



Democratizing America: Shaf Nader and the Founding of an Impossible College

Dimitra Doukas

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An important contribution to the emerging debate about the role of community colleges in our changing society. ?Already past its manufacturing heyday, Winsted, Connecticut, the Naders hometown, was wrecked by the devastating 1955 flood. For Shaf Nader, Ralph's elder brother, the way to rebuild was by democratizing knowledge. A community college, he envisioned, would turn the old town into a regional hub of learning and creative citizenship. Impossible, people said, Winsted was too small, too gritty, too depressed. Turning those attitudes around took genius, persistence, and an uncommon gift of persuasion. This inspiring story is a close-up case study of grassroots change, and of a visionary leader who withstood ridicule and disappointment long enough to show hard-headed New Englanders what they really agreed on.

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