of restoration, whose blond Nordic calm seems a perfect foil for Teitelbaum's hyperactivity, and who brings to the job experience not only as a stone carver but also as a wood carver, a stained glass artist, and a sculptor in iron and bronze.

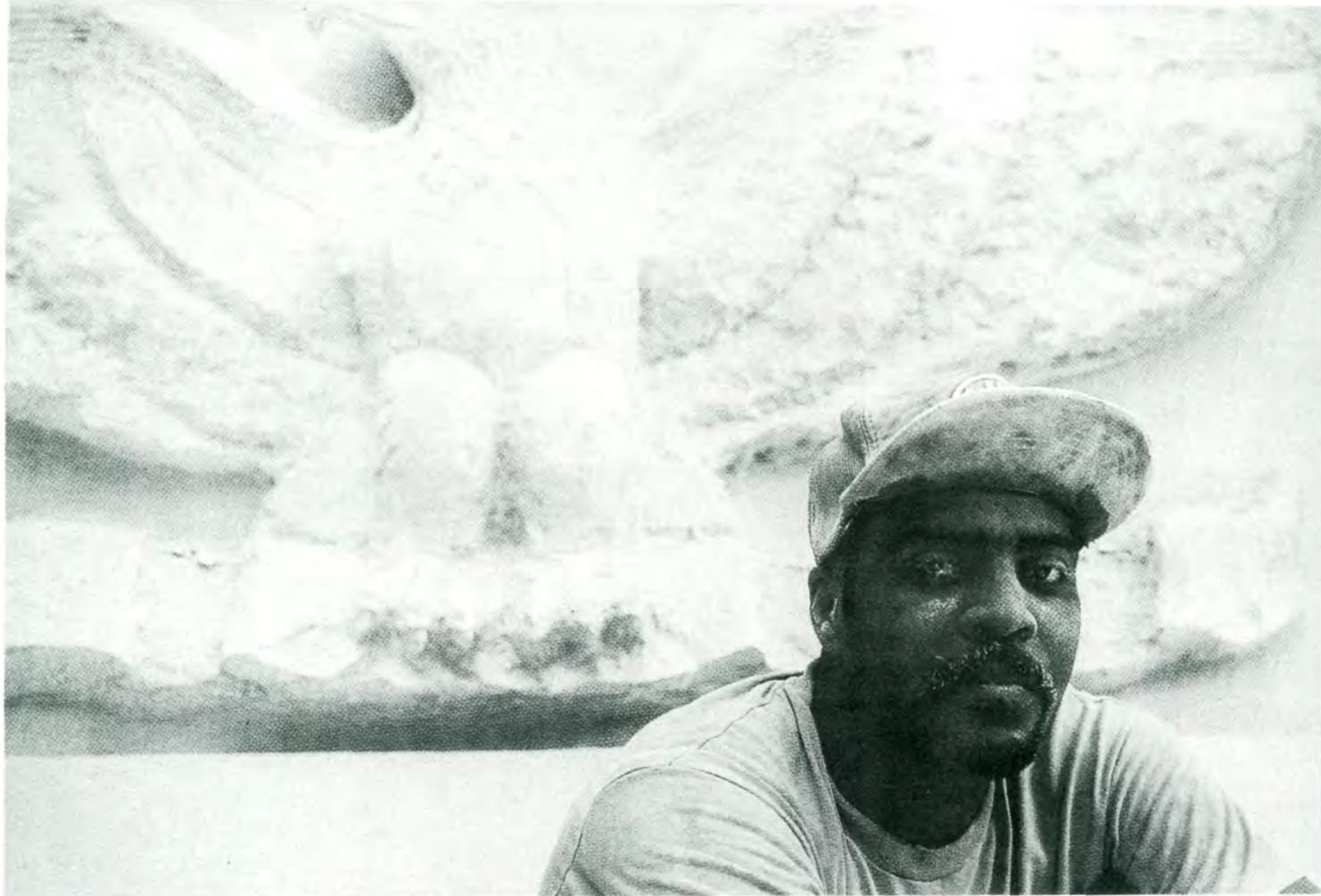
In all, Cathedral Stoneworks employs sixty people, about a third of them from Harlem and the South Bronx, others from Trinidad, Santo Domingo, China, Russia, France—all over. There has even been an apprentice-exchange program with the Cathedral of Saint-Jean Baptiste in Lyons, France, and there is currently an exchange program with the Bath Technical College in the United Kingdom.

