

We Shall Not Be Moved: Rebuilding Home in the Wake of Katrina

Tom Wooten



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As floodwaters drained in the weeks following Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans residents came to a difficult realization. Their city was about to undertake the largest disaster recovery in American history, yet they faced a profound leadership vacuum: members of every tier of government, from the municipal to the federal level, had fallen down on the job. *We Shall Not Be Moved* tells the absorbing story of the community leaders who stepped into this void to rebuild the city they loved.

From a Vietnamese Catholic priest who immediately knows when two of his six thousand parishioners go missing to a single mother from the Lower Ninth Ward who instructs the likes of Jimmy Carter and Brad Pitt, these intrepid local organizers show that a city's fate rests on the backs of its citizens. On their watch, New Orleans neighborhoods become small governments. These leaders organize their neighbors to ward off demolition threats, write comprehensive recovery plans, found community schools, open volunteer centers, raise funds to rebuild fire stations and libraries, and convince tens of thousands of skeptical residents to return home. Focusing on recovery efforts in five New Orleans neighborhoods—Broadmoor, Hollygrove, Lakeview, the Lower Ninth Ward, and Village de l'Est—Tom Wooten presents vivid narratives through the eyes and voices of residents rebuilding their homes, telling a story of resilience as entertaining as it is instructive.

The unprecedented community mobilization underway in New Orleans is a silver lining of Hurricane Katrina's legacy. By shedding light on this rebirth, *We Shall Not Be Moved* shows how residents, remarkably, turned a profound national failure into a story of hope.

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