

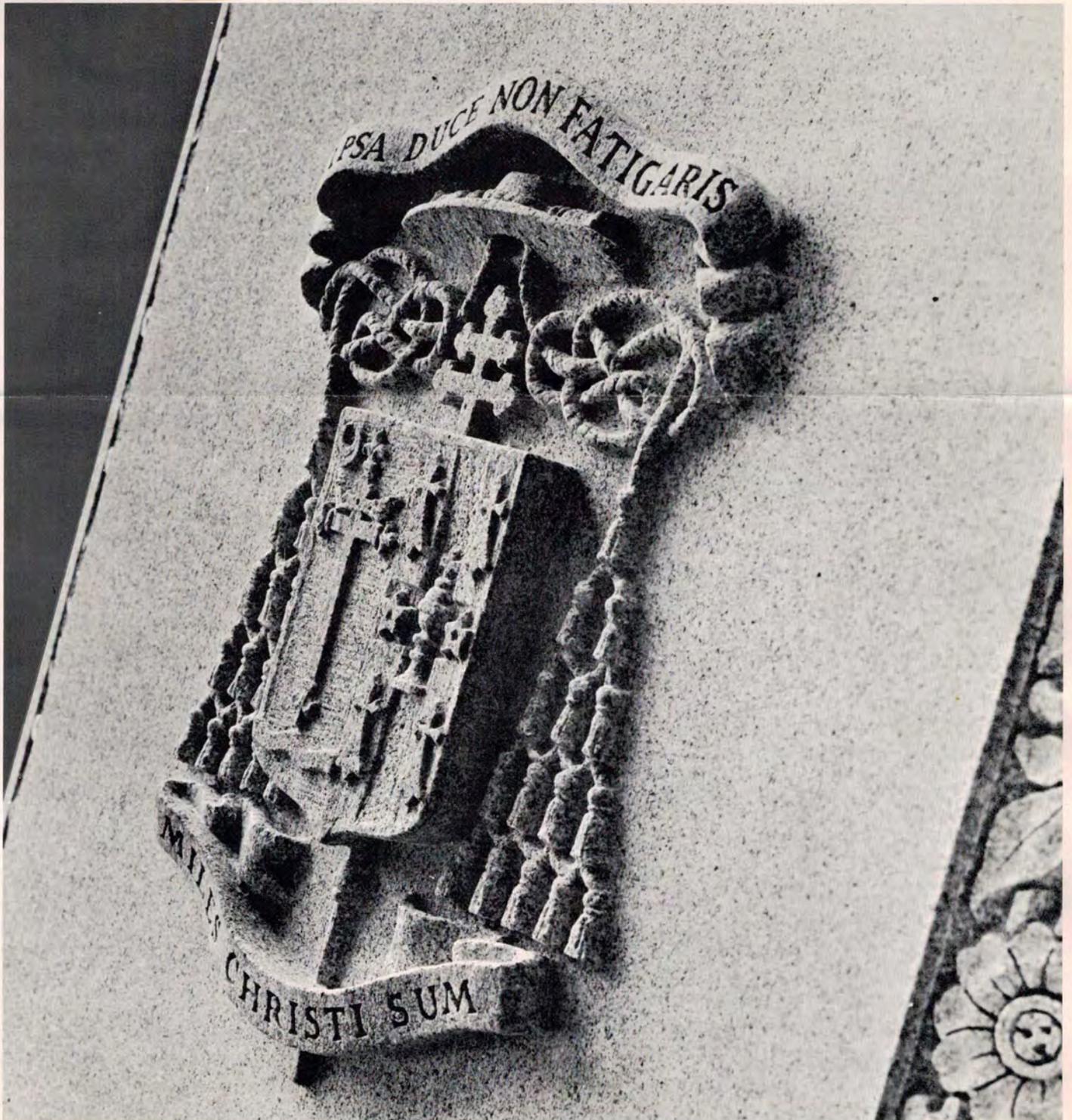
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by The Barre Granite Association, Barre, Vt.

EDITORIAL

by Milton V. Lyndes, BGA General Manager



Measuring Your Monument Sales Volume

The American Monument Association estimates that annual sales of traditional monuments amount to more than \$50,000,000. This is certainly a conservative estimate.

