

Korczak Ziolkowski, Sculptor Who Portrayed Crazy Horse

STURGIS, S.D., Oct. 21 (UPI) — Korczak Ziolkowski, a sculptor who spent half his life carving a monument to Chief Crazy Horse of the Sioux Indians out of a granite mountain in the Black Hills, died Wednesday. He was 74 years old.

The Crazy Horse project — a 563-foot by 641-foot mountain carving of the Sioux Indian chief on his stallion — “definitely will continue,” Robb de Wall, a family spokesman, said. He explained:

“Ziolkowski left everything so his wife, Ruth, and their children could carry on in conjunction with the non-profit Crazy Horse Memorial Foundation board of directors. Ziolkowski’s whole life would be wasted if the project stopped after his 35 years of labor and all the momentum he has given it. It will continue and his family is dedicated to that end.”

Mr. Ziolkowski was a member of the National Sculptor Society and was carving the Crazy Horse monument at the request of Sioux chiefs who said they wanted “the white man to know the red man had great heroes too.”

Started Blasting in 1947

Mr. Ziolkowski was born in Boston of Polish extraction. In 1947 he started blasting away the first of millions of tons of granite from Thunderhead Mountain in a tribute to Chief Crazy Horse, who defeated George Armstrong Custer at Little Big Horn.

When completed, the horse’s eye was to be 18 feet wide and 16 feet high; the head was to be 22 stories high. By late 1981, a rough outline of the horse and rider were visible to passersby, although Mr. Ziolkowski estimated that years of work remained.

Mr. Ziolkowski had visions of setting up an Indian museum and university and medical training center at the site.

The project, five miles north of Custer in the southern Black Hills, never received public financing, but Mr. Ziolkowski raised more than \$4 million in the first 34 years of his work.

He had said that he was beginning to realize his physical limitations, after four back operations.

“I hope I can have a few more years to leave it fully roughed out with maybe enough time to begin some of the finish work before I have to leave it for my family and the Crazy Horse National Commission to complete,” he said.

Mr. Ziolkowski felt he had a special relationship to Crazy Horse. The chief-tain was bayoneted in the back and died when soldiers attempted to throw him into the guardhouse at Camp Robinson, Neb., Sept. 6, 1877, slightly more than one year after he led thousands of Indians in the massacre of Custer and his Seventh Cavalry troopers.

It was 31 years later to the day that Mr. Ziolkowski was born. And on Sept.



The New York Times
Korczak Ziolkowski

6, 1981, the Postal Service unveiled a stamp in the chieftain’s honor, with a first-day release set for the following Sept. 6 at the mountain.

Mr. Ziolkowski had 10 children. His first wife, Dorothy, divorced him. He later married a former student, Ruth Ross, of West Hartford, Conn.