

# New World Trade Center Rises From The Ashes

**By Courtney Brooks**

The day the Twin Towers fell, then New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani declared that they would rise again.

"We will rebuild," Giuliani proclaimed after the terrorist attacks that toppled the iconic World Trade Center skyscrapers on September 11, 2001. "We're going to come out of this stronger than before -- politically stronger, economically stronger. The skyline will be made whole again."

More than a decade later, the new One World Trade Center, or Freedom Tower, is nearly complete.

The colossal building already dwarfs the massive skyscrapers that make up Manhattan's skyline, and will soon be crowned with a spire that will make it the tallest building in the Western Hemisphere.

The final pieces of the 124-meter spire are about to be shipped to the World Trade Center site. There they will sit until the weather is good enough -- with little to no wind -- for them to be lifted into place.

Upon completion the One World Trade Center will stand at a symbolic 1,776 feet (541 meters) -- a nod to the year the United States of America declared independence from England.

## Symbol Of Recovery

The skyscraper's geometric design was selected from more than 2,000 submissions, and to many it symbolizes New York's ability to recover from the 9/11 attacks.

Rena Gregory, a 30-year-old elementary-school secretary from Brooklyn, was at school near the World Trade Center when its two main towers were hit by hijacked airliners.

For Gregory, the new Freedom Tower represents the strength of New Yorkers themselves. "I think it will definitely be something that will be a reminder that we're resilient and that, you know, nothing can hold us back," she says.



The old Twin Towers are memorialized by two gaping square holes where the footprints of the buildings were. Each have waterfalls cascading down the sides, which then drain into a seemingly bottomless hole. The surrounding walls are engraved with the names of the nearly 3,000 people who died in the 9/11 attacks.

Rene Herrera, a 28-year-old Texan visiting New York City with his brother, seems almost at a loss for words in trying to describe the significance of the tower to him. "It's an eerie feeling being here and seeing that thing," he says. "It's just an eerie feeling, that's all. It's good that they're building it though, very good. You see it on TV, and then you're actually here and it's very different though. I like it though. I like it. It's very nice."

#### 'Moving And Respectful'

Khabir John McGeehan, a 56-year-old Muslim who works in advertising, spoke to RFE/RL from the Dergah Al-Farah, a Sufi mosque near the construction site. McGeehan says the World Trade Center Memorial is more meaningful to him than the tower. The memorial is comprised of two massive square depressions at the site of the former towers, with waterfalls pouring down the sides into a pool. The water then disappears into a second, smaller, pool, which appears bottomless, representing the devastating loss of life.

"I sort of understand, I think, from what I've heard, the rationale of rebuilding the tower again -- just something about showing the American spirit, being indomitable, and that we'll rise again, and this sort of thing," he says.

"I don't exactly share that. I'm not opposed to it. I'm sort of neutral. I like that they did sequester off the area where the towers were and made a beautiful memorial that's very moving and respectful."

John, a 27-year-old banker from the Bronx, declines to give his last name in voicing cynicism often associated with New Yorkers. "It's a tower," he says. "What am I supposed to think about it? What does it represent? Just money and politics."