

Backfill

Men of Oak

Most small businesses don't stick around for 50 years, so when Williams Hardwood Flooring made it to that important milestone, company president Jim Leslie decided to do something special: He commissioned chain-saw carver Michael Blaine of Winchester, N.H., to make a life-size sculpture of two installers hard at work.

Modeled on two long-term employees of the Akron, Ohio, company, the figures were hewn from the trunk of a 200-year-old oak tree. (The tree had been dying and was going to be cut down anyway, Leslie says.) The trunk was delivered to the Williams parking lot, where Blaine worked on it for eight days with three chain saws, each of which had a different bar and tooth pattern.

Leslie describes the resulting tableau — dubbed *The Woodsmen* — as a tribute to the men and women who've worked at the company over the years and made it one of the most successful flooring businesses in the region. — *Patrick McCombe*