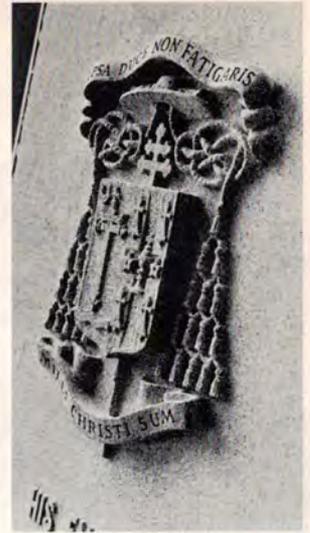
On a national basis, if we compare the monument business with others, it is obvious that we are not large. Yet, you as a retail monument dealer are not so much concerned with the national picture as you are with the size of your own local business. The yearly sales of some dealers do not reach \$20,000. Perhaps the majority of full-time dealers fall in the category of \$40,000 to \$60,000 gross sales per year. Since a few years ago there has been a trend toward much larger retail monument operations. This trend continues. Such firms with many outlets will gross hundreds of thousands of dollars in the course of a year. Their large size does not, *in principle*, either hurt or help their ability to sell good memorialization. The determining factors have been and will continue to be competent sales personnel whose desire it is to provide a family with meaningful memorialization based upon their ability to pay, and of course the restrictions placed on monuments by cemetery regulations.

If we were to group retail firms according to their sales growth, there would be a small segment of dealers whose volume is growing at a very high rate. Next would come a fairly large number of retail firms with sales volumes that are neither growing or getting smaller. If such firms are located in a competitive area, then they are in trouble today. Their costs are going up, and competition prevents them from getting the price they need to stay alive. This can mean shrinking profits. Then, there is a third group of dealers who are falling behind in volume and it will only be a matter of time before they go out of business. The reasons here may be poor management, disinterest, retirement, or inability to expand their markets.

Regardless of how much you are selling, it is a good idea for you to examine your own sales volume at the beginning of your fiscal year. First, take a look at the geographical area in which you sell your monuments — your market area.

About Our Cover Picture

Our cover picture this month illustrates the detailed carving of the Coat of Arms of his Eminence Joseph Cardinal Ritter, Archbishop of St. Louis. He died on June 10, 1967. A beautiful ledger in world famous Barre granite was carved by the Adams Granite Co. in Barre. The Tom Murray Monument Co. of St. Louis handled the sale. A full picture of the ledger appears elsewhere in this issue of the Select Barre Newsletter.



Next, estimate the total number of monument sales made by all retail firms in that area and compare it with what your firm sold last year. This will give you the percentage of the market that your firm sells. Naturally, it is a healthy sign for you if your share of the market is growing each year.

On the other hand, it is possible that your share of the market may be holding steadily or even growing, but your total annual sales may be getting smaller. This could be caused by people moving out of your market area, changes in cemetery regulations or the increased purchases of property in flat marker cemeteries. If you are in this unfortunate position, then the normal reaction would be to enlarge your market area in order to put you in a position to reach more potential customers. This means that you may need to hire additional full-time or part-time salesmen. It may also mean that you must work harder and travel farther in order to make additional sales calls.

You may wonder how you can possibly find the time yourself to make more sales calls and do more traveling in search of business. One way is to get out of the shop and farm out your sandblast work. Some dealers are automating their sandblast and buying stencil cutting machines. Many dealers now find it more economical to have their sandblast work done in Barre. This releases the dealers from the drudgery of shop work and puts them where they belong — *out increasing their sales volume.*

A few years ago the retail monument dealer could afford to make an occasional error in judgment because the world was slow to change and many mistakes could be corrected before it was too late. Now it is different. The world is moving rapidly and the monument business requires management to be alert at all times. Today one mistake could seriously hurt if not ruin your business. Therefore, pay close attention to your sales volume. We all know that volume is related to profit, although it does not automatically mean profit. However, your chances of making a profit are considerably increased if your own sales volume is on an up-trend.

Barre Granite Industry Signs Two-Year Labor Contract

The largest wage increase ever negotiated in the granite industry, as well as increased fringe benefits, are part of a new two-year labor contract signed by Barre, Vermont granite manufacturers and their unions. Over a two-year period this will total \$2,800,000.

The Rock of Ages Corp. and the Wells-Lamson Quarry Co. concluded a separate contract with quarry workers reflecting most of the increases that were given by all Barre Belt Granite Manufacturers to their employees.

Granite cutters, lumpers, boxers, maintenance men and apprentices received a 15¢ wage increase beginning February 5, 1968. Increased benefits will be granted beginning May 1 of this year. These include an increase of 50% in pensions, a 65% increase in hospital room allowances, an increase of 50% in life insurance, and an increase in the manufacturer's participation in the payment of employees' group insurance benefits. Sickness and accident benefits are also increased.

