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For further information contact: 603-362-6589, or
info@paulwainwrightphotography.com

FROM CORPORATE MANAGER TO ARTISTIC PHOTOGRAPHER: PAUL WAINWRIGHT'S LEAP OF FAITH CHANGED HIS LIFE

New Hampshire photographer Paul Wainwright has achieved what many only dream about: escaping from his "day job" to follow his passions.

Atkinson, New Hampshire, October 29, 2010 – New Hampshire photographer Paul Wainwright has re-created his life in a way many only dream about. With a PhD in physics, he spent most of professional life behind a desk at Bell Labs, that fabled research organization where such every-day things as the transistor and laser were invented. All the while, however, he nurtured his love for black & white photography, and in 2001 at the age of 51 he left the security of his corporate job to embrace photography full time. His work has just been published in his first book, *A Space for Faith: The Colonial Meetinghouses of New England* (Randall, 2010, \$35). More about the book can be seen on the book's web site, www.aspaceforfaith.com.

Wainwright, who has long considered himself to be a photographer with a "day job," discovered his creative passion for photography with his first darkroom at age 12. "Seeing a photograph appear in the developing tray was magic," Wainwright says. "It still is. During high school I was the photographer for the school paper, and it was a good way for a shy boy with limited athletic ability to become accepted by his peers. Today I would be called a geek, I suppose. For me, photography has always been my expressive outlet in life. It's what I did for stress relief."

As the photography world began to "go digital" in the 1990s, Wainwright chose to go in the opposite direction. He bought a large-format wooden sheet film camera, and taught himself the art of large-format photography. "I like the slow pace of working with traditional photographic materials," he says. "Subconsciously I suppose I was gravitating toward a slower lifestyle, and for me large-format photography became a Zen-like process. I had spent too many hours in front of a computer to feel particularly creative with digital photography."

A downturn in the telecommunications business left Wainwright without a job in early 2001. Always one to look on the bright side of every situation, Wainwright took this as an opportunity to go in a new direction. "I took a leap of faith," Wainwright says, "I'll admit that like many of us who suddenly find ourselves without a job, I was scared. But that leap of faith led me to create my book, *A Space for Faith*, which wouldn't exist if I'd still been working in the corporate world." Wainwright is now a successful landscape and architectural photographer.

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Wainwright works with a wooden large-format camera, sheet film, and develops all his images in his darkroom. Every photograph is carefully and individually created. He prefers to *create a photograph* rather than “shoot” or “take a picture” and uses traditional processes which force him to slow down and really think about what he wants his images to be.

Following his particular interest in New England’s old buildings, Wainwright began photographing Colonial meetinghouses in 2004. These landmarks of the New England landscape and American history are both historically significant and artistically beautiful, yet are not well known. Wainwright’s goal with his art is to bring their story to a wide audience.

Drawn to capture images that reflect our Puritan heritage, Wainwright says, “The Puritans were religious dissidents who came to New England so they could live apart from the Church of England. Their lives were simple, and their belief in God was central to their lives. I believe my meetinghouse photographs reflect the Puritans’ simple, well-ordered lives and inspire my quest to simplify my own life.”

A Space for Faith: The Colonial Meetinghouses of New England is a collection of Wainwright’s classic black and white photographs that paints a composite portrait of these once ubiquitous landmarks of the New England landscape. An essay by noted historian Peter Benes tells the rich history that surrounds these buildings. Only a few remain as they were – touched only by time – and Wainwright’s photographs give us a glimpse into an age when life was simpler.

A Space for Faith: The Colonial Meetinghouses of New England is available for purchase on the book’s web site, www.aspaceforfaith.com.

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