

## START THE PRESSES!

Rutgers University Press celebrates its 75th year of publishing, having long been a champion of all things New Jersey.

had for all titles published upon the anniversary of 9/11. Besides, a host of titles, many coffee-table books full of powerful pictures that relived the tragedy, had been published in the intervening year and done reasonably well. *Twin Towers*, a primer on the building of the World Trade Center, from its architecture and complex engineering to its tenants and staff, couldn't match these books for graphic and emotional impact.

Nonetheless, *Twin Towers* had sold 55,000 copies, the second-largest selling title in Rutgers University Press history. With the sales from Gillespie's book, the press was able to publish a number of scholarly books for which it wouldn't otherwise have had funds. "That's what we're best equipped to do," says Marlie Wasserman, director of the press: "publish about 100 scholarly books a year in editions of a thousand or so."

— Michael Aaron Rockland

Michael Aaron Rockland, a professor of American studies at Rutgers–New Brunswick, is the author of *The George Washington Bridge: Poetry in Steel* (Rutgers University Press, 2008).

With its diversity in geography, demography, and biography, New Jersey is one complex state—and a place with a lot to write about. And no one has had more to say about the Garden State than Rutgers University Press, which has been publishing authors' accounts of the state in all its permutations since publishing its first title in 1938, *James Madison: Philosopher of the Constitution*. From coffee-table books like the *Encyclopedia of New Jersey* (2004) and *Mapping New Jersey: An Evolving Landscape* (2009) to books about New Jersey in pop culture and history, the press, celebrating its 75th anniversary, has always championed the state.

One of the nation's first state university publishers, the press today is one of 120 university presses operating in North America. It showcases the writing and unique interests of Rutgers professors and alumni, among other contributors.

"When it comes to New Jersey, we're the only game in town," says Marlie Wasserman, director of the press since 1995. "It kills me to reject a regional book that won't sell, because I know there is no other place for that writer to go."

Rutgers University Press also publishes authors and academicians from around the country writing not only about the state and region, but also a host of other topics, subjects that big trade publishers eschew for their meek marketability. The press produces 100 titles a year, all of them nonfiction, and plans to publish more books by international scholars—especially if titles have application in classroom instruction.

Despite the press's having to cover practically all of its costs through sales revenue, Wasserman is bullish about the future—especially the publisher's

move in 2012 to the Gateway Building on the College Avenue Campus. It will house a Barnes & Noble College Booksellers superstore, an inviting venue for hosting author readings and piquing interest. What's more, the press will benefit from



Marlie Wasserman is the director of Rutgers University Press, which publishes approximately 100 titles a year, all of them nonfiction. The 2012 completion of the Barnes & Noble College Booksellers superstore, within the Gateway Building in New Brunswick, will be a boon for authors associated with the press.

the largesse of Thomas Higgins RC'61, GSNB'63, a retired teacher who is leaving his estate, estimated at \$400,000, to the press. The gift, in memory of the late Richard P. McCormick RC'38, GSNB'40, his former history professor, is earmarked for underwriting books about New Jersey's history and politics.

"Submissions are up; manuscript quality is better than ever; and new technologies offer exciting opportunities," says Wasserman. "We are in a period of transition, but the book is not dead. Not by any means."

— Bill Glavin