On May 1, 1969, all workers and apprentices will receive an additional 15¢ per hour increase.

All of these increases are designed to bring the income of granite workers to a level equivalent to that

which is paid by other industries. It is hoped that the contract will have a beneficial effect on keeping skilled workers in the industry and encouraging new apprentices to train for positions of greater skill and responsibility as the years go by.

Faced with these vastly increased costs of wages and fringe benefits, the quarry companies announced an increase in the price of rough granite. It has been reported that granite manufacturers have already been forced to make substantial price adjustments to cover their rising cost of manufacturing.

Even though attractive wages and fringe benefits were granted by manufacturers and quarriers, a shortage of skilled workers, particularly in the quarries, makes it difficult for companies to promise quick deliveries to their customers. This problem seems to exist in other producing areas throughout the United States, and has required retail dealers to place their orders much earlier than previously.

Member-firms of the Barre Granite Association have pledged their full support in doing everything possible to meet delivery deadlines.

The Cardinal Ritter Ledger shown here is a fine example of Barre's craftsmanship. The size of the ledger is 7' x 3' x 1'-10". Select Barre Granite was chosen for the material. Although ledgers are usually simple in design, the richness of the carving and the proportions of this ledger make it a stately and meaningful tribute to this great church leader.



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TIPS ON MONUMENT SELLING

Whenever you face a monument prospect, bear in mind the cardinal rule of successful monument selling: you must present your story in terms of your customer's interests and his problems.

Do you talk about the benefits of your monuments and your service? Be careful! You ought to be talking about *the prospect* and how he will benefit from your service and your monument. Help him to visualize how he will benefit from what you are selling him.

Do you talk about the fine reputation your organization has maintained? If so, you're doing only half the job you should be doing. *If you want to talk about your reputation, you should tell what this reputation will mean to your prospect in terms of benefits, satisfaction and service to him.*

Study the number of times in your sales presentation that you use the words "I", "we," "our." Try and eliminate these words. Instead substitute "you" and "yours" as many times as you possibly can.

What makes your monument customer sign his name on the dotted line? Usually it is a mental picture of *himself* owning your product. The object of your sales presentation is to give your prospect the mental picture of owning and benefiting from the monument you want to sell him. Make your picture vivid, interesting, beneficial, and always from the point of view of your customer.

A good monument salesman can tell whether or not a customer is making valid objections about your product or whether he is simply making excuses for not wanting to buy. But it takes a real student of human relations to get to the root of why the customer does not want to buy. The ability to pin-point the exact reason is the mark of a really good monument salesman. Until you can put your finger on the *real* objection and answer it effectively, you have lost the monument sale.

Putting yourself in your prospect's shoes — trying to determine what will influence him and what appeals to him — this means that you must do more listening than talking. Ask him questions, flatter him, get him to open up and talk. While the customer talks, you can look for those points of interest which may appeal to him when you make your sales pitch.



Our BGA girls are helping to serve you by helping to carry out the programs that are helpful to monument dealers throughout the country. From left to right are Delina Ferrario, Bookkeeper; Ileen Livendale, Traffic Department; Carmen Beck, Barre Guild Dealer Services; Angie Gariboldi, Secretary to the General Manager.

Delina has been Assistant Treasurer of the BGA for many years. She has full responsibility for the Credit Records of customers of BGA companies. She also

handles all of the bookkeeping for the Association. Her knowledge of granite industry history in the Barre area is unsurpassed.

Ileen assists Charles Zanleoni, Manager of Member Services. In this capacity she has full charge of the Barre Guild Freight Consolidation Services. Her ability and thoroughness make her a valuable part of the BGA team.

Carmen has many jobs to do. She is our charming BGA Receptionist. She must handle the processing of the many Barre Guild sales aids that are ordered by retail monument dealers. She also keeps the records for the five full-time Barre Guild Inspectors who daily make their rounds of the manufacturing plants.

