

Author of WTC book to visit

Judith Dupré
penned definitive
work on new tower

KARL ETTERS
DEMOCRAT STAFF WRITER

Judith Dupré had unprecedented access to the construction of the One World Trade Center in New York City.

Through the course of more than 70 interviews with designers, builders and laborers, and eyewitness accounts, Dupré's 285-page book, "One World Trade Center: A Biography of the Building," puts the reader inside the tallest building in the Western Hemisphere.

Dupré has written several books detailing the architecture of churches, bridges, memorials and skyscrapers. Elements of all are incorporated into One World Trade Center.

The tower stands on the grounds of the World Trade Center, which was destroyed in the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Construction of the new building began in April 2006.

Dupré comes to Hearth and Soul in Tallahassee this weekend to talk about the release of her new book, which hit shelves April 26.

Q: How was it that you were given such close access to the building of the One World Trade Center? Did you feel an enormous sense of responsibility in working on your book?

A: "I've been writing about the World Trade Center since the early '90s. When I first wrote about the Twin Towers in my book 'Skyscrapers,' I did my research in the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey's offices in the North Tower. Then I wrote about the memorials of September 11 in my book 'Monuments,' which, eerily enough, I proposed to my publisher on September 10, 2001. That was my last glimpse of the twins.

"On a more personal note, having lived in lower Manhattan for two decades, I sought to ease some of the lingering heartache of my fellow New Yorkers and acknowledge the superhuman effort that has gone into the site's rebuilding by creating a historically accurate, physically beautiful book.

"As the only author given access to the Port's site, archives and vendors, I felt a tremendous sense of responsibility while writing this story. My narrative is based almost entirely on eyewitness accounts, culled from the 70-plus interviews I conducted with designers, builders and laborers. These accounts represent critical documentation — made while the interviewees were working actively on the project and not recollecting in hindsight."

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COURTESY JOE WOOLHEAD
Judith Dupré's new book hit stores April 26.



COURTESY PANYNJ

One World Trade Center is illuminated in red, white and blue at night.

One World Trade Center by the numbers

1,776 feet tall with 104 stories. One World Trade Center, dubbed the Freedom Tower, is the tallest building in the Western Hemisphere.

With an estimated final cost of **\$3.9 billion**, the skyscraper is the most expensive tower in the world.

45,000 tons — or 90 million pounds — of structural steel were used. Most of it was recycled.

208,000 cubic yards of concrete were used in the building's construction, enough to make a sidewalk that stretches from New York to Chicago.

1 million square feet of glass cover the building's upper reaches.

If you go

This weekend, Dupré, accompanied by Figg, will share her book at three public events at Hearth and Soul located at 1410 Market St.

11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Friday — Book signing and brief talk

5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Friday — Book signing with beer, wine and light refreshments

11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday — Book signing with tea and shortbread



CRAIG RUTTLE/FILE/AP

"One World Trade Center is simply the safest, strongest, most advanced skyscraper in the world," says Judith Dupré, author of a new book on the center.

Dupré

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Q: Why do you think the tower's rebuilding efforts were so emotional?

A: "While interviewing those who built the new Trade Center — from the executives to laborers — I was struck by their dedication and sense of moral obligation to those who lost loved ones on 9/11 and to the people of New York and the nation. It was abundantly clear that they were determined to build the best possible buildings in honor of those who died and, for the rest of us, to create an enduring symbol of pride and hope."

Q: What is unique or compelling about the tower's construction, materials, people involved?

A: "One World Trade Center is simply the safest, strongest, most advanced skyscraper in the world. It has established new benchmarks of quality and safety in many areas, which are already being incorporated into new structures globally. These environmental, structural and safety innovations will continue to benefit the public. There is no other building like it: It is the only tower that serves double duty as a skyline commemoration and a commercial office tower. It had an impossible task: to stand tall and yet remain humble. I like to refer to it as a gentle giant.

"As much as writing this book taught me, I am continuing to learn from those who built the project. Rudy King, a 9/11 survivor, Port Authority employee, and my minder during dozens of interviews conducted for the book, wrote an extraordinary story about how working on my book helped him heal from the trauma of escaping from the falling towers. His words convey the amazing grace that continues to bubble up from this book."

Q: What is your connection to Tallahassee?

A: "My connection to Tallahassee goes back 20 years, when I was researching my book "Bridges." Engineering has its own language, and I was completely at sea until the late, great Gene Figg, the founder of FIGG Bridge Group, generously and painstakingly explained the complexities of bridge engineering to me.

"I can date my friendship with Linda Figg, Gene's daughter and now FIGG's CEO, to January 2006.

"Linda and I have been close friends and colleagues ever since. Over the last decade, we have worked on bridge projects together and have chipped away at a book about FIGG's unique, aesthetic approach to bridges that are both beautiful and eco-friendly. In a series of recorded interviews, Linda has shared her perspectives on building healthier, happier communities through bridge building."

Q: Are there structures in Tallahassee you find intriguing? What are they and why?

A: "The historic homes along Calhoun Street never fail to inspire me, with their columned facades, soft colors, decorative ironwork and elegant proportions, all of it festooned with Spanish moss.

"Smokey Hollow Commemoration at Cascades Park is a wonderful example of how history can be shared in ways that teach and delight the general public. Its superb, minimal design delivers both facts and emotion.

"Another memorable commemorative ensemble is the World War II Memorial that includes a replica of Florida's pillar at the National World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C. I like that the two memorials are linked, speaking to each other over great distances.

"I admire the whimsical and prescient design of Spring House by Frank Lloyd Wright. Its leaf-like form was one that fascinated Wright in his later years; that same shape is seen in the pools and curves that he incorporated into the Guggenheim Museum. I applaud the Spring House Institute's efforts to preserve this important structure."