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LOU DEL BIANCO (top right) and extended family members helped unveil a plaque in September honoring Lou's grandfather Luigi, chief carver at Mount Rushmore.

Del Bianco Gets His Day

A new plaque honors Mount Rushmore's chief carver

A new marker unveiled in September of 2017 at Mount Rushmore National Memorial commemorates the contributions of chief carver Luigi Del Bianco and ends a nearly three-decade effort by his descendants to ensure their family patriarch's place in history.

Del Bianco, a classically trained Italian stone carver from New York, worked parts of eight seasons at Mount Rushmore, primarily refining the four faces. Del Bianco's family knew little of his involvement on the monument until his son combed through Gutzon Borglum's papers at the Library of Congress and realized how heavily Borglum depended upon Del Bianco. "He is worth any three men I could find in America," Borglum wrote in one letter.

The Del Bianco family presented their findings to Mount Rushmore in 1991, but was told all workers were honored equally. That remained the policy until Cam Sholly became director of the National Park Service's Midwest Region in 2015. He sent historians to examine the papers, and they recommended a separate plaque for Del Bianco.

"We are so proud of his accomplishment and only wanted him to get the credit he was due. No more, no less," says Lou Del Bianco, Luigi's grandson. "To our family, justice had finally been served, and history is now telling a more accurate story. My grandfather is a great representative of the immigrant who comes to America to live his dream."

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