

Golden Greeks to grace historic marathon route

STATUE. From *A1* start of history's first marathon. Both were commissioned by New Balance Athletic Shoe, Inc., whose chairman, Jim Davis, is a Greek-American.

"The foundry used the original wax model to make the mold for casting this one," said Kaufman. "It is a very interesting and complicated process."

According to New England Sculpture manager Jim Montgomery, the casting process involves several steps. The artist's original design is transformed into rubber and wax molds. Those are used to create concrete molds that are strong enough to hold the liquid bronze. Once the bronze hardens inside the molds, the concrete shells are broken off and the individual bronze pieces are welded together.

New England Sculpture used molds saved from the Greek version of the statue to make concrete casings for the Hopkinton statue, but Montgomery said Kaufman made a few small changes so it is not a precise replica.

The statue shows Kyriakides in a tired but determined mid-stride during his historic 1946 Boston Marathon run, and Spiridon Louis, his mentor and winner of the 1896 Olympic Marathon, who appears to be

an encouraging guide. Despite being weakened by near-starvation during the Nazi occupation of Greece, Kyriakides won the 1946 race, and used his victory to raise awareness of the plight of his homeland.

Kaufman said he was inspired by Kyriakides' story, and honored to do both sculptures.

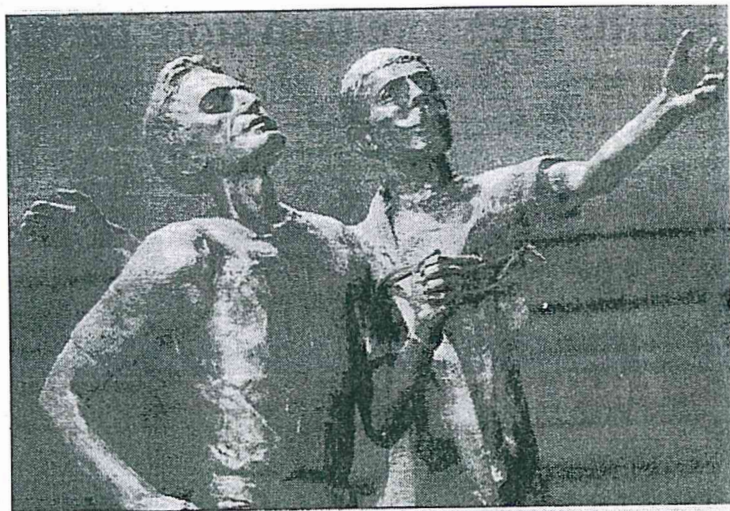
"Nobody is immune to a beautiful story like that," he said. "I felt very delighted to be asked to do the sculpture."

The base also tells a story of Phidippides, who, according to legend, ran those first 26 miles from Marathon to Athens to tell the Greeks their armies had defeated the Persians. Carved beside Phidippides is Pan, the goatish Greek god who was known to startle animals. According to Kaufman, Pan always felt he didn't get enough credit for scaring the Persians during that legendary Battle of Marathon.

"Pan wanted to be accepted into the society of gods and demi-gods," said Kaufman, who added that Pan's name lives on in the term "panic."

While the work was all-consuming, Kaufman said, "The work itself inspires you and generates what you need to do it."

The idea for the Hopkinton statue came from the Hopkinton Athletic Association, which will



The details of the figures atop "The Spirit of the Marathon" are apparent on the statue at New England Sculpture Services in Chelsea. Below, Sculptor Mico Kaufmann, 82, right, of Tewksbury, confers with Guy Wertheim of New England Sculpture Services in Chelsea after viewing his work Wednesday.



serve as official caretaker once the statue is in place. Hopkinton resident Bob Foster, a civil engineer, is arranging for a strong granite foundation for the statue.

"You need a piece that's flat, long, wide and massive," said Foster, who has seen the original statue in Greece.

According to Tim Kilduff of the HAA, the unveiling ceremony

will likely be held April 12, the Wednesday before the Boston Marathon. The statue will be positioned so that runners heading east on Rte. 135 can easily glimpse it, and gain inspiration for the next 25 miles.

For more on Kaufman, go to www.sculpturesbymico.com

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