But is this admirable group working in vain against the spirit of the times? Isn't the building of a cathedral by traditional techniques a rather special—one might even say precious—endeavor? And aren't these young people being taught rather arcane skills for which there may be limited future demand?

No, say Teitelbaum and Myjer, and they can prove it. Cathedral Stoneworks, in fact, is big business, given an enormous boost last year when the New York State Job Development Authority provided a \$3.7-million loan guarantee for the purchase of new equipment, helped also by grants from the Kaplan Foundation and New York's Urban Development Corporation, becoming bigger and stronger in

**P**reservationist/developer David M. Teitelbaum, opposite, relinquished a quiet retirement to transform a modest program into a real business. Today's staff of sixty includes chief mason Chris Pascoe, top, stonecutter Edgar Reyes, center, and foreman Patrick Maltom, bottom.





December 1991 when it entered a joint-venture partnership agreement with Brisk Waterproofing, said to be the largest masonry contractor in the United States, and becoming bigger still this past April when it bought the Alabama Limestone Company, in business since 1826.

Cathedral Stoneworks now spends only a quarter to half of its time on St. John, but whatever it does profits the cathedral, with one third of its earnings going directly to the building and job-training program. Demands for the company's services are now coming in from all over the country, and the structures it has worked on constitute an honor roll of historic landmarks. In the Boston area these include the Wellesley Town Hall and the 1903 Harvard Stadium; in Washington, D.C., they include the National Cathedral and the West Front of the Capitol; and in

**A** third of the staff comes from nearby Harlem and the South Bronx, others from distant Trinidad, Santo Domingo, China, Russia, and France. Among their ranks are mason James Fowler, top, carvers Rafael Taveras, center, and Yves J. Pierre, opposite, and apprentice carver Jason Bird, left.

New York City, they include Rockefeller Center, the General Electric Building, Trinity Church, the Waldorf-Astoria, Grand Central Terminal (recarving missing sections of the Mercury sculpture grouping), the Municipal Building, the Jewish Museum (to which St. John has donated a five-foot-tall stone pinnacle), and, fittingly, the Woolworth Building (Cass Gilbert's 1913 Gothic Revival "Cathedral of Commerce").

Nationally, sixty-one projects are now under way, and awards for the quality of the work done are as impressive as the quantity, coming from the Preservation League of New York, the New York Landmarks Conservancy, the Municipal Art Society, Classical America, and The President's Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. The cathedral's share of the profits is now roughly \$500,000 a year (but with an estimated \$150 million of construction still ahead).

