EDITIORIAL

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"QUALITY" - Oversold and Under-sold

All manufacturers and monument dealers claim their product is of high quality. Yet, nothing has harmed the monument industry more than the production and sale of poor quality monuments. By poor quality we mean inferior design, inferior workmanship, inferior granite and inferior setting.

The truth of the matter is that the word "quality" as it pertains to monuments has been vastly oversold and under-sold. Today many in the industry point to the worst aspects of the traditional monument industry as the reason why the public should buy a grave space before need in a memorial park.

The most common examples of poor quality in monuments is in lettering and carving that is done by people who aren't specialists. Another example is memorial stone that darkens and discolors. Poor quality foundations and inferior setting techniques are other examples that stand out in the cemetery.

Shaving a dollar here and there, cutting corners, doing the work yourself even though you are not a craftsman — these all serve to give a poor image to your industry.

When a monument is placed in the cemetery it becomes an eternal advertisement for the retail monument dealer. It is also an eternal obligation for the cemetery to maintain. Human nature being what it is, don't you believe cemetery management will be more interested in maintaining an attractive monument than one that is not attractive?

Your Barre Guild friends have strong beliefs in the value of high quality memorialization. Our 39 member-companies are proud of their craftsmanship and they are proud of the record that Select Barre Granite has made as a superior memorial stone.

You and the other retailers in your community deserve to have a growing market for monuments. In order to be assured of this growing market you must set the kind of example that will encourage the public to continue to want monuments. This means letting a capable manufacturer do your memorial work if you can't do a quality job in your own shop.

Think positively about monument quality. Above all, sell quality monuments. Don't just talk about it.

81 European Quarriers and Manufacturers Visit Barre

A visit to Barre, Vermont, the Granite Center of the World was a "must" for 81 quarriers and manufacturers from France, Italy, Spain, Germany, Belgium, Holland, and Portugal. The Barre Granite Association recently hosted this group for a two-day period. The tour was sponsored by La Mausolee, a leading magazine on memorialization in France.

The European visitors were impressed by the advanced techniques and the superior skills of the 39 member-companies of the Barre Granite Association. They visited the Rock of Ages quarries and manufacturing plant, Jones Brothers Co., Modern Granite Co., Adams Granite Co., LaCross Memorials, Valz Granite Co., Giudici Brothers, Buttura & Sons, Associated Memorials, and Consolidated Memorials. In addition, the group visited world-famous Hope Cemetery in Barre.
CEMETARY MODEL
to help sell memorial idea to cemeterians

This is a photograph of a traditional cemetery model which is being used by the Cemetery Assistance Program at some of the national cemetery conventions throughout the United States.

The model is only about four feet square. Yet, its realistic appearance and fine detail make it an effective means of showing cemeterians how attractive a modern monument section can look. Frank Foster of the American Monument Association has displayed it at the National Catholic Cemetery Conference, and Don Swaim has displayed it at the National Association of Cemeteries. It is planned to show it at other conventions where possible.

When cemeterians see an actual model of a modern monument section, it is easier for them to visualize the advantages for their cemetery. Attractive screen plantings behind the memorials provide easy maintenance. Lots sell more quickly because the public is attracted to them.

The Cemetery Assistance Program is jointly sponsored by the Monument Builders of North America (our national retail dealer group), and the American Monument Association (the national organization of quarriers and manufacturers). Don Swaim ably administers this program. Earl Grever, cemetery designer and landscape architect, has designed most of the modern monument sections for this program.

SOME THOUGHTS on Monument Salesmanship

It pays to have a positive attitude in the monument business. It is then easier to establish a good relationship with your customer. More monument salesmen are held back by poor attitudes than by lack of ability.

Every monument salesman should be profit-conscious. A salesman is hired because management believes he can help the company make a profit. Therefore, the salesman should be profit-oriented. He should understand at least some of the economics of your company in order to do the best job for you. Obviously, the man who operates only on commissions is in a different category because he is spending his own money to make a sale.

Do you or your monument salesmen think you have a lot of problems? If so, be thankful for them. Easy jobs don't pay much. No one can advance very far in the monument business unless he is willing to come to grips with the problems associated with it. Problems are what give people a chance to succeed. Most retail monument firms have problems of some sort, and certainly the traditional monument industry has a number of serious problems. You should be willing to face up to your own problems as well as those of the monument industry.

Do you give up too quickly when you are trying to make a monument sale? Studies show that almost half of all salesmen quit cold after a single call on a prospect. The salesman who doesn’t give up will make more sales.
Picking up those lost monument sales from people who never bought

Some families never seem to get around to buying a monument, resulting in graves that go unmarked for years. Here is an idea that may help you pick up a few of these sales from people who haven't made a decision to buy a monument.

Keep a record of the families who never purchased a monument, together with the date of death of the family member. A few days before the anniversary date of the death, send a letter or other type of mailing to the family.

It is natural for persons to recall their loved ones on the anniversary of the death. Your mailing received on the anniversary might be enough to convince them to make such a decision to buy a monument with the help of your firm.

Try it. This idea has worked for others!

Dante Mori is Managing BGA Truck Consolidation Terminal

Dante Mori, who is well known in the Barre granite industry, is now Manager of the BGA Truck Consolidation Terminal.

Dante operated his own granite trucking firm for many years. He has long experience in the trucking business, including the handling of granite and the routing of trucks to make the most efficient service.

We are completing one full year of operation of the trucking terminal. This terminal handles granite which goes to points in the Midwest, West and South. Although problems were experienced this Spring in being able to expedite shipments, terminal personnel now has the experience and ability to put through these shipments quickly and efficiently.

Remember Pete Carr’s nasty four-letter word for success? It's spelled W-O-R-K. Pete says there is no magic in selling a lot of monuments — just get up off your behind and go to WORK.

Hundreds of dealers who have attended the BGA Dealer Business Conferences recall Pete Carr, our dynamic Conference Leader. As head of his own retail monument firm, he is also its sales manager, office manager, and star salesman! This photograph was recently taken of Pete in his display yard showing some potential customers the advantages in purchasing a Select Barre Granite monument. (That's work?)