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**Vale
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On The Road

[Nyack, New York]

Fulfilling a Final Wish

More than a dozen years ago, Anthony “Tony” Fatale paid a visit to Travis Monuments with a very special request – he wanted the Nyack, New York-based firm to design a private mausoleum as his final resting place. *Patti Martin Bartsche reports*

While most private mausoleums hold four to six individuals, Fatale explained that the mausoleum would be his alone. Although the lifelong Nyack resident had no close family, he knew that he wanted to be interred in Nyack’s Oak Hill Cemetery in a private mausoleum.

On and off for about six months, Fatale met with Travis Monuments President Charles Minozzi, going over ideas for the final resting place.

“They had some substantive conversations about the design and details ... what it would look like, how it would come together,” Anthony Minozzi, Charles’ son and Travis Monuments’ vice president said. “Mr. Fatale would tell my father some of the things he wanted, and my dad would come back with a rendering, and Mr. Fatale would say he liked this, but not that and my dad would make some changes and come back with another rendering.”

Minozzi met Fatale several times, although he was not part of the design meetings.

“What I do know from conversations with my father is that he and Mr. Fatale had some great conversations ... he (Fatale) didn’t know exactly what he wanted, but he knew my father would be able to translate what he wanted into a beautiful structure,” Minozzi said.

About six months after their initial meeting, Charles Minozzi thought he

had perfected the design. “My father had made these beautiful renderings and Mr. Fatale was close to liking one, so my father made some adjustments,” he said. “My father really felt that with the final rendering that he brought it home ... this was the one that he was going to go with.”

But Fatale never returned to Travis Monuments to look at that rendering.

“After a while Mr. Fatale stopped coming around,” Minozzi said. “We were left scratching our heads about what happened ... but it’s not our way to chase after customers.”

Eventually, Fatale’s file was closed and put away.

Fast forward to 2019.

Answering the office phone one day, Minozzi was greeted by a voice on the other end identifying himself as the executor of Fatale’s estate. Fatale had died unexpectedly May 3, 2018, at age 70, and his wish was to have the mausoleum completed to his specifications.

Fatale’s death came as a surprise, Minozzi said. The executor’s request for Travis Monuments to bring Fatale’s dream of a mausoleum as his final resting place to life was an even bigger surprise.

“We didn’t have a finalized plan,” Minozzi said. “Mr. Fatale didn’t have a spouse or children to direct questions to. The executor said that we were the ones who met with him,

we were the ones who knew what he wanted best ... so we went back to our files. It was up to us to carry the project to completion.”

Once Fatale’s estate was settled and Travis Monuments was given a budget to work with, Minozzi went to work in recreating what he and his father believed was Fatale’s vision.

“We wanted to keep the flavor, architecture and design elements – like the stained-glass windows – that were important to Mr. Fatale,” Minozzi said.

The Fatale mausoleum is a masterful combination of traditional Greek and Roman architecture featuring hand-carved fluted columns that flank the front of the structure, three stained-glass windows and a solid bronze door. The Air Force veteran’s name is spelled out in Roman-style letters on the front of the structure.

“One of the most difficult decisions was selecting the stained-glassed images,” Minozzi said. “Mr. Fatale hadn’t picked out anything specific ... the only thing we had in our notes was that he didn’t want anything religious. In discussions with the executor, we learned that he loved the outdoors, so the designs are reflective of his love of the outdoors.”

Once the final design was approved, Travis Monuments turned



Anthony "Tony" Fatale's private mausoleum in Oak Hill Cemetery. (Photo courtesy of Travis Monuments)

to Vermont-based Rock of Ages for the granite that would be used to construct the mausoleum.

"Mr. Fatale didn't pick a specific color ... all he knew was that he wanted a light color," Minozzi said. "We selected the Rock of Ages Blue Gray granite because of its color and durability."

Another advantage was that the granite for the project would be mined from Rock of Ages' quarry in Graniteville.

"That was an important consideration," Minozzi said. "They needed to harvest several blocks for a project this size."

The entire project was then fabricated in Rock of Ages' plant with the individual pieces arriving at Oak Hill Cemetery on two 53-foot long trailers in late July.

Over about 10 days, the nearly 32 tons of Vermont granite were

painstakingly put together atop the 5-foot deep solid foundation, which had been poured in advance of the mausoleum's construction.

"The building is so large (it measures 11.5 feet by 11.5 feet by 13 feet) and features so many architectural embellishments that it needed to be built on-site," Minozzi explained. "There is no way it could have been trucked in in one piece."

Watching what began from unfinished drawings and brought to life a year later was surreal, Minozzi said. "We didn't have a finished design, but I believe it's the finished product that Mr. Fatale would appreciate. I think it's exactly what he wanted when he came in so many years ago."

Lou DeLuise, Oak Hill's longtime superintendent, told The Journal News that while Fatale's mausoleum in the cemetery's lower section

wasn't Oak Hill's largest, nothing in the immediate area rivaled its size.

Fatale, whose body had been kept in a receiving tomb since his death, purchased the mausoleum lot in 2003, DeLuise told the newspaper.

While Minozzi is pleased with the finished mausoleum, he admits it would have been nice if Fatale had been able to see what he designed.

"We felt an obligation to Mr. Fatale ... he trusted us, he put an incredible amount of trust in us, and we wanted to live up to that trust," Minozzi said. "It is humbling to be able to do something for someone who's gone ahead of us."

And it's very likely that Fatale would approve of his grand final resting place.

"I've had people tell me he had a larger than life personality," Minozzi said. "I think this mausoleum fits him perfectly." •