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R. Baker & Son - Special Issue United Nations: Moving The World's Treasures

As the extensive renovation of the United Nations Headquarters in New York City recently drew to a close, R. Baker & Son crew members were onsite as usual, positioning large sculptures and other historic artifacts on the headquarters' newly-restored North Lawn. Baker crews had, in fact, been a fixture at the complex for the entire duration of the \$2.2 billion Capital Master Plan (CMP) project, participating in the original sculpture relocation, removal of the iconic green glass curtain wall from all 39 stories of the Secretariat Building, and interior renovation throughout the facility including the General Assembly Hall.

The United Nations is host to an expansive collection of import artworks and historic objects donated by countries throughout the world. One of R. Baker & Son's first tasks on the campus was to relocate the large sculptures from the North Lawn to a staging area located on the 18-acre site. Eight years later, most of the same crew members were on hand to help reinstall the artifacts throughout the newly-restored grounds.

The U.N. overhaul is one of numerous projects over the years in which R. Baker & Son was entrusted with priceless national treasures and important artifacts, including the 2012 renovation of the Statue of Liberty, rigging of the aircrafts onto the Intrepid Sea, Air and Space museum, and installation of the 9/11 museum exhibits which included extensive restoration work following Super Storm Sandy. R. Baker & Son is extremely proud to have been an instrumental part of these historic projects.

photo / art gallery cont. pages 2 and 3



Baker team members relocate three sections of the Berlin Wall from storage to its original location on the UN North Lawn.

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**R. Baker & Son - United Nations: Moving The World's Treasures
Eighty One & Eighty One - Walter Baker and R. Baker & Son Hit a Milestone**



"Peace" by Antun Augustincic, donated by Yugoslavia in 1954, is rendered upright from its horizontal storage position (above) and positioned on its pedestal (left).

"Arrival" by John Behan depicts Irish emigrants disembarking from a ship. Baker crews rigged and reassembled the 11-ton sculpture that also features 150 bronze figures, three masts and a gangplank.



1935 was an eventful year for 31 year-old Robert “Ruby” Baker. In the midst of the Great Depression, he’d established a new business, and he and his wife, Esther, had just welcomed a newborn son named Walter. Eighty-one years later, Ruby’s business is still thriving, as is Walter, now the honored patriarch and ascribed “son” in R. Baker & Son. Walter rarely misses a day of work nowadays, and is a walking treasure trove of stories about challenging projects, proud moments, and the colorful cast of characters he’s encountered on the job.

From a very young age, Walter Baker was eager to work for the family business and willing to take on just about any challenge. Once, when Walter was 16, Ruby was on a dismantling project at a sewer treatment plant in Rockville Center. “It was January, and the ponds were frozen”, says Walter. “My father gave me a torch to melt the copper bars that held the sluice gates together, and I fell through the ice up to my neck. It wasn’t a pretty sight.” Walter reminisces about a job he took around his 18th birthday to raise a sunken barge at the Brooklyn Yacht Club for his uncle Murray. “I remember my uncle sent me down with an old trash pump and one helper. After trying unsuccessfully for two days to get the barge to raise, I called my uncle. He told me not to worry and that he would send one hundred 50 gallon gas tanks. At low tide, we cut holes in the deck of the barge and filled the hull with the tanks. Just as my uncle predicted, as the tide rose so did the barge. We then hired a tug to bring it around to its new



location, which was a whole other adventure and a story for another day.” With the money he made he bought a 1940 Chevy pickup truck. “I used it to buy and sell scrap and motors to make extra money”, remembers Walter. “I was a go-getter.”

Walter’s hard work and ambition didn’t go unnoticed by Ruby, who in 1954 invited his son to partner with him. “That was the beginning of a twenty year partnership that lasted until the day he died,” says Walter. “He was a really great teacher. I don’t think I could have learned anywhere near what he taught me on my own.” Walter’s sons, David, Mark, and Spencer followed in their father and grandfather’s footsteps by joining the family business, David and Mark currently serve the company as president and vice president, respectively.

R. Baker & Son All Industrial Services is widely recognized as one of the premier rigging, demolition, dismantling, and plant relocation contractors in the U.S., Puerto Rico and Canada.



A statue entitled "Mother and Child" is a gift of Italy to the United Nations, presented in 1989. The statue is the work of Italian sculptor Giacomo Manzù.