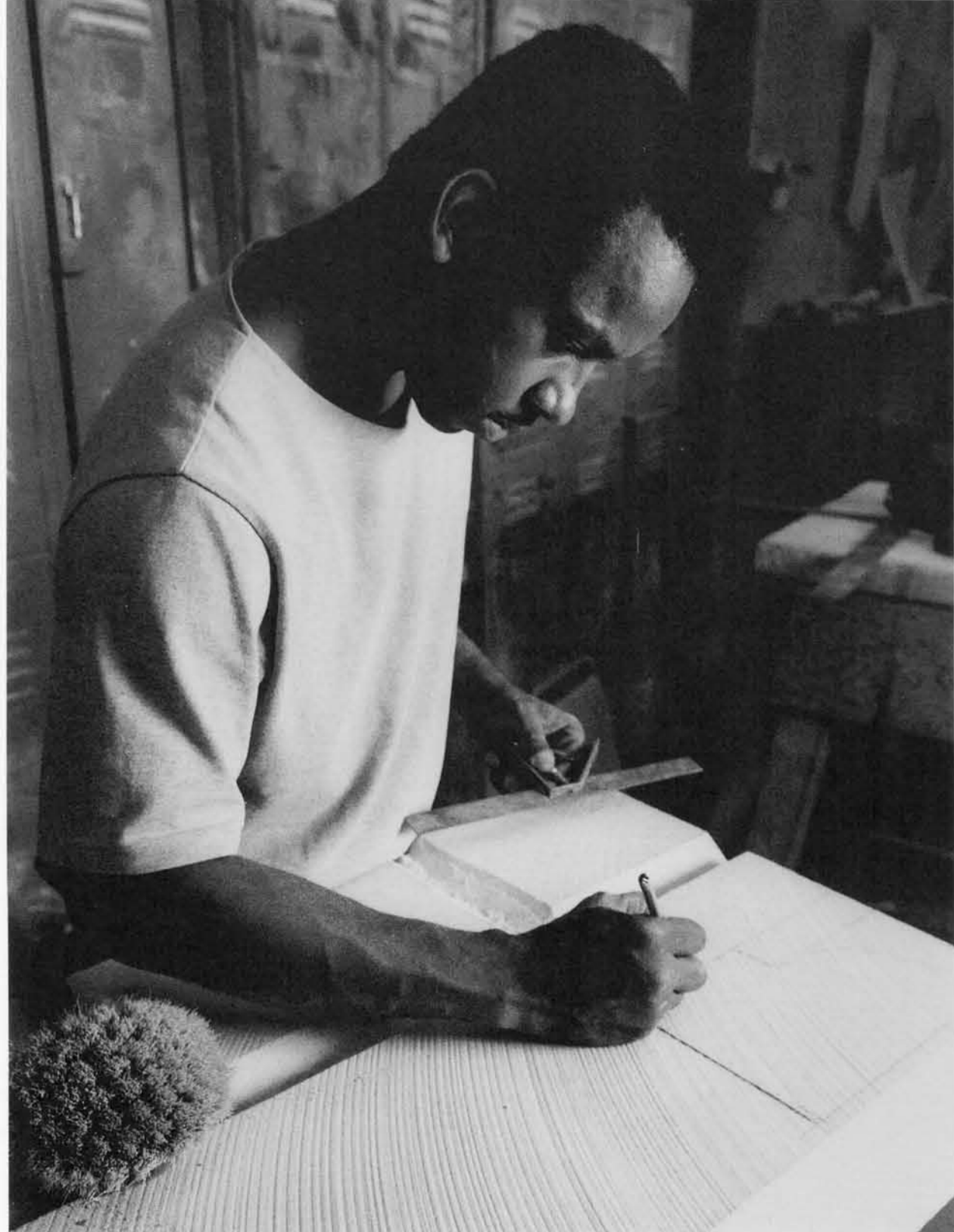


STONEYARD INSTITUTE



CATHEDRAL STONEWORKS



"TEN YEARS AGO I WAS REALLY SURPRISED WHEN THEY ACCEPTED ME. I THOUGHT, WOW, I'M GOING TO CUT STONE? ON THAT BUILDING UP THERE ON THE HILL? AND NOW I'M LEAD CUTTER, TEACHING THE APPRENTICES AND STILL LEARNING. SOME DAY I WANT TO RUN THIS PLACE."

