

Mausoleum project was guided by the world's best

Twenty years ago my wife, Cora, and I were **working** on the design of a mausoleum for Paradise Memorial Gardens cemetery on Shea Boulevard and 92nd Street. Over 10 years, we visited more than 200 mausoleums in Europe, Asia, Australia, Canada and 20 **U.S.** states.

We wanted this mausoleum to be special. We kept records of each mausoleum we visited. Cora would carefully check for any odor. She also reflected on cleanliness, the presence of gnats or cobwebs, and the neatness of the flowers and flower vases on the crypts or niches.

I looked at construction **details**. I took notes on the use of granite, marble and man-made materials. I also noted the designer and builder of each mausoleum. We both made notes about the artwork, such as religious, symbolic, cultural and organic, and how well it blended into the building's overall design.

We found that three international mausoleum builders consistently scored higher than **all** of the others. Their buildings were constructed to last centuries. Their mausoleum designs were all good.



Scottsdale Memories

PAUL MESSINGER

Construction details were right and one felt comfortable in these buildings.

The light levels were adequate, lettering was readable, and they gave the clients opportunities to personalize their crypts or niches. Some used lesser-cost crypt fronts, while others, **used name plaques** instead of individual lettering, but all had the basics right.

After seeing so many mausoleums, we decided to build ours. We selected poured-in-place crypts and niches featuring granite fronts held in place with bronze hardware and individual bronze lettering. The cost was higher than other alternatives, but its usable life is multiples of the other choices. The designers were Tom Woodworth, **David Dahl** and Douglas Sydnor, and the builder was **Milne Mausoleums of Portland, Ore.**

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The late George-Ann Tognoni spent more than a year creating this heroic bas-relief sculpture entitled "Labors Ore." It stands against a 35-foot granite wall in the great **hall** of the mausoleum. Among **Tognoni's** many other sculptures

is "The Yearlings" in downtown **Scottsdale**, which she-sculpted during the early 1970s.

On either side of the great hall are mosaics created by Joe Lupton. These depict two southwestern scenes, one a Native American woman feeding sheep and the other a mother passing stories from one generation to the next. Further north, we later added sculptures of small animals, birds, rocks and native plant life **representative** of our desert.

The **Taj Mahal** of India, the Pyramids in Egypt, the great tombs of Italy and other parts of the world may be **bigger** and more spectacular, but **they're probably** not any better engineered or **constructed** than ours. **Mankind**, over the centuries, has left some of its finest **examples** of architecture and construction **as places of burial**.

Reared on a local dairy farm, former Scottsdale city councilman (1971-76), state legislator (1979-85) and honored oral historian Paul Messinger founded Messinger Mortuaries in 1959. He can be reached at 480-860-2300 or 480-945-9521.