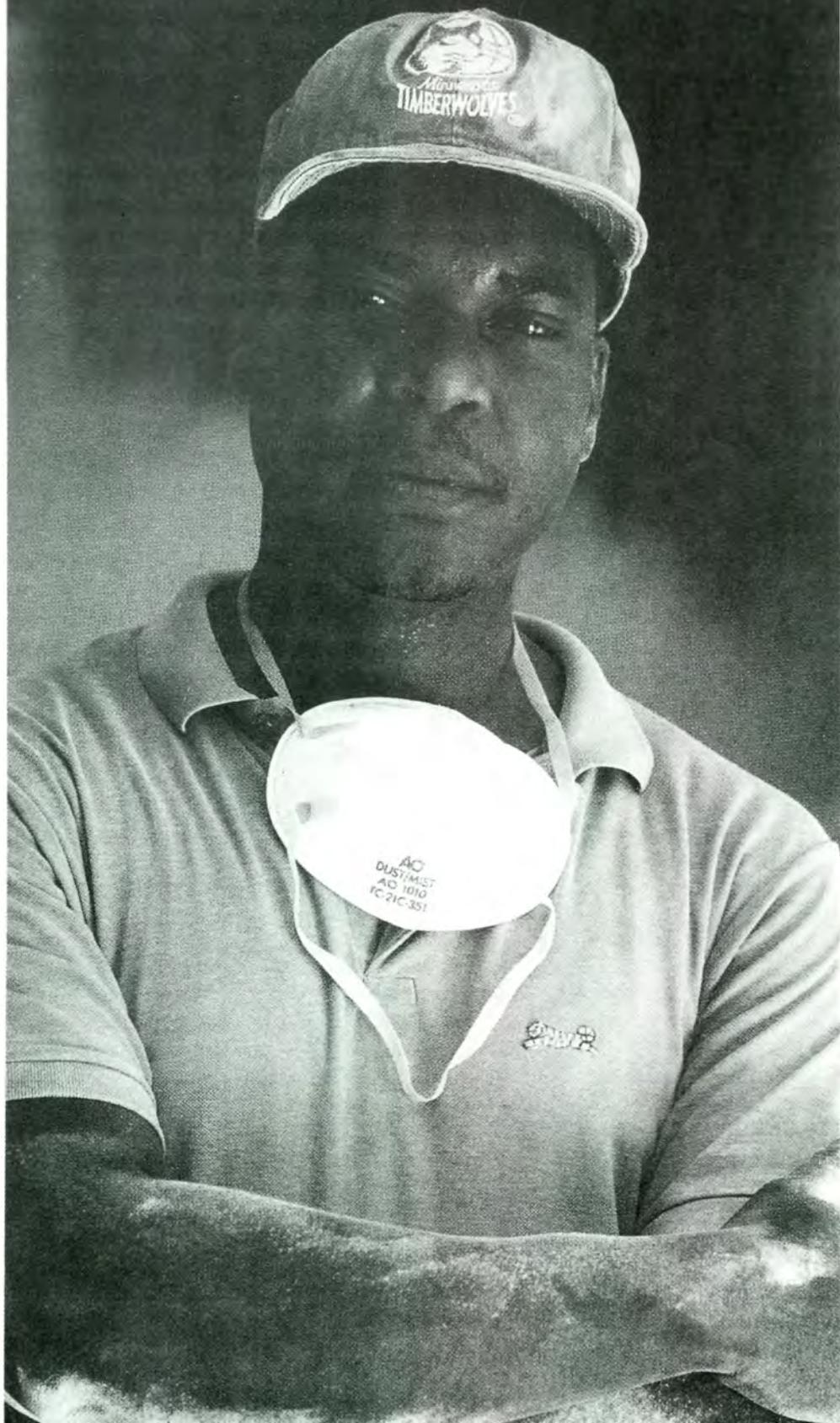
The operations of Cathedral Stoneworks profit the workers, too, of course, with beginners earning \$6 to \$8 an hour, those who have passed their apprenticeship earning \$11 to \$12—their salaries increasing as their skills multiply—and the most highly skilled earning \$30, \$40, and even \$50 an hour.

If you think all of this sounds like more than the revival of old-world craftsmanship, you're right. Sculptors like Simon Verity may actually have chisels in their hands, but here they are working alongside machines that thirteenth-century (or even nineteenth-century) stonecutters never imagined. That Gregori bridge polisher, for example, polishes a fifteen-foot slab of marble in four minutes flat. Disheartening for the true artisan? Not at all. Is Julia Child disheartened by an electric dishwasher?

"Our objective," Teitelbaum says, "is to put in front of our masons the most exciting, stimulating work they can do." And Verity adds that the process, now under way, of distinguishing between repetitive and creative stoneworking tasks has a valuable goal: "To see clearly what a machine is meant to do, and what a man is meant to do."

It isn't all cutting and polishing stone, either. Cathedral Stoneworks' recent commissions have involved such mundane tasks as installing bird proofing, such re-

*'The stone yard is  
a real place for real people  
doing a real job.'*





warding ones as cleaning a bronze bas-relief by Daniel Chester French. They have repaired concrete, repointed brickwork, removed old paint, replicated Guastavino tile vaulting, replaced deteriorated terracotta, reinforced structural steel, restored slate roofing, and regilded clocks.

And all of this work for old buildings, as you might expect, is supported by up-to-the-minute computerization. The stonecutting process, for example, can begin with a digital camera mounted on a linear motion table. Laser beams are bounced from any three-dimensional object back to the optical scanner, providing data that are reconfigured into sections along the object's surface, then translated into coded tool-path instructions sent to the robotic cutting machines.

