



SAINT STEPHEN

Bass

ACTS 6:8 and 7:58

*Stephen, a man richly blessed
by God and full of power,
performed great miracles and
wonders among the people...
They all rushed at him at once;
threw him out of the city, and
stoned him.*

The carving of Saint Stephen was a landmark step in my history of woodcarving. Until that time, I had only done pieces that I wanted to do and I have never sold any of my work.

The Pastor of St. Stephens Lutheran Church in Lexington, SC. came to visit me at home and literally talked me into doing a sculpture of St. Stephen. A member of their church, whose husband had died, gave a memorial to the church for such a carving. There were no restrictions on what I designed, nor any time pressure. Although I had never carved a piece larger than 15" in height, they did want something as big as I could handle for placement in their narthex. I didn't have a good reason to reject the offer and accepted my first commission.

After quite a bit of research, I decided on making a sculpture which could be wall mounted. St. Stephen was a Greek and came from a well-to-do family, so I dressed him in fine robes. I included a cross as a symbol of his Christianity, a palm branch as a symbol of his martyrdom and stones at his feet for that was how he died.

Some friends accompanied my wife and me to the Service of Dedication On Memorial Day, 1993. The sculpture was very well received.

In his remarks at the dedication, Pastor Rueben Olwasky stated, "even though Mr. Hoff may not consider himself a professional carver, he is a true Christian using his God-given gift to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ."