

KARL QUILTER

GLORY BE!

HE NARRATES A SLIDE SHOW ON CONSTRUCTING SPACE-AGE ANGELS. THEY ARE AVAILABLE IN TWO sizes: small and large; they are fiberglass, cast in molds, then gold-leafed.

"The idea just came to me," he says, talking about the armature he built when sculpting the newest Moroni statue for LDS temples. "It's a totally new technique."

Quilter took photographs of a body-builder, cut enlarged wooden profiles of arms and a side body view, then attached them on opposite planes. He stapled plastic to the profile, filled it with urethane foam, and "cut away what he didn't want." After carving out the basic shape, he sprayed it with fiberglass.

On that core, Quilter put a layer of traditional sculptor's clay and created the angel's musculature.

The next step revolutionized LDS temples around the world: The sculpture was sprayed with black gelcoat a quarter-inch thick. Then, the gelcoat was dismantled piece by piece, which left a mold that could be filled with fiberglass and assembled into an exact replica of the initial sculpture. The mold is good for one hundred generations, making it feasible to top every temple in the world with an angel.

Quilter's angels resulted from a modern perspective on materials, and aesthetics too. His angel was influenced by the work of three Moroni sculptors before him.

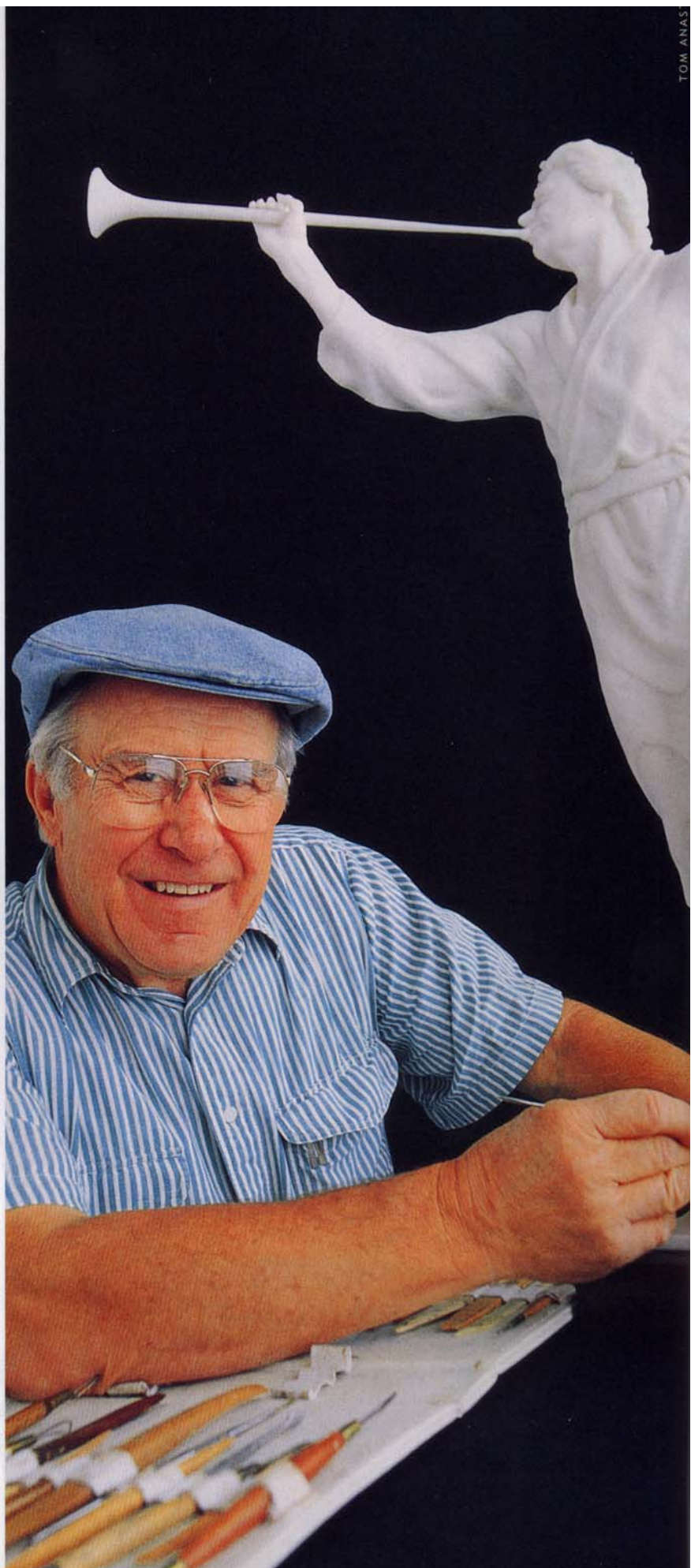
Legend says Cyrus Dallen, who designed the Salt Lake Temple Moroni, told church authorities he'd never seen an angel; the closest he'd seen was his mother and niece, who became his models. Fairbanks was the second sculptor. His Moroni had, in Quilter's words, "a stiff strength." Phil Mailer, who worked on Mount Rushmore, built the third version.

Quilter created an angel as perfect as Baby Bear's bed: not too soft, not too hard, with the compassionate-but-tough personality profile of such celestial residents as Michael and Metatron.

A former seminary teacher, Quilter says this was the project he always wanted to do.

"I remember sitting on the steps at the university, and a classmate came by. She said, what do you really want to do after you graduate?"

"I said, 'I would be more honored than anything if I could sculpt an Angel Moroni for the Temple.'"



TOM ANAS