Specific software components of the company's CAD/CAM technology are Intergraph's MicroStation and Point Control's SmartCam, with a custom translation program linking the two; hardware is of both Macintosh and IBM-compatible types; the staff now includes not only stoneworkers but also architects, engineers, and computer scientists, these last

directed by Wei Ching-Song, who came to the United States from Taiwan in 1986.

A good example of Cathedral Stoneworks' technology at work is a recent job creating five stone niches for the College of Fine Arts at Pittsburgh's Carnegie Mellon University. Architect Henry Hornbostel had planned the niches, meant to tell the history of architecture, as part of the original facade, but building funds had dried up in 1913, and the project had been on hold for almost eighty years. For conveying information about existing conditions, a crew at Carnegie Mellon was "online" via modem with the crew at St. John, dimensional data speeding along the phone lines, the information then being fed into the appropriate machinery. Rough cutting was the work of robots; the delicate touches came later by hand.

One result of such technology is speed. Whereas completion of the cathedral was estimated not so long ago to be 100 years away, some think the date may now be only twenty-five years distant. Another result is accuracy. According to clerk-of-the-works Alan Bird, who had worked with Verity at Wells Cathedral, "With Micro-

**A**t New York City's Custom House Ivan Myjer, Cathedral Stoneworks director of restoration, inspects repairs being made to Karl Bitter's cartouche, above, and Daniel Chester French's allegorical figure of America, opposite. Myjer brings to his work experience as a stone carver, a wood carver, a stained glass artist, and a sculptor in iron and bronze.

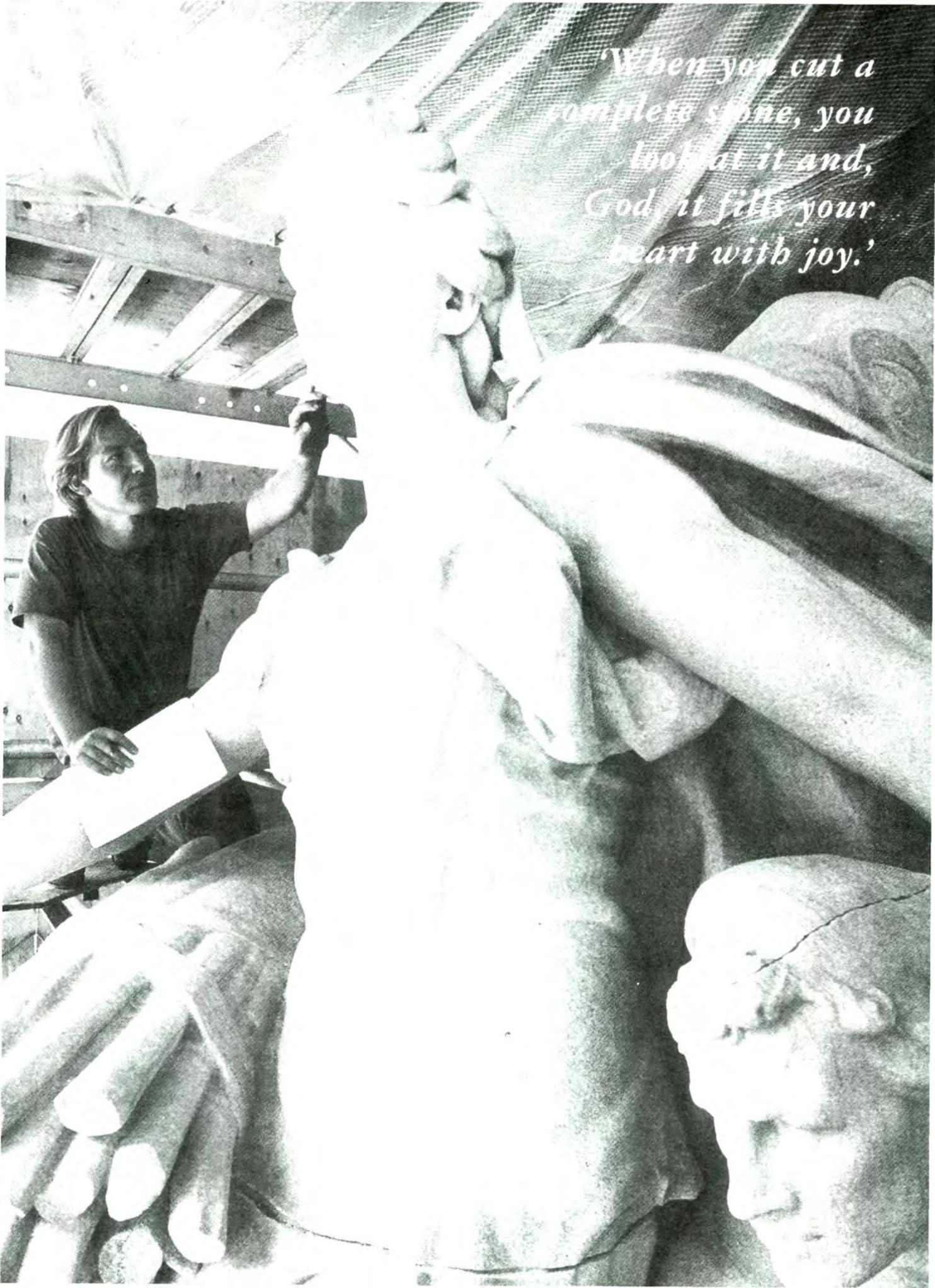
Station, I know each stone fits in the space. I'm not going to get that dreaded call from the project manager telling me he has a stone that doesn't fit."