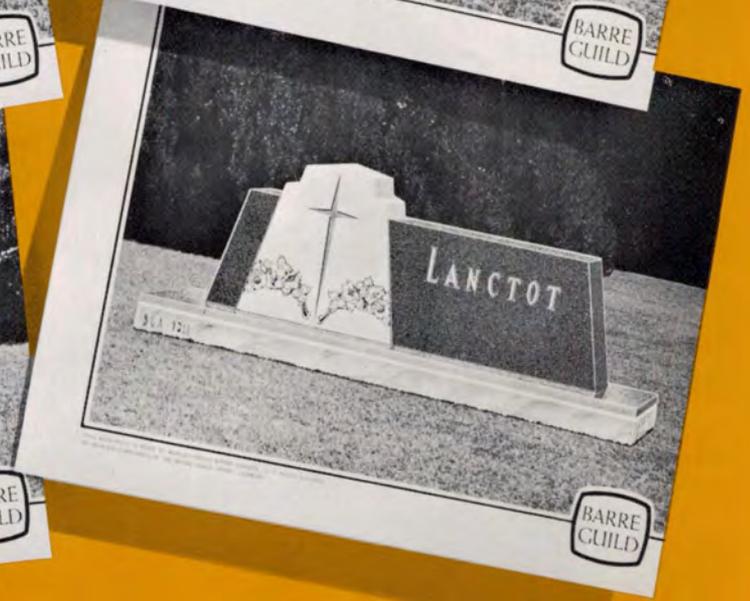
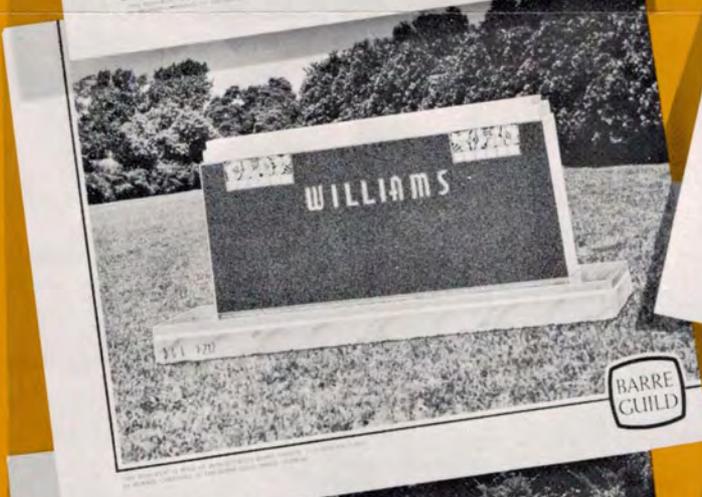
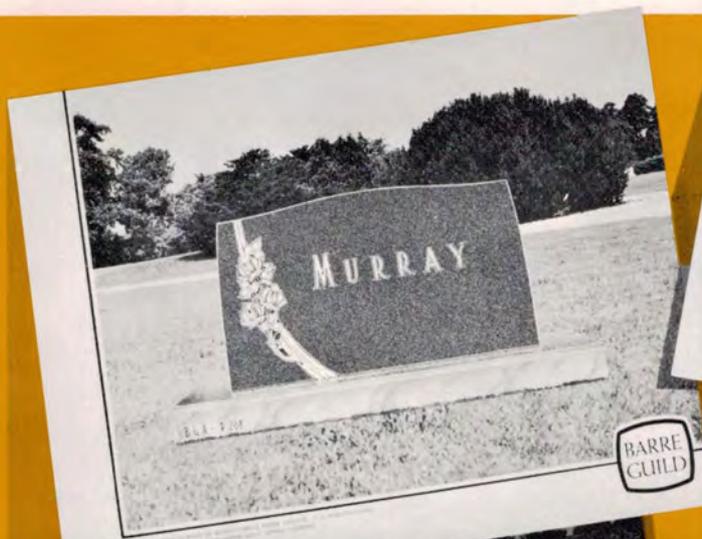
Angie assists Milt Lyndes, the BGA General Manager. She is an expert secretary, maintains the BGA files, handles correspondence for the General Manager and takes care of the many details of scheduling the meetings of a number of BGA Committees.

We salute the BGA girls for their helpfulness in making the BGA a true service organization for the memorial industry!

*Order Your New 1968 Barre
Guild Monument Designs Now*

turn the page

The new 1968 Barre Guild Monument Designs are out. *If you haven't ordered yours, you should do so today.*



These designs normally sell on a share-the-cost basis of \$2.00 for the entire set of 12 designs. *From now until May 1, 1968 you may obtain these designs at a special price of only \$1.00 for the full set.* Up to now these sets have sold for \$2.00, and after May 1 they will again be \$2.00 per set. Act today and mail your check for one or more sets of these attractive and salable Barre Guild Monument Designs.

