

# Sculptor Bernard Langlais Dies

by Terry Dodge

CUSHING — Maine's noted sculptor Bernard (Blackie) Langlais, 56, died Monday evening at a Portland hospital after a brief illness. Funeral services will be held Thursday at 1:00 p.m. from the Davis Funeral Home, Knox Street, Thomaston.

Langlais was noted for his massive wooden sculptures of animals and various interpretations of his fellow man. His art work with its strong originality and primitiveness is in many collections, both private and public, throughout the United States.

A native of Old Town, Langlais was born July 23, 1921, the son of Maurice and Mary Jane Peltier Langlais. He was a graduate of Old Town High School and a veteran of World War II, having

served six years with the U.S. Navy.

He attended Corcoran School of Art in Washington, D.C.; the Brooklyn Museum Art School in New York; the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture; the Grande Chaumiere in Paris and the Kunstakademie in Oslo, Norway, the latter on a Fulbright Fellowship in 1954.

In addition to the Fulbright Fellowship, he had received an honorary Doctor of Fine Arts from the University of Maine, Farmington; the Maine Resident Artist Award from the Skowhegan School of Painting; the Maine Arts and Humanities Award; a Guggenheim Fellowship; a Ford Foundation Purchase Award; and this fall was awarded the Artist's Fellowship for Sculpture by the National Endowment for the Arts.

Trained as a painter, he took up sculpture about 16 years ago. He had lived and worked in New York City for 20 years, prior to moving to Maine with his wife Helen, in 1967, where they had been summering for a number of years.

Langlais, listed in Who's Who in America, maintained his studio home in Cushing. His yard and surrounding acres held scores of his works, a delight to the many tourist and area folk who would stop by to see the artist at work. Langlais warmly welcomed the visitor and seemed ever ready to explain his art.

Langlais had strong feelings for the animal and bird kingdoms and some of his best works depict lions, elephants, tigers, bears, seagulls and crows. Many of these works can be found in playgrounds . . . in Kansas City, Baltimore, and Rochester. His birds and seal adorn the fountain at the Treadway-Samoset Resort in Rockport.

He received the Five Bears commission for the redesigned bear area at the Philadelphia Zoo, completed in the fall of 1976 along with the 20-foot high elephant for exterior display at a gallery in Hope Sound, Fla.

The largest number of his works ever shown together (32) was at the indoor-outdoor sculpture exhibit of the Ogunquit



Cushing Sculptor Bernard Langlais

Museum's 24th annual exhibition in the summer of '76. He also had a very successful second one-man show at the Lee Ault and Company Gallery in New York City in May 1976, and a one-man exhibition at the Unity College Art Gallery in November that year.

His most recent work was a group of owls for the University of Maine at Presque Isle. UMPI was one of three statewide award winners in the "Community Sculpture '76" Project sponsored by Maine State Commission on the Arts and Humanities, by which UMPI received a grant of \$7,500 toward the \$10,000 commission. UMPI chose Langlais as artist for their commission, the 30-foot owl sculpture, chosen as owls are mascot symbols for the Presque Isle campus.

Among his best known works in Maine is the 65-foot Indian,

commissioned in 1965 and completed four years later. It is displayed near the Kennebec River in the City of Skowhegan.

Langlais was a founding member artist of Maine Coast Artists, Rockport, and a much respected member of the Maine State Commission of Arts and Humanities. He had also served as artist-in-residence at Pennsylvania State University.

Mr. Langlais is survived by his widow, Helen Friends Langlais of Cushing; three brothers, Lawrence of Coco, Fla., Harvey of Front Royal, Va., and James Langlais of Old Town; and three sisters, Mrs. Howard (Lillie) Johnston of Reston, Va., Mrs. Donald (Patricia) Madsen of Annadale, Va., and Mrs. Thomas (Annette) Mandras of Virginia Beach, Va.

Spring interment will be at the Norton Cemetery in Cushing.