

## Francis Lestingi

While in elementary school in Queens, N.Y., Francis Lestingi taught himself pen calligraphy and soon moved on to brush lettering. By the time he attended Bishop Loughlin Memorial high school in Brooklyn, he had learned how to gild with genuine gold leaf and was hand lettering paper signs for butcher shops and other storefronts.

After high school, Lestingi entered the religious teaching order of the Brothers of the Christian Schools (The De La Salle Christian Brothers) where he received degrees in physics from The Catholic University of America and under a National Science Foundation Fellowship from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

During his early years in the Order, he was responsible for initiating a print shop and a ceramics facility at the Brothers' complex in Washington, D.C. Later, he taught physics, chemistry, mathematics, and theology at Christian Brother high schools in Rhode Island, Brooklyn, Long Island, and Queens where he developed physics graphics and demonstrations for use on overhead projectors. Harvard University noted this work and invited Lestingi to design transparency graphics for a high school physics course, Harvard Project Physics, it was developing for the National Science Foundation. Eventually, he designed six volumes of physics graphics that were used in classrooms throughout the country.

In 1994, while still teaching, Lestingi decided to return to the "Letter Arts" and started Signs of Gold, Inc. with his master woodworker son Stephen. He enjoyed it so much, he took early retirement and went full time. Since then, he has won many national sign design contests and frequently conducts seminars and workshops regarding hand lettering and gold leaf application.

Lestingi's lifelong fascination with calligraphy and lettering as an artform has led him to design five original digital typeface fonts that are commercially available on the Web. Francis also does pro bono gilding with the Society of Gilders in New Orleans helping to restore Katrina-damaged churches. He is a member of the Board of Trustees of the Society of Gilders.

