



Executive of the Month: Marchese, superintendent of Graciano Corp. - Celebrates 40 years restoring; Awarded the 2000 bricklayer and allied craftworkers craft award for best restoration project NY landmarks

April 22, 2013 - Front Section

What started out as a way for a mother to get a break from her young child, led to Gino Marchese's career as a stonemason. At the age of eight, during the summer, Gino's mother sent him to work with his grandfather. His grandfather, Americo Gonano, was a stonemason who loved his work and would assign Gino small tasks such as carrying water and helping out in any way he could. When Gino was twelve, his grandfather increased his responsibilities to include pointing. By the age of 15, he was learning more about the trade and Americo started paying him. Gino's passion for the work did not go unnoticed by his grandfather.

However, being a first generation American, his parents insisted that Gino attend college. His father, Gino Marchese Sr. wanted his son to obtain a degree in business. Gino fulfilled his parents' wish of attending school at Ohio University. His father assumed he was majoring in business. Gino later revealed to his parents that he was majoring in fine arts. Upon graduation, he anticipated being drafted into the service. During this period, he worked as a substitute teacher. When Gino was not drafted into the army, he returned to being a stonemason because that's where his passion resided. Gino said, "My fine art major has always helped me with the aesthetic part of being a stonemason."

In 1992, Gino became employed with Graciano Corp. where he still currently works. He lives in Pittsburgh, but travels to New York weekly to oversee and perform projects. He is a project superintendent and has worked on many significant landmarks in New York. Several of these projects are the Brooklyn Academy of Music, 90 Church Street, MetLife Building, the Newark Post Office, Waldorf-Astoria, Queensboro Bridge Marketplace and more. When asked about working in New York, Gino said, "Pittsburgh's architecture is beautiful, but not on the same scale as New York. He loves working on New York structures because everything is bigger in scope, larger buildings, more unique architecture, and more money." But, Gino jokes that he is not allowed to stay in New York City on the weekends, as his wife likes him to come back home.

The most rewarding project for Gino was the Queensboro Bridge Marketplace project. It was important to him because of the Guastavino tile work and the innovative methods used by Rafael Guastavino, who Gino greatly admires for his creativity and engineering ingenuity. Graciano Corp. president Glenn Foglio said, "Gino has made himself and our company, an expert in Guastavino tile work." The project took almost two and a half years to complete. However, the project could not have been completed without some innovating thinking by Gino. He developed a solution to a section of the bridge that was damaged and would have continued to become damaged by the vibration from traffic. Gino convinced those involved to redesign, demolish, and rebuild the section a foot and a half lower to avoid the problem with vibration. The success of the Queensboro Bridge

project did not go unnoticed; Graciano Corporation was awarded the 2000 Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers Craft Award for Best Restoration Project.

Gino has been in the field for almost forty years and loves working for Graciano Corporation. According to Graciano Corporation President Glenn Foglio, "Gino is the most talented stonemason in Pittsburgh as well as New York, and could possibly be the best in the country." When Gino was asked what has been the key to his success, he related it back to the early start and information garnered under the tutelage of his grandfather. However, he does not feel that a person needs a family background to become a successful stonemason. Gino believes having a strong desire and a hard working attitude would allow a person to succeed in this field. He works with young stonemasons that did not know much about the trade initially, but they are willing to learn and to become the best they can be.

At the age of sixty-three, Gino's desire is still evident and he plans to work as long as he can. He is currently working on the Motor Court at the Waldorf-Astoria. When asked what interests him the most about his career, Gino said, "Everything about it, I love the work." The true measure of Gino's passion for stonework is that it is not only his career, but it is also his hobby. He performs a lot of stonework around his house, mostly exterior. Stonemason may be the name of his career, but, to him, it is his life.

His mom's decision to have him spend time with his grandfather when he was eight paved Gino's career path. That early start allowed him to gain knowledge and develop a real passion for his career. He may have studied art in college, but he said his grandfather taught him everything he needed to know about composition and color than any professor could have. His love and exceptional craftsmanship in stonework has led Gino to become one of the finest stonemasons in the United States.

New York Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540