



PORT CHESTER

Westmore

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Mount Rushmore chief carver cemented in bronze at monument

By CASEY WATTS

Seventy-seven years ago, he laid down his hammer and chisel and looked upon the stone faces he brought to life; the faces of four former presidents who tirelessly watch the landscape of South Dakota. Twenty-five years ago, Luigi Del Bianco's family realized he was never recognized as the chief carver of Mount Rushmore. Today, Luigi is immortalized on a bronze plaque in the monument's visitor's center, which was unveiled on Saturday, Sept. 16.

He was previously only listed as a worker and not the chief carver.

"To say it was worth it is an understatement," Luigi's grandson Lou Del Bianco said about seeing the plaque unveiled in South Dakota.

"I've had my nose to the grindstone for so many years," Lou said. "I started to speak even before the plaque was unveiled, and it hit me with emotion. A great love for my grandpa and the pride of what he accomplished and the culmination of our efforts, it's still hard to articulate what I really feel."

Lou and his uncle Caesar, who died in 2009, spent countless hours scouring documents from the

Library of Congress and National Archives to prove what their relative did for the monument. Lou was joined on Sept. 16 by his Aunt Gloria, who is Luigi's only surviving child. She recalled standing on the observation deck of Mount Rushmore in 1991 when it was named a national monument, and in 2017 she can say she was there when her father was written into the history books.

"The historians were extremely impressed, and they knew what they were reviewing is truth," the 70-year-old said. "That's history in the making. History is changing now and



After 25 years of dedicated research, Lou Del Bianco (right) finally managed to get his grandfather Luigi recognized as chief carver of Mount Rushmore. He and his wife Camille Linen attended the ceremony in South Dakota on Saturday, Sept. 16 where the plaque was unveiled at the monument's visitor's center.

COURTESY OF LOU DEL BIANCO

that's pretty profound."

"My nephew did a job that nobody could have done," she added. "He is a most remarkable man and I thank him so much for how he took care of a situation with many roadblocks. He never wavered, not even once."

The experience was overwhelming for both the Los Angeles resident and Lou, who resides in Port Chester. Gloria only wished her brother, whom she called a monk for finding gold nuggets of information during his years of research, was not there to see his work completed.

"I told him on his deathbed that

that this would get done," Gloria said.

Lou and Gloria both thanked the Midwest National Park Service Director Cam Sholly, who pushed for Luigi's recognition at the monument. Along with his grandson and daughter, about 20 other family members attended the ceremony.

The plaque in the visitor's center resembles the one in Port Chester which is located in a small park across from 68 North Regent St. where Elizabeth Street meets Webster Place. The Mount Rushmore plaque, which is a 30"x24" bronze relief sculpture

Please turn to page 10



The plaque in the visitor's center resembles the one in Port Chester which is located in a small park across from 68 North Regent St. where Elizabeth Street meets Webster Place. The text on the 30"x24" bronze relief sculpture crafted by Michael Keropian reads, "Luigi Del Bianco, Chief Carver on Mount Rushmore. 'He will have complete charge of the practical ways and means of dealing with the finesse of carving and instructing the older carvers...' Gutzon Borglum." COURTESY OF LOU DEL BIANCO

Hospital site up for sale

By JANANNE ABEL

Starwood Capital Partners is selling the 15.4-acre former United Hospital property on the Boston Post Road. Port Chester Trustee and Industrial Development Agency Chairman Frank F...



Crime Stats	2014	2015	2016	Jan.- Sept. 1, 2017
DWI		91	99	227
UPM		0	51	41
Narcotics		133	98	54
Investigations		87	67	31
Drugs		16	48	27

Upcoming PCHS reunions

Class of 1957

The 60th reunion of the Port Chester High School Class of 1957 will take place Sat., Oct. 14. There will be a cocktail hour at 6 p.m. followed by a buffet dinner at Westchester Burger Co., 275 S. Ridge St., Rye Brook. Cost is \$85 per person.

