

Artcast celebrates 50th anniversary

Artcast is celebrating 50 years in business and to mark the occasion the company hosted an open house Saturday so the public could drop by to see how bronze castings are made.

The Armstrong Ave. foundry was busy with approximately 200 people coming in to learn about the "lost wax" duplication process, and that evening's VIP event saw at least another 150 attend.

The creation of Artcast began in 1964 when Eric Knoespe, Barry Hadley and Allan Rice, who met while working at a Brampton casting company, talked about starting their own business over lunch.



Foundry technician Stan Yeung explains some of the bronze casting process to Alex Vonghia, 11, while a cast bronze figure for the War of 1812 sculpture looks on.

That discussion led them to launch Canadian Investment Casting—a precision industrial casting company, which was later incorporated to become Mid Canadian Investment Castings Ltd. They originally set up shop in a double mechanic's garage on Guelph St. then later moved to a larger location on Mountainview Rd.

Eric's son Marcus, who now runs Artcast, said in the early days to make ends meet his dad, who is now retired from Artcast, and Rice, who recently died, worked at different full-time jobs by day and at night would cast with Hadley, who worked full-time answering the phone and preparing the night castings. They quickly built a solid reputation as a quality foundry and attracted many artists.

Marcus said this brought new opportunities and eventually they sold some shares to Cercast from Montreal.

"The years that followed saw them develop into a top class foundry specializing in the aircraft and aerospace industry with a division run by my dad, dedicated to fine art," said Marcus.

He said as Artcast had become a



Foundry technician Dave Chadwick (left) and foundry welder Blair Hicks pour 100 pounds of molten bronze into a cast for the War of 1812 sculpture in front of visitors at Artcast's 50th anniversary open house.

distraction to the core business his father decided to sell his shares in Cercor and take Artcast on as his own. With the support of Rice and Hadley he said his father grew the business and moved into it into its current building in 1981.

Marcus said he and his sisters worked at Artcast throughout their teen years.

Over the years Artcast has done the castings for several major pieces including one of John Diefenbaker for Parliament Hill, Remembrance

and Renewal for Juno Beach by Colin Gibson, Au Revoir by Andre Gauthier for Val Cartier Army Base, and Oscar Peterson by Ruth Abernathy for National Art Centre in Ottawa. The company is also known for its restoration work and recently cast the bronze finials on the roof of St. Michael's Cathedral in Toronto.

Marcus is now president of Artcast. His wife Cathy works there along with the third generation Knoespe to be involved—their son Erich James.



Artcast had a steady flow of visitors to its 50th anniversary open house. Here a group listens to an explanation of the lost wax casting process with the life size wax mould of a soldier for a War of 1812 sculpture.

Photos by Jon Borgstrom



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