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A Cathedral for the 21st Century

An Oral Biography of the Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine, New York

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Wayne Pearson

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- An oral biography and new and historic photography are combined to tell the story of New York City's Cathedral of St. John the Divine
- Presents the history of hub of culture and faith in New York City narrated by those who made it happen

New York City's Cathedral of St. John the Divine has been built stone by stone, story by story for over 125 years. Now collected for the first time in one stunning volume, this oral biography gathers stories behind the still unfinished Cathedral. Over 175 voices, compiled from new interviews and archived material, speak to the fascinating reasons why church and city leaders decided to build the world's largest Gothic Cathedral, the meaning behind the building's architecture, and an inside look at some of the world's most noteworthy events. New photos and freshly unearthed snapshots of the majestic structure punctuate this tome. The words of Bishops and Deans are collected alongside those of Cathedral Artists in Residence Phillipe Petit and Judy Collins, public figures David Dinkins and Al Gore, artists Madeleine L'Engle and Jessye Norman, Cathedral employees, neighborhood residents, and more, illustrating the vibrant life that fills this colossal building.

Bill Smith spent 30 years as CEO of the Bill Smith Group (BSG), an award-winning creative office specializing in visual books and digital contact. At BSG, Smith led a global team of over 100 writers, editors, designers, illustrators and photo professionals. Smith earned a Master of Arts in Oral History from Columbia University in 2015. Projects have included an oral history of artist Sarah Charlesworth, choreographer Edward Villella, the American Academy in Rome, and private oral histories for a number of philanthropic families.

Wayne Pearson was appointed Photographer in Residence for the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in 2017 after bringing a 40-plus year career as an internationally acclaimed commercial photographer to a close. Pearson is now concentrating on the types of photography that brought him into the medium all those years ago portraiture, travel, sacred architecture and the farmland of the Hudson Valley. Inspired by the work of the late Frederick H. Evans, Pearson has been directing his efforts the last half dozen years on possibly the greatest of the great cathedrals of the world, St. John the Divine.







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