There will also be a buffet breakfast the following morning at Griffith E. Harris Golf Course (Birdie's Restaurant), 1323 King St., Greenwich. Cost is \$20 per person. Checks should be made payable to Noell Gioffre/1957 Reunion. Include your phone number and/or email address.

Hotel arrangements can be made at Courtyard Marriott in Rye, 914/921-1110; Hilton Westchester, 914/939-6300 or Doral Arrowwood Resort, 844/214-5500. Class members should provide family occupations, accomplishments, hobbies and anything else to share with the class. For information, contact Al Covino at 914/939-6162, alcovino@verizon.net or Dave Avitable, 203/869-5909.

The committee is seeking information on the following unlocated classmates: Robert Brady, Barbara Clapp Baker, Rosalie DiLeonardo Dalgren, Richard Fortunato, David Gordon, Robert Grippo, Grace Giulli Gasparino, Robert Haloj, George Haviland, Judith Ann Herbst Seilstrom, Margaret Horton Morello, Emily Jones Elders, John Kallareou, Steven Karver, Brenda Kirla, Helen Koztecki Cassidy, Doris Law Gould, Michael Leili, Rosemary Leonard Heitmann, Lawrence Lonergran, Frank Marello, Angela Martello Hamilton, Caroline McCoy, Marie Morabito Wright, Frederick Morosco, Anne Muller, Andrea Mulvaney Lucifer, Susan Murray, Richard Perin, Helen Rende Burdsall, Barbara Riccio Mattison, Margaret Ann Simpson Bradley, Marie Terico Rackiewicz, Benjamin Todd, Stanley Weeks, Rita Wolf, Carol Wortley Watson, Loretta Wright, Dolores Yaich Morabito and Ellen Young O'Shaughnessy.

Information should be sent to Al Covino or Dave Avitable.

Class of 1967

The Port Chester High School Class of 1967 will be celebrating its 50th Reunion on the weekend of Oct. 6 and 7.

On Friday, Oct. 6 at 7 p.m., there will be an informal gathering at the Village Beer Garden located at the Port Chester train station.

On Saturday, Oct. 7 at 10 a.m. there will be a guided tour of the high school for all wishing to attend.

Later that day, the reunion dinner dance will be held at The Mansion on Broadway, 139 N. Broadway, N. White Plains, with a full buffet dinner, open bar, deejay and dancing. The cost for a ticket to this event is \$125 per person. For information, contact John Colangelo at jbcologne100@aol.com or 914-939-0002.

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Continued from page 1

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Borglum designed Mount Rushmore and designated Luigi as chief carver in July 1935.

About Luigi Del Bianco

The Italian was only 11 when he began to study as sculptor and carver, completely unaware he would grow up to be the only classically trained stone carver in the tradition of Michelangelo to work on an American monument.

He was 17 when he first travelled to America, but his time in the country was short—he returned to Italy in 1913 to fight in World War 1. He returned and settled in Port Chester in 1921, where he met his future wife Nicoletta Cardarelli.

Twelve years later, he caught Borglum's attention and was brought to South Dakota to create Abraham Lincoln's eyes and fix a crack in Thomas Jefferson's lips. Due to his skill, Luigi was the highest paid worker at \$1.50 an hour. He worked on the monument sporadically during 1933, 1935-1936 and 1940.

He died in 1969.

Continuing his legacy

To continue Luigi's legacy and teach people a more complete version of Mount Rushmore's history, Lou recently wrote a book, titled "Out of Rushmore's Shadow: The Luigi Del Bianco Story – An Italian Immigrant's Unsung Role as Chief Carver."

"The people who want to know the full story should get the book," the storyteller said. "They'll not only learn about my grandfather's life, but how he was omitted through history and the 25 years it took to get him recognized."

The story is available on Amazon for \$18.95. It



Mount Rushmore's Chief Carver Luigi Del Bianco preps the stone on George Washington's forehead for carving by creating a honeycomb pattern.

COURTESY OF LOU DEL BIANCO

is 348 pages long and is the top new release in the U.S. Immigrant History section as of Wednesday, Sept. 20.

It can be purchased by going to rushmorebook.com.