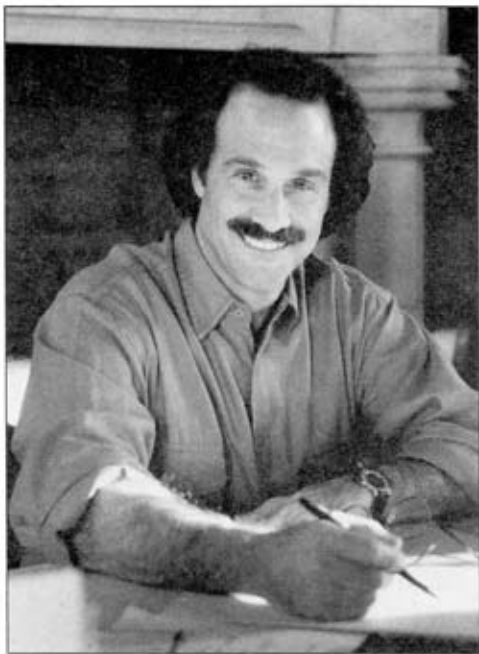


David Teitelbaum, Partner



“I’m talking about building as people . . . They are what makes this company go.”

Working as partner with the Cathedral of St. John the Divine is the most challenging business opportunity I could ever hope for. The Stoneworks is a public/private partnership, and it has all the difficulties you can imagine — all the challenges and the potential rewards where you can have fun, make money, and do good. Cathedral Stoneworks is the Cathedral’s attempt to help itself. The Cathedral has a very large mission. It has a lot of heart, and a lot of heart requires a lot of money. It’s incredible that this medieval hand-hewn structure has become such a vital metaphor for our times.

When I refer to cathedral-building, I’m talking about building as people. We are building the people, and the people are building the cathedral. They are the company. They are what makes this company go.

We plan to have 122 employees by 1993. The cutters and carvers here have learned the skills of working the stone. They are learning even more: management, how to communicate, high-technology skills. We’re talking about attitude and integrity. We’re talking about the absence of drugs. Some of these people have been on a destructive road. Now they’re able to develop, to grapple with the pull and push of self-image and the limits they had set on their own ability to grow.

It’s hard. I understand that. I’ve been there. I’ve been broke. I’ve been on top of the world. Being not broke is better.

In college I dislocated my shoulder and wrecked my swimming career. I lost interest in school, worked in a restaurant, and was going nowhere. My boss told me I had too much talent to be working in a hick town. He gave me a ticket to Los Angeles and fired me. There, I worked as a box boy. By the time I was twenty-three I had three children and was working two jobs. By the time I was twenty-five I was manager of a large supermarket chain. By the time I came to New York, in 1971, I had experience in marketing, banking, real estate and insurance. That was my college. In 1974, I formed the first consortium in the United States to recycle commercial buildings. I’ve been in the real estate business ever since.

Being partner with the Cathedral is ‘real estate’ of another kind. We’re working in an ancient medium in much the same way as the Egyptians and Mesopotamians did five millennia ago. Yet by introducing highly sophisticated European technology, we’ve added another dimension that will create a viable and challenging future for all who are dedicated to stonework.

We’ve created a rather interesting niche for ourselves — a highly skilled, high-tech, artisan-based company that can take on garden benches or 50-story buildings, a company that just happens to be constructing the largest gothic cathedral in the world, by hand! Stranger things have happened. ■