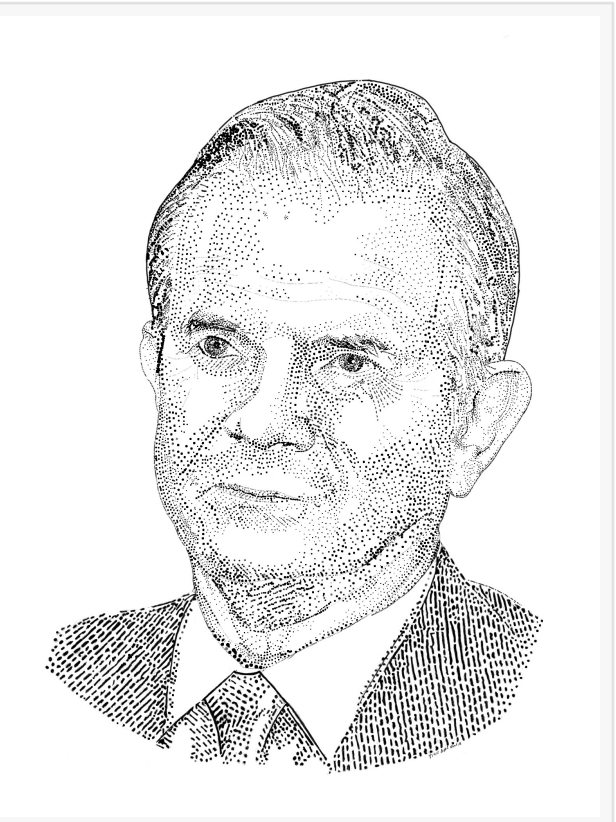
On the Anniversary of 9/11, Dean Rotbart's 'September Twelfth' Profiles Former WSJ and ProPublica Editor Paul E. Steiger

The Book's Newly Expanded Edition Traces the Childhood Adversity and Leadership Philosophy of One of Modern Journalism's Most Influential Editors

DENVER, CO, UNITED STATES, September 10, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- When terrorists attacked the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, The Wall Street Journal lost the use of its principal newsroom, left reporters and editors scattered across New York and New Jersey, and normal lines of communication collapsed.



Paul E. Steiger, former managing editor, The Wall Street Journal and founder of ProPublica

For hours, the newspaper's managing editor, Paul E. Steiger, was himself incommunicado and feared dead.

Yet the Journal never stopped functioning.

The newly expanded 25th anniversary edition of "September Twelfth: An American Comeback Story", by veteran journalist Dean Rotbart, examines how the professional culture Steiger built long before 9/11 helped make the newspaper's extraordinary response to the attacks possible.

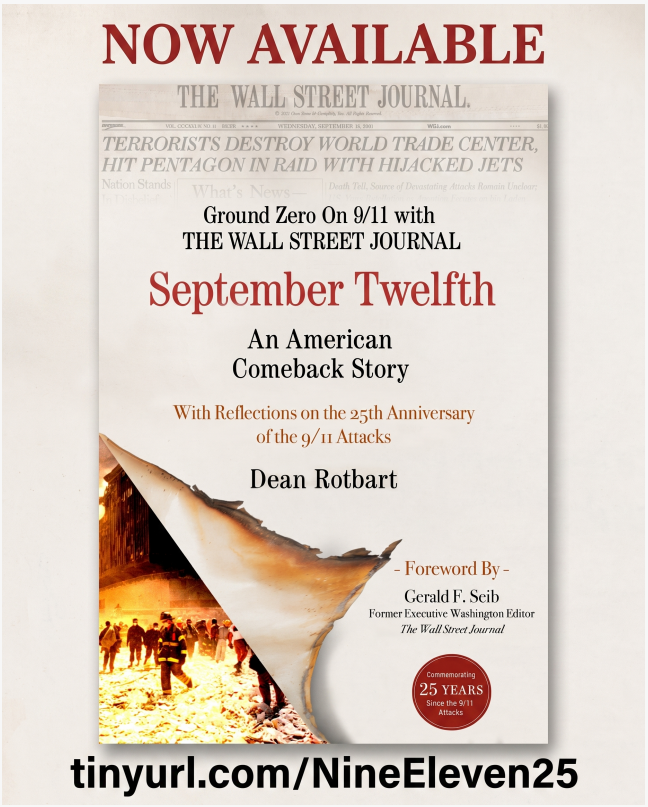
Reporters and editors who could not reach Steiger or other senior executives nonetheless knew what was expected of them. They gathered facts, improvised workspaces, exercised independent judgment, and produced a September 12 edition that would earn the Journal the 2002 Pulitzer Prize for Breaking News Reporting.

Steiger, who served as the Journal's managing editor for 16 years beginning in 1991, is the subject of a newly added biographical profile, "A Journalist in the Public Interest." The profile looks beyond his celebrated career to explore the experiences that helped shape his resilience,

temperament, and approach to leadership.

At age four, Steiger contracted polio and spent four months at a rehabilitation hospital in Haverstraw, New York, learning to walk again. More than seven decades later, Rotbart accompanied Steiger back to the hospital and retraced other landmarks of his youth, including his childhood homes, the Hun School, and Yale University, where he studied economics.

Steiger began his Wall Street Journal career in San Francisco in 1966, later distinguished himself during 15 years at the Los Angeles Times, and returned to the Journal, ultimately taking charge of its newsroom. After leaving the Journal, he founded ProPublica as a leading nonprofit investigative news organization. During his leadership at the two organizations, their journalists earned a combined 18 Pulitzer Prizes.



2026 Edition of "September Twelfth" is Available on Amazon

But "September Twelfth" argues that Steiger's most consequential legacy may be the generations of journalists he recruited, mentored, and entrusted with significant responsibility — many of whom went on to lead some of America's most influential news organizations, including:

> When the Journal's normal chain of command disappeared on 9/11, Steiger's team had been prepared to think and act for themselves. That is a lesson for every organization, not merely a newsroom."
>
> *Dean Rotbart*

Jill Abramson at The New York Times; Stephen Adler at Reuters; Martin Baron at both The Boston Globe and The Washington Post; Rebecca Blumenstein at NBC News; Marcus Brauchli at The Wall Street Journal and The Washington Post; Nikhil Deogun at CNBC; Edward Felsenthal at TIME; Alessandra Galloni at Reuters; Laurie Hays at Bloomberg News; Dafna Linzner, at Politico and U.S. News and Work Report; Joanne Lipman at Condé Nast Portfolio and USA Today; Alan Murray at Fortune; Matt Murray at The Wall Street Journal and The Washington Post; and Tom Webber at Newsweek and TIME.

"When the Journal's normal chain of command disappeared on 9/11, Steiger's leadership didn't disappear with it," Rotbart said. "His people had been prepared to think and act for themselves. That is a lesson for every organization, not merely a newsroom."

The anniversary edition also includes a new foreword by former Journal executive Washington editor Gerald F. Seib, reflections from more than a dozen journalists featured in the original book, and an epilogue tracing their lives and careers since 2001. The original 2021 narrative is reprinted.

Rotbart concludes his profile of Steiger with an observation that connects the editor's childhood struggle to his professional legacy:
"The little boy who came to Haverstraw to learn how to walk again grew up to teach generations of journalists how to stand."


Award-winning author Dean Rotbart

September Twelfth: An American Comeback Story is available on Amazon at tinyurl.com/NineEleven25.

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