And a third result is flexibility. "Today," Verity says, "we can do in stone what has never been done before. I would love to see a dozen young Frank Lloyd Wrights come to us with a sheaf of new designs and say, 'There! Let's see what you can do with that!'"

Even more heartening than Cathedral Stoneworks' technical ability, however, is the difference it is making to some young people in the community. One is Angel Escobar, the company's lead cutter.

"I never thought I would be working for this church," Escobar says. "When I was small, I used to look (Continued on Page 88)

*'When you cut a  
complete stone, you  
look at it and,  
God, it fills your  
heart with joy.'*



## STEPPING STONES

*(Continued from Page 36)* at the church from way down there, from East One-hundred-and-twelfth Street, and wonder what that big thing was. I was hangin' out on the streets a lot by the time I was in my teens. My mother had died, and I dropped out of school. I had to do for myself.

"I started out here as a trainee. For two years I moved stones, stacked stones, drove the crane and the forklifts that lifted the stones. Heavy work, but it was just a beginning.

"I've been here ten years now. Stone-cutting is a lot different than mortaring brick. And at the beginning I used to get angry when I couldn't get it right. It takes about five to six months to get down the use of the hammer, punching. Using a pneumatic gun might make cutting a lot

easier, but the vibration messes up your hand. Too much power, too much vibration. The gun is only good to take out waste. Detail has to be done by hand.

"I was in the carving shed for three years, learning how to carve. I like the skill, working with your hands and your mind. I've done all kinds of stones here, so many. Ten years ago I was really surprised when they accepted me. I thought, 'Wow, I'm going to cut stone? On that building up there on the hill across town?' And now I'm the lead cutter, and I'm still learning."

Stonecutter Edgar Reyes, coming from a youth in foster care and group homes, has a similar attitude: "When they put me inside to cut stones, my first thought was, 'Hey, I didn't apply for this.' But you get a feel for stone. When you cut a complete stone, you look at it and, God, it fills your heart with joy."

If, in this operation, there are conflicts between cathedral and commerce, between machines and artists, between the thirteenth century and the twentieth, or between the requirements of construction and the needs of community service, Teitelbaum will not admit to them. And was Ruskin right in claiming that happy carving can make good buildings? Well, it just could be that he was, after all. As Verity puts it, "What we're all drawn to this funny place for is some sort of reevaluation of what is real for us and what is honest. If it's true and good, it will be beautiful, too." In any case, what is being demonstrated daily and with absolute certainty at St. John the Divine is that happy carving can make good lives. ▼

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*Stanley Abercrombie, an architect, is the chief editor of Interior Design magazine.*

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