ANGEL ESCOBAR
LEAD CUTTER

Making Good Masons. The Stoneyard Institute was founded in 1979 by the Very Reverend James Parks Morton, Dean of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. Since then, under the tutelage of European master masons, it has trained over 100 young men and women from Cathedral neighborhoods in the medieval arts of cutting and carving stone.

A Good Attitude. "The apprentice program here is a hell of a training," says Eddie Pizarro, graduate and now stoneyard manager. "Everything is concentration, patience. That's the job. If you have a bad attitude, it shows in your stone."

"Your stone is the greatest teacher of all," explains Jason Bird, apprentice. "You learn the basics: you pitch, you punch, you claw. But there's even more. There's technique, the way you approach your stone. The stone teaches you about yourself. It teaches concentration. It teaches patience."

"The attitude of the stoneyard crew is unbelievable," reports English head mason, Chris Pascoe, trainer in charge of the Stoneyard Institute. "They're so keen and willing. They're going to be good masons."

A Unique Program. During their training, apprentices are subsidized by the Cathedral, government agencies and private foundations, as well as by Cathedral Stoneworks, which has managed the Stoneyard Institute since 1989.

"Ours is the only acknowledged masonry training program in the United States," says Alan Bird, clerk of the works, and former head trainer. "We've adapted the classic City and Guilds of London curriculum, and added computer and robotic training so apprentices can learn to operate our new high-tech machines."

"It's beautiful with the computer saw," states graduate Yves Pierre, assistant lead cutter. "It means less time on every stone and more time for the fine detail work."

"It's not like a car assembly plant where computer-driven machinery takes the place of skilled workers," adds Ricky Telemaque, apprentice cutter. "I look on the use of computer-driven saws as a challenge and an opportunity to spread the skill and preserve the use of design in stone."

Intercultural Training. Each year, the Stoneyard Institute operates an exchange program with the Cathedral of Saint-Jean Baptiste in Lyon, France. Apprentices from both countries experience life and training in the host's tradition as part of this intercultural effort.

"I went to Paris and saw Notre Dame, Saint Chapelle and Saint Denis, and visited a few museums," says Jerry Perez, graduate cutter. "I'm proud to say I enjoyed all I saw and did."

Apprentice Amy Brier reports that she gained a growing understanding of the Gothic style, "...that accepts and nurtures the quirks and foibles of the human spirit. When architecture is accepting of these things, a freedom is achieved."

Skill and Pride. The Stoneyard Institute has proven a success, not just in the skills it has taught and the fine stonework that has been completed, but, more significantly, in the pride generated in its apprentices and graduates.

"I cut stone for four years and I'm glad I did it," says Theresa Robb, a recent graduate. "Now I know how to move stone. I know my chisels. I know how to think in geometric planes and depths. Sometimes I think sheer willfulness carried me through my apprenticeship."

"In my neighborhood, I'm the only person who can do this type of work," claims apprentice Lisa Young. "A hundred people can do electronics. I know I'm doing something special!"

"You get a feel for the stone," says Edgar Reyes, stone setter and recent graduate. "When you complete a stone you look at it and, God, it fills your heart with joy."

COVER: Ricky Telemaque, Apprentice Stone Cutter.



The new banker mason shed.



James Fowler, Apprentice Stone Cutter.



Chris Pelletieri, Apprentice Stone Cutter.



Head Mason Chris Pascoe explains a template to apprentices and staff.