



## Sculpting a Better Life

A computer programmer from nine-to-five and a self-taught sculptor in his free time, **Brian Birrer '90** combines the rigors of business with the rewards of creativity for a more fulfilling life.

By day, Birrer employs his business skills as an MIS project

manager and programmer at Hebrew Hospital Home of Westchester in Valhalla, N.Y. "I've done just about everything at one time or another," he says, "from design of custom systems to writing, testing and implementing programs to training."

The urge to try sculpting hit when Birrer was a student at Bentley. Home for the semester break in 1989, the Accountancy major picked up a Dremel die grinder for the first time and was hooked.

"Carving things out of wood started innocently enough," he says of the hobby that has since become a second career. "I never set out to become a sculptor."

Tapping that creative energy led Birrer to switch career fields. In 2000, he left accounting and finance to pursue a diploma in computer programming at the Chubb Institute in Parsippany, N.J.

"Programming gives me the same thrill that sculpting does," he observes. "You are creating something that didn't exist before. You are in total control of the output."

The business background has colored Birrer's artistic endeavors. In 1993, for example, he set out to tackle a large-scale project that would be saleable. His own long-standing interest in baseball, coupled with the knowledge that people were paying large sums for sports memorabilia, inspired him to carve a life-sized wooden replica of Babe Ruth. A second version of that six-foot statue was unveiled in March 2008 at the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center in Washington, D.C. — though the validation of his talent has not gone to his head.

"I don't see myself as part of the 'world of sculpture,'" says Birrer, whose portfolio now includes baseball legends Eddie Gaedel, Mickey Mantle and Joe DiMaggio. Jackie Robinson and "Shoeless" Joe Jackson are on his to-do list, as is refurbishing the statue of Mantle. "I'm a businessman who can sculpt a little." ❖ **Chantale Shepard**

To learn more, visit [www.birrerart.com](http://www.birrerart.com).



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