

Living Heritage at Work

PROFILE

Charlie Pirie, Stonemason

They say people who love their work, never have to. Nothing could be truer of Charlie Pirie. His passion is readily apparent when he starts talking about stonemasonry. He is not shy about knocking on anyone's door to chat with them about their home or a building in their community if stonework is involved, especially if it appears to need some tender loving care. His genuine interest in the stories of others is coupled with a memory that allows him to recall people and places with surprising ease. He is a natural storyteller.

Charlie was introduced to the centuries old trade of stonemasonry in the Kingston area when he took a job with a group of Portuguese Canadians, well-known for their skill and craftsmanship. There he learned how to use heritage lime mortars and developed an understanding of the importance of the geological composition of the substrate. He has worked on numerous heritage projects across the country since then including: The Library of Parliament, The Governor General's Residence (Rideau Hall), Saskatchewan Legislative Building, and the Victoria Memorial Museum Building.

Charlie Pirie is a man who navigates life with a strong moral compass and work ethic, learned no doubt from his parents and grandparents. Open and generous with his time, he has brought both seasoned craftsmen and young apprentices to the province to work with him and learn from each other. Charlie and his staff at CAP Masonry, the business he established since deciding to stay in Saskatchewan, are kept very busy. In fact, business is flourishing. Charlie is actually in a position to choose which jobs he wants to pursue and has declined work when he got the sense the owner was not really committed to the building. His energy and knowledge of stonework are a powerful combination; making any heritage restoration project possible, especially when the community believes in it as well. And Charlie's dedication to the job at hand is hard to resist.

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P R O F I L E

Not surprising, CAP Masonry, has received recognition for the quality of their work. The Saskatchewan Architectural Heritage Award (SAHA) for Interior Conservation was presented by Her Honour, the Honourable Vaughn Solomon Schofield, for work on the stone foundation of Judith Venas' home in Moosomin, and a Municipal Heritage Award was presented to the staff of Cap Masonry and to Aaron and Naomi Lynn, for work done on their heritage home in Regina. More recently, CAP Masonry received the SAHA award for the exterior restoration of the Wishart Stone Church.

Charlie Pirie's commitment to an environmentally friendly approach extends not only to his craft but to life in general. He and his wife Susan, along with their network of friends and acquaintances are engaged in life; making Saskatchewan their home, nurturing a sense of belonging and building community in the process.



Wishart Stone Church - Photo courtesy of Charlie Pirie

Heritage Saskatchewan Alliance is the collective voice of all those who value heritage in Saskatchewan. Our vision is to see heritage as a valued and dynamic legacy that contributes to our sense of identity, creates an understanding of our past, is used to build communities in the present, and informs our choices for the future.